

FORUM

POLICE SHOOTINGS

How many more will we mourn?



Cornell W. Brooks
Guest Columnist

Freddie Gray wasn't the only person to die at the hands of the police in April. Before Mr. Gray suffered three

broken vertebrae during the course of his arrest by Baltimore police, 17-year-old Justus Howell was fatally shot by an unidentified officer in Zion, Ill. Like the death of Mr. Gray, Mr. Howell's death was ruled a homicide.

The NAACP says no more.

On the day that Mr. Gray was laid to rest protests and demonstrations against police brutality rung out in Baltimore, A group of local and federal law enforcement officers arrived at the home of 20-year-old Terrance Kellom, who was a suspect in a robbery case. Less than 10 minutes after police entered Terrance Kellom's home he was dead, shot several times by an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officer who was part of an inter-agency fugitive task force for reasons that remain unclear.

Then there was 37-year-old Natasha McKenna. This 130-pound woman died after she was Taser-shocked four times by the Fairfax, Virginia, police Feb. 3 with her hands cuffed behind her back, shackled around her legs, with a hobble strap connecting both of the restraints. Police say they are still investigating.

More than 400 people have died while in police custody this year and the list keeps growing, according to an online database that compiles news reports of instances of use of deadly force. While there is no comprehensive national database compiled by law enforcement agencies of police's use of excessive or deadly force in the United States, the number of people both severely and fatally injured while in police custody underscores a distressing symptom of the untested and over-aggressive policing culture that has become commonplace in communities of color all across the country.

How many more lives of unarmed Black men and women, tragically and senselessly killed by police, will our nation have to mourn before our country moves to fix its unjust and ineffective criminal justice system?

Now the NAACP is doubling down on advocating for body-worn cameras, car cameras and gun and Taser cameras. The availability of video evidence of police interactions with civilians can lead to significant improvements in police accountability and trust among a community.

Additionally, we must deploy the use of independent investigation bodies and the use of civilian review boards. But we cannot do it alone. Join us in our fight.

Here are three simple ways that you can help.

***Join the NAACP:** Become a part of the largest civil rights organization in the nation. When you become a member of the NAACP, you are doing more than joining an organization; you are becoming a part of a community. Our membership community is the reason we've been able to protect, defend, and fight for our civil rights and human rights for over a century.

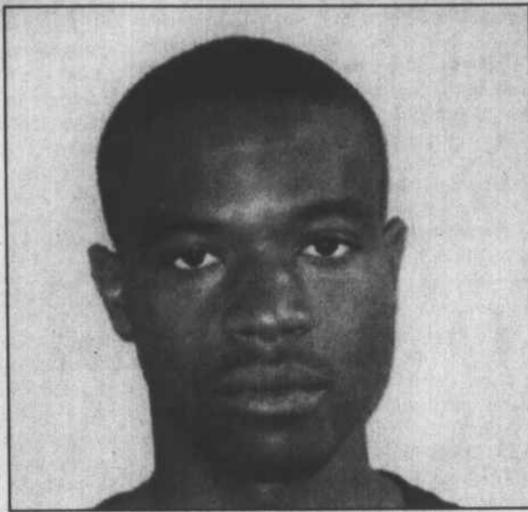
***Help us pass the End Racial Profiling Act:** The End Racial Profiling Act has been re-introduced in both the U.S. Senate the U.S. House of Representatives. The End Racial Profiling Act comprehensively addresses the insidious practice of biased treatment by law enforcement because of who you are, or who you are perceived to be, by law enforcement. Call your U.S. senators and representative in Washington and tell them to pass the End Racial Profiling Act. The switchboard phone number is 202-224-3121.

***Support America's Journey for**

Victims



Gray



Kellom



McKenna

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— Cornell W. Brooks

Justice: Last year, our "Journey for Justice" campaign began with a 134-mile, seven-day march from Ferguson to Jefferson City, Missouri, to join members of the Ferguson community in protesting the death of Michael Brown at the hands of the police, and to provide leadership to the predominantly young activists, participants in democracy.

This year, we are continuing our work with America's Journey for Justice, with a trek along the 850-mile route from Selma, Alabama, to Washington, D.C. — through Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina and Virginia — to highlight the need for criminal justice and voting reforms because our lives matter and our children deserve to live.

Every American deserves the opportunity to grow and thrive and reach their full potential. And every American child has the potential to become our nation's leading scientists, entrepreneurs, scholars, law-makers and law enforcement officials. It is us who must protect them.

The NAACP remains committed to this promise — fighting to ensure that

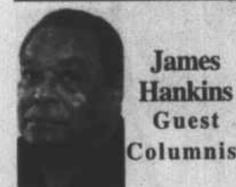
communities of color, our children especially, are judged by the content of their character and not by the color of their skin in the eyes of the law. For 106 years, this is what we have stood for and we will not waver.

Cornell William Brooks is president/CEO of the Baltimore-based NAACP.

This column is part of an op-ed series on behalf of the Civil Rights Coalition on Police Reform. The coalition, convened and led by the national Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, is comprised of over 30 national civil and human rights organizations, faith and community leaders who are working to address the nationwide epidemic of police brutality and lethal shootings, which are claiming the lives of Black men, women and youth. The series is intended to provide insight on necessary reforms to change the culture of policing in America.

For more information, please visit www.lawyerscommittee.org.

Solutions to problems can bring for students and parents



James Hankins
Guest Columnist

their summer educational activities.

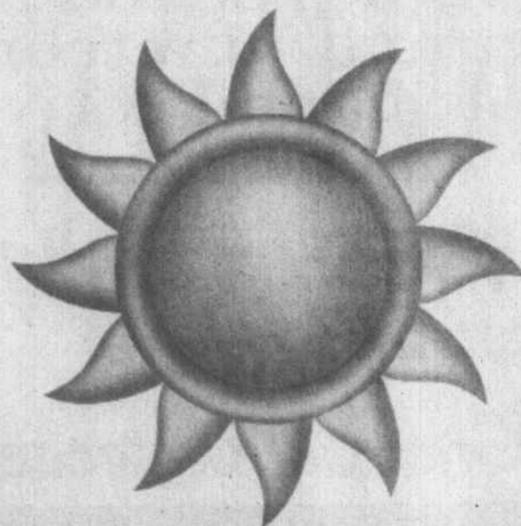
SOLUTIONS:

Here are some of the solutions to the problems that summer brings for students and parents:

***To help your child succeed, all parents, guardians and concerned relatives must write out a plan for the students under their care for the summer. It will be easier to carry out if the student is willing, help write it, but if they are not you must do it anyway. You must step up and be loving, but firm. If you do not put your foot down, who will?**

NOTE: My wife and I developed this plan for our newborn son. It helped make him the successful and enthusiastic social studies teacher he is today. This is his sixth year and he loves his job. It will work for your children and grandchildren!!!

***You must keep a good supply of quality reading material in your home. The only cost to your family will be around \$40 a year for a subscription to your local Black newspaper. All**



of the other necessary reading materials can be checked out free from your local library.

***Newborn up to Kindergarten:** Read to your children sometime during each day and at bedtime. Teach them by using pictures, letters, numbers, words, sounds, shapes, colors and everything they see during the course of a day. Never forget, you are their first and most important teacher. This is the formative time in their life and

they think you are the smartest person in the world. Use this time to teach them that learning is fun. Use the 75 /25 rule. Spend 75 percent of their time reading, writing, coloring, drawing and singing. The other 25 percent can be used on games, free playing and a little television viewing.

***Elementary to Middle School:** Most public libraries offer a summer reading program for children. Have them pick five

or more books from the recommended reading list to prepare them for their next grade level. Encourage first, then demand if necessary they read something every day.

***High School:** Do not allow your children to have any grade below a C+ unless they have a learning problem. Do not allow the school system psychologist to place your child in special education class until you receive direct proof of a problem. It is a fact that Black students are far too often placed based on attitude rather than aptitude. Hire a reputable educational specialist not connected with your school system to test your child.

***First ask your church, outreach organizations and family members for help. If they refuse, then borrow the money from a loan company if that is your last result. It is that important because this placement will help determine your children and grandchildren future.**

***Guide the precious gifts GOD gave you, your beautiful children, through**

two hours each day of reading something educational, writing summaries and meditating. Teach them how to analyze their problems and research the solutions. Strengthen your family unit by having frequent family discussions.

Parents as their leaders must also abide by the two-hour shut down rule. Read something that will help you reach the next step in your occupation, prepare you for another career and help you become a better-educated voter. The election year of 2016 is just around the corner.

Proverbs 22:6—Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not turn from it.

James J. Hankins is a graduate of Williston Senior High School, military veteran, N.C. A&T State University alumni, retired vocational teacher; past president of the New Hanover County Branch of the NAACP, member of Friends of Abraham Galloway and author of the book "What We Blacks Need To Do." To comment or order a copy of his book, please e-mail him at jhan606@gmail.com