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NCCU Featured in Smithsonian National Museum

North Carolina Central University (NCCU) is part of the new Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C., opened Sept. 24.

A photograph of noted educator and presidential advisor Dr. Booker T. Washington during a visit to Durham in 1910 that is held jointly by NCCU and Duke University for North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company will be included in the museum display.

Additionally, a video from the university's student web series, Eagle Access, is featured as part of a focus on football in the museum's Sports Gallery. This four-minute video explores the African-American relationship with football with commentary by sports journalists, including ESPN's Jemele Hill.

Patrick "9th Wonder" Douthit, an NCCU artist-in-residence who teaches in the Department of History, has participated in the museum's executive committee for hip hop and rap since 2014. Douthit is also featured in a video exhibit in the museum's music section discussing the history of hip-hop culture. The interview was taped in Raleigh at Douthit's Brightlady Studios, which is named after his late sister.

Yaba Blay, Ph.D., who serves as Dan Blue Endowed Chair and Visiting Assistant Professor in the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences, is featured in a video displayed in the "1968 and Beyond" exhibit located in the museum.

Obama: African-American museum tells 'story of all of us'

WASHINGTON (AP) - President Barack Obama on Friday celebrated the pending opening of the Smithsonian's new African-American museum and said the institution, decades in the making, is a powerful place because it tells "the story of all of us," not just the famous.

Obama also said he hoped the museum would help people bridge divides that were re-exposed by the latest fatal, police-involved shootings of black men.

The country's first black president, Obama was scheduled to preside over an outdoor ribbon-cutting ceremony Saturday morning for the National Museum of African American History and Culture, which was built on the National Mall in the shadow of the Washington Monument.

"The thing about this museum is that it's ... more than just telling stories about the famous. It's not just about the icons," Obama said at a White House reception celebrating the museum. He added that the museum has plenty of space to feature black icons like Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King Jr., Muhammad Ali and others.

"What makes the museum so powerful and so visceral is that it's the story of all of us, the folks whose names you never heard of, but whose contributions, day after day, decade after decade, combined to push us forward and the entire nation forward," Obama said, mentioning maids, porters and others who stood up for themselves despite daily assaults on their dignity.

Obama pointed out that the hundreds of people who were invited to the reception in the Grand Foyer included artists Quincy Jones and Phylicia Rashad, astronaut Mae Jemison and Oprah Winfrey, "the woman who owns the universe." Civil rights legends like Rep. John Lewis, D-Ga., and Jesse Jackson attended, along with representatives of a new generation of activists, including DeRay Mckesson of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Everyone in the room can think of an unsung hero, Obama said. "But the point is that all of us cannot forget that the only reason that we're standing here is because somebody, somewhere stood up for us," he said. "Stood up when it was risky. Stood up when it was not popular. And somehow, standing up together, managed to change the world."

Obama said the museum opening this weekend, following the shootings of black men in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and Charlotte, North Carolina, would allow Americans to "put our current circumstances in a historical context."

"My hope is that, as people are seeing what's happened in Tulsa or Charlotte on television, and perhaps are less familiar with not only the history of the African-American experience but also how recent some of these challenges have been, upon visiting the museum, may step back and say: 'I understand. I sympathize. I empathize. I can see why folks might feel angry and I want to be part of the solution as opposed to resisting change,'" the president said.

Obama took his wife, Michelle, their daughters, Malia and Sasha, and his mother-in-law, Marian Robinson, on a behind-the-scenes tour of the museum earlier this month. He and the first lady returned Thursday, where they were interviewed by "Good Morning America" co-host Robin Roberts.

The museum features Obama's groundbreaking presidency. He told Roberts in the interview broadcast Friday by ABC News that the museum put into context his presidency and what he has tried to do for the country, and "explains that we're standing on the shoulders of giants."

He said he and Mrs. Obama were "humbled" to be included but "we think of ourselves as a pretty small part of the story."

Mrs. Obama, the descendant of a slave, said the museum is "one of the few places on earth that tells the complete story of my existence." She said it will be a "point of pride for this nation."

Later Friday, the Obamas attended a performance at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts that chronicled the experiences of black Americans through song and dance. Patti Austin, Mary J. Blige, Usher, John Legend, Dave Grohl and Dave Chappelle were among those who performed.

North Carolina's Congress map again facing a challenge

By Gary D. Robertson

RALEIGH (AP) - Another legal challenge was filed Sept. 22 to boundaries for North Carolina's congressional seats drawn by Republicans who control the state legislature, with the plaintiffs again arguing politics played too great a role in drawing the lines.

But authors of the new litigation offer a little something more - a method to measure excessive partisanship, one that courts could use going forward.

Similar allegations of illegal partisan gerrymandering surfaced in a federal lawsuit filed last month by the national election reform group Common Cause, the state Democratic Party and voters. Both lawsuits focus on comments and actions taken by Republican lawmakers last February when they were ordered to redraw the boundaries because federal judges ruled two majority-black districts were racial gerrymanders.

The lawsuits want the updated map thrown out and replaced, although it's too late for it to happen before the November's elections.

The new map didn't consider race, redistricting leaders said, and was designed so Republicans could retain their previous 10-3 seat advantage in the state's congressional delegation. Democrats comprise 40 percent of registered voters, with the remaining number of registrants essentially split as Republicans and unaffiliated, save for a few Libertarians.

"It's clear that the intent and effect of creating North Carolina's 2016 congressional maps were to manipulate the democratic process," said Anita Earls, an attorney with the Durham-based Southern Coalition for Social Justice who represents the League of Women Voters of North Carolina and Democratic voters in Thursday's lawsuit. Lawyers for the Campaign Legal

Center in Washington also are handling the case.

The lawsuit names General Assembly leaders, lawmakers who drew the map and the State Board of Elections as defendants. The map's defenders have said previously it's not an illegal partisan gerrymander because Republicans must rely on unaffiliated and Democratic voters to win North Carolina elections.

"No matter how many costly and duplicative lawsuits special-interest groups continue to file against our congressional map, it doesn't change the fact that it splits fewer counties and fewer precincts than any map in modern state history - it just may not elect enough Democrats for their liking," said Sen. Bob Rucho, R-Mecklenburg, and Rep. David Lewis, R-Harnett, the map's authors, said in a statement.

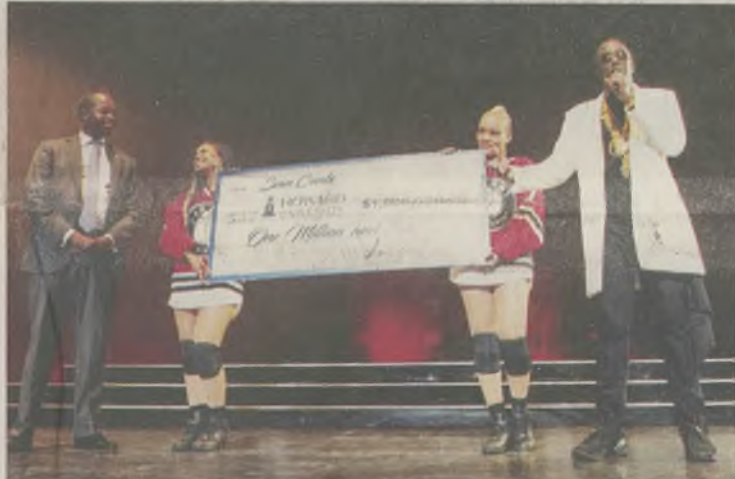
U.S. Supreme Court justices have expressed concern over the excessive use of politics in drawing maps, but maps have not been declared illegal on that basis.

That's in part because there hasn't been a workable standard to calculate when partisanship is excessive, according to Thursday's lawsuit, which like last month's lawsuit was filed in U.S. District Court in Greensboro.

The plaintiffs offer a three-pronged test to determine whether district maps cross that line, based on the premise that the percentage of overall votes a party's candidates receive shouldn't be out of whack with the percentage of seats to which they are elected. Those percentages can be unbalanced by boundary shifts that either spread thinly voters of one party across several districts or by packing them in one district, which help the controlling party more seats.

Based on calculations looking at maps since the early 1970s, the lawsuit says, the current congressional map is "by any measure, one of the worst partisan gerrymanders in modern American history."

At least four other lawsuits have been filed since 2011 challenging North Carolina congressional and legislative districts drawn by Republicans. A panel of federal judges last month struck down nearly 30 General Assembly districts as racial gerrymanders. The U.S. Supreme Court has said it will review the racial gerrymander case involving the previous congressional districts.



Sean "Diddy" Combs, right, makes donation to Howard University. (Howard U. Photo)

Puff Daddy donates \$1 million to Howard University

WASHINGTON (AP) - Puff Daddy is donating \$1 million to Howard University, where he once was a student.

The rapper and music mogul, whose real name is Sean Combs, made the announcement alongside Howard President Wayne Frederick at his Bad Boy Records reunion tour show Thursday night in Washington, D.C., where the historically black college is located.

Howard says the money will go toward creating a Sean Combs Scholarship Fund, which will award money to undergraduate business majors with a financial need. The school also says recipients will get an internship with one of Combs' companies and mentoring through Combs Enterprises.

Combs spent two years at Howard before dropping out in 1990. He received an honorary doctorate and served as commencement speaker in 2014.

Doubts remain after Charlotte police shooting video released

CHARLOTTE (AP) - Charlotte police released dramatic video Saturday that shows officers with guns drawn surrounding a black man with his hands at his side before shots are fired and he buckles and falls. It's unclear if there was anything in the man's hands in the footage, which has done little to assuage his relatives.

The footage of the fatal police shooting of Keith Lamont Scott was released amid days of protests, including an outpouring by hundreds earlier Saturday, which coalesced around demands for the public to see the video. Police said Scott had a gun, though residents have said he was unarmed.

In the dashboard camera video released Saturday night, Scott could be seen slowly backing away from his SUV with his hands down, and it's not apparent if he's holding anything. Four shots are heard, and he falls to the ground.

Police also released photos of a handgun from the scene, saying it was loaded and contained Scott's DNA and fingerprints. They also said Scott had marijuana.

The dashboard camera footage starts with a police car pulling up as two officers point their guns at Scott, who is inside the SUV with the doors closed and windows rolled up. Scott gets out and starts walking backward before shots are fired.

From a different angle, newly released police body camera footage shows an officer approach with his gun drawn and another officer already pointing his gun at Scott. When Scott comes into view, his hands are at his side and he's standing beside his SUV. The body camera footage doesn't show the moment shots are fired, and Scott is next seen on the ground.

An attorney for Scott's family, Justin Bamberg, said the footage leaves questions unanswered more than it provides clarity.

"One of the biggest questions," Bamberg said, "is do those actions, do those precious seconds, justify this shooting?"

Ray Dotch, Scott's brother-in-law, objected to reporters' questions about Scott's background, saying he shouldn't have to "humanize him in order for him to be treated fairly."

"What we know and what you should know about him is that he was an American citizen who deserved better," he added.