

A black and white portrait of a man with a beard and mustache, wearing a dark hat and a patterned jacket over a white shirt and dark tie. He is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression.

SoulVision[®]

M A G A Z I N E

**BK Fulton:
Faith In Action
Deeds Not Words**

October 2020

EDITORS NOTE

Nicholas Powell



Photo by Queon "Q" Martin

“Each of us has talents and gifts that help to make the world a safe space for all.”

We will all be telling our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren what it was like living in America in 2020. Is it too much to say that we are exhausted? I know I am. Breonna Taylor was only 26 years old when she was murdered. Ahmaud Arbery was 25 years old when he was murdered. I am 25. When you think about your own mortality, the deaths of your peers start to weigh on you.

Over 200,000 Americans have died from COVID-19. As a country, we are under the leadership of a man who has threatened a coup if he does not win the presidential election. John Lewis is gone. C.T. Vivian is gone. I look at my peers and the generation behind me and wonder what the future will be like for us. As our parents and grandparents age and retire, we will be in leadership roles, creating laws and building communities and families of our own. We are the change.

Nicholas Powell - October 2020 (continued)

We have marched in the streets. We have torn down statues. In some municipalities, we have changed laws. In November, we elect not just the president. Depending on where you live, your ballot may include a vote for mayor, sheriff, district attorney, judges, governor, your state legislator, and your senator and representative in Congress. In November, we vote for everything that matters.

Here is an excellent resource from the New York Times on what you need to do to make sure your voice is heard: <https://nyti.ms/3cDdEUU>.

In this issue of SoulVision Magazine, our cover story is founder and co-founding editor BK Fulton. He shares with us his vision for Soulify Productions' future and what lessons he hopes we will learn in the midst of America's racial awakening.

Elsewhere, we honor social justice advocate and leader Dr. Iva E. Carruthers. Also in this issue, DeNita Turner helps us to stay positive, NFL vet Antoine Bethea supports families facing evictions, fashion designer Alvin Thompson designs eco-friendly fashion for all, Louise Keeton writes stories that educate and empower, and Kristen Peyton creates beautiful art for some much-needed escapism. Lastly, chef Tye Hall fixes up a superb dish.

Each of us has talents and gifts that help to make the world a safe space for all. Let's start planning what that vision looks like today. Thank you for supporting our magazine. You get a new look when you have SoulVision.

“I look at my peers and the generation behind me and wonder what the future will be like for us.”

CELEBRITY

BK Fulton: Faith In Action, Deeds Not Words



Photos by Jessica Knox and styling by Nikki Tucker

| “The win is in the work.”

Faith is how BK Fulton describes the force that motivates him to keep going and to keep helping others as he climbs. “At the end of the day, it is my faith and prayer that helps me get it all done at a very high level,” he says. He wants to make sure that we know he doesn’t do it alone. “The secret sauce,” as he describes it, is a team of passionate individuals who are willing to put in the work to make his vision a success. They are counting on him and he is counting on them. He believes we are all connected in a giant and friendly universe, and it is up to us to bring our best selves as individuals to collectively create a better world. Even in times of uncertainty, BK is hopeful, passionate, and excited about the future of his Soulidify Productions. More importantly, he is confident that he and his team will have an impact on this country and the world.

BK Fulton: Faith In Action, Deeds Not Words (continued)

His media empire's mantra is "to create media with a message." Since its inception in 2017, Soulidify Productions has released five feature-length films. By the end of the year, Soulidify will have released a total of eight. Its latest release, *1 Angry Black Man*, came at a pivotal time when citizens took to the streets in mass to protest the murder of George Floyd. *1 Angry Black Man* has been used as a resource to understand America's uncomfortable past and the trauma we are still dealing with today. The film, released by Byron Allen's Freestyle Digital Media, is thought-provoking and essential viewing. Films like *1 Angry Black Man* capture BK's cinematic vision. He believes diverse art can heal. While Hollywood has been scrambling to produce more diverse films for a more diverse world, creating inclusive content has been the driving priority for BK's Soulidify Productions from

day one. Soulidify films have been on Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu, HBO, Apple TV and Starz, among others. Company distribution partners include Lionsgate, Cine-digm, Gravitas Ventures, Freestyle Digital Media, and Urban Home Entertainment.

BK's vision extends beyond creating more inclusive narratives in films and books. He also aims to teach the next generation of media makers how it's done. The Soulidify chief is working with former Disney executive Adam Leipzig to launch **MediaU** – the first online film school with transcripts and transferable credits from the University of California (UC) System. It's a big deal. MediaU will launch in 2021 and will allow students from all over the world to access working professionals as they pursue careers in media and film production. "Diversity and inclusion are sorely needed in the film industry. MediaU will reduce the time it takes to earn the requisite training and certifications needed to land a career in the industry," BK explains. "It will reduce the cost of quality film education and increase the number of people that can access the best media training available." Those who complete the MediaU programs will receive credits from the UC System. "It's exciting to be a part of the MediaU journey."

BK is also one of the lead investors in PreShow.co, which anticipates a launch during the fourth quarter of this year. BK says PreShow will allow people to go to the theaters and pay for their tickets with a virtual credit card after watching a few ads on the PreShow app. Basically, consumers get to watch movies for free, forever. "It is going to be a game changer," he says enthusiastically.

"My prayer for everyone is that they do their work and go forward guided by their hopes for humanity rather than their fears."

While audiences have appreciated the range of Soulidify's current films, the company has not yet created a film or cartoon specifically geared towards children. That is about to change. Soulidify Productions is working with



BK Fulton: Faith In Action, Deeds Not Words (continued)

the Oscar-winning animation studio Lion Forge Animation (creators of Hair Love) on a *Mr. Business*-inspired animation series. “We are working with Lion Forge Animation on a series we have been asked to pitch to several networks,” he says. “We will have at least one cartoon or children’s movie in production soon. “Children’s programming is important because when you reach children with positive programming early enough, you don’t have to work so hard later in their lives to get them to unlearn things that could hurt their future.” Before *Mr. Business* makes his animated debut, fans can purchase the current seven-book series online and soon will be able to purchase his eighth adventure – *Video Games*. “In the eighth book, I share lessons from a time in my life when I was thinking about running away. I decided against it,” he says laughingly. “Who wants to leave all that fun and love and food at home to go into the unknown? Not me! I stayed with my parents and my dog.”

Within the next year, BK hopes to have a film fund established for Soulidify. It will include funding for new work and funds for additional marketing of their films. “That will be the next level for us,” he says. “We have been able to successfully make quality programming with bankable talent over our first few years, culminating in a \$10 million first-look deal with GoMedia Productions out of Atlanta, GA. The foundation for growing Soulidify is in place. Beyond the day-to-day work to produce films, write books and manage the company’s other brands (a TV network – SoulVision.TV – and a magazine – SoulVision Magazine), taking on investors and going public is within the realm of possibility for us.”

Soulidify recently produced BK’s new book, *The Tale of the Tee*, with co-author Jonathan Blank. The book details a strong friendship that grew out of a series of e-mail communications between the two authors as they discussed the local and global protests that occurred after the murder of George Floyd. The two men try to make sense of where we go from here. The book demonstrates the power of truth and honest conversations to heal.



BK believes change is overdue. He believes we can build the “civil society that our children deserve” but it will require collaboration. One group alone cannot do it. He was pleased to see the NFL apologize and admit that they should have listened to Colin Kaepernick from the beginning of his civil protest. Similarly, he is encouraged by the NBA, LeBron James, and others who are leading and showing solidarity with Black Lives Matter. He shares that he did not expect either of these moments to happen in 2020. He is most proud of the professional athletes for using their standing and their stage for justice. “It means a lot when our leaders and heroes take a stand for people on the margins,” he says. “I think it elevates the meaning of humanity when those with a voice use their standing to advance decency and to help others find their own voice. Their example gives me hope and nourishes my faith.”

BK Fulton: Faith In Action, Deeds Not Words (continued)

BK says the next steps beyond protests that must happen are policy changes. “Tearing down statues is one thing, but you have to be ready to build up statutes (laws and policies) that change society,” he explains. “Our society is one that is governed by rules and laws. In today’s world you don’t have to terrorize with white sheets. If you know how to use spreadsheets, you can disenfranchise people through voter suppression tactics like gerrymandering, voter ID laws, and purging. This is why voting is so important. If people don’t vote, they effectively abdicate their rights. Very little good comes from civil abdication. Citizenship has always been about the right to vote and then actually doing it. A lot of good people risked everything so we could have and exercise the right to vote.”

BK continues to reflect on making America and the world better. “I believe you have to act on what you believe to be true,” he explains. “My prayer for everyone is that they do their work and go forward guided by their hopes for humanity rather than their fears.” He explains that when we see systematic injustice like violence against particular communities or inequitable investments in education for low-income areas, they are the consequences of people acting out of fears and prejudice. “They say . . . ‘don’t you come to my country,’ ‘I have to build this wall . . .,’ ‘these people are good people and those people are bad.’ This is not leading from a place of hope,” BK explains. “We need more hope. We need to vote from a place of our dreams not our fears.”

“We have to put less time and money into the instruments of hate and war and go all-in on love and peace.”

BK sometimes gets exhausted by issues surrounding race and what he says are “old problems” that generations have been fighting to resolve since the founding of this nation. “When we can get past these issues, we will be able to do more for the collective good.” He envisions a world that can collectively work to cure cancer, ALS, and

rid the world of ailments like Alzheimer’s and dementia. He wants to see a world that prioritizes a higher quality of life for everyone. “It means we have to invest in all of our children. We have to put less time and money into the instruments of hate and war and go all-in on love and peace.”

He’s optimistic that it can happen. “I think we can do it once we realize the value in every person,” he says. “It starts with yourself. It starts at home. We have to learn to feed the good in ourselves and work on our awesomeness. If you are amazed at life, you know that we owe our very best for future generations. Mediocrity has no place. When you embrace that philosophy, it is a lot easier to put your faith into action and do the work required to win.”



BK Fulton: Faith In Action, Deeds Not Words (continued)

BK is an advocate for integration of more diverse history in our schools. “Learning about inventors who looked like me changed my life for the better,” he says. “This is why I know that art can heal.” He names a few African-American men whose contributions are not widely known: Lewis Howard Latimer and Dr. George Franklin Grant. “Lewis Latimer improved on Thomas Edison’s light bulb by creating the carbon filament that provides the luminescence in the electric lights we use in our homes today.” George Grant is the man on the cover of *The Tale of the Tee*. He invented the golf tee in 1899. “When golfers all over the world drop that tee, most have no idea that an African-American man invented it,” BK says. “There are so many stories like these that get left out of history. They are inspiring and should become a standard part of what is taught to all children year-round, not just one month.”

When we don’t see people as contributors, BK explains, it is easier to rationalize their dehumanization. “It is ok to put those people off in a ghetto if you don’t value them,” he says. “It is ok to put those people off in the slums. It is ok to put those people in an underfunded barrio. It is ok to push those people onto a reservation if you think they don’t matter. They say, ‘These people don’t love our country.’ That is a lie. The more you expose yourself to the truth, the harder it is for discrimination to be tolerated.” BK hopes when people see his films or watch documentaries like *After Selma*, *The Uncomfortable Truth* and read books like *The Tale of the Tee*, *Begin Again*, *White Rage*, *Caste*, and *One Person, No Vote* they will internalize the lessons and find the courage to fight systemic racism.

BK finds pleasure in reading biographies, especially those of business leaders. “I’m a person who doesn’t

believe in reinventing the wheel, so I find inspiration and learn quite a bit from what others have done,” he says. “I read bios and then develop blueprints and plans for myself.” Even with these blueprints for living he isn’t afraid to try new ideas, and he encourages young people to do the same. “Don’t be afraid of failing,” he advises. “The win is in the work and you have to take small steps in the beginning and then bigger steps later.” He says “the path to your best life isn’t often easy but it’s worth it. Looking at the biographies is just the start.” BK advises young entrepreneurs to “get busy and be inspired by what others have done while adding their personal touch; then just keep going.”

Souldify Productions has many initiatives that will help in the fight for social justice and equality. Souldify is working with three nonprofits to deliver national programs for youth: Media Mentors, the Joan Trumpauer Mulholland Foundation, and Riverside Community Development Corporation. Media Mentors has created a new initiative called “TikTalks” that will invite celebrities like Pharrell Williams and Missy Elliot to meet with school children nationwide to inspire their creativity and expose them to the creative process. Riverside Community is the sponsor of an innovative news service that hopes to update people on what is happening in the social justice space real time. Finally, in projects with the Joan Trumpauer Mulholland Foundation, Souldify is working to produce and promote civil rights training and documentaries as well as a podcast with civil rights legends. “We want to highlight interracial cooperation and show how working together leads to a better society,” BK says. “At the end of the day, deeds not words will shape the world we deliver to our children and their children. We have to put our words into action.”

Follow BK Fulton on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#). To learn more about Souldify Productions, visit their website souldify.com and follow them on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#). To see recent articles on BK and Souldify Productions, click [here](#).

“At the end of the day, deeds not words will shape the world we deliver to our children and their children. We have to put our words into action.”

Alvin Thompson's Sustainable Fashion Design



Photo by Renee Comet Photography

“You can care about how you look and the health of the planet at the same time.”

As a 13-year-old living in Washington, D.C., Alvin Thompson knocked on the door of every designer and tailor he could find in the phone book. Impressed by his enthusiasm for their craft, Nunzio and Gina Salvi, Italian immigrants who had recently arrived in the U.S., granted him an apprenticeship at their design house, Salvi of Florence. “I was there every spare moment,” Alvin says. “That first year, I swept up pins, took out the trash, and watched everything they did. In the second year, I was allowed to sit at the cutting table and practice basic stitches. Within a few years, I was sketching my own designs and constructing patterns.” Even after he entered Howard University, he continued to work at the studio whenever he could.

Alvin Thompson's Sustainable Fashion Design (continued)

Among the most important lessons he learned from the couple, who had survived the deprivations of World War II, was to let nothing go to waste: cloth remnants were used to make children's clothing or shawls, and who would have thought cashmere and silk scraps were perfect for polishing silver.



Photo by Theo Photography

Alvin took that “waste not” ethos with him when he founded NewCouture in 2004, with the mission of creating exquisitely tailored, custom garments. He has long been a proponent of “slow fashion,” conscious of the environmental and ethical ramifications of his work. “The fashion industry is one of the largest polluters on the planet,” he explains. “It discards 92 million tons of

clothing a year, which represents 10% of the world's carbon footprint, and is the second-largest consumer of the world's water supply.”

He is careful to obtain his fabrics only from select companies. “Many of our garments are constructed from vintage or reclaimed materials and eco-friendly fibers,” he says. His latest project: a series of unique masks created with showroom-quality leftover fabrics. The Salvis would no doubt be proud.



Photo by Renee Comet Photography

NewCouture recently entered into a collaboration with Bigthink, an award-winning fashion tech company that allows the designer's clients to view the fashions virtual-

Alvin Thompson's Sustainable Fashion Design (continued)

ly, try them on their personal avatars, and decide upon customized alterations before ordering. With multiple in-person fittings no longer needed, Alvin cuts no fabric until the garment is ready to be made, saving his clients thousands of dollars and greatly reducing waste. “You should feel as good about how your clothing is produced as you feel about how you look in it,” he asserts.

To learn more about Alvin Thompson and NewCouture, visit newcouture.com.



Photo courtesy of Alvin Thompson

DeNita Turner: Creating the Best Image of You



Photos by Sarah & Dave Photography

| “You sell yourself with your image—use it.”

DeNita Turner is the founding President and CEO of Image Builders, Inc. She is also a life coach, motivational speaker, and author. In a world where one’s image is important in building a successful personal brand, DeNita Turner helps people to authentically broadcast their image to the public. “You sell yourself with your image—use it,” she says. After working in international sales for corporate America and collegiate and professional sports, DeNita ventured out on her own and created Image Builders.

In recent years, Image Builders has expanded from positive image building to working with individuals on their personal and professional development. She calls this “The Other Game,” which gives a nod to her previous work in sports. She has found much success in helping executives and rising leaders around the country to become the best leaders they can be. Now she is looking to expand her audience to the general public.

DeNita Turner: Creating the Best Image of You (continued)



Photo courtesy of Alvin Thompson

Her latest creation is a non-traditional book club that was created to “inspire and calm” us during times of uncertainty. The club hosts speakers that focus on one WORD as inspiration to share insights with the group. Last year, DeNita also released *Pass The Word* with Pastor John K. Jenkins Sr. to help people with their spiritual journey. Through the power of words, DeNita and Pastor Jenkins believe people can channel their greatness from within. “The book was used as a launching pad to create a non-threatening environment for conversations designed to help people manage the complexities of their day,” she explains.

DeNita plans to enhance her WORD platform by interviewing individuals who are willing to be transparent in discussing their achievements, disappointments, and their journey to spiritual enlightenment. “Each session will offer a conversation with a variety of guest speakers who share their story around one word that had a major impact on enriching their life and hopefully will inspire other individuals.” DeNita’s work is vital in changing the way we talk about achievement and success.

To learn more about DeNita Turner, visit denitaturner.com and follow her on [Facebook](#). You can also contact DeNita Turner at denitapasstheword@gmail.com.

ART

Kristen Peyton: Finding Beauty and Inspiration in the Ordinary

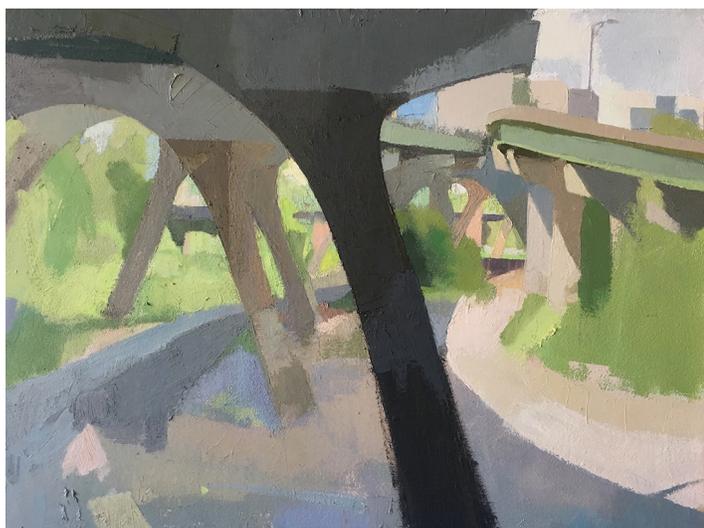


Photo by Michelle Krewinghaus

| “Inspiration can be found all around us.”

Kristen Peyton’s passion is painting. She is an artist and the co-director and curator of the Flippo Gallery at Randolph-Macon College. Her paintings are inspired by her surroundings. “At times, I hunt for beauty in the ordinary and seek to paint beautiful things,” she explains. “Other times and more often than not, I seek to make the ordinary beautiful.” Whether she is in her home, commuting, in her studio, or out and about within the community, she observes the lights, shadows, color, and geometry of what is around her. “Through my work, I offer an attentive lens of captured light, time, and space,” she explains. “I hope to invite my viewer to pause, enter the created space of my works, and experience something of the visual abundance of our world.”

Kristen Peyton: Finding Beauty and Inspiration in the Ordinary (continued)



Under 9th Street by Kristen Peyton



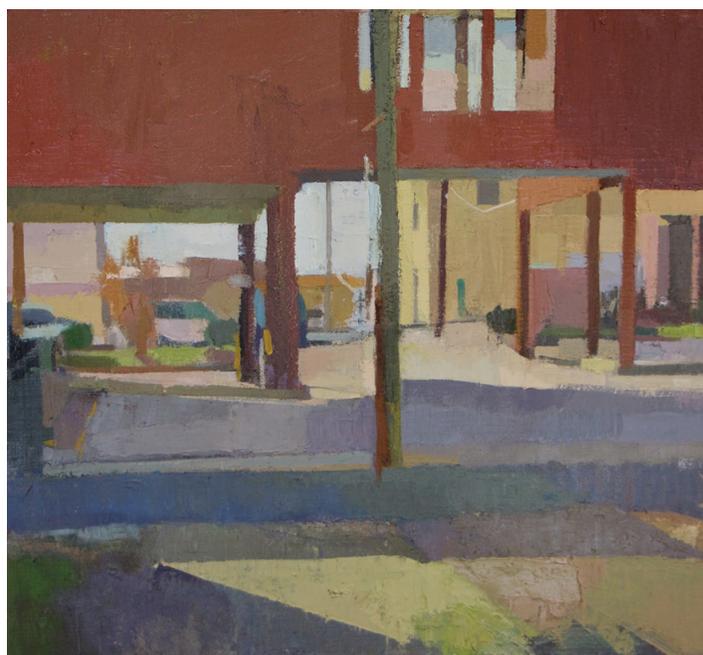
River House by Kristen Peyton

Her latest work is inspired by the space underneath the 9th Street Bridge in the Manchester neighborhood of Richmond, Virginia. She deems this place and those similar to be “pockets of space.” Kristen describes pockets of space as a “lyrical rhythm created by the interweaving of near and far space.” She sees this in the bridge’s steel supports and the surrounding landscape.

She says that the arched steel supports create a repeated pattern within the space that adds structure to the composition of her painting.

As a resident and citizen of the Richmond community, this space does not interest her solely as an artist. She is thankful for the people that pass by her while she is painting. She answers questions about her vision and finds joy in seeing and meeting others who become inspired by her work and the city that inspires it.

This month, Kristen will feature her recent work in a group show titled “Points of View” at Dwell Fine Art & Craft in Washington, Virginia. She is also working on a large show for August 2021 at the new Quirk Hotel in Charlottesville, Virginia. Additionally, Kristen is represented by Eric Schindler Gallery in the Churchill neighborhood of Richmond, Virginia, where her work can be viewed year-round. During the pandemic, Kristen has continued to stay positive by working on her art. “The silver lining of 2020 has been the gift of unexpected time,” she says. “With fewer commitments on the calendar, I have spent more time and focus behind my easel.”



Across E 14th Street by Kristen Peyton

Kristen Peyton: Finding Beauty and Inspiration in the Ordinary (continued)



Ninth Street Bridge from Manchester by Kristen Peyton

She is also happy to announce that she is expanding her family. “My husband, Daniel, and I are expecting our first child in January 2021. We are ecstatic,” she says. “While I am conscious of the fact that painting will take a back seat to mothering in the coming season, I am excited to see the ways in which motherhood will inform my vision.” She is excited to see what is to come and while she does not know what the future holds, she looks forward to being both a mother and artist.

To learn more about Kristen Peyton and view her work, visit kristenlied.com.

THEATER

Louise Keeton: Theatre as a Remedy for Isolation



Photo by Christiana Woodard

| “Theatre connects us deeply with our history and community.”

Louise Keeton is an Ashland, Virginia, native of many talents. As the founding artistic director of the Whistle Stop Theatre Company, Louise creates stories that educate, empower, and inspire people to create real-world change. “When we share stories, we are able to empathize all the more deeply with one another and when we empathize with one another, we can imagine a better world where everyone is included,” she says.

The Whistle Stop, also based in Ashland, performs literature, fairy tales, and moments in history from the perspective of what they may mean for audiences today. This includes *Cinderella: The Fairy Godmother’s Tale*, which had a run in New York City. Before the pandemic, the theatre was planning a one-day festival with three performances. After the pandemic, Keeton and her troupe had to rework their ideas.

Louise Keeton: Theatre as a Remedy for Isolation (continued)



Photo by Andrew Keeton

They decided to tell the story of Anne Frank. They thought about how people might feel during the pandemic and picked out six of her diary entries that perfectly captured feelings of isolation, frustration, and hope. Actress Kady Noelle Bunting, who plays Anne Frank, recorded Ann's diary entries through her webcam. The webcam was used as her diary. This was a way for the Whistle Stop Theatre Company to use digital media in a unique way that felt modern as well as authentic to the story. Since the summer, the Whistle Stop has produced *The Suffrage Flag* to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment, and has distributed *Story Time With Doc Jana* by [Dr. Tiffany Jana](#). "These digital efforts have connected us deeply with our history, modern literature, and our community," she says.



Louise Keeton stars in *Cinderella: The Fairy Godmother's Tale*, which had a run in New York City. Louise was the playwright for the production. Photo by Andrew Keeton.

Louise says that she and the company miss live theatre and are aware that their audience does too. Whistle Stop is collaborating with the Ashland Theatre and the Hanover Arts and Activities Center to put on a live production of *Grief, Guilt, and Paranoia: The Madness of Poe*. The production will take place on the lawn of the Hanover Arts and Activities Center on October 16, 23, and 30 at 5:00 PM.

“When we share stories, we are able to empathize all the more deeply with one another and when we empathize with one another, we can imagine a better world where everyone is included.”

The production will bring the works of Edgar Allan Poe to life. Louise adapted the production and will serve as the show's producer and director. "Even in a pandemic, I can't imagine a reality where I am not creating," she says. "Even though *Grief, Guilt, and Paranoia: The Madness of Poe* is my next theatrical production, it most certainly will not be my last."

To learn more about Louise Keeton, visit louisekeeton-creates.weebly.com and follow her on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). To learn more about Whistle Stop Theatre Company, visit thewhistlestoptheatrecompany.com and follow them on [Facebook](#).

CHEF'S CORNER

Chef Tye Hall



Photo by Max Williams

“A dish inspired by the love of family.”



Photo by Rebekah Pierce

Cook-up Rice

Course: Lunch or Dinner

Cuisine: American with African influence

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 25 minutes

Total Time: 35 minutes

Serving Size: 4-6

Ingredients

- 1 sausage ring (beef or turkey, chopped)
- 1 medium onion (chopped)
- 1 pepper (any color, chopped)
- 1 zucchini (chopped)
- 1 squash (chopped)
- 2 cups parboiled rice (Uncle Ben's, preferred)
- 2 cups water
- 1 cup chicken broth or vegetable broth (optional if want to make vegan)
- Adobo seasoning
- Salt (kosher, preferred)
- Pepper
- 2 garlic cloves (minced)
- 1 can coconut milk

Preparation

1. Pour a quarter cup of olive oil (extra virgin) or avocado oil into a hot pan.
2. Sauté the chopped veggies into the oil until translucent for about 2-3 minutes. Pour in the rice and stir, to absorb the oil, until the rice is coated.
3. Add the meat and stir. Then add the broth (stock) and coconut milk.
4. Stir one more time to incorporate everything. Bring to a boil.
5. Reduce to a simmer, cover, and have a drink.

Chef Tye and her husband, Reggie, are the co-owners of T&R Catering LLC. Chef Tye and Reggie serve up delicious comfort foods designed to take you on a trip around the world. Chef Tye and this recipe appear in the premiere episode of season 2 of “Beyond the Plate RVA,” an RLP Productions’ production. Visit rlpproductions.com to learn more about the show.

COMMUNITY

Bethea Family Foundation: NFL Vet Antoine Bethea Gives Back



Photos by David Helwani

| “We provide future leaders with the essential tools they need to succeed.”

Each month we highlight a community program that aligns with the values of SoulVision Magazine. We believe engaging with one’s community is critical to fostering positive change in the world.

NFL veteran Antoine Bethea gives back to the community that made him a success. As a Newport News, Virginia, native, Antoine was heartbroken that many families within the community were on the verge of losing their homes. So, he took action. His foundation, Bethea Family Foundation, launched Safe Cover, an initiative that recently hosted a 21-day rent relief fundraiser for families in Newport News, Hampton, and Norfolk, Virginia. He set the goal at \$100,000 and donated \$10,000 to get the ball rolling. The fundraiser has now raised \$57,546.

Bethea Family Foundation: NFL Vet Antoine Bethea Gives Back (continued)



Antoine knows how it feels to be underestimated. No Division I or II schools offered him a football scholarship due to his height and weight. He was 5 feet 11 and weighed 170 pounds. He enrolled at Howard University. Without a football scholarship, he was a walk-on and played as a safety. Through grit and a determined spirit, Antoine went on to play for the Indianapolis Colts, winning a Super Bowl. He played for the San Francisco 49ers and Arizona Cardinals where he earned three Pro Bowl selections.

In 2018, the Arizona Cardinals named Antoine the Walter Payton Man of the Year in recognition of his passion for philanthropy and community service. Antoine believes it is his job to use his platform to uplift the community that made him the success he is today. “I’m continuing to grow, lead and inspire the folks around me one day at a time,” he says.

To find out how you can support the Bethea Family Foundation’s relief fund, visit mysafecover.com. To learn more about the Bethea Family Foundation, follow them on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).

Antoine and his wife, Samantha Bethea, started the foundation to inspire, enrich, and expose youth to opportunities that they could only imagine. “My family foundation focuses on engaging with the community, school, and other organizations to help students who are underserved obtain higher learning,” he explains. The Bethea Family Foundation also has a scholarship fund. The scholarship fund is need-based. The scholarship allows two Newport News Public School District high school seniors the opportunity to fulfill their higher education dreams.

LEGENDS

Dr. Iva E. Carruthers



Photo by Tony Carpenter

Dr. Iva E. Carruthers is a social justice advocate and leader who has spoken and written about social issues that affect the Black diaspora. She is currently the general secretary of the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference (SDPC), an “interdenominational organization within the African- American faith tradition focused on justice and equity issues.” In 1967, she graduated from the University of Illinois at Chicago with a degree in sociology and French and went on to Northwestern University where she earned her M.A. in counselor education and Ph.D. in sociology (1972). Her studies prepared her to take on the educational and social advocacy work she would become known for throughout her career. Before retiring to focus on her faith work full-time, Dr. Carruthers founded and ran Nexus Unlimited, one of the largest women-owned ed-tech consulting firms in the nation.

As an educator, Dr. Carruthers is held in high esteem. Dr. Carruthers is professor emeritus and the former Chairperson of the Sociology Department at Northeastern Illinois University. In 1999, the University awarded Dr. Carruthers their Life Achievement Award. She also has spoken at the U.N. Civil Society Forums and other private and public institutions about racial and social justice.

Dr. Iva E. Carruthers (continued)

As a writer, she has penned and edited many articles and books that outline her vision for a greater society. Some of her more recent advocacy work includes fighting for reparations. She is a member of the National African American Reparations Commission (NAARC) and has called on the faith community to contribute and support the organization's 10-point plan. The organization's 10-point plan includes social and economic development, affordable housing, and preserving black sacred sites and monuments. As a champion for what is just, Dr. Iva E. Carruthers has created a master plan for future generations that values equality and justice for all.

“Today’s journey and all whom you meet mark the footprints of how you will be remembered as an ancestor. The blessing of legacy and legend is the Divine space of elder grace – the responsibility and opportunity to pass on wisdom and new possibilities to the next generation.”
– **Dr. Iva E. Carruthers**