

# UNSUNG PILLARS OF THE WESTSIDE:

## A Timeline of Legacy

### Explore the Inspiring Legacy of the Historic Westside

This timeline serves as a resource for discovering the rich and uplifting history of the Historic Westside surrounding the Pearson Community Center. Each photograph is arranged in chronological order and corresponds to the 21 pillars featured within the community center.

The pillar artwork was created by Mike Norice, while the historical timeline was developed by Claytee White. This poster was designed by Laura Silva of MYS Firm, with video documentation of the mural process and research by Zachary Fried of Arecibo Films.

To delve deeper into the significance of each pillar or to learn more about this community, please scan the QR code to the right or visit [bit.ly/3GvL4aR](https://bit.ly/3GvL4aR).



**DOCUMENTARY**  
**COMING SOON**  
[bit.ly/3GvL4aR](https://bit.ly/3GvL4aR)



**The First Black Landowner in Clark County**

In 1870, John Howell, a freed Black man and one of the first landowners in the Las Vegas Valley, began his significant contributions to the area's agricultural and economic development during a transformative period of westward expansion.

In 1870, John Howell, a freed Black man and early landowner in the Las Vegas Valley, significantly contributed to the area's agricultural and economic development during westward expansion.



**The First Lady of Las Vegas Helen Stewart (1882-1903); JT McWilliams**

In 1904, JT McWilliams claimed 80 acres of unclaimed land west of the Las Vegas Ranch, leading to the establishment of a townsite after Helen J. Stewart sold 1,834 acres to William Clark for \$55,000.



**Block 17: A Black Space**

In 1905, Las Vegas was established under the San Pedro, Los Angeles, Salt Lake City Railroad, designating Block 17 for Black residents, where Mary Nettles emerged as a key community leader and co-founder of the local NAACP branch.



**Place of Worship**

In 1917, the Black community in Las Vegas established Zion Methodist Church on Block 17, marking the beginning of a significant movement to create a robust Black religious community.



**The school that would become the hub of Black life**

In 1923, Helen J. Stewart donated land for the Historic Westside School, which initially educated a diverse student body and became a significant community hub after ceasing operations as a school in 1967.



**First Black Doctor and Dentist**

In 1954, Dr. Charles I. West relocated to Clark County, Nevada, as part of the Great Migration after passing the state examination for physicians.

In 1960, James B. McMillan, an influential civil rights advocate, led the NAACP in achieving the integration of public accommodations in Clark County and the City of Las Vegas.



**The Black Architect - Paul R. Williams**

In 1954, architect Paul R. Williams completed Berkley Square, the first Black housing development in Las Vegas, marking a significant milestone in providing homeownership opportunities for African Americans in the area.



**The Great Migration**

In 1941, as the U.S. entered World War II, the establishment of Basic Magnesium Inc. in Henderson, Nevada, led to significant employment opportunities for Black migrants, contributing to the growth of the Westside community and the housing development of Carver Park.



**The Boldest and the Baddest**

In 1928, the Las Vegas branch of the NAACP was established by Mary Nettles, Zimmie Turner, Arthur McCants, Bill Jones, and Clarence Ray to combat discriminatory hiring practices at the Hoover Dam and advocate for just treatment of black workers.



**First Black to pass the Nevada State Bar Exam**

Charles Kellar migrated to Las Vegas in 1959 to take the Nevada State Bar exam, becoming a pivotal figure in civil rights efforts in the state.



**First Black Casino Executive**

In 1946, James "Jimmy" Arthur Gay III migrated to Clark County, Nevada, with plans to establish the first funeral home for Blacks, later becoming a prominent figure in the gaming industry and a civil rights advocate.



**Fordyce and Tallulah**

By 1942, the Black population in Las Vegas surged from 178 to 4,000, driven by job opportunities during World War II, particularly at Basic Magnesium Incorporated.



**The Entertainment Capital of the World**

In 1941, Pearl Bailey performed at the El Cortez downtown, marking the beginning of a vibrant entertainment scene in Las Vegas that attracted numerous Black entertainers.



**The Moulin Rouge with your emcee.... Mr. Bob Bailey**

Bob and Anna Bailey received the Distinguished Nevadan Award in 2013, recognizing their significant contributions to the arts and civil rights in Nevada.



**Union Power**

Hattie Canty, president of Culinary Workers Union Local 226 since 1990, significantly impacted Las Vegas's hospitality industry by leading labor movements and establishing the Culinary Training Center.



**Operation Life in the Westside**

In the 1960s, Ruby Duncan and other women in Las Vegas formed the Clark County Welfare Rights group, advocating for welfare reforms that led to food stamps, the WIC program, and improved community resources for families in need.



**Decade of Change: The 1950s**

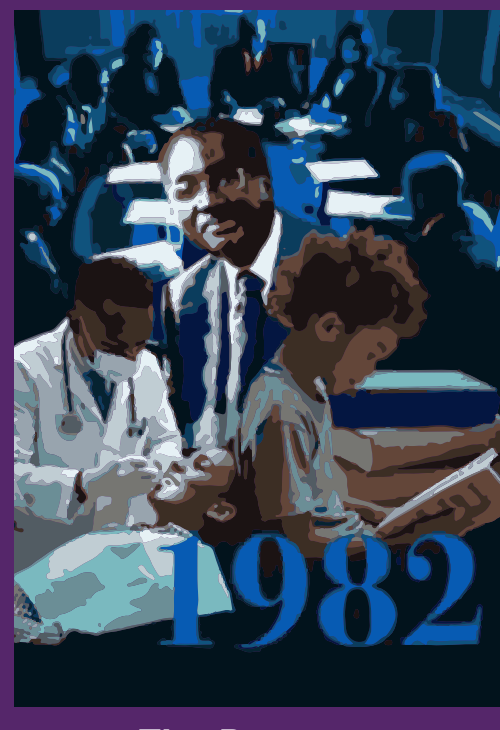
In the 1950s, the Westside saw significant growth with new housing, the Nevada Test Site, the first integrated hotel casino, and the establishment of the Moulin Rouge in 1955.



**Building the Westside for Work and Play**

In 1968, the US Fair Housing Act was passed, allowing Black families to fully participate in FHA financing and paving the way for local builders like George Simmons and Louis Richardson to create housing developments and public spaces in Las Vegas.

By 1978, Louis Richardson established Richardson Construction, leading to numerous successful projects including public libraries, community centers, and the Moulin Rouge, while continuing the legacy of Black builders in Clark County.



**The Pearson**

Dr. William Pearson, who established a dental practice in Las Vegas in 1963, became the first Black City Council member in 1982 and was honored as a Distinguished Nevadan in 2004.



**Left of Center**

In Clark County, the evolution of Black art is marked by the founding of the Left of Center Art Gallery by Vicki Richardson and her partners, fostering a collaborative environment for artists of diverse backgrounds through classes, exhibitions, and workshops.



**Then and Now**

Since the 1890s, the Latino community has significantly shaped Las Vegas' Historic Westside, which now has about 40% Latino and 38% Black residents and is poised for a bright future despite past challenges.



togetherforbetter



Dr. William U. Pearson Community Center