

Changing the Smithsonian doesn't erase slavery and the racial wealth gap

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I want to revisit part of the “Sincerely, Michelle” series because understanding our history with slavery is crucial to addressing economic disparities that still exist for Black Americans.

The institution that stripped Leah of basic human rights also seeded the discriminatory policies that systematically denied Blacks opportunity.

After the Civil War, many newly freed people purchased land, only to see it stolen. Prosperous Black towns were looted and burned. Blacks were denied the right to vote and were prohibited from living in certain neighborhoods.

The denial of these rights isn't just part of America's past. Look at how voting rights are being eroded. The Supreme Court is likely to overturn a key part of the Voting Rights Act as it prepares to decide on a case where Black voters and civil rights groups sued Louisiana, claiming that a new congressional map reduced their voting influence.

Blacks still face discrimination in the workplace and are prevented from earning fair and equal pay.

Slavery, segregation and voter suppression - which often depended on violence or the threat

of violence - provided major advantages to White Americans. These included free and cheap Black labor, less employment competition, and the election of politicians who created laws that denied equal opportunities to Black people.

Slavery was not that long ago, if you think in terms of generations instead of years. My lineage demonstrates that point.

Leah's son was Byrd Drumwright, who was 18 when slavery ended. Byrd was my grandmother's grandfather. Even our family's last name wasn't ours; it belonged to the man who bought and sold my family.

Many people want to believe America is post-racial and that companies treat all customers equally regardless of race. They do not.

I've been covering lending-bias settlements in the home and auto industry since I started my journalism career. And I'm still writing about predatory and discriminatory lending practices today, three decades later.

Meanwhile, the impact of slavery is quantifiable and enduring: As of 2022, White families had six times the average wealth of Black families, according to a report

on wealth inequality in America by the Urban Institute.

“Racial wealth inequities have persisted for generations, reflecting the long-standing effects of racist policies, not individual intentions or deficits,” the report points out. “In a nation that professes that those who work hard and play by the rules should be rewarded with social and economic upward mobility, these persistent disparities are a stark reminder that, as a society, we have not achieved this goal.”

The legacies of slavery and Jim Crow, as well as the gaps left by the New Deal, are some of the most significant contributors to inequality in America, according to a 2019 report by the Center for American Progress.

“Together, these policy decisions concentrated workers of color in chronically undervalued occupations, institutionalized racial disparities in wages and benefits, and perpetuated employment discrimination,” the report said. “As a result, stark and persistent racial disparities exist in jobs, wages, benefits, and almost every other measure of economic well-being.”

Yes, there's been progress, and there is much to celebrate.

But pushing an agenda that slavery wasn't so bad isn't patriotism; it's a deliberate act of historical amnesia. Efforts to whitewash it are an incomplete portrayal of a horrific system.

Michelle Singletary, The Washington Post © 2025

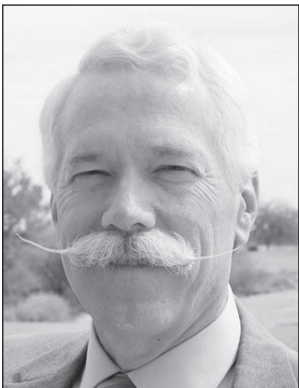
Contemplating Life

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We should try to rise above our petty grievances and do something positive for ourselves and others. Many unhappy people have been transformed into happy souls when they abandoned their negative thinking and focused on doing things that would help others find happiness. The people who find the greatest happiness for themselves are usually those selfless individuals who have a genuine desire to bring happiness to others and who give little thought to their own happiness. In the words of Sir James Barrie, “Those who bring sunshine to the lives of others, cannot keep it from themselves.”

Think about it.

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OBITUARIES



Dr. Lawrence Coss

Dr. Lawrence David Coss, 72, passed away Friday, Aug. 8, 2025, at his home in Snowflake. His unending work ethic and genuine compassion,

along with his distinct moustache made him one of the most revered members of his community.

Lawrence was born on April 25, 1953, in Battle Creek, Mich., to Carlton and Elinor Coss.

He attended medical school at the University of Arizona College of Medicine Center in Tucson. He completed his residency and internship at the University of Missouri, Columbia School of Medicine in Columbia, Mo. Lawrence and his wife Sherry moved to Snowflake in late 1982, where Lawrence has served as a family

physician for the past 43 years.

Lawrence is survived by his incredible wife, Sherry; his brother, Carlton; his sister, Constance and his stepmother, Janet. Their five children, Casey, Clifford, Scott, Lawrence (Andrew), and Caitlin as well as nine grandchildren.

There will be a celebration of life for Dr. Lawrence Coss from 1 to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 27, at the Main Street Chapel, located at 48 Main St. in Snowflake.

Owens Livingston Mortuary of Snowflake handled the arrangements.

The center served seniors for years and now it needs the community's help

By Shawn White

The Winslow Senior Center has become a lifeline for many in the community, offering not only meals but also friendship, resources and support for older residents. Under the leadership of Marshall and Trudy Losey, who have been running the center without compensation since budget cuts in 2017, the center continues to fill a crucial gap in services for seniors. Marshall, who also works full time as director of cardiopulmonary at Little Colorado Medical Center, said, “There’s just nowhere else for seniors here.”

The center serves hot meals five days a week, both in-house and through its Meals on Wheels program. For many who receive delivered meals, this daily interaction is as important as the food itself. “Because we might be the only contact they get all day,” Marshall explained. Volunteers not only drop off food but also perform welfare checks, which can be vital for those who may otherwise go unnoticed. “When people’s vision and hearing start to go their world gets so much smaller,” Marshall said. “Senior isolation is a huge issue.”

Beyond meals, the center provides opportunities for socialization and enrichment. There are monthly birthday celebrations, crafting classes, free bingo on Tuesday afternoons, as well as puzzles and books available throughout the week. Meals are provided at no cost. The center suggests a contribution of \$5 for in-house dining and \$6 for delivery, though no one is turned away for lack of funds.

The center also offers transportation services. Local rides cost \$3, while trips to Holbrook are \$30 round-trip and Flagstaff \$60 round-trip, though Marshall noted those prices may soon increase due to underfunding. This service is crucial for getting seniors to doctor appointments that they would otherwise not be able to attend and often is the difference in getting them the care they need.

Additional resources include vaccination clinics hosted by Safeway, tax assistance for seniors and food distribution in partnership with St. Mary’s. Seniors over 65 can apply for food boxes based on financial need, though demand is so high that there is currently a waiting list. Emergency boxes with shelf-stable items help bridge the gap for those in dire need but the center’s shelves have been emptier than they’d like lately. In July alone, the center distributed nearly 15,000 pounds of donated food from Walmart, Safeway and Maverik and that’s not counting the food from St. Mary’s of that is privately donated.

While the services provided are extensive, they come with challenges. According to Marshall, energy bills are about \$550 a month and insurance costs, which exceed \$1,000 a month, weigh heavily on the center’s limited budget. “We don’t want to close the doors but it’s a constant struggle,” he said. The center relies heavily on donations of both money and food, and the Loseys emphasize the importance of giving shelf-stable items like canned or dry goods, provided they are not expired.

Donations to the Winslow Senior Center are eligible for Arizona tax credits and do not conflict with school tax credit contributions, meaning residents can maximize their giving by supporting both. The center is urging more community support, whether through volunteering, donating food, or contributing financially. “We need more local buy-in,” Marshall said, stressing that these contributions directly keep services alive for Winslow’s seniors who are often overlooked.

For updates on events, resources, or ways to help, residents can visit the Winslow Council on Aging Facebook page, the City of Winslow’s website or visit the center at 212 E. Second St.

Council approves city manager's contract

By Linda Kor

The Holbrook City Council has approved a contract with City Manager Randy Sullivan, who has been employed for more than 15 years as finance director and has several times during his tenure served as interim city manager for the City of Holbrook.

The contract went into effect Aug. 13, and is effective through Aug. 13, 2027, and includes an annual base salary of \$148,000.

According to the contract, the agreement may be terminated by the City with or without cause at any time, subject only to the limitations in Section 3.08 of the City Charter. If the City Council terminates the agreement with cause, no severance pay will be paid to Sullivan unless otherwise approved by the City Council in its sole discretion. Sullivan may terminate the agreement at any time, with or without cause, upon not less than 30 days written notice to the City Council.

In the event the City Council terminates the agreement without cause, Sullivan shall be entitled to severance pay in a lump sum amount equal to six months of his annual base salary. Sullivan shall also be entitled to a pay-out of accrued and unused vacation and sick leave as of the effective date of termination.

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