

PALM BEACH COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Meeting Date: August 31, 2021

Department: Administration

I. EXECUTIVE BRIEF

Title: PBC Community Remembrance Project

Summary: The Board directed Administration in July 2019 to explore options for obtaining the Palm Beach County lynching monument from the Alabama-based Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) and place at a permanent location in Palm Beach County. EJI operates the National Memorial for Peace and Justice and the Legacy Museum in Montgomery, Alabama. The National Memorial for Peace and Justice is the nation’s first comprehensive memorial dedicated to thousands of African American victims of racial terror lynchings between 1877 and 1950. In the Memorial, among the exhibits displayed, is one for Palm Beach County listing the names of Henry Simmons and Samuel Nelson who were lynched in Palm Beach County.

Henry Simmons was taken from a boarding house in West Palm Beach where he lived with his wife in the early morning hours of June 7, 1923. He was called out by a group of men and taken away in a car. His body was found riddled with bullets and hanging from a tree near where a police officer was shot and killed a few days earlier while questioning individuals in possession of turtle meat and eggs. Henry Simmons was not considered a suspect in the shooting of the police officer.

Samuel Nelson was in the jail at Delray on September 26, 1926 on a charge of attempted criminal assault of a woman in Miami. The next morning the steel door of the jail was found battered open and his body was found riddled with bullets next to a canal west of Delray.

Administration submitted a Proposal of Interest to EJI in 2019. The EJI framework requires the formulation of a Community Remembrance Project to include a community coalition, an agreement between the coalition and EJI, “truth-telling” education, meaningful dialogue and community engagement in reckoning with the history of racial terrorism and lynching. The process also includes Soil collection, essay contests and historical marker placement in collaboration with EJI.

In early 2020, Administration identified a core working group of diverse community leaders who had contacted EJI to express an interest in this project. Several were already engaged in racial justice work in our community who had visited EJI and the Memorial in Montgomery and saw the Palm Beach County monument. These core members formed the Palm Beach County Community Remembrance Project Coalition. This group has been meeting monthly since June 2020. The required documentation to move forward including an updated Expression of Interest, Pledge and Agreement were submitted to EJI.

EJI has assigned two liaisons to work with Palm Beach County on this project. The PBC Coalition has formed several sub-committees to include additional interested community members. The Education and Community Engagement Sub-committee is currently developing an extensive education and awareness program to include book readings, film screenings, community discussions and essay contests.

Countywide (DN)

Attachment:

Recommended by: 
Assistant County Administrator

Date 8/12/2021

Approved by: 
County Administrator

Date 8/20/21

II. FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

A. Five Year Summary of Fiscal Impact:

Fiscal Years	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Capital Expenditures	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>
Operating Costs	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>
External Revenues	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>
Program Income (County)	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>
In-Kind Match (County)	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>
NET FISCAL IMPACT	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>
# ADDITIONAL FTE POSITIONS (Cumulative)	<u>* 0</u>				

Is Item Included in Current Budget: Yes No
 Does this item include use of federal funds? Yes No

Budget Account No.: Fund Department Unit
 Object Program N/A

B. Recommended Sources of Funds/Summary of Fiscal Impact:

* There is no fiscal impact associated with this Board item.

C. Departmental Fiscal Review: _____

III. REVIEW COMMENTS

A. OFMB Fiscal And/Or Contract Development and Control Comments:

Supervisor 8/12/21
 OFMB 8/12/21 8/12/21

Contract Development & Control
8-13-21

B. Legal Sufficiency:

Assistant County Attorney 8/16/21

C. Other Departmental Review:

REVISED 09/2003
 ADM FORM 01

(THIS SUMMARY IS NOT TO BE USED AS A BASIS FOR PAYMENT.)



PALM BEACH COUNTY COMMUNITY REMEMBRANCE PROJECT

ADMINISTRATION

Board of County Commissioners Workshop
August 31, 2021

INTRODUCTIONS

DORRITT MILLER, ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS DIRECTIVE

July 2019 BCC Direction:

- Explore options for claiming Palm Beach County monument created by Alabama-based Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) and creating a permanent location in Palm Beach County.
- The first step in the process is the formation of a Coalition; a core working group of diverse community leaders, who in our case, the majority had contacted EJI to express an interest in this project. Several of these individuals had visited the EJI memorial in Alabama and saw the Palm Beach County monument.

INTRODUCTIONS

PBC COMMUNITY REMEMBRANCE PROJECT



Dorritt Miller	Palm Beach County
Bryan Boysaw	Boysaw Law – Chair of PBC Community Remembrance Project Coalition
Barbara Cheives	Converge & Associates Consulting – Co-Vice Chair of PBC Community Remembrance Project Coalition
Josephine Gon	Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County – Co-Vice Chair of PBC Community Remembrance Project Coalition
Edith Bush	MLK Coordinating Committee Inc.
Charlene Farrington	S.D. Spady Cultural Heritage Museum Inc.
Tammy Fields	Palm Beach County Youth Services
Charles Hagy, Jr.	Director of Middle Schools at The Benjamin School
Richard Perry	Entrepreneur
Mark Schneider	ACLU Palm Beach County
Jennifer Cirillo	Palm Beach County Parks and Recreation

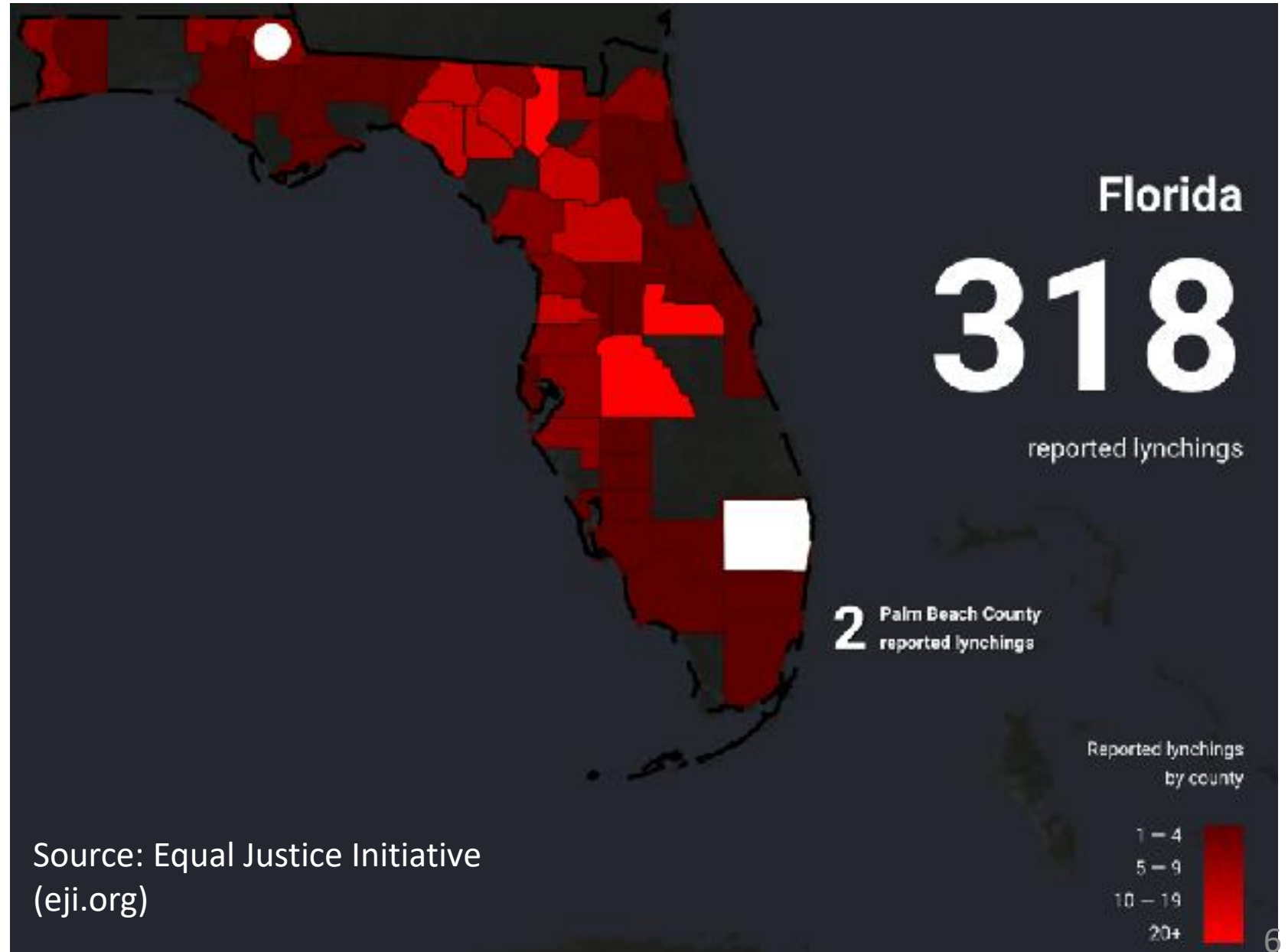
*** Father Burl Salmon** *Bethesda By The Sea, served on the Coalition for first year but has since relocated to Virginia*

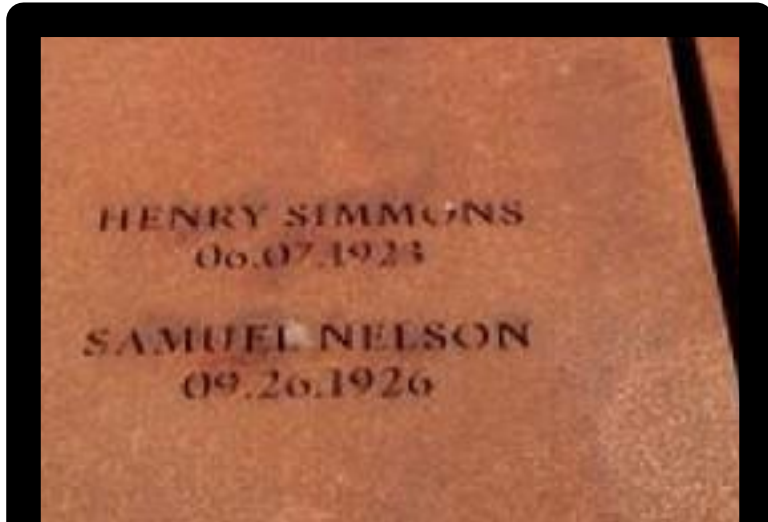


THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE, MONTGOMERY, AL

“Over 800 steel monuments memorialize 4,400 known racial terror lynchings in America between 1877-1950”

FLORIDA'S & PALM BEACH COUNTY'S HISTORY OF RACIAL TERROR LYNCHINGS





PBC'S MEMORIAL FOR HENRY SIMMONS & SAMUEL NELSON

HENRY SIMMONS

- **LYNCHED** on June 7, 1923 between 3am-6am.
- 39 years old
- Married
- Dragged from home located in the Northwest Neighborhood by a mob of white men.
- Mob was hunting black males.
- A white police officer claimed he was attacked and shot by 3 Black men.
- Mr. Simmons body found several hours later riddled with bullets and hanging from a tree.
- He was the mob's 2nd black victim that morning (the 1st survived).
- Police stated these men were not suspects.



SAMUEL NELSON

- **LYNCHED** on September 26, 1926
- Jailed in Delray and charged with attempted criminal assault of a white woman in Miami.
- Next morning the steel door of his cell was battered open.
- Mr. Nelson's body found riddled with bullets next to a canal west of Delray.
- Palm Beach Post stated "**Negro is taken from the Delray Jail and Lynched.**"
- The article includes a statement from the Miami police, "**they did not recall an assault case of this kind nor had they been informed of the lynching.**"



EJI's THREE PRIMARY CONDITIONS FOR THE MONUMENT

- Education and Community Engagement
- Soil Collection
- Historic Markers



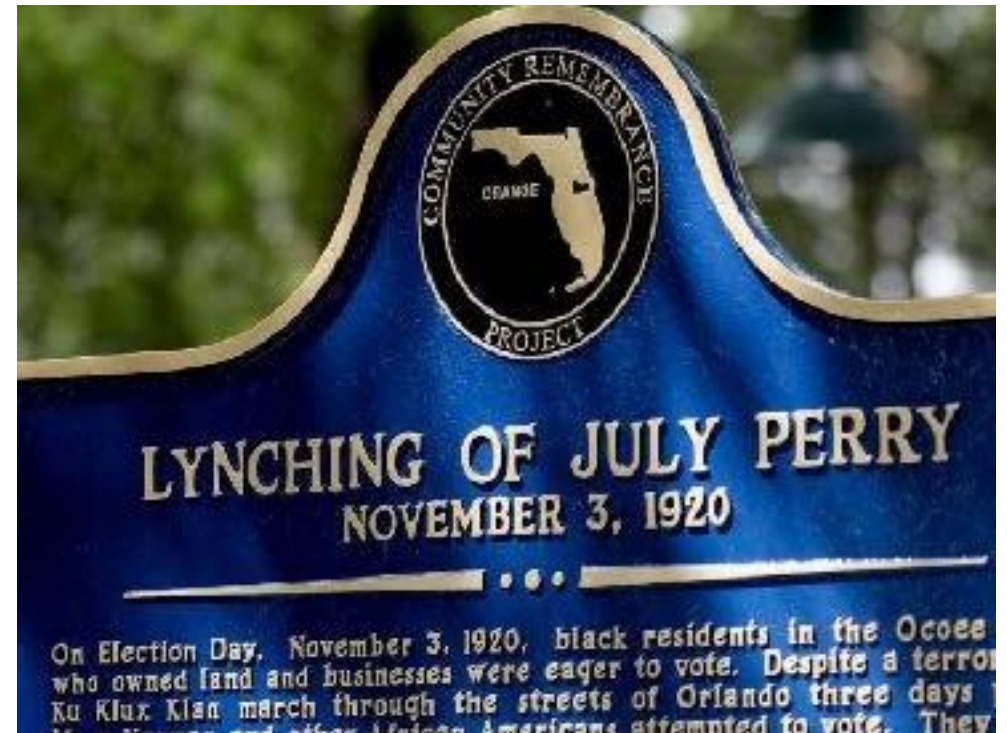
CONDITION: SOIL COLLECTION PROJECT

Purpose: PBC's opportunity to demonstrate it has a strong diverse community interest which is supportive of memorializing its history of racial terror lynchings.



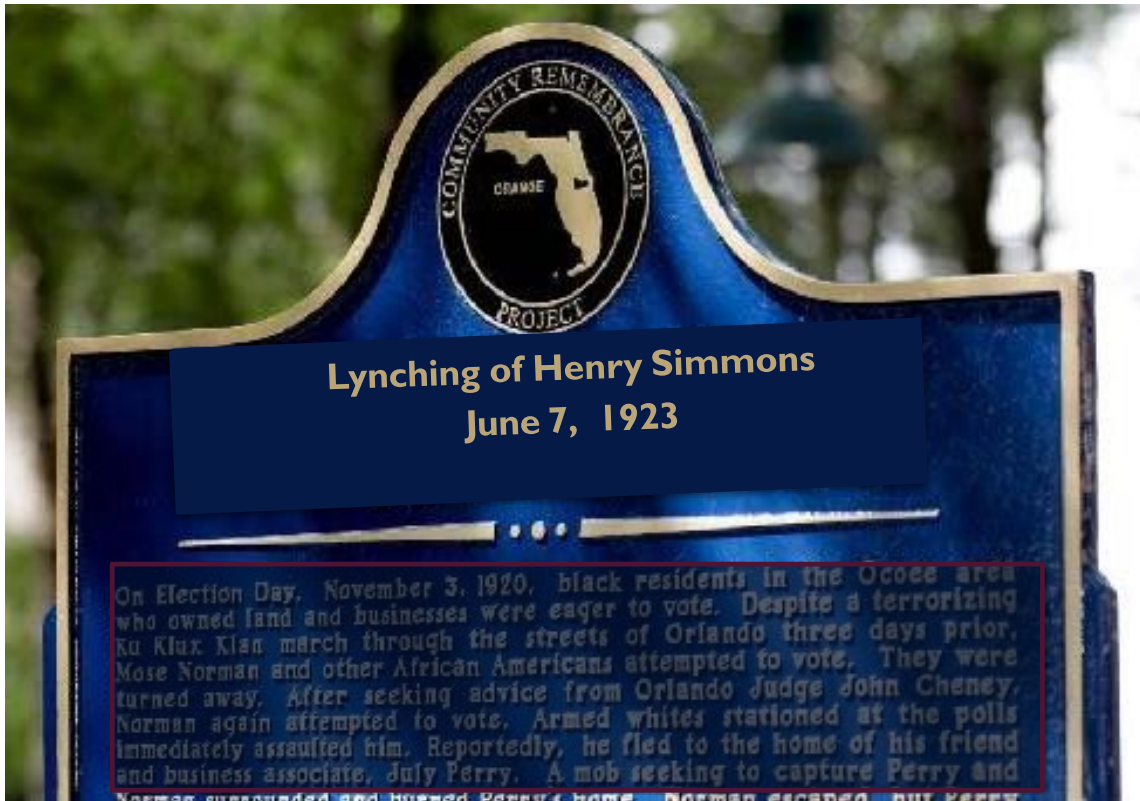
STATUS: SOIL COLLECTION PROJECT MEMORIAL SERVICE (TBA)

Coalition is finalizing its research tracing the hours of Mr. Simmon's and Mr. Nelson's racial terror lynchings.



CONDITION: HISTORICAL MARKER PROJECT

Purpose: Through the historical marker project, people are motivated to confront historical trauma that is both universal and also very specific to the experiences of African American communities.



STATUS: HISTORICAL MARKER PROJECT MEMORIAL SERVICE (TBA)

The historical markers will tell the story of the racial terrorism lynchings of Henry Simmons and Samuel Nelson and will follow the soil collection project working with EJI.

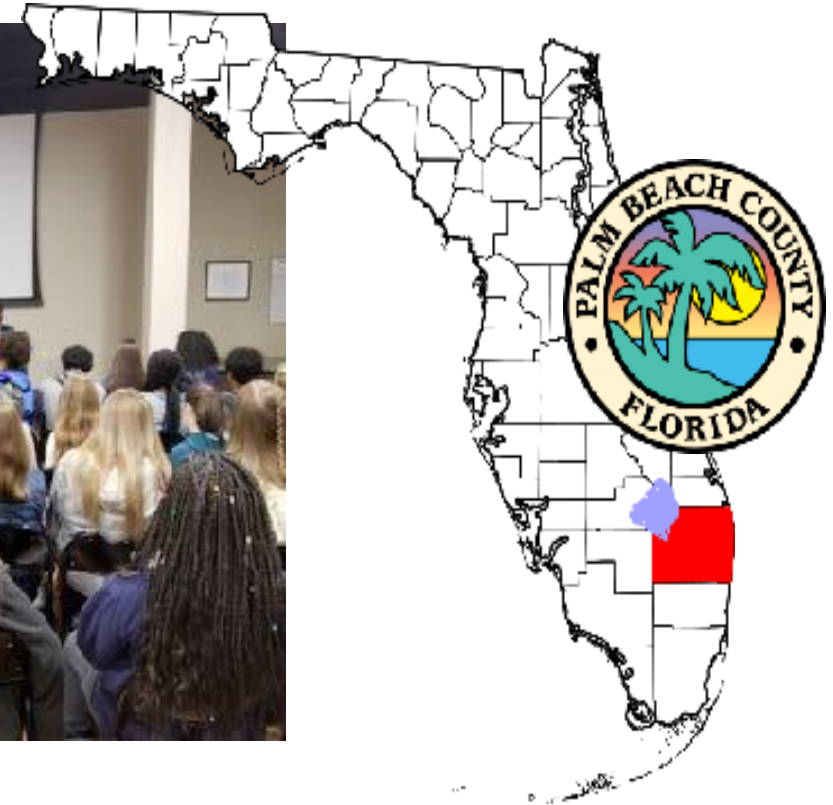


CONDITION: EDUCATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

Purpose: Community Engagement through education and art

STATUS: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION PROJECT

- Planned Activities
 - Education and History Lectures
 - Community Conversations
 - Book Readings and Film Screenings
 - Essay and Art Contests
 - And much more...
- Partners including PBC Library, Municipalities, Schools and Non-Profit Organizations will play a critical role



OUR PROGRESS

- **2019: BCC Directive issued**
- **2019: PBC submitted Expression of Interest to the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)**
- **2020: PBC Community Remembrance Project Coalition formed (June)**
- **2021: Coalition's Expression of Interest accepted by EJI (July)**
- **2021: Coalition's Website URL (PbcRemembrance.org) in development stage**
- **2021: Education and Community Engagement Plan under review by EJI (August)**

NEXT STEPS

- Agreement and Education/Community Engagement Plan approval by EJI
- Continue outreach and collaboration with Family and interested PBC stakeholders
- Solidify fiscal sponsor for activities
- Launch essay contest for young people in Spring 2022
- 100 year anniversary recognition of Henry Simmons in June 2023
- Culminating aim remains to bring the memorial monument to Palm Beach County

" There can be no reconciliation and healing without remembering the past."

Member of Community Remembrance Project Coalition in Chattanooga, Tennessee

LOGO AND ARTIST INTERPRETATION

The logo depicts four individuals in various shades representing diversity.

They merge in the center to represent a common source and the reinforcement of unity and love while raising their hands in hopefulness and spreading awareness.

Together they form a symbol reminiscent of a flower, honoring the past but also communicating hope, healing, and beauty.

~ Kimberly Krieger
artist and Logo designer





PBC COMMUNITY REMEMBRANCE PROJECT

QUESTIONS