

**EAGLE INDEPENDENT**

# Chelmsford resident's civil rights series focus of forum

**Margaret Smith** Wicked Local

Published 4:00 p.m. ET Feb. 26, 2021 | Updated 1:33 p.m. ET Mar. 1, 2021

CHELMSFORD -- A virtual program will focus on a four-part civil rights series, created by Chelmsford resident Jesse Heines, with Chelmsford TeleMedia.

A panel discussion on "Civil Rights: A History," takes place March 9 via Zoom. It will be broadcast on Chelmsford TeleMedia and made available on YouTube.

The series follows a timeline from the trans-Atlantic slave trade to the killing of George Floyd -- which sparked outrage -- and calls to end racial injustice.

Those who are interested are asked to view the series ahead of time.

The series can be found at [jesseheines.com](http://jesseheines.com).

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## A community conversation

The event will include a panel discussion with:

- Shawn McGuffey, associate professor of sociology and director of African and African diaspora studies at Boston College;
- Brenna Wynn Greer, associate history professor at Wellesley College
- Ralph Edward Jordan, assistant professor of the Manning School of Business at the University of Massachusetts Lowell.

Each panelist will speak briefly, followed by questions from audience members.

## **'To share with other people'**

"It was heartening to have someone who wasn't from the field of history, or even the humanities, in this climate, particularly -- to be taking on this level of labor to educate themselves. But also, to share with other people," Greer said.

Greer said, "What has really been interesting to me is that this past month (Black History Month), I have done more talks than before with non-academic groups. They want to know things, in terms of going forward, how they are going to apply knowledge going forward, or what it means to them."

Events of the past year -- and especially the murder of George Floyd -- may have served as a catalyst, Greer said.

"I think a lot of institutions -- businesses, schools, libraries -- are trying to intentionally, deliberately and thoughtfully take up the mantle of anti-racism," Greer said. "I have never gotten so many invitations -- so clearly, something has shifted out there."

## **Learning in real time**

Chelmsford High School teacher Dan Richter's civics class will attend the virtual event.

"Dan's class will be reviewing the fourth video in the series...in preparation for the discussion," said Stephanie Quinn, the district's social sciences coordinator.

Quinn said hybrid learning has posed challenges.

"However, our teachers, including Mr. Richter, work to encourage our students to engage in these conversations -- so that we can all learn and deepen our understanding of critical issues in the past, present and future," Quinn said.

## **An idea grows**

The series' idea came after Bob Pariseau, a Chelmsford TeleMedia producer, heard a presentation Heines gave on behalf of Learning in Retirement Association early in 2020.

Heines a retired computer science professor who taught at UMass Lowell, began working with the New Hampshire Department of Corrections, developing job-training programs for inmates.

With the upcoming forum, Heines said, "The purpose here is to add depth and perspective to the video series Bob Pariseau and I created."

The series is featured on the page of the town's Diversity, Racial Equity and Inclusion Committee.

It has been featured in a program by Congregation Shalom, and is the focus of a program on March 25, sponsored by three Lutheran churches in New Hampshire.

## 'My hope is education'

Asked what he hopes the series will help achieve, Heines said, "My hope is education. I still believe the only way out of our dilemma is through education."

Heines said, "One person said to me, for example, 'Why do they say, Black lives matter? Why not say all lives matter?'" Heines said, "I try to engage a person into conversation, as to why."

Heines said he encountered another person who favors vaccinating corrections officers against coronavirus -- but not inmates.

"One of the sad things to me about our political situation is that, I have people who I consider friends, neighbors, people I respect...and who will not enter into a conversation," Heines said. "And to whom I have said, 'This makes me sad. Not that our views are different, but that we can't have a conversation.'"

With the series, Heines hopes a conversation can continue.

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## The details

**WHAT** Discussion panel on "Civil Rights: A History"

**WHEN** March 9, 12:30 p.m.

**TO REGISTER** Visit [jesseheines.com](http://jesseheines.com).

**TO SUBMIT QUESTIONS** Submit questions and comments when registering , or email Jesse Heines at [Jesse\\_Heines@uml.edu](mailto:Jesse_Heines@uml.edu).