



ETHICAL VIEWS

January 2019 Vol. 133, No. 5 Newsletter of the Philadelphia Ethical Society



Sunday Platforms

Sunday, Jan. 6, 11:00 AM
Remembering Those We've Lost – Memorial Sunday Program,
Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader,
Philadelphia Ethical Society



On the first Sunday of each year we at the Philadelphia Ethical Society honor loved ones, colleagues, and historical heroes who are lost but not forgotten. We share memories that can inspire us to bring out our best and live full lives. Members and visitors are encouraged to share a few words regarding how the memory of someone we have lost helps us live more fully, joyfully, and ethically. How do they inspire you to be the best person you can be?

Sunday, Jan. 13, 11:00 AM
Comedy and the Law in America – Laura E. Little, Law Professor, Temple University

This talk provides an overview of how comedy and law intersect. By examining humor's effect on law and law's effect on humor, the talk explores the relationship among legal rules, matters of taste, and ethical considerations. The talk will also review many current First Amendment issues, and *will analyze the effect of satire* on the current political climate in the United States and elsewhere.

Laura Little is the James G. Schmidt Chair in Law and Senior

Advisor to the Dean at Temple's Law School, specializing in constitutional law, conflict of laws, and federal courts. An award winning teacher and scholar, she has taught in Rome, Tokyo, Beijing, and beyond. Professor Little has written numerous books and articles – most recently: *Guilty Pleasures: Law and Comedy in America* (Oxford 2018). The American Law Institute appointed her to serve as Associate Reporter for the next restatement on conflict of laws. Professor Little practiced law in Philadelphia and was a law clerk to Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist, U.S. Supreme Court.



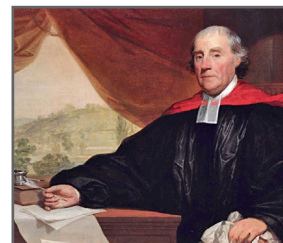
Sunday, Jan. 20, 11:00 AM
The Weight of History
Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader,
Philadelphia Ethical Society

In honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day and February's Black History Month, Hugh Taft-Morales will discuss how the horrific damage done to people and communities of color due to "white supremacy" can practically paralyze many who in theory support campaigns for justice. He will share information about a "400 Years Project" that he is undertaking this year. See details in the Leader's Column below.

400 YEARS OF WHITE SUPREMACY

Sunday, Jan. 27, 11:00 AM
Facing the Past: UPenn's Ties to Slavery
Kathleen Brown, Professor of History, UPenn with
VanJessica Gladney, Public History Fellow, UPenn

Kathleen Brown and Jessica Gladney will discuss the impetus behind the creation of the Penn and Slavery Student Research Project in Fall 2017 and some of its findings. The University of Pennsylvania, while not itself a slave-holding institution, was complicit in slavery in a number of historically significant ways, including its credentialing of doctors who returned to the slave-holding South to "practice" plantation medicine on the bodies of enslaved people, exhausted and injured from coerced plantation labor. Kathleen Brown is the David Boies Professor of History at the University of Pennsylvania and the Director of the Alice Paul Center for Research on Gender, Sexuality, and Women. VanJessica Gladney is a 2018 graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and a Public History Fellow for the Penn and Slavery Project.



Penn's first provost, William Smith, one of many with ties to slavery.

Sunday Ethical Education for Kids (SEEK) will meet during platforms on January 6th and 20th. If you have questions, please contact Nick Sanders, nick@phillyethics.org

LEADER'S COLUMN

The 400 Years Project

*Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader,
Philadelphia Ethical Society*

Beginning January 1, 2019, marking the 400th year since the first people were brought against their will to the North American mainland from Africa, I will write 400 weekly words, offer 400 lessons, and get 400 commitments from 400 people who pledge to confront systemic racism more directly through concrete action.

Since 1619, when the first Africans were brought against their will to the North American mainland, systems of race-based oppression have evolved from indentured servitude through chattel slavery, post-Civil War wage-slave sharecropping, Jim Crow segregation, lynching, housing and loan discrimination, the prison-industrial system, and more. As a history teacher for a quarter century, I am continually challenged to acknowledge and seek ways to heal the devastating wounds caused by systemic racism and white supremacy in the United States.

Given the 400th anniversary of the arrival in Jamestown of approximately 20 African men and women, I am undertaking a personal project that I invite you to join. While there are many others working to commemorate this anniversary, like *The Angela Project*, I felt compelled to take action myself. Beginning on January 1, 2019, I will make a part of my daily work as an Ethical Humanist Leader the following:

1) Collect and distribute an

annotated list of 400 history books and articles, primarily by people of color, on various aspects of systemic racism and the efforts to repair the harm done;

2) Write 52 weekly blog posts of approximately 400 words in length about the 400 years of oppression in the North American colonies and the United States;

3) Gather pledges from 400 people, especially those of us who consider ourselves “white,” to make the following pledge: “To mark 400 years of racial oppression in colonial America and the United States, I pledge to confront systemic racism more directly and take concrete steps to repair the harm done;”

400 YEARS

4) Share 400 ways, big and small, to help repair the harm done by slavery and racism. They can include individual acts and public policies that address racism, and empower and provide resources to descendants of slaves and people of color.

I undertake this project:

1) With gratitude for numerous mentors, teachers, and friends of color who continue to advise me;

2) Aware that my privileged position in our society affects my perspective on this issue - both theoretically and practically - and that I must continually educate myself by reading works by people of color who address this issue.

3) Aware that I must avoid the bad habit of assuming that the people of color I know personally want to help me solve the oppression which victimizes them;

4) Acknowledging that “race” is a social construction that affects many people who are not descendants of slaves, and that racism is clearly not simply a question of black and white;

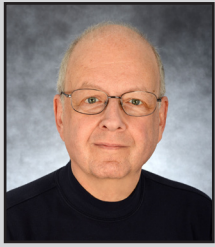
5) Acknowledging that there are many other forms of oppression and injustice - such as sexism, classism, and hetero-normativity - that affect many groups, which we must address as well. In this regard, we must educate ourselves about “intersectionality;”

6) Admitting that this project is modest - particularly in comparison to the depth and breadth of systemic racism in our nation today. This project is meant as part of the larger, more challenging paradigm shift towards a more radical reallocation of public and private resources to help repair the damage already done to countless people and communities of color; and

7) Acknowledging that reparations to descendants of slaves is complicated - that it is difficult to identify precisely who has been most harmed by race-based oppression and to decide how to repair this harm most effectively. I hope this project contributes to a national discussion with African American cultural leaders to determine the form that reparations will take.

Will you join me in this project? You can read and recommend books, share my blog posts, take the pledge, and take deliberate concrete action. After 400 years, let's bend the arc of the moral universe towards justice.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



*Bob Bueding, President,
Philadelphia Ethical Society*

Who We Are

"My father was a wandering Aramean" (Deut. 26:5). Well, not really. My father was a German Jew who had to flee his home in Frankfurt in 1934. My mother (a Russian Jew) originally left Odessa in 1918 and settled in Vienna for a few years before migrating with her family to Paris. There she met my father who was studying medicine at the Sorbonne. They spent their early married years in Istanbul. As WWII approached, my father was first to go to Columbia University

in New York, followed shortly by my mother, one of the last to depart Paris before the Nazis closed the port. These parents, my adoptive parents, were Jewish immigrants fleeing destruction. They are the only parents I have ever known.

The point of this column is not so much about my parents, it's really about immigration. It seems lately all we hear about are efforts to keep immigrants out of the US.

The United States is a nation whose roots were planted by immigrants. But imagine if today's harsh policies had been implemented as our country grew.

How stunted our nation would be.

The current administration supposedly doesn't understand what all the fuss is about, but I can't

fathom where I'd be if the borders of America had been closed to my dad and mom.

I want others to have the opportunities my parents and I had. I want others to have the blessing of being an American.

Our country needs to again acknowledge the value of welcoming the immigrant. Given the current state of affairs, it's



not going to happen tomorrow. But hope, hard work, and perseverance will give us the chance to look once more at Lady Liberty and mean the words on her inscription,

"Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free..."

— Bob

bbueding@phillyethics.org

GLIMPSE INTO PES PAST: J. Ramsay MacDonald, British Prime Minister, spends the night at the Philadelphia Ethical Society by Eric Clausen

James Ramsay MacDonald was a British statesman who helped establish the British Labor Party and who was the first Labor Party politician to become British Prime Minister, leading minority Labor governments in 1924 and in 1929-1931. According to Wikipedia, "MacDonald's natural gifts of an imposing presence, handsome features and a persuasive oratory

with an arresting Highlands accent made him the iconic Labor leader." MacDonald and Philadelphia Ethical Society Director S. Burns Weston became good friends and as a result during the mid 1920s, while audiences of more than 1000 were attending Philadelphia Ethical Society Sunday Platforms at the 2500-seat Academy of Music, MacDonald delivered at least three Sunday Platform addresses.

At that time the Society offices and smaller meeting rooms were in the Society-owned house at 1324 Spruce Street and S. Burns Weston and his family lived in a house almost directly across the

street. A 1926 newspaper article provides some clues as to the nature of the facilities in the Society's 1324 Spruce Street house. The article describes how J. Ramsay MacDonald and S. Burns Weston were having lunch at the 1324 Spruce Street house (probably being served in the Society's dining room by Francis Smith, who at that time was the Society's housekeeper) and how J. Ramsay MacDonald became ill. A doctor was sent for and MacDonald was ordered to spend the night in the Society's guest room. The following morning when MacDonald had not improved he was moved to Jefferson Hospital, and was released within a few days.

Making Some Law For Economic Justice A Case for POWER, Chutzpah and Perseverance

by Kate Esposito

It all coalesced on July 4, 2017. My 7 year-old great niece and 10 year-old great nephew were in town and I was looking for kid friendly things to do in celebration of Independence Day in the City where it happened. I found this ceremony at the Betsy Ross House where children would take the Naturalization Oath to become US Citizens, and I thought this would be a great thing for the kids to witness. As it turned out, the event was really quite moving. The immigrant children ranged in age

from 9–17 and were from Central America, Asia, Africa and Europe. Their parents had taken the oath the day before and they were all there with their kids. OK, so I got teary eyed and a tad jingoistic when we pledged allegiance with all of them, but I couldn't help it.

The Mayor, who got misty eyed himself when he spoke, and Councilman Mark Squilla were also there, and that's where I stopped them to garner their support for updating the 21st Century Living Wage Legislation which would phase in wage increases to \$15 over a period of four years for the lowest wage City workers, contract and sub-contract workers. It passed on December 6th by a unanimous vote of 17 -0 and the Mayor introduced it from his office. The workers will reach \$15 by July 1, 2022.

My chutzpah didn't come out of thin air. It came from the Ethical Society's membership with POWER. I would not have been so emboldened otherwise. Councilman Squilla said yes on the spot, and worked with us through unexpected delays, negotiations with the Mayor's office and convincing other council members to co-sponsor. Deputy Mayor for Labor, Rich Lazer was also a big help.

There were days when this seemed hopeless. Members of



Mayor Kenney signs the 21st Century Living Wage bill as celebrants proudly look on including, from left to right, Kate Esposito, Councilperson-At-Large Helen Gym, Councilman Mark Squilla, and Gregory Holsten.

our Economic Dignity Team traipsed around City Hall for months, meeting with every council member except for one. We had visited with Councilman Squilla about a year before, and he didn't say no at that point, but he didn't say yes either.

So now, I just want to say thanks for your help in moving this bill. Thanks for listening to me drone on about it so many times from the podium. Thanks for

supporting POWER. It was great to see so many of you there, at our team's back, when the bill was introduced, heard at committee and finally passed. The workers will always remember what we all did to help them pay their rents, put food on the table and keep warm in the winter.

It takes a movement! It takes POWER! And maybe a little chutzpah too.



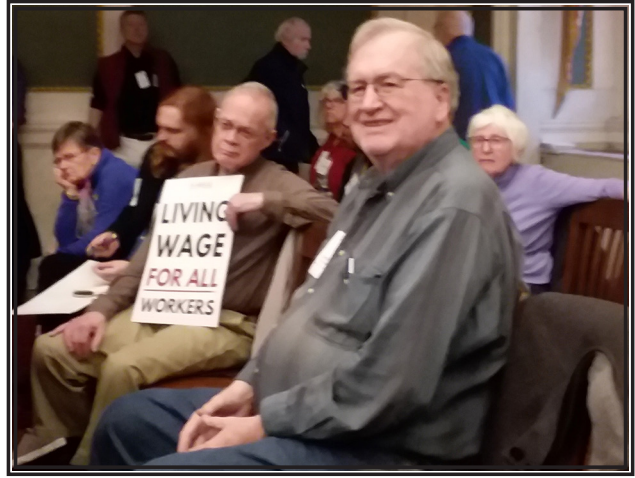
Kate celebrating with everyone after the vote in City Council.

PES Members go en masse to City Hall

.... to support the 21st Century Living Wage Bill



Sylvia Goldman and Rhoda Forte

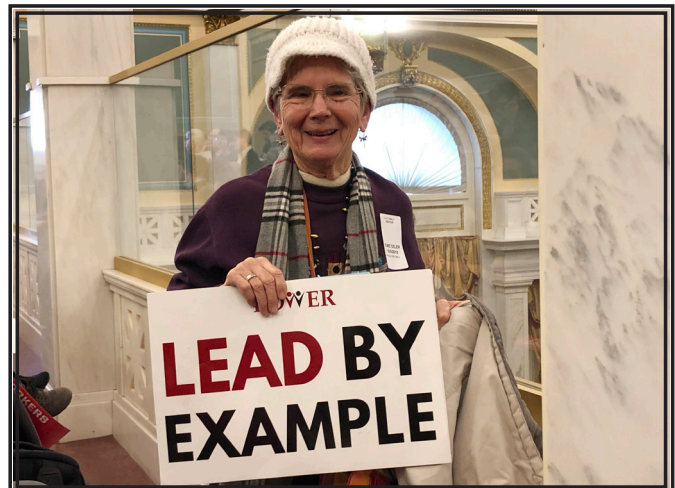


Nick Sanders and Chuck O'Neill

John Marshall, Sharon Wallis, Susan D'Alessio, Betsy Lightbourn and Bob Bueding share a proud day with POWER members to show support for this important legislation, approved by the City of Philadelphia on Dec. 6, 2018, to address the long-needed increase in the minimum wage paid to City workers.



Councilperson-At-Large Helen Gym and Marta Guttenberg



Sylvia Metzler with a sign that says it all.

Photos by Hugh Taft-Morales



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday, Jan. 6, 7:00 pm

INTRO TO ETHICAL HUMANISM

Join Hugh Taft-Morales for the first Introduction to Ethical Humanism of 2019! We'll share snacks and conversation about our non-theist alternative to traditional religion. In honor of the 400th year since the first Africans were brought against their will to the British colonies, Hugh will offer a section on Ethical Culture's historic and current relationship to systemic racism. RSVP to LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org.

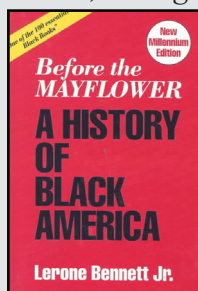
Monday, Jan. 7, 7:00 pm

BOOK DISCUSSION:

BEFORE THE MAYFLOWER: A HISTORY OF BLACK AMERICA, by Lerone Bennett Jr.

To mark the 400th year since Africans were brought against their will to the British Colonies, Hugh Taft-Morales will host

a book discussion of *Before the Mayflower: A History of Black America*. The author traces black history from its origins in western Africa, through the transatlantic journey that ended in slavery, the Reconstruction period, the Jim Crow era, and the civil rights upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s, culminating in an exploration of the complex realities of African-American life in the 1990s. (You are encouraged to find the most recent edition, though Hugh will be using the 6th edition published in 1993 in case you want literally "to be on the same page".) Even if you don't manage to read the book, you are welcome to attend, although the first half of the discussion will be reserved for those who read most of the book.

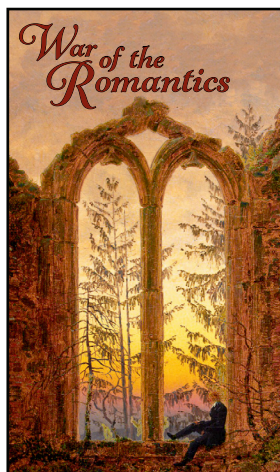


"LIFE'S MOST PERSISTENT AND URGENT QUESTION IS, 'WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR OTHERS?'" MLK, JR.

Monday, Jan. 21, MARTIN

LUTHER KING DAY ACTIVITIES-

Interested in marking Martin Luther King Day by participating in good works or protests? PES is joining efforts with two organizations: The 24th Annual Greater Philadelphia Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service organized by Global Citizen; and public witness events through POWER. Contact Hugh Taft-Morales at LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org, or Nick Sanders, chair of the Ethical Action Committee, at nick@phillyethics.org, and let them know if you would like to participate



The "CONCERTS AT ETHICAL" series continues in January and March with a two-part episodic concert program, *War of the Romantics*. PES hosts this on-going

series - now in its fifth year - together with Fine Art Music.

War of the Romantics, Part I and II will be a departure from the normal concert format, and will feature PES'

own meister-singer, **Robert Steinfort** (who, on the stage, will go by Robert Edwin). He will portray a late 18th century music critic who, with insight and humorous disposition and even song, will convey the human drama of this fervent and controversial period that brought the titans of Romantic composition into a war of beliefs. In Part 1, presented January 27th, Pianists **Rollin Wilber** and **Katarzyna Salwinski**, along with violist/violinist **Adelya Shagidullina** will set the stage of the War's beginning with Beethoven's *Spring Sonata* for violin, and a four-hand piano arrangement of his *7th Symphony*, 2nd movement. The story will then unfold with works of Schumann, Chopin, Liszt, Clara Schumann, and Brahms, all interwoven with commentary from the

critic to provide the "back-story" of dynamics among these composers.

In Part II, presented on March 31st, the *War of the Romantics* will reach its pinnacle, with unexpected theatrical fireworks and full-on Romantic music.

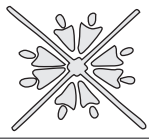
WAR OF THE ROMANTICS Part I
Sunday, January 27, 2019 at 3pm
at the Philadelphia Ethical Society

WAR OF THE ROMANTICS, Part II
SUNDAY, March 31, 2019 at 3pm
at the Philadelphia Ethical Society

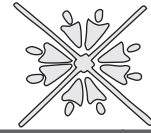
For tickets, information, and additional concert dates, visit:

www.FineArtMusic.com

Fine Art Music



JANUARY 2019



4 Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
		1	2 PES MEETING: 6:30 PM Education Committee	3	4	5
6 11:00 AM <i>Remembering Those We've Lost</i> Hugh Taft-Morales 7:00 p.m.: <i>Intro to Ethical Humanism</i>	7	8	9 PES MEETINGS 5:30 PM Finance Committee 6:30 PM Ethical Action Committee	10	11	12
13 11:00 AM <i>Comedy and the Law in America</i> Laura E. Little	14 7:00 PM Book Discussion Before the Mayflower: A History of Black America	15	16 PES MEETING: 6:30 PM PES Board of Trustees	17  7:00 PM Amnesty International Meeting	18	19
20 9:30 AM: End Racism Task Force Sylmetz2@gmail.com 11:00 AM <i>The Weight of History</i> Hugh Taft-Morales	21 All day: Martin Luther King Day Activities	22	23 PES MEETING 5:30 PM Building Committee PES MEETING 6:30 PM Camp Linden Committee	24	25	26
27 11:00 AM <i>Facing the Past: UPenn's Ties to Slavery</i> Kathleen Brown	28	29	30	31		

QUOTABLE

Cross the river by
feeling the stones
under your feet

Deng Xiaoping

January Birthdays

- 10 Carol Love
- 11 Sandy Goffey
- 14 Lyle Murley
- 21 Ken Greiff
- 30 Lelah Marie

LOOKING AHEAD
PES members!
What are you
doing right after
the platform on
Sunday, March 3,
2019? Hope you
are coming to our
Annual Pledge
Luncheon.
Mark your
calendars now!



SUNDAY SERVICES

11:00 A.M.

Ethical Views is published monthly
except July and August.

Executive Editor, Henry Pashkow
Copy Editor, Betsy Lightbourn
Web Master, Copy Editor, Nick Sanders
Layout, Celeste Hardester
Production, Cheryl Desmond

Philadelphia Ethical Society
1906 South Rittenhouse Square
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader
PES Board of Trustees
Bob Bueding, President
Betsy Lightbourn, Vice President
Vincent Russo -Treasurer
John Marshall-Secretary
Kate Esposito
Susan O'Connell
Michael Black-Smith

(215) 735 - 3456
office@phillyethics.org
www.phillyethics.org

Coffee Hour Coordinators



January 6 - Kate Esposito
Last names: A-E
January 13 - Ken Greiff
Last names: F-K
January 20 - Garry O'Rourke
Last names: L-Q
January 27 - Harry Thorn
Last names: R-Z

Flowers Coordinated by Sally Redlener



January 6 - From Scott Pleune "In
memory of my loving mother.",
January 13 - From Janet Horwitz,
"Happy Birthday to my Father, Marty
Horwitz."
January 20 - Fro Sally Redlener,
Happy Birthday to my Father, Jerry"
January 27 - From Temma Fishman,
"Happy 80th Birthday to my husband,
Arnold!"

Hosts Coordinated by John Marshall

Sunday hosts greet and orient
members and visitors and make
a valuable contribution to the
community. If you'd like to help out,
please contact John Marshall.

For suggestions regarding this
newsletter, contact Henry Pashkow
hpashkow@gmail.com



The first and most identifiable image
of the 18th century abolitionist
movement.

Do you enjoy *Ethical Views*?

As a reader of *Ethical Views*, you know that the Ethical Society produces
many excellent programs, platforms, and other activities—including
this newsletter. But did you know we rely on membership and
public support to fund all of our outreach activity? As you make
your annual charitable donations, won't you consider making an
annual giving contribution to support this work?

For email and online readers, the donate button takes you
directly to the PES link where you may donate securely
through your by credit card or Paypal.

DONATE NOW

Or if you prefer, mail your donation to PES
1906 Rittenhouse Square, Philadelphia, PA 19103
Thank you for your support.

