

2023 HYDE PARK

# LIVING HISTORIES OF COLOR

## THE LIVING HISTORIES OF HYDE PARK EXHIBIT

Hyde Park, Massachusetts is one of the 23 neighborhoods of Boston. It is described as having a "river running through it", referring to the flow of the Neponset River stretching from Foxboro to the Dorchester/Quincy line. Developed from farm lands and open spaces along the Neponset River, it is a residential, suburban community bordered by Milton and Dedham. Hyde Park is proud of its rich history, which includes being home to such historic notables as Mayor Thomas Menino, Boston's longest-serving Mayor, Dr. Rebecca Crumpler, the first Black doctor in the United States, Abolitionists Sarah and Angelina Grimké, and Camp Meigs, the training grounds for the 54th Regiment Civil War Troop (made famous in the movie "Glory"). Formerly a majority ethno-European community, it has become more racially and culturally diverse and boasts a rich mix of upper-, middle- and working-class residents, several of whom hold prominent roles in local and national areas.

Documenting the contemporary history of Hyde Park, this exhibit is designed to acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of People of Color in modern times. It was conceived and produced by The Forum for Racial Equity in Hyde Park. The Forum for Racial Equity in Hyde Park via Educational Experiences (FREEE) believes that acknowledging modern Black and Brown contributions and history is important for many reasons: First, it allows us to eradicate the pervasive and damaging myth of inferiority that has been perpetuated throughout history about Communities of Color; Second, by highlighting the achievements and successes of Black and Brown residents, we challenge this false narrative and promote a more truthful and positive view of the residents, and the broader community in Hyde Park and beyond. In addition, by recognizing the valuable contributions of Black and Brown residents, we can help to create a more inclusive City and State that values and respects the diverse experiences and perspectives of all individuals. The third and final reason this is important is because acknowledging modern Black and Brown contributions and history is a crucial step towards achieving racial justice and equity.

The honorees in this exhibit are residents of Hyde Park who are making or have made contributions to this City or State, and nationally and/or internationally.

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AYANNA PRESSLEY

## "POLICY IS MY LOVE LANGUAGE"

I am many things — a policymaker, but also a mother, a wife, a survivor, a friend, a proud Hyde Park resident and, more than anything, my mother's daughter. My mother, Sandy Pressley, was a tenants' rights organizer, an advocate, and a super voter. Instead of traditional bedtime stories, she read me the speeches of Shirley Chisholm and Barbara Jordan and taught me that I was enough. I have carried my mother's lessons with me throughout my life, from the first campaign I ever volunteered for — Harold Washington for Mayor of Chicago — to Boston University, as a staffer in the offices of Representative Joseph P. Kennedy II and Senator John Kerry, to the Boston City Council, and, ultimately, to Congress, as the first Black woman elected to represent Massachusetts in the U.S. House of Representatives.

In all that time, I've borne witness to the struggle my mother spoke of. In Congress, I've seen how policies perpetuate deep and persistent economic, racial, health, housing, education, and transit injustice. I believe if hurt and harm can be legislated, so too can healing and justice.

I'm proud to show up in Congress every day to center the voices and lived experiences of the residents of Hyde Park and everyone in the MA-07, to harness and leverage our collective power in service of progress. Together, we've advanced community-led and government-endorsed solutions that address deeply intersectional issues of consequence. We've crafted legislation to close the wealth gap, protect abortion access and reproductive freedom, end hair-based discrimination, combat the Black maternal mortality crisis, transform our criminal legal system, treat long COVID, and more. We've leveraged the power of movement building to come closer than ever before to canceling student debt for millions of people across the nation. And we've secured tens of millions of dollars in federal funding for high-impact, community-led projects across the Massachusetts 7th, including more than \$56 million for community health centers, and \$26 million to support those experiencing homelessness.

Policy is my love language, and I lead with love. It is a joy and a privilege to keep fighting and working in partnership with community, and to keep bringing those closest to the pain closer to the power as we build a better, more just, more promising world — together.

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