

FOR RELEASE: PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT
Wednesday, March 2, 2022

**THE COLD CASE JUSTICE INITIATIVE ANNOUNCES THE SECOND ANNUAL
WHARLEST AND EXERLENA JACKSON LEGACY PROJECT Interactive Program
April 1 & 2, 2022 via Zoom**

The Wharlest and Exerlena Jackson Legacy Project and the Cold Case Justice Initiative (CCJI) at Syracuse University College of Law are hosting the second annual Program on April 1 and 2, 2022 in honor of the memory of Wharlest and Exerlena Jackson for their major contributions and sacrifices to the cause of racial justice, civil rights, voting rights, and full civic engagement

This year's Program Theme is: *Honor Their Memories. Continue Their Legacy.* The second annual program of the Wharlest and Exerlena Jackson Project is designed to recognize the sacrifices of the Jacksons for civil rights, to provide information and resources for students to achieve their aspirations and goals, and to continue the Jacksons' legacy for racial and social justice. Participation is open to junior and senior high school students in Natchez, MS, Syracuse, NY. and communities in other areas. There are sessions for parents, guardians, teachers, and administrators to help students plan for post-high school life. The program takes place Friday evening, April 1, and throughout Saturday, April 2, 2022. The event will be held online on Zoom. The program is FREE and all are welcome to attend.

The program features a keynote presentation by Brad Lichtenstein and Yoruba Richen, directors of the PBS Frontline documentary, "American Reckoning," about the lives of Wharlest and Exerlena Jackson, and the Black community's resistance to racial injustice. There will be remarks by Jackson family members, including Denise Jackson Ford and Wharlest Jackson, Jr., CCJI Director Professor Paula C. Johnson, and law students in the Cold Case Justice Initiative, among other presenters.

There will be concurrent panels for students interested in college, vocational fields, creative arts, STEM, financial literacy, and civic participation. There also are sessions for parents, teachers, and administrators to discuss ways and resources to support high school students before and after graduation.

Please register [here](#). The registration deadline is Thursday, March 31, 2022, at 5:00 pm Central. For more information or questions, please email the [Jackson Legacy Project](#).

During the Civil Rights Movement, Wharlest and Exerlena were active in Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi to assist people of color to register to vote, have a voice in their community, and to increase educational and employment opportunities. Wharlest became the Treasurer of the local NAACP Chapter, in Natchez. Exerlena was also active in the movement for voter registration and civil rights. Wharlest had the qualifications that earned him a promotion within Armstrong Tire and Rubber Company for a job that previously had been held only by Whites. The Ku Klux Klan was very active in the area, and Wharlest was constantly threatened for his activism and his employment position. He was murdered on February 27, 1967, when a bomb was detonated under his truck when he left work.

No one has been held accountable for Wharlest Jackson's death. However, Wharlest and Exerlena's work was not in vain. They were courageous and their actions galvanized the community to insist on the equal rights and civic participation that they fought for. The Jackson Legacy Project will carry on their legacy by providing the annual two-day program to inspire others to continue to fight for voting rights, education, and employment opportunities for all people.

About the Cold Case Justice Initiative: The Cold Case Justice Initiative (CCJI) at Syracuse University College of Law was co-founded by Professor Paula C. Johnson and Professor Janis L. McDonald (emerita). Professor Johnson continues to direct the Initiative. CCJI investigates unsolved racially motivated homicides and disappearances, such as the Wharlest Jackson case, which occurred during the Civil Rights Era and contemporary times. CCJI works to hold responsible parties accountable and conducts relevant research, academic education, professional training, public awareness, and memorial legacies of victims of racial crimes who fought for the rights and freedoms of present and future generations. For more information, visit <http://law.syr.edu/academics/clinical-experiential/experiential-courses/cold-case-justice-initiative/>.

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