

An Alternative to Big
Indianapolis Literary Club

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My wife often reminds me that too much context can be a bad thing when I start to tell a story, or in tonight's case, read an essay. So I will try to keep this short.

As mentioned earlier, I retired in 2010 after thirty years as a reference librarian at the Indianapolis Public Library. Fourteen of those years were under the guidance of our own Ray Gnat. After my retirement, I needed something to do outside the house because I still had two teenagers at home who I feared would come to see me as their constant driver.

Prior to my retirement, I was swimming a couple times a week, mostly at the Jordan YMCA. I saw they needed lifeguards. I flunked out of a lifeguard class when I was 15 years old so I decided to give it another shot. I passed the training and testing and a few weeks later found myself on the lifeguard stand at Jordan. I remained there for another 12 years.

One of the first swimmers I met at the Jordan pool was one of our late and esteemed members, Bill Wood. Bill was popular there. Everyone in and around the pool always enjoyed his encouragement and playfulness. After he learned I was a retired librarian, we spent a fair but never an unsafe amount of time talking. I was his lifeguard and was also happy to continue in my librarian role as Bill's reader

advisor. I managed to discuss books with him while keeping a close eye on the pool. His invitation to this Literary Club accounts for my presence here tonight.

Another swimmer I met early on was an older gentleman who asked me to hold his Life Alert button whenever he came into the pool. He liked to talk also, and I learned that his name was Ivan Chalfie. He told me he had been swimming at the YMCA since 1945. What he didn't tell me was that he was a former Indiana University swimmer, an alternate for the 1948 Olympic team, and was a major developer and philanthropist in Indianapolis. From a YouTube video and various tributes to him, I also learned that there was nowhere for him to train year-round until 1945. He was Jewish and the clubs with indoor pools wouldn't allow him to swim. With the encouragement of one of his coaches, the Central YMCA located at New York and Illinois Streets opened the indoor pool there to him in 1945.

I was intrigued by Mr. Chalfie's story and it pointed me in the direction of my essay tonight.

I enjoyed working for the Y. One reason for that was I felt the local branches really tried to make everyone feel welcome. Young, old, large, small, it didn't matter. Certainly, those of great religious faith or no faith at all were no exception.

In the swimming pool we welcomed swimmers of all sorts, including those of whom I took to be conforming to Muslim dress. I learned that while many took advantage of modern but modest swimwear for women, others chose to enter the pool in traditional covering.

Sadly, as with many of our institutions, it is probably no surprise that the welcoming attitude of our era wasn't the case at the beginning of the 20th Century.

I think some of you might already be familiar with the story of the Senate Avenue YMCA, also known as the Indianapolis Colored YMCA. If you are not, I hope my essay will serve as an introduction to the remarkable history of that facility and the “Monster Meetings” series of lectures and sermons that the Senate Y sponsored for more than 50 years.

“In the first two decades of the twentieth century, the number of African-Americans in Indianapolis more than doubled, growing from 15,931 in 1900 to 34,678 in 1920. This increase was the result of the Great Migration, the movement of large numbers of African Americans from the South to the North in search of work and opportunity.”

(C.M. Brady, *Indianapolis at the Time of the Great Migration, 1900-2010*)

The end of Reconstruction, anti-black race riots, the resurgence of the terrorist Ku Klux Klan, denial of voting rights, unequal justice, and the establishment of Jim Crow laws south of the Mason-Dixon line were all major factors sending Black people north to Indianapolis and other northern cities. And above all, keep in mind that reliable statistics show between 1877 and 1950 there were over 4000 lynchings in the United States; not just in the South, but in Indiana, too.

New arrivals to Indianapolis around 1900 encountered somewhat better conditions, although segregation of the African American community to the environmentally less desirable near west side was enforced. Refusal of service by white shop owners, harassment and occasional violent attacks by white gangs still made life

difficult. In the teens and Twenties, the Ku Klux Klan's rise to political power in Indiana made life even more challenging for those hoping for respect and equality. Churches, fraternal organizations and civic groups and the YMCA grew among the recent arrivals to the city. For white people:

‘The YMCA movement reached Indianapolis before the Civil War. A small group of evangelical Protestants opened the Indianapolis YMCA in 1854. The YMCA built its own building at 33-37 North Illinois Street in 1871. The YMCA had a religious mission and membership relied on active church members. (Encyclopedia of Indianapolis).

But here, as in most places, segregation prevailed in the early YMCA.

“Two or three black men brought segregation of the Indianapolis YMCA into sharp focus in 1888 when they attempted to join...although the Y lacked an official policy mandating segregation, they denied the black mens’ applications. Two years later, a group of African American men formed a Young Men’s Prayer Band.” (Lindsay Beckley, Monster Meetings at the Senate Avenue YMCA, *The Indiana History Blog*, March 11, 2018)

In 1902, this group was reorganized into “The Indianapolis Colored YMCA.”

As membership in the new “Colored” Y grew alongside the increasing Black population in Indianapolis, it was determined that a new building was necessary to replace the original facility at California and North streets.

“Fortunately, just as the YMCA members began to plan their fundraising strategy, they gained a rather unlikely ally in a white, Jewish, Chicago businessman. Julius Rosenwald, part owner of Sears, Roebuck and Company, announced that he would give \$25,000 to any community able to raise \$75,000 toward the construction” of a new building.

(Beckley, *ibid*)

Local community groups, Black and white, made good on Rosenwald’s offer. They raised the additional \$75,000, including a \$10,000 contribution by Madam C.J. Walker.

Construction of the new Senate Avenue Y started in July, 1912 and was completed in July, 1913. An official dedication ceremony included an address by Booker T. Washington.

The Senate Avenue YMCA took its place alongside Black churches and civic clubs in serving the segregated black community. Membership grew quickly, especially among young men.

In fact, I should note here that the Senate Avenue YMCA was open only to men and boys.

For Black women and girls the Indianapolis Phyllis Wheatley YWCA, named for the first published African American woman poet in the U.S., opened its doors in 1921...

(Encyclopedia of Indianapolis. *Phyllis Wheatley YMCA*.

<https://indyencyclopedia.org/phyllis-wheatley-ywca/>)

Typical YMCA programming at the new Y included summer camps, swimming, volleyball, basketball, boxing, and a running track. As did many YMCAs of that era, the building was residential with more than 60 dormitory rooms. Y sponsored clubs for men and boys met in several meeting rooms and auditoriums.

What I really want to focus on tonight are the Monster Meetings, originated under the leadership of the Senate Avenue Y's first executive secretary, Thomas Taylor.

“(Taylor) instituted public forums where men, and later women, could gather on Sunday afternoons between November and March to listen to lectures on a wide variety of topics. Originally, Taylor wanted to call the forums “Big Meetings” but the proposal was rejected by the Central (read: white) YMCA board because their annual meeting was already labeled the Big Meeting. So Taylor one-upped them and labeled his series the “Monster Meetings.”

(Beckley, Lindsay, Monster Meetings at the Senate Avenue YMCA, *The Indiana History Blog*, March 11, 2018.)

While the early Monster meetings often featured local pastors and had an evangelical focus, the executive secretary of the Senate Avenue Y who succeeded Taylor, Fabian DeFrantz, had a larger view of what could be accomplished. Beginning in 1916, he decided to try to attract speakers of wider renown, including nationally known civil rights leaders, politicians, poets, scientists and famous athletes. The monster meetings continued into the early 1960s.

In examining the partial list of speakers compiled by Dr. Stanley Warren in his 2005 book The Senate Avenue YMCA for African American Men and Boys,

1913-1959, I noted the presence of some of the most important civil rights voices of the first half of the 20th century.

And, while I don't want to promote the proverbial "Great Man" theory of history, it's not hard to identify three individuals who carried the early civil rights movement forward both locally and nationally. I refer to appearances at the Senate Avenue YMCA and their Monster Meetings by Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois and Martin Luther King, Jr. as representing the highest level of discourse and a clear through line of progressive thinking to the 1960s.

I think that's especially notable because, based on my admittedly unscientific reading of the public knowledge of civil rights and race relations history in Indianapolis. If you ask these days, most local folks' knowledge includes a little about Madam C.J. Walker, maybe a little more about the predominance of the KKK in the '20s and then jumps ahead to 1968 and Robert F. Kennedy's speech in what is now Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park on the night of King's assassination. The old saw about Indianapolis as Naptown comes to mind. That perception leaves out the work done nationally and locally from the Post-Reconstruction era through the late '50s that set the stage for the civil rights movement of the 1960s.

This essay is not meant to overlook the work of the Indianapolis NAACP. It was founded in 1912 and their work on local issues continues to the present day. The commitment and courage of NAACP leadership, especially during the heyday of the Indiana Ku Klux Klan, is a topic worthy of a future essay.

While Hoosiers, especially Indiana Quakers of the time, can be proud of their support of the Underground Railroad, it's fair to say that in Indiana, race relations got off to a bad start.

Frederick Douglass is generally accepted as the first nationally recognized black leader. His autobiography and writings are well known. As Hoosiers, we might regret the outcome when Douglass first came to Indiana.

“In September, 1843, Frederick Douglass and other speakers went to Madison County, Indiana to give a speech at a meeting at the Pendleton Baptist church. The Anti-slavery society focused their action on small towns like Pendleton where the African American population constituted an important proportion of the inhabitants. Situated in the periphery of Indianapolis, people relied on the church to gather and get news on politics. Douglass wanted to prove that the fight for abolition should be everybody’s concern. However, the crowd they encountered was deeply racist: more than thirty white men marched in, armed with stones and brickbats, asking for them to leave.[7] Douglass and others were injured, even though they were defended by the local supporters. In his autobiography "My Life and Times (1881), he described the event saying, “They tore down the platform on which we stood, assaulted Mr. White and knocked out several of his teeth (...).” Rioters went unpunished, showing that progress was still to be made in justice and that racial violence was still not publicly condemned, even in the North.”

(The Liberator, "Of the Board of managers of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, to the Abolitionists of the Western and Middle States," June 16, 1843)

Then, there were the unfortunate visits to Indiana by Sojourner Truth.

Truth “ first visited northeastern Indiana in 1858, probably because it was not far from her new home in the Harmonia community near Battle Creek, Michigan. By setting foot in Indiana she broke the law, as Article 13 of Indiana’s 1851 Constitution provided that “No negro or mulatto shall come into or settle in the State, after the adoption of this Constitution...Her 1861 appearance at the Steuben County courthouse in Angola was, according to abolitionist accounts, disrupted by a drunken mob, which pushed and cursed her, threatening tar and feathers or even worse. Sojourner Truth was arrested “by her would be friends on a charge of being in the State contrary to the laws of the State,” tried before a friendly justice of the peace, and set free. Other local residents, dissatisfied by this “mock trial,” had her arrested again and taken before a less-friendly justice, whereupon her friends won a change of venue to a court ten miles to the north in Jamestown, very near the state line. As she told the story afterward, she and her white companion Josephine Griffing were called before the courts on six occasions, but she was never convicted.

(Furlong, Patrick J, The “Symbolic Rape,” Arrest, and Defense of Sojourner Truth in Indiana, *The Indiana History Blog*, June 5, 2018<https://blog.history.in.gov/the-symbolic-rape-arrest-and-defense-of-sojourner-truth-in-indiana/>)

With the passage of the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments to the US Constitution, Indiana could no longer keep Blacks out of the state. But in most places they were far from welcome. Those who did find their way here congregated in a few farming communities such as Lyles Station in Gibson County. These small groups created successful ways of living on their own terms and were exactly the kind of places that found favor with Booker T. Washington.

Washington, as many of you might recall, was born a slave sometime in the early 1850s. After advancing his own education, he went on to found the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama in 1881. He became the predominant voice of Black Americans from the 1880s until his death in 1915. Washington's advocacy of building Black communities through education and industry was accepted by aspirational black people, especially in the South, and by prominent white politicians, including President Teddy Roosevelt. Washington believed that by creating wealth and support systems within communities, there would be no reason to challenge Jim Crow laws. He encouraged Black people to become farmers, teachers, service workers and tradespeople. Washington proposed that the economic power of the masses would eventually require white Americans to acknowledge them as full citizens.

Washington is also recognized for what would be seen today as building his own brand. He knew how to appeal to the right people for financial and political support but it seems he also knew not to push too hard.

It's easy to see how the new Senate Avenue Y appealed to Washington because it represented the kind of bootstraps development that he endorsed. When he spoke at the dedication:

“Washington commended the citizens of the city, both black and white, for banding together to make the Senate Avenue Y a reality. Then, he said, I am proud of being a member of the Negro race and never more so than tonight. I spurn the men who sympathize with me because I am a member of the Negro race. We have work to

do and difficulties to overcome...Let the white people know about the good deeds in our race. In too many cases, white people hear only of crime. They do not hear about the hard-working, industrious, sober colored men, and Indianapolis has many of the latter class.”

(Beckley, Lindsay, Monster Meetings at the Senate Avenue YMCA, *The Indiana History Blog*, March 11, 2018.)

I wasn't able to find any record of Washington speaking at an actual Monster Meeting, but I still consider his appearance at the dedication a beginning in the important part the Senate Avenue Y played in the history of the movement in Indianapolis.

With Washington's death in 1915, new leaders unwilling to accept his accommodationist position came forward.

William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, better known as W.E.B Du Bois, was the least known to me of the three early civil rights leaders I proposed to discuss. I read the Souls of Black Folk, when I was in college. I had a vague knowledge of his final years in Ghana. In my reading for this essay I found out I had much to learn. It would be impossible for me to even begin to summarize the life and works of an author who was active until his death in 1963. For this essay, I'll try my best to describe the highlights.

Du Bois was born in Great Barrington, Massachusetts in 1868. A gifted writer from an early age, before graduating from high school he was already a reporter for the *New York Age* and other newspapers.

I found it notable to learn that even as a teenager, Du Bois advised that the “best thing that could be done for colored people (in Great Barrington) would be the creation of a literary society.”

(D.L. Lewis, WEB Dubois: Biography of a Race: 1868-1919, New York, H.Holt and Co. 1993, p.40)

Dubois felt that the best hope for himself and other Black Americans was through education. Dubois received his undergraduate degree from Fisk University in 1888. After teaching in Tennessee, he moved onto Harvard where he completed work for his Masters in history in 1891. After postgraduate study in Berlin and teaching at Wilberforce University in Ohio, he received a Ph.D. in history from Harvard in 1895. Dubois Ph. D was the first awarded to a Black American at Harvard.

Dubois also organized and chaired major national conferences on the condition of Black Americans. The best known among these were the Atlanta Conferences, held at Atlanta University from 1896 to 1914.

“The *Atlanta University Publications* (AUPs), edited mostly by W.E.B. Du Bois are highly significant because they represent systematic, social-scientific inquiries into the condition and lives of African Americans a century ago.”

Webdubois.org

<http://www.webdubois.org/wdb-AtlUniv.html>

The Suppression of the African Slave-Trade to the United States, 1638-1870,

Dubois Harvard dissertation, was his first published monograph and there were many titles to follow. Among the best known: Dubois study of the sociology of

black households in The Philadelphia Negro from 1899. Later, his history Black Reconstruction: An Essay toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880, (1935) is praised for putting the perspective of those who gained and then lost the most in one generation.

Dubois was also a novelist, columnist, editor, and contributed to numerous journals and magazines. He was among the founders of the NAACP and the first editor of the *Crisis*, the NAACP's official journal.

But Dubois is best known for The Souls of Black Folk, first published in 1903, in which he combined several magazine articles and a short story into an anthology..

I think this is a good description for the book that I believe should be included, especially now, in every senior high school English or American history syllabus.

“At times serious and at other times lyrical, he strove to educate audiences about the special experience of black people in America and their contributions to American culture and life. More than a century later, it is fascinating how prescient Du Bois was in his analysis and how many of his observations, troublingly, still ring true today.”

(https://www.perlego.com/book/3860763/summary-of-the-souls-of-black-folk-by-w-e-b-du-bois-pdf?utm_source=bing&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=2.1.1.1%20DSAG*%20%7C%20US%20%7C%20ALL&utm_term=US&utm_content=ALL&mclid=5ed84f0c3ef41e8fe56f2af0edd95c0a)

It was in the “Forethought” of The Souls of Black Folk that DuBois describes an important concept in understanding his work. He speaks of the “Veil”:

“it is possible to think of the Veil as a psychological manifestation of the [color line](#). The color line exists in the world, defining people’s access to opportunities and to institutions from universities to bathrooms to the justice system. The Veil, on the other hand, exists in people’s minds, and compels white people to structure society according to a racist logic—to build and police along the color line. Du Bois argues that the Veil prevents white people from seeing black people as Americans, and from treating them as fully human. At the same time, the Veil in turn prevents black people from seeing themselves as they really are, outside of the negative vision of blackness created by racism.”

(<https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-souls-of-black-folk/symbols/the-veil>)

Another important concept popularized by Du Bois is the idea of the “Talented Tenth”. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. describes Du Bois endorsement of the idea:

In his 1903 book called The Negro Problem, Du Bois said “The Negro race, like all races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men. The problem of education, then, among Negroes must first of all deal with the Talented Tenth; it is the problem of developing the Best of this race that they may guide the Mass away from the contamination and death of the Worst, in their own and other races.”

These sentences were effectively a throw-down against Washington’s strident advocacy of industrial training as the ideal curriculum for the daughters and sons for the former slaves, rather than a classical liberal arts education, the sort of education that Du Bois had received at Fisk and then at Harvard.

[\(https://www.pbs.org/wnet/african-americans-many-rivers-to-cross/history/who-really-invented-the-talented-tenth/\)](https://www.pbs.org/wnet/african-americans-many-rivers-to-cross/history/who-really-invented-the-talented-tenth/)

Gates goes on to say that the term was originated in 1896 by white educator Henry Lyman Morehouse, for whom the Atlanta HBCU Morehouse College is named.

Du Bois was, as I understand it, what was once referred to as a “race man” or “race woman”. A race man was a leader whose personal and public life was focused almost entirely on lifting the status of Black Americans. Du Bois promoted the concept because he believed the Talented Tenth were in a position to make this happen.

Du Bois' first talk in Indianapolis that I could identify was at Second Christian Church at Pratt and Camp Streets in March of 1911. Second Christian evolved to become what is now known as Light of the World. According to the Indianapolis Star in March of 1911:

“Du Bois “as a race leader ... contends for the highest culture of the negro youth and is an open foe to racial discrimination and injustice as menacing not only the future of the negro but the free institutions of the nation.”

(Indianapolis Star, March 26, 1911, p. 58)

His first talk at a Monster Meeting was in January of 1922. Du Bois spoke about the Pan African Congresses he first organized in 1919 and reconvened annually.

(Indianapolis News, January, 21, 1922, p. 31)

Du Bois returned to the Senate Avenue Y in February of 1923 to speak about the condition of Black soldiers following the First World War. Many soldiers returned

from the war hoping to find greater acceptance in American society in recognition of their loyal service. By 1923, Du Bois recognized that wasn't happening.

Du Bois again spoke at a Monster Meeting in March of 1934. It was a transitional time for him. Du Bois was losing hope in the integrationist policy of the NAACP and becoming more accepting of segregated Black cultural life and institutions. His eventual departure from the NAACP reflected a further shift left in Du Bois politics.

Du Bois' early adult years have been characterized by a positive view of the American labor movement and the socialist ideals that supported it.

“In August, 1912, Du Bois informed readers of *The Crisis* that if he could assure the presidency to Eugene V. Debs, he would do so, for of all the candidates, he alone by word and deed, stands squarely on a platform of human rights, regardless of race or class. (*The Crisis*, Dec., 1910)

(Burden-Stelly, Charisse and Gerald Horne, W.E.B. Du Bois: A Life in American History, p.70)

Du Bois thought there was hope for the Black masses if they could join labor unions. Unfortunately, that hope was mostly unfulfilled. The leadership of the major unions and their members were nearly all white, and they were not excited about creating more competition for jobs by allowing Blacks to join them.

For the next 30 years until his death in 1963 Du Bois traveled the world and endorsed revolutionary movements in Russia, China and supported peace movements at home. Anti-communist sentiment in the US following World War Two and through the McCarthy era also made his life difficult. But many newer

Black leaders were reluctant to criticize him too much because of the leadership he provided.

Du Bois spoke at least three more times at Monster Meetings. His final appearance I could document was in 1944.

(Indianapolis Recorder, *Dubois Speaks*, March, 25, 1944)

I think it's again important to note that Du Bois dedicated himself to his work at a time when Jim Crow laws, discrimination in the courts and the voting booth, and lynchings continued. He never played it safe and, for better or worse, he was always outspoken.

Before I turn to Dr. King, I want to mention a few more of the hundreds of "Monster Meeting" speakers. From a partial list compiled by Dr. Warren, you will find Walter White, President of the NAACP, Dr. George Washington Carver, and Merze Tate, a former teacher at Crispus Attucks and Fulbright scholar and the first Black woman at Oxford.

There were repeat appearances by A. Philip Randolph. Randolph, was the organizer and leader of the first successful Black labor union, The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. Eleanor Roosevelt spoke in 1953 on the topic of International Human Rights, and Thurgood Marshall spoke in 1958 while he was still counsel for the NAACP Legal and Education Fund.

Local leaders on the list you might recognize included Indiana governors Harry G. Leslie, Henry F Schricker, Ralph Gates and Paul V. McNutt. IU basketball coach Branch McCracken and Bill Garrett, an All-American basketball player and the first Black player in the Big Ten were featured at a 1951 meeting.

About Indiana University, “It was DeFrantz who headed the 1937 group that negotiated an end to segregation in housing, union building activities, ROTC and swimming facilities” at IU. Further “talks with President (Herman B.) Wells by a contingent ...including DeFrantz” and others from Indianapolis ... were the catalysts that opened the way for integrated play in Big Ten basketball.”

(Warren, Stanley, The Senate Avenue YMCA for African American Men and Boys, p.55)

In 1955, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. first became known nationally after a group of ministers asked him to take the lead as a spokesperson for the Montgomery bus boycott.

“The boycott lasted for 385 days,^[103] and the situation became so tense that King's house was bombed.^[104] King was arrested for traveling 30 mph in a 25 mph zone^[105] and jailed, which overnight drew the attention of national media, and greatly increased King's public stature. The controversy ended when the United States District Court issued a ruling in Browder v. Gayle that prohibited racial segregation on Montgomery public buses.^{[106][1][102]}

King's role in the bus boycott transformed him into a national figure and the best-known spokesman of the civil rights movement.”

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Luther_King_Jr.)

King's rise to national prominence in the civil rights movement continued in 1957 when King helped organize and lead the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. He was an obvious candidate to speak at a Monster Meeting, but

demand for his eloquent leadership and an early attempt on his life preceded his talk in December of 1958.

“Martin Luther King Jr. himself, made an appearance on the YMCA Monster Meeting roster with a speech entitled “Remaining Awake through a Revolution.” Due to intense interest in King’s lecture, organizers moved the event to Cadle Tabernacle, which could accommodate a larger audience. In one of his first public appearances since he suffered a brutal attack at a book signing that year, the Baptist minister maintained his message of nonviolence, urging the use of love in the face of violence. He proclaimed:

“A new age of justice is challenging us to love our oppressors . . . We must not assume this new freedom with attitudes of bitterness and recrimination, for, if we do, the new age will be nothing but a duplicate of the old one . . . A new world is being born, and the old world will die. We must be prepared for the new world to come. Segregation is nothing but slavery covered up with certain niceties and complexities. If our democracy is to live, segregation must die . . . Use love. Love is a sure winner. Remember that as Christians we are working with god. If we do it the way God wants us to do it, we will be able to sing with pride, ‘My Country ‘tis of thee’ for Freedom must ring from every mountainside.”

(<https://blog.history.in.gov/monster-meetings-at-the-senate-avenue-ymca/>)

According to the *Indianapolis Star*, Dr. King made his final appearance at a Monster Meeting in December of 1959 where he spoke on public education. (Indianapolis News), Nov. 24, 1959, p. 9)

The last recorded Monster Meeting was in 1963. While famous names like Marcus Garvey and Malcolm X may never have made it to the alternative to big meetings, those who did represent a pretty significant contribution to racial progress in the United States.

To conclude, while the Monster Meetings were ongoing, things were changing with the national YMCA and with the Senate Avenue or “Colored Y.”

“In 1946 the national YMCA ended its policy of segregation and urged local branches to integrate their facilities. In 1959 the YMCA branch moved to a new location at West 10th Street and Fall Creek Parkway and changed its name to the Fall Creek YMCA. Although no longer segregated, the new Fall Creek Y continued to serve a predominantly Black membership even after these changes.”

(<https://indyencyclopedia.org/senate-avenue-ymca/>)

Due to lagging attendance, and, I'm only guessing, pressure from the growth in and around IUPUI, the Fall Creek YMCA closed in 2002.

I have noted publicity for new Monster Meetings at the Y since 2021. According to an Indianapolis YMCA spokesperson, these are now annual meetings featuring nationally known authors and, in 2024, a musician.

Finally, if you are downtown, take a look for the Indiana Historical Bureau plaque at 420 N. Senate Avenue, at the southwest corner of Michigan St. and Senate Avenue. Also, I urge you to stop by the OrthoIndy Foundation YMCA at 5315 Lafayette Road. In the lobby there you will find a photographic display of many of the events and personalities I have mentioned in this essay.

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