The New Chicago School of Philosophy

Bart Schultz

Rounded Globe

The New Chicago School of Philosophy: Some Lessons from the University of Chicago Civic Knowledge Project

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The Civic Knowledge Project is redefining the role of the University in its surroundings.

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Contents

Abstract:

The new Chicago School of Philosophy is in many respects another historical moment of the original Chicago School of Philosophy, the anti-foundationalist, experimentalist approach to philosophy that John Dewey and other pragmatist philosophers developed in the 1890s, an approach tying philosophy to a vision of participatory, deliberative democratic practice and corresponding notions of education for active citizenship. In some respects it is in line with both the dreams Dewey harbored and the realities he confronted, since the realities and dangers of plutocracy, racism, and elitism are of course as daunting as ever. But the New Chicago School of Philosophy is not limited to a narrow academic space, either literally or figuratively, and is less a creature of the University of Chicago, though it does reflect certain moments and dimensions of the University's history. It represents a later critical consciousness of the ways in which institutions of higher education need to pursue civic engagement strategies by means that can work to foster genuine local democratic deliberation, practice, and trust, and to develop adequate modes of critical self-examination.

I. Introduction: Danielle Allen and the Birth of the CKP

The University of Chicago Civic Knowledge Project was founded in 2003 by political theorist and MacArthur "genius" grant winner Danielle Allen, who was then a faculty member of the Departments of Political Science and Classics. Its Mission Statement, which has remained constant, reads:

The Mission of the CKP is to develop and strengthen community connections, helping to overcome the social, economic, and racial divisions among the various knowledge communities on the South Side of Chicago. We believe that the free and reciprocal flow of knowledge is empowering. Working with our many local collaborators, we (1) Provide educational and humanities programming linking the University of Chicago to other knowledge communities surrounding it; (2) Develop institutional policy for the exchange of knowledge among different local knowledge communities; and (3) Serve as an educational and organizational resource for our community.

A later addition was the final line: "Ultimately, our Mission is to apply, through meaningful community connections, the motto of the University of Chicago: Let knowledge grow from more to more; and so be human life enriched."

Allen's vision for the CKP reflected her work in political philosophy, particularly a certain vision of ancient Athenian democracy. The best comprehensive statement of that vision was presented in her book *Talking to Strangers: Anxieties of Citizenship since Brown v. Board of Education*, a work that weaves gracefully between an analysis of the ongoing civil rights movement, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, and a reconstructed Aristotle on political friendship.[1] Perhaps the biggest theme is the rehabilitation and application of Aristotelian notions of civic friendship to the pervasive distrust characterizing American politics, particularly American racial politics: "I recast the problem of interracial distrust in the United States as a symptom of a more general problem of citizenship. This democracy has repeatedly failed to develop forms of citizenship that help break down distrust and generate trust, a failing closely linked to a second failure to develop citizenly habits that can contend with the unequal distribution of benefits and burdens inevitably produced by political decisions." (Allen, p. xxi). The forms of citizenship needed draw heavily on Aristotle's notion of political or civic friendship and ancient Greek models for face to face citizenship and the circulation of knowledge:

We are all always awash in each other's lives, and for most of us that shared life, recorded as history, will be the only artifact we leave behind. Political friendship begins from this recognition about what we share with the people who live around us and in the same polity. It moves from this recognition of a shared horizon of experience not to a blind trust in one's fellow citizens but rather to a second recognition that a core citizenly responsibility is to prove oneself trustworthy to fellow citizens so that we are better able to ensure that we all breathe healthy air. But in order to prove oneself trustworthy, one has to know why one is distrusted. The politics of friendship requires of citizens a capacity to attend to the dark side of the democratic soul. My ideal reader is simply the democratic citizen, any citizen, but my argument is neither Pollyanna's nor Hollywood's. (Allen, p. xxii).

In a context of "fossilized distrust," the simple act of talking to strangers represents a powerful democratic gesture, one that can help build the social capital that a successful democracy needs.

But Allen sought to drive her message home with the specific example of her home institution: the University of Chicago, a major urban research university which was founded in 1890 and for much of its history grew in tension with the African American communities on Chicago's South Side, the location of the historic Bronzeville community that formed as a result of the first and second Great Migrations of African Americans from the South to the North.2 As she noted, the "one institution with which I work daily is the University of Chicago. Can one speak of a relationship that binds a university to those who live around it? What is its relationship to the other institutions in the polis? As it happens, the institutions of my polis have divided up the territory, each cleaving to its own domain. In my own desire to live according to norms beyond my polis, I want to reorient my own institution's habits for interacting with strangers." (Allen, p. 175). She presses the point home with an open letter to the Faculty Senate that surely ranks as one of the sharpest and most informed critiques of the University ever penned, a review of the University's unconscionable early twentieth century support for restrictive racial covenants (agreements that, until they were rendered unenforceable by the Supreme Court in the 1940s, real estate agents used to keep people from buying or selling to people of color in neighborhoods around the University), and its disastrous support for racist urban renewal policies in the 1950s and 1960s, during which questionable Eminent Domain powers (in part crafted by the University) were deployed to remove supposed "blight," which in practice meant the elimination of low income housing and the displacement of low income families, especially African Americans. Urban renewal became known on Chicago's South Side as "Negro removal," created a poisonous atmosphere of distrust that continues to surround the University, and motivated such reformers as the civil rights activist Timuel D. Black and Leon Despres, the famous independent Democratic alderman of Chicago's 5th Ward, where the University of Chicago is located, to fight the political machine of the first Mayor Daley, Richard J. Daley, the "American Pharaoh." As Leon Despres put it, in his work *Challenging the Daley Machine: A Chicago Alderman's Memoir*:3

In 1956, there had been a first, small urban renewal plan. It had displaced a few residents, eliminated a lot of old saloons, pushed out actors Nichols and May from their storefront, and produced middle-income housing as well as a shopping center. Then planning began for much bigger urban renewal from Forty-seventh to Fifty-ninth streets between Cottage Grove Avenue and the Illinois Central Railroad. The area covered nearly two square miles.

This urban renewal plan was as troublesome an issue as I had ever faced. Being in favor of it brought me support from the university's administration, business interests, and constituents who wanted to keep the community attractive. But being in favor of it also brought anger from whole blocks of constituents and businesses who faced demolition and removal. It created hostility among constituents in Woodlawn who believed the University of Chicago was about to annex their neighborhood. The Catholic Archdiocese published a strong statement on the unfairness of expelling the poor and not providing them with affordable housing.

Although financial compensation was available for the displaced, this did not satisfy either my critics or my conscience. Most of the sufferers were poor, black, or both. They and their philosophical defenders kept telling me that the urban renewal plan would eliminate affordable housing and build only expensive housing.

The University of Chicago administration, which had contractual control of planning, had not taken me into the planning process. A technical expert, Jack Meltzer, had charge of that work, and a resourceful university administrator, Julian Levi, carried out university administration policy while inventing some of his own. At times Meltzer and Levi showed me what they had done after they did it. At other times they met privately with objecting businesses, property owners, or community institutions to negotiate changes, but they did not invite me. I was treated as the alderman who had no choice but to vote 'Aye.' I had no opportunity to shape what was coming except once, to gain a parking lot for the University National Bank, which was being treated shamelessly. (Despres, pp. 66-67).

Indeed, by the time of the City Council Committee hearings, Despres had had enough. Even an English Tory Lord, with whom he had lunched, had called urban renewal "a cheat," and Despres agreed. At the hearings, he created a firestorm by asking the simple question: "Why is there no adequate provision for low-income public housing?" And the opposition to his re-election mobilized quickly: "The conservative property owners were furious at me and terrified that, if I were reelected, I would kill urban renewal. The administration of the University of Chicago, our ward's largest employer and property owner, felt the same." (Despres, pp. 68-69). As Despres would often observe, there were really two Universities of Chicago. Although he enjoyed the support of most of the faculty, the "business side" of the University, including the central administration, used all of the political tricks at its disposal, including pressuring the *Chicago Daily News*, to try to defeat him. Unsuccessfully, as it turned out.

Comedian Mike Nichols, of Nichols and May, whose famous comedy club The Compass Players fell victim to urban renewal, famously joked that urban renewal in Chicago meant "black and white, shoulder to shoulder, against the poor." There was some truth in the jibe, though in this case the poor were primarily black.

At any rate, it is this history that Allen invoked in her Open Letter. Although, puzzlingly, she did not directly refer to Despres, her account might well have been written by him, except that it devotes more space to wondering what the example of such practices means for political education at the University. Thus,

... any university that operates in a democratic context must admit that it educates citizens; it ought at least to know what sort of political education it provides. Most students and faculty on campus wonder exactly why relations with the community feel so poisonous. Very few know about Illinois' remarkable eminent domain laws, nor of the university's role in writing and then implementing them. How uncommonly embarrassing that at a university we accept such a high degree of ignorance about our own circumstances. We should now have the self-confidence to make the university vulnerable within the community, trusting that over the long term appropriate vulnerability will issue in vastly greater rewards, both of self-knowledge and of political friendship, than do current norms of distrust. (Allen, p. 184).

And in words that were as prescient as they were utopian, Allen observed that another side of the University's involvement in the community concerned an ever expanding law enforcement program. Thus, "the university community, including the administration, imagines that the university will keep an extensive police force in perpetuity. The university in its public aspect

has become a rough equivalent to a private security company, something like the Bel Air patrol, which posts signs on the lawns of houses it guards, promising an 'armed response.' Over the long term this mode of self-presentation will undermine other efforts of trust generation that rest more on collaboration than on power." (Allen, p. 181).

Indeed, in various writings, Allen has insisted on how the failings of the University of Chicago's community relations efforts impact the core academic mission of the University. As she explained in her short piece on the founding of the CKP (reproduced in Appendix 1):

For the last five decades, the University of Chicago has simultaneously supported its affiliates' development of some of their capacities for knowing the world while also allowing others to atrophy. Specifically, the University has not encouraged affiliates to take in information from their immediate environments and to connect that information to knowledge acquired through academic research. Traditionally, students and faculty at the University of Chicago have been encouraged to read exciting books and to have stimulating conversations, but often also to "not see" the community immediately around them. Habits of "not seeing" have been taught through lessons about how to drive to Hyde Park from other parts of the city, about which businesses in Hyde Park to patronize, about which restaurants to eat in, and about how to avoid strangers. Who has taught these lessons? Most members of the University community who have been residents for longer than a year. And these lessons have been taught, for the most part, innocently or in passing.[4]

The CKP was meant to work to counter that form of political socialization—the "don't talk to strangers from the community" form so characteristic of the University community. Also, in seeking to build civic friendship, the CKP was to work on the assumption that "different communities have analogous banks of knowledge within them. In every community, people's minds are full of memories and other types of useful knowledge. The only question is what types of knowledge different communities have." In short, members of the University of Chicago community were to build civic friendship by developing genuinely reciprocal partnerships and projects based on mutual respect and interest. The University, for Allen, needed to recognize how much it stood to learn from its neighbors, not simply how much it could teach its neighbors.

Overcoming its own hubris, sharing power, and practicing a genuine epistemic humility were, of course, not easy tasks for an elite educational institution, as Allen well knew. But, as she recognized more clearly in later works, her theory of political citizenship in these respects was in fact deeply Deweyan, in some ways harking back to the first publicly recognized "Chicago School." In a work co-edited with Robert Reich, *Education, Justice, and Democracy*,[5] she and her co-editor explained:

...we believe we can gain clarity and content in our discussion about education by deepening our understanding and appreciation of three core ideals—education, justice, and democracy—that structure, implicitly or explicitly, nearly every discussion about schooling in the United States.... We are not the first to take up such an aspiration. When John Dewey published *Democracy and Education* nearly one hundred years ago, he too argued that "the reconstruction of philosophy, of education, and of social ideals and methods ... go hand in hand." His social moment was not so different from our own. Now as then, changes in the structure of the global economy and in

national labor markets raise questions about the levels of achievement and attainment that prepare individual students and particular nations for competitive success. Now as then, population growth and global patterns of migration raise questions about the capacity of democracies to build civic cultures where citizens can bridge difference and where opportunity is equitably distributed. And now as then, record income inequality, shrinking social mobility, and hardened residential segregation in the United States raise questions about whether educational institutions can function as engines of advancement for those born into difficult and disadvantageous circumstances. (Allen and Reich, p. 2).

To be sure, Allen and Reich allow that certain changes mean that the democratic project must take some new directions. National power, more than local power, is now the big factor in educational policy, and although legal segregation has been challenged on many counts, immigration restriction and diversity are issues on which the state security apparatus plays a role that Dewey could not have foreseen. Even so, the entangled projects of Deweyan democracy and Deweyan education remain profoundly relevant for Allen, as helpful reminders of the long felt need for more meaningful and effective forms of democratic citizenship. Her invocation of "democracy" is largely aspirational—she is hardly unaware of the plutocratic nature of the U.S., and of how far short it falls of anything deserving of the name "democracy."[6] In this, too, her position is very close to Dewey's, who was under no illusions about the class structure of the U.S. The University of Chicago's first president, William Rainey Harper, had called on the University to be the philosopher, priest, and prophet of the City of Chicago.[7] For Dewey, and for Allen, the University's educational mission had to be reconstructed in less elitist terms, as a partner in a collaborative community effort to "let knowledge grow from more to more." Better democratic practices would take place on the ground and in the street, rather than in the cloistered offices of the University. That was the type of "civic knowledge" that the Civic Knowledge Project was tasked to advance.

II. Civic Friendship Past and Future

As the previous section should suggest, the history of the University of Chicago is in many respects the history of the battle for pragmatism, as both a philosophical and social movement.[8] Dewey, for half a century America's best known and best loved philosopher, was very much a formative influence at the University in the 1890s, but so were various of his friends and allies, notably Jane Addams and George Herbert Mead. This "Chicago School," designated as such by none other than Harvard's William James, encompassed philosophy, psychology, pedagogy, and the new social science of sociology, and it was ardently reformist right from the start. As Robert Westbrook has shown, in his compelling work on *John Dewey and American Democracy*,[9] both Dewey and Jane Addams were far more radical figures than their somewhat masked public writings revealed. They both sympathized with Labor in the bloody 1894 Pullman Strike, and consistently bemoaned the narrow and divisive materialism of the capitalist class. But,

With regard to one condition of liberty Dewey did, however, take a strong and definite public stand in this period. All members of a democratic society, he declared, were entitled to an education that would enable them to make the best of themselves as active participants in the life of their community: "Men will long dispute about material socialism, about socialism considered as matter of distribution of the material resources of the community, but there is a socialism

regarding which there can be no such dispute—socialism of the intelligence and of the spirits. To extend the range and the fullness of sharing in the intellectual and spiritual resources of the community is the very meaning of the community." For a child to become an effective member of a democratic community, Dewey argued, he must have "training in science, in art, in history, command of the fundamental methods of inquiry and the fundamental tools of intercourse and communication," as well as "a trained and sound body, skillful eye and hand; habits of industry, perseverance, and, above all, habits of serviceableness." In a democratic community children had to learn to be leaders as well as followers, possessed of "power of self-direction and power of directing others, powers of administration, ability to assume positions of responsibility" as citizens and workers. Because the world was a rapidly changing one, a child could not, moreover, be educated for any "fixed station in life," but schools had to provide him with training that would "give him such possession of himself that he may take charge of himself; may not only adapt himself to the changes which are going on, but have power to shape and direct those changes." (Westbrook, p. 94).

Dewey got caught up in the efforts to reform the Chicago Schools and, in 1896, was successful in founding the University's Laboratory School, his own effort to put his philosophy into practice. So possessed was he with educational reform that at one point he considered giving up teaching philosophy altogether, except through the vehicle of teaching pedagogy. And Dewey's pragmatist approach to education worked at all levels. If the early Lab School was aimed at elementary school children, Addams's Hull House, one of the most successful of the Settlement Houses (the model was taken from Toynbee Hall, which Addams visited), was directed at adults as much as children. Dewey devoted a great deal of time and energy to Hull House, regarding it as the very embodiment of his vision of experimentation in democratic community, and Addams, who was also designated as a lecturer at the University, welcomed this alliance. In many ways, as Westbrook demonstrates, Hull House enjoyed a freer and more open public sphere for the exchange of ideas than the University, which had been founded by the combined forces of Rockefeller and Marshall Field and overall had little sympathy with radical democracy, especially when it led to labor unrest. William Rainey Harper, the University's first president, moved steadily in the direction of the more elitist and managerial approach favored by business. As Robin Bachin has argued, in her persuasive work, *Building the South Side: Urban Space and Civic Culture in Chicago, 1890-1919*:10

The battle over school reform demonstrates the competing visions that were emerging at Chicago over what form modern American education would take in the wake of the rise of the modern research institutions like the University of Chicago. Harper emphasized business models of consolidation and efficiency for his vision of modern education. His school reform bill reflected the rising belief in the power of centralized coalitions of trained experts to direct all phases of education. Because the university offered the most efficient and professional model for shaping education, Harper sought to bring other educational institutions under its control. By contrast, Haley, Dewey, and Mead saw the potential for engaged public participation, with decentralized teacher control, as the best course for providing democratic education in modern America.... The pedagogical debate further underscored the tensions over civic culture emanating from the University of Chicago. The processes of centralizing education in Chicago, designing the university, and regulating land use all suggested a model of civic engagement different from the one initially invoked by Harper. Rather than seeing the university as a neighbor and partner in

shaping knowledge in the city, the administration envisioned a more paternalistic role. Just as the university centralized and consolidated the production and dissemination of knowledge, so too did it try to exert direct control over the process of shaping its physical borders and isolating itself from the rest of the city. These practices went hand in hand, for they illustrated both the physical and the intellectual barriers the university erected as it developed into a leader of higher education both in Chicago and across the nation. Some critics even compared the tactics of the University of Chicago to those of Standard Oil, arguing that taking over smaller competitors in the realm of education was the equivalent of John D. Rockefeller's trust-building project. By swallowing smaller competitors and supplanting competition with a system of corporate consolidation, the university—like Rockefeller—undermined the democratic ideal. (Bachin, pp. 71-72).

Thus, for all of their success on the community level, both Dewey and Addams represented only one part of the University, not the more dominant "business side." Dewey would leave with the turn of the century, and when he did it was not on happy terms with Harper. As Bachin concludes, the "more activist and democratic model of civic engagement promoted by Dewey became an auxiliary function of the university rather than a defining component of it." (Bachin, p. 72).

Still, if this more participatory, Deweyan form of democratic education and community building became an auxiliary function of the University, it proved to be a lively and enduring one. Mead continued his work at Chicago for decades, and the University had a contingent devoted to its own Settlement, in the Back of the Yards neighborhood eventually made famous by the community organizing of the University's most famous organizer, Saul Alinsky, another chapter in the story of making democracy a way of life in Chicago. And the University's Lab School has throughout proudly proclaimed its Deweyan legacy, even as it has grown and evolved in ways Dewey never could have anticipated. Moreover, the more radical, reform elements of the University regularly supported independent reform-minded candidates for city government, unsuccessfully in the case of political scientist Charles Merriam, but successfully in the case of 5th Ward Alderman Despres, who from 1955 on would prove to be one of the most powerful voices on behalf of civil rights, racial equality, and political reform. Again, it was Despres, not Alinsky, who forcefully (if unsuccessfully) opposed, on grounds of fairness, the University-supported urban renewal plans of the 1950s and 1960s, recognizing that this form of "urban renewal" was indeed, as critics noted, simply a mask for "Negro removal." The University clearly wanted a largely white middle-class residential neighborhood for its surroundings, and it used all of its considerable clout to get exactly that. It was against this longer historical backdrop that Allen condemned the problematic elitism and isolation of the University that, she maintains, has unfortunately limited the educational experience the University has had to offer. She founded the Civic Knowledge Project expressly out of the (very Deweyan) belief that scholars and students at the University "need to become civic knowers, that is, people who can learn to decipher the structure of their own world just by observing physical, social, and aesthetic details immediately around them."[11]

Now, it is important to recognize that the spirit of the CKP that Allen embodied was in some key respects set against what she regarded as the problematic model for community relations that the University of Chicago's Office of Community and Government Affairs had established. Like

Dewey, she was seeking to create a less hierarchical and more free floating vehicle for community partnerships, one less driven by what Despres had called the business side of the University, and consequently better able to engage in honest and open discussions of the University's history. One that, in sum, could represent the more vulnerable side of the University and seek to share power.

Allen became Dean of the Humanities Division in 2004, but in 2007 left the University for Princeton's Institute for Advanced Study. However, in line with some of her recommendations, the University of Chicago re-invented itself on the community relations front, changing the Office of Community and Government Affairs into the Office of Civic Engagement in 2008, in an effort to "bring under one umbrella community affairs, and local and state government relations while expanding the University's intellectual and cultural engagement with the City." The first "Vice-President for Civic Engagement" was Ann Marie Lipinski, formerly of the Chicago Tribune, but she was followed in 2012 by Derek Douglas, the Obama Administration's Special Assistant to the President for Urban Affairs. This development, following on such earlier developments as Michelle Obama's work founding the University Community Service Center and serving as Executive Director of Community Affairs at the University's Medical Center, and the growth of what became the Urban Education Institute, under the leadership of Tim Knowles, certainly positioned the University to play a much more active role in a wide range of ambitious and constructive community projects, from education to community medicine to professional development and creating employment opportunities. The ethos of community service and civic engagement for members of the University community has grown so rapidly, particularly under President Robert Zimmer, that it seems safe to say that no other period in the University's history could rival it. Even in the 1890s, when Dewey was actively pushing the University to be a better neighbor, and the University of Chicago Settlement House, on the model of Jane Addams's Hull House, was founded, there was nothing akin to such a commitment on the part of the University's central administration.

To be sure, the growth of administrative policies of civic engagement, at the University of Chicago and many other institutions, notably the University of Pennsylvania,[12] has not always been seen as an unmitigated blessing. The difficult issues of hierarchical central organization, corporatization, faculty governance, and the optimal structure of civic engagement are of course extremely important ones that have received much attention in recent decades, following the self-conscious efforts at civic engagement that began in the 1990s.[13] Critics of shifting university governance policies, such as Benjamin Ginsberg, whose book *The Fall of the Faculty*[14] represents the worries of many faculty members, have charged that institutions of higher education have in the main used their revenues in recent decades to grow into bloated, over-administered institutional structures that have steadily encroached on the prerogatives of the faculty. Administrators devoted to civic engagement, or to any number of other newer but now familiar departments, such as campus and student life, do not, according to such critics, successfully reflect the perspectives of the faculty. And they can be vehicles for colleges and universities to promote the agendas of their central administrations in ways that actually run counter to the vision of citizenship framed by Allen, which stressed the sharing of power rather than the political enhancement of it. After all, one could say that Despres' confrontations with the University of Chicago were in key respects confrontations with a very civically engaged university, one that was working closely with the City's political machine to promote what it saw

as “development,” when in reality it was, as Despres demonstrated, promoting segregation and gentrification.

And there is no doubt some paradox in the entwined development of civic engagement initiatives and the ever increasing elitism of elite universities, such that socioeconomic inequality in the U.S. is now largely reinforced and guided by the educational system at all levels. As Robert Putnam’s powerful work *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis*[15] has demonstrated:

As the twenty-first century opened, a family’s socioeconomic status… had become even more important than test scores in predicting which eighth graders would graduate from college. A generation earlier, social class had played a smaller role, relative to academic ability, in predicting educational attainment. Nowadays, high-scoring rich kids are very likely (74 percent) to graduate from college, while low-scoring poor kids almost never do (3 percent). Middling students are six times more likely to graduate from college if they come from a more affluent family (51 percent) than if they come from a less affluent family (8 percent). Even more shocking, high-scoring poor kids are now slightly less likely (29 percent) to get a college degree than low-scoring rich kids (30 percent). That last fact is particularly hard to square with the idea at the heart of the American Dream: equality of opportunity. (Putnam, pp. 189-90).

In the face of massive socioeconomic inequalities, and such insidious developments as the “school-to-prison pipeline,” with the mass incarceration of poor young people of color,[16] even the best-intentioned college and university administrations are destined to struggle with their own contradictions and limitations. The unintended consequences of well-intended initiatives can seriously compromise them, playing into the very problems that the initiatives hoped to help resolve. The confidence that institutions of higher education have in their efforts to, for example, promote the arts in their neighboring communities may be misplaced, if such efforts only result in urban renewal under another name. The forces of marketing, branding, promotion, fund-raising, and positioning an institution to compete against its peers can all militate against a capacity for critical self-examination, the application of the Socratic method to its own words and deeds. In a strange twist of fate, the official “news” coming from the news offices of colleges and universities is almost invariably good news, indeed positively triumphal news about the latest awards, grants, research breakthroughs, etc. Critical editorializing is left to the student newspapers, which are scarcely in a position to engage in extended investigative journalism, or to outside resources, such as the American Association of University Professors.[17] Faculty are to an astonishing degree quite uninformed about the public policies of civic engagement pursued by their institutions, and tend to intervene only in sporadic and inconsistent ways.[18] As political communities, colleges and universities can be surprisingly limited in fostering their critical public spheres, perhaps in part because their citizens so often assume from the start that they are part of a vibrant intellectual community given to the free exchange of ideas. Academics who lament the ignorance of U.S. citizens when it comes to significant civic knowledge are often no better themselves when it comes to knowing what their home institutions actually do and how they are run. As Allen so persuasively argued, civic knowledge should begin at home.

Such cautionary remarks are meant as precisely that—cautionary remarks. Although it is certainly heartening that so many institutions of higher education have come to adopt a somewhat more Deweyan language about matters of civic engagement and education for

citizenship, it must be admitted that this is in circumstances that make a genuinely Deweyan form of civic engagement very difficult to carry out. The need for Deweyan style Socratic gadflies may in fact be greater than ever, in an era when so many are so concerned to celebrate the triumphs of elite institutions that have made higher education another leading factor in reinforcing socioeconomic inequality. As research institutions they are obviously brilliant on many fronts; as schools of Deweyan democratic citizenship the struggle continues.

III. Unsung Successes

Given the claims and concerns of the previous two sections, it must be flatly admitted that the University of Chicago Civic Knowledge Project has failed in its mission. Overcoming "the social, economic, and racial divisions among the various knowledge communities on the South Side of Chicago" will probably take nothing less than the democratic socialist transformation of the U.S., but in any event is certainly beyond the capabilities of a comparatively small-scale initiative such as the CKP, or even the larger scale initiatives of the University's Office of Civic Engagement.

But in this and the following section, the aim will be to point to some of the paradoxical ways in which, in this context of failure, some signs of hope emerge, signs of hope that ought to be presented more effectively than they usually are, ironically enough. There are lessons to be learned from the work of the CKP, though they are lessons about how mixed and compromised progress can be, and how epistemic humility really is called for, if anything like the vision of Allen and Dewey is to be realized even in part.

Consider, to begin with, the University of Chicago homepage, which has a special box on Diversity and Inclusion that features a statement by President Robert Zimmer that opens as follows:

The University of Chicago is distinctive in many respects, but perhaps in none more so than our singular commitment to rigorous inquiry that demands multiple and often competing perspectives.

The nature of questions being asked and the perspectives being engaged are often a function of the diversity of experiences and outlooks of those participating. Diversity for the University is therefore particularly germane to our core perspective. We must ensure that our scholarly community is composed of a rich mix of individuals who, through their own distinctive viewpoints, contribute to the intellectually challenging culture of the University.[19]

This statement is true and helpful—diversity, in the form of multiple and often competing perspectives, is essential to the very academic mission of the University of Chicago, as both Allen and Dewey would agree. Diversity is a matter of intellectual growth, of always, in a dynamic, living fashion, seriously engaging with alternative perspectives on big questions, on what matters and why, how one is to live, what good citizenship demands, and more. In this sense, although a certain language of diversity is relatively recent, the underlying concern is obviously not so recent, and was in fact reflected in Dewey's vision of education for true democratic citizenship in the modern age.

Naturally, when it comes to implementing any such vision, promoting diversity in practical and concrete ways requires policies that carefully attend to such crucial factors as race and ethnicity, sex and gender identity, and socioeconomic class and status. And there is today much better data about these factors than there was during any previous period of the University's history. Much controversy swirls around these numbers, to be sure, but, problematic as they often are, they do nonetheless indicate that the struggle for greater diversity at the University and in higher education generally is very far from over. Although there have been important gains, especially for women, in other respects, such as the number of African Americans enrolled in top, elite universities, there has been much less progress. As best one can tell, the University of Chicago has always struggled on this score, with the percentage of African American students only varying between something like 2 and 4.5%, where it stands now. This is better than Berkeley, but much worse than Columbia, Stanford, Rutgers, and many other schools.

Such numbers tend to fit all too well with the worst side of the University's history, the ways in which it has alienated the neighboring communities by supporting restrictive covenants, urban renewal, and other deeply problematic social policies that have unquestionably done much damage to community relations, damage with a serious impact on the University's reputation for diversity.[20]

But the narrative really is more complicated than such numbers suggest. This can be illustrated by reference to the very informative exhibition that was curated by Allen (and reflected the concerns that animated the creation of the CKP) and mounted with the help of the University's Department of Special Collections and the Black Metropolis Research Consortium—namely, the exhibition "Integrating the Life of the Mind: African Americans at the University of Chicago 1870-1940."[21]

As the exhibition page—titled 'Who Were the First African Americans at the University of Chicago'—explains:

We are not alone in asking the question: "Who were the first African Americans to attend the University of Chicago?"

A surprising number of letter writers contacted the office of the President between 1900 and 1920 to ask just that. Since the University did not organize student lists by race or ethnicity, this question was difficult to answer. The University Registrar did, however, note on a student's transcript if he or she were "Negro" (see Strategies for Coping with the Social Issue section for examples).

Originally these notations were in the form of marginal notes on the transcripts, but some time between 1908 and 1915, the Registrar's Office added a line on the transcript form for entering a student's racial identity.

The earliest African American undergraduate alumni were Cora B. Jackson (1896), Spencer Cornelius Dickerson (1897), Richard Robert Wright, Jr. (1901), Monroe Nathan Work (1902), John Wesley Hubert (1903), James Garfield Lemon (1904), Cecilia Johnson (1906), Dudley

Weldon Woodard (1906), George Franklin Thompson (1908), Garfield Allen Curry (1910), Earl Edward Finch (1910), and Georgiana Simpson (1911).

The first seven African American graduate alumni were Work (1903), Wright (1904), Charles H. Turner (1907), Woodard (1907), Carter G. Woodson (1908), Julian H. Lewis (1915) and Ernest Everett Just (1916).

By 1943, at least forty-five African Americans had earned PhD degrees from the University of Chicago, more than from any other university in the country.[22]

This all too brief exhibition pointed to some aspects of University of Chicago history that are indeed legitimate sources of pride. It is surely remarkable that the University was home to such figures as Carter G. Woodson, the father of Black History Month, Katherine Dunham, who founded the first major African American dance company in the U.S. and did pathbreaking anthropological work on Haiti, and Benjamin Mays, PhD '35, who became a mentor to Martin Luther King, Jr. Georgiana Simpson, PhD '21, was one of the very first African American women in the U.S. to receive a PhD, and Julian Herman Lewis earned not only a PhD from the University's Department of Pathology, but an MD from the Rush Medical Center as well, becoming the first African American on the University's faculty in 1917.

And yet, oddly enough, many of the individuals just listed, and this side of University of Chicago history in general, remain curiously uncelebrated and comparatively unrecognized by the University. As evidence, consider the new and much publicized book *The University of Chicago, A History,* by longserving Dean of the College John Boyer.[23] On many, many counts this is an admirable work, from which one can learn a great deal. It reflects many years of original archival research on the University, and attempts to straighten the record on various past controversies. And yet, the very exhibition just described, on 'Integrating the Life of the Mind,' which was also based largely on archival evidence, simply does not figure in Boyer's book. Not only is the exhibition itself never mentioned, pathbreaking though it was, but Danielle Allen, who curated the exhibition (and of course founded the CKP) is never mentioned either. At all, in any connection, not even as the first African American woman to serve as Dean of the Humanities. In fact, not one, not a single one, of the illustrious figures just described as highlighted in the exhibition—Katherine Dunham, Benjamin Mays, Carter G. Woodson, Georgiana Simpson—is so much as mentioned in passing in this book. One of the pillars of the CKP, the Senior Statesman of the South Side, oral historian and civil rights activist Timuel D. Black, MA 1954, who won the University of Chicago Benton Medal for distinguished public service, is not mentioned. The first tenured African American on the University of Chicago faculty, Allison Davis, with whom Timuel D. Black studied, is not mentioned. Dr. Julian Herman Lewis is not mentioned in this book, even though he was the first African American on the faculty, teaching at the University from 1917-1943. John Hope Franklin, who as a member of the University's History Department did so much to promote Black History, is mentioned only in connection with his criticisms of the student protestors in 1969, who occupied the Administration building in protest over the treatment of black sociologist Marlene Dixon. James Bowman, the physician on the faculty in the Department of Pathology who mentored generations of black students, and who was the father of Valerie Jarrett, receives no notice. Even Derek Douglas, the Vice President for Civic Engagement, fails to receive any notice in this work.

Admittedly, Boyer allows that he is not trying to make note of every great individual who has ever been associated with the University, a task that would be as difficult to realize as the mission of the CKP. And yet, this is not simply a matter of individual greatness, but of significant institutional, academic, and social policy with respect to diversity and inclusion. The title of the exhibition, 'Integrating the Life of the Mind,' was meant to suggest, not too subtly, "the fact that African American students at the University of Chicago between 1870 and 1940 were integrated into the intellectual but not the social life of the institution." This is as important an aspect of the history of the University of Chicago as any, directly bearing on how it can or cannot serve as a model for promoting diversity in ways that will resonate with the visions of Dewey and Allen and speak to the concerns of neighboring communities. It is not an aspect of the history of the University that should be treated with neglect.

Perhaps the moral of all this is somewhat paradoxical. The CKP has always served as something of a critical conscience on these matters, but in this case the University, which is promoting Boyer's book as part of the 125th anniversary celebration, is actually failing, despite such recent efforts as the University's website section on Diversity and Inclusion, to honor the very figures who illustrate and exemplify what the University of Chicago is aspiring to enhance with respect to certain key forms of diversity. And to underscore the importance of the CKP's approach, it should be stressed that here is a perfect illustration of how the University stands to learn a great deal from the other knowledge communities on the South Side of Chicago. The official histories by prominent academics would be much improved if they reflected a more collaborative and participatory research program, one that brought in a wider range of voices important for the self-examination and self-understanding of the University's history.

IV. Epistemic Humility and Talking to the Elders

At this point, a more personal perspective is needed. I became the Executive Director of the CKP in 2006, shortly after Allen became the Dean of the Humanities at the University, and after the departure of Elizabeth Babcock, a wonderful colleague who directed the CKP in its earliest years. I had been involved in various continuing education and "community outreach" programs, and had been teaching in the College since 1987, designing courses that often reflected my indebtedness to such figures as Dewey and Addams. Certainly, my philosophical disposition was congenial, though I have never been quite sure just why Allen chose me to fill this role. Whenever I asked her, she tended to make cryptic remarks about the CKP needing someone with "strong hands," which I charitably interpreted to mean someone with a strong independent bent.

At any rate, I inherited a smallish organization within the Humanities Division that was primarily committed to 1. working in collaboration with the Illinois Humanities Council in support of the Odyssey Project, the Illinois incarnation of the Clemente Course in the Humanities, which provides a free, credit bearing course in the humanities for low income adults (see Odyssey Project/Education Community), 2. enhancing relations with small arts organizations on the mid-South Side, in what became the CKP's Southside Arts & Humanities Network (see The Network), and 3. providing general programming building positive community connections (see, e.g., The Civic Knowledge Project on Diversity and the University of Chicago). And I was also tasked, as part of my appointment as Senior Lecturer in the Philosophy Department, with creating a "public ethics program."

In developing these commitments and programs, and others that naturally grew out of them (such as the Winning Words precollegiate philosophy program), I came to appreciate the wisdom of Danielle's deeply Deweyan thought that "different communities have analogous banks of knowledge within them. In every community, people's minds are full of memories and other types of useful knowledge. The only question is what types of knowledge different communities have." In the course of my work with the CKP, I would learn more about the University of Chicago than I had ever learned during my previous twenty-eight years at the place, and I would learn most of it from our community partners, not the select group of academics with whom I had mostly associated. Seeking to build trust by understanding the sources of distrust meant doing a lot of listening and learning, and a lot less lecturing than is usual for an academic. The rewards of this work have been greatly-treasured encounters with so many amazing individuals, from Leon Despres to some of the founding members of the Congress of Racial Equality to Clemente Course founder Earl Shorris to Timuel D. Black himself, who has become one of my most admired friends and is still going strong at age 97. Some of the individuals involved have been comparatively well-known, though never honored as much as they deserved to be honored. Many have been part of that larger community that is the true life force of any serious movement. In what follows, I want to pay tribute to all of these people, though I can at most relate a few stories that might illustrate the vision of the CKP, what has been done to help realize it, and why the vision remains important.

Although I had become rather acutely aware of the University of Chicago's puzzling failures to honor some of its most amazing alumni even before my work with the CKP—when, for instance, I worked to support the return of Katherine Dunham to the campus that she had not visited in over fifty years—nothing in my previous experience had quite prepared me for the learning experience that came in the shape of the family of Dr. Julian Herman Lewis.

It all began when I started receiving phone calls from Tyrone Haymore. I had never met Tyrone, but some mutual friends, Timuel Black and Antoinette Wright (the former head of the DuSable Museum of African American History) told him to get in touch with me because they thought that the CKP was the right place to go for help with his project. Tyrone had had a long career with the Chicago Transit Authority, but was also involved in municipal government in the town of Robbins, Il., a historic place that had been developed by those blacks coming up from the South during the first Great Migration who chose not to live in Chicago's "black belt" because they wanted a more rural setting. Tyrone was a very proud resident of Robbins, and he took it on himself to found and direct the Robbins Historical Society and Museum. In the course of his work with the Robbins Museum, he had been put in touch with independent scholar Robert Branch, who helped him identify the figure of Dr. Julian H. Lewis in some photos showing black aviators. Robert had developed a passionate interest in the life and career of Lewis, and had collected an amazing wealth of materials about him that he hoped to turn into a book. His interest in Lewis proved infectious, and Tyrone soon came to share it, which led to the phone calls, in autumn of 2014. "Why hasn't the University of Chicago ever done anything to honor Dr. Julian Herman Lewis?" was the question put to me, and I did not have a good answer. Or any answer at all, in fact.

I had seen the name Julian Herman Lewis, primarily because of the exhibition that Danielle had curated on 'Integrating the Life of the Mind.' But that exhibition actually provided very little

information about Lewis, and certainly did not convey his true significance. He had been a man of many firsts, with his PhD and MD, and role on the faculty at the University. He had married Eva Overton, the daughter of the powerhouse Bronzeville businessman Anthony Overton, and another of the early black students to attend College at the University of Chicago, though she received no mention in 'Integrating the Life of the Mind.' And his book, *The Biology of the Negro*, which was largely a measured and careful condemnation of racial prejudice in medical research, had received rave reviews and influenced such figures as Gunnar Myrdal and Ashley Montague in their attacks on racism in the U.S. It had even been published by the University of Chicago Press, in 1942.24 Why, I wondered, had I heard so little about him? Why was there no memorial to him, or mention of him on the University's Diversity and Inclusion page? No scholarship fund?

I immediately started calling around, but most of the people I contacted knew even less about Lewis than I did. John Boyer admitted that he could not help with this one, and Adam Green, the Master of the Social Sciences Collegiate Division, whose research had largely been devoted to Bronzeville, also admitted that he knew very little about Lewis, having only seen the name here and there. Even Danielle could not help—she tried to recall more information, but only had the little that had been included in the exhibition, though she added that she seemed to recall that there had "been some unpleasantness" in connection with Lewis. This last naturally piqued the interest of the historian in me, and made me determined to find out more.

I found out much, much more. Tyrone and Robert, along with University of Kansas MD Christopher Crenner, collaborated with me to host a one day conference on 'The Life and Legacy of Dr. Julian H. Lewis,' which took place at the University of Chicago in February of 2015.25 As the plans for the conference developed, Tyrone and Robert put me in touch with various members of the Lewis family, including Dr. Lewis's son, John Lewis Sr., an amazing individual in his own right. Dr. Lewis had insisted that his son John attend College at the University of Chicago, then under the leadership of Robert Maynard Hutchins, and John dutifully did so, despite his primary interest being an engineering career. John would also pursue an avid interest in aviation, and his experiences as a private pilot are chronicled in his book *One Adventure After Another*—a book that, he explained, he was helped to write in his retirement years by dusting off his old College notes.26 Indeed, as it turned out, some five generations of the Lewis family have attended or worked at the University. And this remarkable extended family was delighted to see the University honoring its great ancestor with a conference; many of them attended and participated.

The conference led to negotiations with the Department of Special Collections to create an archive for the Dr. Julian H. Lewis and Eva Overton correspondence and artifacts that the family was willing to see housed there, an archive currently under construction. But it was in discussions with various family members—John Sr., Elise Goren, and Eve Earles, especially—that I learned more about the "unpleasantness" to which Danielle had alluded. Sadly, although Dr. Lewis had taught on the faculty of the University of Chicago from 1917 until 1943, he had never been given tenure. And following the retirement and death of his primary backer, H. Gideon Wells, his relations with the Department of Pathology soured. According to his son, he complained that he could not take the disrespectful treatment that he was receiving, which included not being told about department meetings, and as a result decided to move to Provident

Hospital, the historic black hospital in Bronzeville, where he could pursue his research in an atmosphere of respect and without harassment. He continued working at one location or another almost until his death in 1989, but he was never bitter, and he did not condemn the University of Chicago as a whole. Still, it is clear that the University, in the form of its faculty in the Department of Pathology, in some ways in the end compromised the good work that it had done in training, hiring, and supporting Lewis for over two decades, and that much of the story remains to be told.

If, with the creation of the new archive, the story does eventually receive the attention that it deserves, this will be because of the work of the CKP. But in this case, as in so many others, the work of the CKP only came about because I was willing to listen to and learn from people outside of the University, rather than assuming that the truth must already be in the University archives, which themselves may reflect the very exclusions and prejudices that need to be acknowledged and overcome. Tyrone Haymore and Robert Branch only came to me because of the CKP's relationships with the DuSable Museum, Antoinette Wright, and Timuel Black. No one at the University could have sent me to them. And this even though the story here concerns the very first African American faculty member of the University of Chicago, our own history even in the most limited academic construction of it.

The case of Dr. Lewis is a telling one. In my work with the CKP, so much of what I have learned has come about in some such fashion. It was only after seeing the movie *The Great Debaters* and looking into the history of James Farmer that I learned of the role the University had played in the founding of the Congress of Racial Equality in the early 1940s. I was delighted to learn that two of the original founders were still alive—James Robinson and George Houser, who had also worked for the Fellowship of Reconciliation and after his work with CORE had gone on to found the American Committee on Africa. I invited them to come back to Chicago to make a video recounting the history of CORE, an invitation that they gladly accepted. The video, 'The CKP Remembers 1942-43,' remains one of my proudest achievements with the CKP, featuring as it does Tim Black interviewing Jim and George in my living room, with the distinguished black historian Tom Holt, from the History Department, asking questions, and various site visits during which Jim and George identify the locations where CORE protested and lived in an interracial household in defiance of restrictive covenants.[27] During all my time at the University, I had never learned that one of the first Gandhian inspired sit-ins in the U.S. protesting racial discrimination took place in 1943 at the Jack Spratt Coffee House on 47th St., and was led by people who were running workshops on Gandhian non-violence on campus (Jim Robinson was at that time a graduate student in the English Department). Or that CORE had recruited their colleague Bayard Rustin to try to get a haircut at the University Barbershop in the Reynolds Club, knowing that he would be refused and that this could help mobilize opposition to the discrimination happening on campus, even at the Quad Club, the faculty club that excluded black faculty members. The University had, to the best of my knowledge, never called attention to, much less honored, the work of CORE that took place in connection with it. Jim Robinson was never listed in the roles of distinguished alums. Nothing related to CORE figures in Boyer's book, or any other book about the history of the University.

Of course, there are some important exceptions to this one way learning street from the community to the University. Many years ago, the redoubtable Sonya Malunda, now an

Associate Vice-President for Civic Engagement, but then part of the Office of Community and Government Affairs, suggested that I try to work with Prof. Timuel D. Black, since he was an important figure on the South Side but one that the University had done very little to acknowledge. It was, to be honest, thanks to her that perhaps my most significant community connection developed when I followed up on her suggestion.

Timuel D. Black is one of the most remarkable individuals that I have ever worked or studied with. Born in Birmingham Alabama on Dec. 7th 1918, he moved with his family to Chicago in the summer of 1919, the very summer of one of the most important race riots in the history of the U.S. He grew up in historic Bronzeville, the place that he calls "Sacred Ground," served in WWII and was moved to work for social justice after witnessing the Buchenwald concentration camp. He decided in the 1950s to work with King and the civil rights movement, helped organize the March on Washington in 1963, supported Dr. Margaret Burroughs in founding the DuSable Museum of African American History in the 1960s, helped elect Harold Washington as mayor of Chicago in 1983, helped Barack Obama enter political life, recently worked to bring the Obama Presidential Library to Chicago's South Side, and became a highly respected oral historian with his multivolume *Bridges of Memory*, which is a series of interviews with people from Chicago's South Side. One would be very hard pressed to name any major figure associated with Bronzeville that Tim has not known. Calling him the Senior Statesman of the South Side scarcely begins to do justice to this extraordinary man, who has been actively fighting for social justice for longer than most people have been on earth.

Why exactly Tim and I hit it off so well remains something of a mystery. But in no time at all I was working with him to organize visits to Bronzeville; the Bronzeville Experience tour, which is really the Timuel D. Black Bronzeville Experience, featuring his inimitable stories, has now been running for some twelve years, and it has been one of the primary means for connecting the University of Chicago community to the rich knowledge community of the Bronzeville neighborhood. One of my greatest honors was to receive this letter of recommendation from him:

To Whom It May Concern:

For more than the last ten years, I have had the honor, because of my contact and friendship with Bart Schultz, Director of the University of Chicago Civic Knowledge Project, of leading University of Chicago tours and courses that give students and other participants the opportunity to learn about Chicago's South Side. These tours and courses have not only helped me recall events from my ninety-six years on Chicago's South Side, but have also, I hope, helped the participants to understand what Sinclair Drake called the 'Black Metropolis'—to understand that the segregated black communities in Chicago were home to many historically outstanding people in the areas of economics, politics, culture, and social relationships.

There are places still existing, such as the DuSable Museum, founded by nationally known artists and social activists, such as Margaret Burroughs. We have a chance to visit, during these tours, the DuSable Museum and other sites associated with Margaret Burroughs, including the South Side Community Art Center, which she also helped found. On our tours, we pass such places as the mansion of Robert Abbott, founder of the Chicago Defender, which sits by what was then called Grand Blvd., then South Park, and now Martin Luther King Drive. I also talk about the old

South Center Dept. Store, and the old Regal Theater, where many young people such as myself had the opportunity to hear such great musical artists as Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway, and many others. We might head north, past the famous 8th Army Regiment, up to the Wabash Av. YMCA, where in 1926 Carter G. Woodson founded Negro History Week, now known as Black History Month. I was very young at the time, but I was there. Moving along, we pass the sites of former clubs, such as the Sunset Café and Grand Terrace, where Louis Armstrong and many others popularized jazz and city blues. Moving north, we pass the building where Anthony Overton created not only his famous cosmetics company, but also the Douglass National Bank, and we also talk about Jesse Binga and the Binga Bank. There is the old Chicago Bee building, and other sites associated with the many African American businesses that were created in historic Bronzeville.

Sometimes, with our MLK Legacy tours, we visit Liberty Baptist Church, Dr. King's organizing headquarters on Chicago's South Side. Then we might go out to the West Side, to North Lawndale to visit the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Fair Housing Exhibition Center, built on the site where Dr. King lived during his time in Chicago in 1966. We have also visited Marquette Park, the site of one of the most violent attacks on Dr. King and the civil rights marchers. I was there, with Dr. King, and I remember thinking that if one of those mob hecklers attacks me, the non-violent movement is over. I often, during these tours and courses, recall my work with Dr. King, such as my part in organizing the March on Washington.

All of this has been done by Bart Schultz and the Civic Knowledge Project and the Graham School, agencies of the University of Chicago, which have given me the opportunity to help University of Chicago students and other tour and course participants to understand the importance of black life in Chicago from the First Great Migration through the Second Great Migration and down to the present day. This contributes in important ways to community life, enriches the knowledge of African American life during these periods, and demonstrates too why the Obama Presidential Library should be on Chicago's South Side. I am honored to have been the leader of these tours and courses, and able to share the stories of my 96 years on the South Side. I must express here my appreciation to Bart Schultz, who initiated these tours, courses, and other events. Thanks to him, there is now even a garden in my honor on the University of Chicago campus, the Timuel D. Black Edible Arts Garden, located at 5710 S. Woodlawn. And in recent years, more honors from the University have come to me—such as the Benton Medal and the Diversity Leadership Award. The work of the Civic Knowledge Project and Graham School helped pave the way for these.

And I will end by saying that the Civic Knowledge Project under Bart Schultz not only enriches the knowledge of the relationships with the communities around the University of Chicago, but also inspires the building of community between the academic life of the University and these neighboring communities. There is a sharing of the life of both, and that is progress.

Sincerely,

Timuel D. Black

AM '54, University of Chicago

Professor Emeritus, City Colleges of Chicago

Author of *Bridges of Memory*

As Tim's letter suggests, our activities together have gone beyond the Bronzeville Experience to include a Martin Luther King Day tour and many other events and activities as well. For some four years, we have done an Orientation week tour to introduce the College's incoming students to the Bronzeville neighborhood and its most distinguished spokesperson, but there have been many, many other events—workshops, interviews, video productions, etc. The CKP built and maintains the Timuel D. Black Edible Arts Garden, and in 2015 it launched the Timuel D. Black Annual Distinguished Guest Lecture and Jazz Concert, which was hosted by the historic Parkway Ballroom in Bronzeville, where Tim used to go to hear Duke Ellington in the 1940s.28 And Tim's work, along with that of other CKP partners like the Rev. Jesse Jackson of RainbowPUSH, is featured in the CKP's "public ethics" program, its precollegiate philosophy program Winning Words, which has introduced thousands of students on the South Side to a truly diverse practice of philosophy.

I cannot thank Sonya Malunda enough for connecting me to Tim Black, and her efforts reflect one of the ways in which, to my mind, positive and constructive work can indeed be achieved through the University's Office of Civic Engagement. And although at the time she first connected us Tim had received little recognition from the University, his alma mater, it must be admitted that in his case the University has worked hard to make up for lost time. Tim was awarded the University's Benton Medal for Distinguished Public Service in 2012, and the Diversity Leadership Award for 2015, and the City of Chicago honored him with its first "Champions of Freedom Award" and a section of State St. named in his honor. In this, the University has set an example of how to both honor and learn from, and encourage its students to learn from, its neighboring knowledge communities, and one can only hope that more such efforts will be forthcoming. Such actions may seem relatively insignificant, in the larger scheme of things, but they create multiple precedents and paths for a university community to "talk to strangers" who really should not be strangers.

If the CKP has failed in its larger mission, it can nonetheless be proud of accomplishments such as these. It has always kept before it the central goal of, in Allen's words, "leading the University in generating modes of knowledge transmission between itself and its surrounding knowledge communities that might help jumpstart, in places where it has broken down or has never existed, the process of cultural circulation and mutual influence that is crucial to socioeconomic mobility and fluidity, and successful democratic practice." With the CKP, the University of Chicago pioneered an experiment in self-criticism and a more collaborative approach to its own history. Many more examples of this could be provided, but the hope is that there will be many more examples to come, and not only at the University of Chicago. The experiment, like the struggle, continues.

Appendix

THE CIVIC KNOWLEDGE PROJECT

Grounding Ideas, by Danielle Allen

The Civic Knowledge Project originated from two central ideas, one about the nature of universities, and the other about the social, economic, and political effects of knowledge acquisition and circulation. (1) A healthy university cultivates the capacities of its students and faculty members to acquire and process information. The relevant capacities include not only the ability to read books and conduct experiments, but also to absorb and process sense data from the physical world or one's immediate environment. Every feature of life at a university should enhance, not reduce, its residents' capacities for information assimilation, including their ability to process sense data.

For the last five decades, the University of Chicago has simultaneously supported its affiliates' development of some of their capacities for knowing the world while also allowing others to atrophy. Specifically, the University has not encouraged affiliates to take in information from their immediate environments and to connect that information to knowledge acquired through academic research. Traditionally, students and faculty at the University of Chicago have been encouraged to read exciting books and to have stimulating conversations, but often also to "not see" the community immediately around them. Habits of "not seeing" have been taught through lessons about how to drive to Hyde Park from other parts of the city, about which businesses in Hyde Park to patronize, about which restaurants to eat in, and about how to avoid strangers. Who has taught these lessons? Most members of the University community who have been residents for longer than a year. And these lessons have been taught, for the most part, innocently or in passing. That such lessons in "blindness" are typically innocent does not neutralize the effects they have on University and community scholars' capacities to learn.

There is evidence that blindness to one's environment can have negative effects on scholarship by corroding faculties of analysis. Let's take an example from far afield. Scholars who have written histories of Charlotte, N.C., regularly record two facts: first, one of the first prominent white families in Charlotte was the Alexanders; second, the first African-American in city government in Charlotte in the 20th century was an Alexander. No connection is ever drawn between these two facts. Yet at a recent Civic Knowledge Project presentation to a gathering of 500 prominent Charlotte philanthropists the audience acknowledged that there was indeed a connection. As it turns out, Charlotte's history includes the neat historical detail that one early group of settlers, a mix of slave owners and slaves, produced city leaders, both white and black, for two centuries. But the unwillingness of the citizens of Charlotte to see in full the world around themselves, and therefore to see among other things the many connections between white and black citizens, has kept the city's historians from getting their city's history down accurately. Indeed, to be better historians the citizens of Charlotte will need to improve their ability to take in and process information about the present about their environment. To be scholars, they also need to become civic knowers, that is, people who can learn to decipher the structure of their own world just by observing physical, social, and aesthetic details immediately around them.

A central goal of the Civic Knowledge Project is to reintroduce to the intellectual community at the University of Chicago the civic element of the "knowledge" endeavor. Each of us learns to be knowers not only by spending time with books or in laboratories, but also by being attentive to the concrete world around us and becoming capable of taking and processing the information

it provides. The real world is as rich as any book, and a great proportion of our libraries' best books have been written by people who excelled at acquiring civic knowledge. (2) A second idea also motivates the Civic Knowledge Project; namely, that different communities have analogous banks of knowledge within them. In every community, people's minds are full of memories and other types of useful knowledge. The only question is what types of knowledge different communities have. Successful democracies gather their strength and vitality from their ability to generate remarkably rapid knowledge transmission and an impressively fluid circulation of knowledge across geographical and social barriers. In a successful democracy, social diversity should translate into an expanded knowledge base compiled from the banks of the entire citizenry.

In the US, however, the democracy's ability to stir up knowledge circulation fails at points of racial and ethnic difference in society. The relationship of the University of Chicago to the knowledge communities surrounding it serves as a case in point. The University community collectively possesses vast stores of historical, scientific and literary knowledge that flow only in thin streams to the surrounding communities; it also has much knowledge about the worlds of professions and about how to navigate in a professional world. This knowledge, too, circulates only minimally out of the University community to the South Side.

Analogously, communities around the University also have vast stores of knowledge: about the history of Chicago and the US; about religious theory and practice; and about a broad array of cultural artifacts. Just as the University community knows some things about music, poetry and theology, so does the community around the University, even if the specific contents of their respective treasure troves of knowledge differ. Also, communities around the University have much knowledge about how to survive in difficult economic conditions and too often dangerous urban settings; about the benefits of living on the South Side of Chicago; about how to live as a multilingual citizen (i.e. how to "code switch" between local dialects and standard English, as professional situations require). These specific knowledge troves would enhance the lives of members of the University community, if they could be transmitted to them.

In short, the University and the knowledge communities around the University all have knowledge that would be useful to one another. A central goal of the Civic Knowledge Project is to lead the University in generating modes of knowledge transmission between itself and its surrounding knowledge communities that might help jumpstart, in places where it has broken down or has never existed, the process of cultural circulation and mutual influence that is crucial to socioeconomic mobility and fluidity, and successful democratic practice.29

Notes

1. Allen, *Talking to Strangers: Anxieties of Citizenship since Brown v. Board of Education* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004). Her account of Aristotle, on both civic friendship and rhetoric, is of course a radically reconstructive one, transforming Aristotle's case for aristocracy into what is in effect a form of Deweyan democratic community. And her vision of Athenian democracy as one facilitating the circulation of knowledge admittedly owes much to the work of Josiah Ober, for example *Democracy and Knowledge: Innovation and Learning in Classical Athens* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

2. For first-hand accounts of the Great Migrations, see Timuel D. Black, *Bridges of Memory, Vols. 1 and 2* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press/DuSable Museum of African American History, 2003, 2008).
3. Despres, *Challenging the Daley Machine: A Chicago Alderman's Memoir* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2005). The account above is also indebted to my interview with Despres, 'Leon Despres at 100'.
4. See Allen, 'The Civic Knowledge Project: Grounding Ideas'. Also her Aims of Education Address, 'The Power of Education,' in *The Aims of Education: Selected Essays* (Chicago: The College of the University of Chicago, 2009).
5. Allen and Reich, *Education, Justice & Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).
6. See, for example, Lawrence Lessig, *Republic, Lost: The Corruption of Equality and the Steps to End It* (New York: Twelve, 2011).
7. See Harper, 'The University and Democracy,' with an introduction by Morris Phillipson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970 reprint).
8. The first part of this section is adapted from my 'Obama's Rhetoric, Pragmatism, and the University of Chicago.'
9. *John Dewey and American Democracy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).
10. Bachin, *Building the South Side: Urban Space and Civic Culture in Chicago, 1890-1919* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).
11. Again, see Allen, 'The Civic Knowledge Project: Grounding Ideas'.
12. See the important work *Dewey's Dream: Universities and Democracies in an Age of Education Reform, Civil Society, Public Schools, and Democratic Citizenship*, by Lee Benson et al. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007).
13. See such works as Derek Bok's *Universities in the Marketplace: The Commercialization of Higher Education* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), and Jonathan Cole, *The Great American University: Its Rise to Preeminence, Its Indispensable National Role, Why It Must Be Protected* (New York: Public Affairs, 2009). Bertrand Russell had long ago wondered aloud about the curious role of wealth in supporting higher education in the U.S., which of course extends beyond issues of corporatization, commercialization, etc. See Kenneth Warren's 'Timuel D. Black Lecture'.
14. Ginsberg, *The Fall of the Faculty: The Rise of the All-Administrative University and Why It Matters* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).
15. Putnam, *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015).
16. See Michelle Alexander's classic *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press, 2010). Also Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me* (New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2015), which captures the vital importance and motivating force of the Black Lives Matter movement.
17. Which is, to be sure, a very important force. See Cary Nelson, *No University is an Island: Saving Academic Freedom* (New York: New York University Press, 2010).
18. It is telling that, for better or worse, when the University of Chicago in recent years pushed hard and successfully to bring the Obama Presidential Center to Chicago's South Side, there was scarcely any significant general faculty discussion of the University's involvement, despite some faculty representation on the relevant committees.
19. See Zimmer, 'Diversity Statement'.
20. This is not to deny the significance of the many recent initiatives taken by the University of

Chicago administration, which a recent email message from President Zimmer and Provost Eric Isaacs proudly details: “The recently launched No Barriers initiative has broadened access to the College through an expansion of scale and scope of financial aid and increased academic and career support, and led to significantly greater economic, racial, and ethnic diversity of incoming undergraduates. The College has also launched the Center for College Student Success, offering additional advising and increased resources with a focus on students from lower-income families, those who are the first in their families to attend college, and students who may be undocumented. To help foster diversity in our graduate student population, the University also will announce this month that it will be part of the C3 consortium, which creates pipelines to help students from underrepresented groups access graduate programs and continue into academic positions. In these and other contexts, the Center for Identity and Inclusion has been expanded to provide more support for students of diverse backgrounds. Faculty-led programs such as the Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture contribute to engaged scholarship and collaborations that expand the study of race and ethnicity by our students and faculty.” (Robert Zimmer and Eric Isaacs, email communication on ‘Diversity and Inclusion,’ November 24, 2015).

21. See ‘Integrating the Life of the Mind: African Americans at the University of Chicago 1870-1940’.

22. See Who Were the First African Americans at the University of Chicago? An Old Question.

23. Boyer, *The University of Chicago, A History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015). Much of the material in this section was presented as a talk at the University of Chicago Humanities Day on Oct. 17, 2015, with the title ‘The Civic Knowledge Project on the History of Diversity at UChicago.’

24. See Lewis, *The Biology of the Negro* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942). Also, The Biology of the Negro.

25. See The Life and Legacy of Dr. Julian Herman Lewis.

26. See Lewis, *One Adventure After Another* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2013).

27. See ‘The CKP Remembers 1942-43’.

28. See The Prof. Timuel D. Black Bridges of Memory Distinguished Guest Lecture and Jazz Concert and for other events, Media Page.

29. I would like to thank John Lewis, Timuel D. Black, Danielle Allen, and the audience at the University of Chicago Humanities Day event, ‘The CKP on the History of Diversity at UChicago.’ Special thanks to Simon Cook, whose Rounded Globe project deserves every success.

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