



The Museum of the Courageous Honors Nine Stories of Individuals Who Stood Up to Hate

New York, NY, JANUARY 18, 2021— The Museum of the Courageous (MOTC) today announced its inaugural Courageous Class: historical and contemporary leaders who took a stand against hate and injustice through courageous acts. In honor of the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr, after one of the most divisive elections in U.S. history, and when the nation seeks to stem a growing tide of hate, MOTC is highlighting untold and under-told stories that remind us we can all stand up to hate.

The Courageous Class is an annual celebration of inspiring stories. This year's honorees include leaders who fought for LGBTQ+, gender, racial, and religious equity; activists who demanded redress for past injustices; and everyday individuals who refused to stay silent when hate threatened their communities.

Launched in 2019, MOTC is building the largest collection of stories about individuals standing up to acts of hate based on race, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, and ability. These stories show that even small actions can change the course of history and influence others to stand up.

"We know that storytelling can define a nation and shift mindsets," said Teresa Vazquez, executive director and founding trustee of MOTC. "By featuring the stories of those who stand up to hate we remind each other that our shared values of justice and equality will always be stronger than our differences. This is especially important as headlines highlight increasing polarization and hate crimes continue to climb. I'm incredibly proud to share the inspiring stories of our Courageous Class, which show that everyone has the capacity to stand up to hate."

The inaugural Courageous Class includes:

Darnella Frazier, 2020

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Seventeen year-old Darnella Frazier filmed the murder of George Floyd, sparking a global uprising to confront racism and police brutality.

Shahid Shafi and Texas Republicans, 2019

Tarrant County, Texas

A Republican official in Tarrant County, Texas, Dr. Shahid Shafi, refused to surrender his right to religious freedom when a local group tried to oust him from his leadership role due to his Muslim faith. Texas Republicans stood up for Dr. Shafi and reaffirmed his rights.

Pittsburgh's Faith Community, 2018

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Pittsburgh's religious community exemplified courageous leadership, coming together in solidarity across religions to stand firmly against acts of hate in the wake of the deadliest anti-Semitic attack in America's history.

Ricky John Best, Micah Fletcher, and Talliesin Myrddin Namkai Meche, 2017

Portland, Oregon

Three strangers on a Portland train stood up to protect two young women who were threatened with racist, Islamophobic abuse.

Ana Ramos, Leslie Hiatt, and the Bell Gardens 4th Graders, 2015

Bell Gardens, California

A fourth-grade class demanded that their state representatives acknowledge and redress a government policy of mass discriminatory deportations against Mexican Americans in the 1930s.

Pamela Raintree, 2014

Shreveport, Louisiana

Pamela Raintree challenged a city council member in Shreveport, Louisiana to cast the first stone when he tried to use the Bible to argue against an ordinance protecting LGBTQ+ people.

Aiko Herzig Yoshinaga, 1983

Washington, DC

Aiko Herzig Yoshinaga exposed the truth about Japanese internment camps, proving through her dedicated research that her internment was not a "military necessity" as the government claimed.

Vernon Dahmer Sr., 1966

Hattiesburg, Mississippi

A Mississippi man who fought Jim Crow-era laws to ensure that Black citizens could freely vote, Vernon Dahmer, Sr. died defending his family from a white supremacist attack.

Pauli Murray, 1954

Washington, DC

Repeatedly denied opportunity because of her race and sex, Pauli Murray refused to surrender to discrimination. Her vision and dedication helped topple the doctrine of separate but equal, carved a path for women's rights, and forged a more just America.

“The 2021 Courageous Class illuminates the powerful American cultural narrative that individuals have the agency to change the future for the better,” said David Neil, board chair and founding trustee of MOTC. “By celebrating these stories, the Museum of the Courageous seeks to inspire countless others to stand up to hate.”

About the Museum of the Courageous.

The Museum of the Courageous (MOTC) is building the largest collection of stories about individuals standing up to acts of hate based on race, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, and ability. Founded on the beliefs that powerful narratives compel action and storytelling at scale can change a nation, MOTC amplifies untold and under-told examples of courage to continuously bend our country toward justice.

To learn more, visit www.motc.org.

Media Contact: Teresa Vazquez, teresa@motc.org, (917) 279-7280

###