



# VOICES OF PORTLAND

## A BLACK HISTORY MONTH PANEL

2.22.25 1 pm Portland Middle School  
93 High Street, Portland CT

### 1:00 PM - WELCOME - AUDITORIUM

John Dillon, Portland Board of Selectmen  
Bob McDougall, Portland Historical Society

### PANEL

Patricia Hall Jemison  
David Roane  
Barbara Shaw  
Rev. Laurence Woods

moderated by Bob McDougall

### CLOSING

Poem by Naji Chester-Payne

### 2:30 - 4:00 PM

Light Reception - Cafeteria  
Memory Recording Booth - Computer Lab

### SPONSORED BY

Portland Historical Society, Portland Library, Portland Committee on Solidarity; with support from Portland Public Schools, Friends of the Portland Library, CT Valley School of Music and Adams Hometown Market.

Made possible with generous funding from

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**AMERICA 250 AFFILIATE**  
CONNECTICUT

PROGRAM



Neighborhood Playground  
Grows from Joint Effort





# PANELISTS

## **PATRICIA HALL JEMISON:**

Ms. Jemison's family has a deep connection to Portland and Middlesex County. Her mother, Lillian Jones, was born on Freestone Ave. and her father Charles L. Johnson owned Autobody Repair on St. John Street in Middletown. Of Charles and Lillian's eight children, four served in the US military while Patricia attended the American International College in Springfield, MA. Patricia worked as a Prevention Specialist and was a Master Teaching Artist of Dance, Stepping, and Double Dutch for grades K - 12. She developed and trained teams for competitions and exhibitions including the Double Dutch Competitive Team at Gildersleeve Elementary School. In addition to working at the Wesleyan University College Prep, Patricia was employed by several Portland businesses including Standard Knapp in personnel & payroll, by the Portland Dukes as a cheerleading coach, and by Tommy's Pizza during her college breaks. Patricia held many roles here in our town; developing Tykia Modern Dance for the Portland High School, as a Midget Football Cheerleader, playing on the Portland Women's Softball League, and serving as the Community Liaison for Chatham Court, where she still helps with the Chatham Court Reunions.

Her dreams for the future of Portland include utilizing her talents and skills with Portland Youth Programs, being a professional presence for black and white students, and seeing more people of color in the Portland school system.

## **BARBARA E. SHAW:**

Born and raised in Portland, CT, Barbara attended Portland Central School, Valley View, Portland Jr. High School, Portland High School; class of '69. She grew up and lived at 3 High Street (Anderson Farm Supply), and moved to Middletown in 1975.

Her mother, Eugenie "passed on to me to always help and care for everyone in need. Portland will always be home to me."

## **DAVID ROANE:**

Born in Harlem, New York City; on March 3, 1942, David moved to 3 High Street, Portland, CT in 1945. In 1948 the family moved to Veterans Terrace (Long River Village) for two short years, but then returned to live at 3 High Street. Mr. Roane attended Portland Central School, Valley View, Portland Jr. High School. He left Portland High School while in 9th grade to attend the Vinal Regional Technical School (Electrical trade) class of '60. In 1960 he joined the United States Marine Corps; serving until 1964. It was during his first month in the Corps that he learned that his birth name was David Roane. After a brief discussion and explanation of why he was raised with the last name of Shaw, his mother and he agreed that he would keep his birth name, David Roane. After serving the majority of his time in the Corps in Yokosuka, Atsugi Japan, he served briefly in Camp Pendleton (San Diego County) California. In 1966 he returned home to Portland CT, where he met and married his wife, Barbara Jordon. Barbara was raised in the Bottom, as it was called by residents who lived there - under the bridge. As well said by his baby sister, Barbara Shaw, their mother, Eugenie passes on to them to always help and care for everyone in need.

## **REV. LAURENCE WOODS:**

Laurence Woods is the Senior Pastor of the Church of God's Grace in Middletown CT. Married Marie Woods of the Bronx, NY, and together they have four daughters, one son, six grandsons, and two great-grandsons. Laurence is the son of the late Pastor Lorenzo L. Woods and Lady Janese Woods. Laurence has three brothers and one sister. He lived in Portland for the first twelve years of his life before moving to Middletown. He graduated from Woodrow Wilson High School (class of '69) where he played football as a running back and received many awards for his outstanding performances on the playing field. He also ran track for three of his high school years but football was his passion. He was nominated as one of the top football players in New England, and was a perennial selection for the New Haven Register Allstate Team. Upon graduating he received a football scholarship to the University of Nebraska where he played football as a running back. After college, Laurence tried out for several professional teams such as the Detroit Lions (NFL) and the Detroit Wheels of the USFL. Very determined, he went on to play as an undrafted free agent for the NFL Kansas City Chiefs Farm Team and also played for several other Farm Teams affiliated with the NFL, such as the Detroit Giants and the Michigan Indians. Laurence retired from the workforce in 2021 and shortly after began to adhere to the call of God, walking in his father's footsteps to preach the word of God. Laurence and Marie started the Church of God's Grace in October 2021 in Middletown CT. Laurence is the founder of Mancave Ministries of CT where he mentors as well as ministers to men of all walks of life. In addition to loving to fish and attending live Jazz Concerts, Laurence is himself a jazz musician with a group he created called Smoov, and he performs as a bass player when they are in concert. Laurence is additionally known for his delicious famous barbeque spareribs. People come from surrounding areas to enjoy; he loves cooking at his place called The Bone Yard. Laurence is proud to be part of the history of the Black Bottom Community.

