

# Growing Democracy PODCAST

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Ashley (Co-Host): Hi, I'm Ashley Nickels.

Shemariah (Co-Host): And I'm Shemariah Arki.

Casey (Co-Host): And I'm Casey Boyd-Swan.

Ashley (Co-Host): We're podcasting from Northeast Ohio. This is the Growing Democracy Podcast: a space to amplify multiple forms of knowledge, demystify politics, policy and governance, and foster equity-centered civic engagement.

Shemariah (Co-Host): Each episode, we invite a guest or two to talk about what it means to be civically engaged, how engagement can be leveraged to dismantle systems of oppression, and how to grow a socially just and equitable democracy.

Casey (Co-Host): Welcome to the show, and thanks for joining us.

Ashley (Co-Host): So, we're really excited and honored to share a space today with Josiah Quarles. Josiah is NEOCH's director of organizing and advocacy. A long-time soccer coach, he views the sport as an apex of cooperation, communication, skill-building, and endurance. Nurturing these attitudes while appreciating the dignity and creative sovereignty of the individual permeates the way he thinks about organizing. The interplay of freedom and structure, space and connectivity, urgency and patience animate the points of tension that create moments of brilliance in what they call the beautiful game, and in movement work.

Josiah has a background in grassroots organizing, public speaking, education, sports-based use development, and multimedia arts. Social justice and the liberation struggle have been at the heart of many of his professional and artistic endeavors. He views two-way education, community-based solutions, and decentralized power building as fundamentally essential to challenging the politics and policies that have codified the oppression and disenfranchisement of so many. Housing is the foundation to creating community stability, safety and success, and he's happy to help lay that foundation. And we're honored to be here with you today. Welcome.

Shemariah (Co-Host): So, to get us started, last week we had a podcast where we were talking about two Shakers. So, we interviewed someone who works with, uhh, the advisor for the support group, the student group on race relations, it's a group that's been around about 20 years, probably more than that, umm, working with students beginning in the fourth grade, umm, around race relations. It's a peer-to-peer program, so high school students work with other high school students, and

then they also go into the middle and the elementary school students, umm, and work with them there. The person that's running the program now is, umm, an alumnus of Shaker High School, umm, also participated in the program and has done various other things in communities surrounding race relations, equity– things like that.

We also talked with Dr. Donna Whyte, who umm, used to be– uhh, who's a professor at Cleveland State University now. Umm, she actually used to be the vice-president, I think, or maybe the director when she was there before she retired– institutional diversity. She was one of the first people at Dayton University to hold that role. But she also is a long-time resident of Shaker. Her children went to school there, so she has experience, umm, in various roles in the neighborhood, in the community as a resident, as a community member, but then also in this professional role.

In our conversations, we talked, umm, about this concept of two Shakers. So, that wasn't necessarily, umm, where we were headed with the conversation, but that's where it landed. Umm, because we are committed to having honest conversations, umm, with one another about these things, right, birthplace and democracy. And knowing what I had known, what I had also learned about Shakka's case really made me think differently around the questions that we were asking, and then also, umm, how to bring that into our conversation.

Ashley (Co-Host): So, Dr. Whyte was involved in a project, uhh, in the Moreland community in Shaker Heights years ago, and there was an article in Shaker Life that said that everyone has a story to tell. And it was specifically about the Moreland community, where folks were interested in interviewing senior residents and broadcasting these stories on YouTube, and they referred to it as witness to history. Umm, can you tell us a little bit about the power of storytelling– and I'm guessing that's not [inaudible 00:05:13]

Shemariah (Co-Host): Right, you know, but it's that ... it's, we're thinking about the power of storytelling and the opportunity that we have, right, as a podcast about growing democracy and amplifying voices, umm, knowing that we had this conversation with two people from Shaker – with two Black people from Shaker, two Black women. And, you know, we talked about the contentious nature of Black students in the Shaker Heights school district. And so, we had that very frank conversation, but I want to expand it. When we think about storytelling and we think about democracy, it's not always happening in these institutions or in Shaker Life magazine. The story about our good brother, Shakka, is not going to be in Shaker Life, but it is a Shaker story through and through. And so, I want to use this platform to share that.

This is another example of this two Shakers. Thinking about everything that we talk about around race and place, and democracy and gentrification, and moving people in and out and migration patterns. Umm, you know, and this is for someone who I only know from my community advocacy work. You know, I don't know Shakka from anywhere else. I know that when I'm going to be in the

streets or on the line, Shakka's going to be there, right. And I know that he plays a support role in making sure that folks have what they need, making sure things are set up, and making sure things are torn down. And while those are not always the glamorous roles, those are the *necessary* roles, right? And I know him as someone who's always willing, umm, to be on the line. And when we say to bring your gifts and talents, this is what we mean. I remember Shakka playing the piano, providing the entertainment for a cookout we had or something, like the DJ. We got him in the truck – always have what we need, right, so I want to take this time to amplify his story.

So, I want to welcome in Josiah. I also know Josiah from community, most recently through the neighborhood network. But I'm pretty sure that we've been on the same front line in the Black Lives Matter protests recently ... Yes, okay.

Josiah Quarles: Yes.

Shemariah (Co-Host): So, we share that. We've been in the same place a few times, really, with this, uhh, angle of getting our people free, right, thinking about all oppressed people and starting with the most marginalized and understanding that that's Black people in this work. So, it was really important for us to have this story brought to light, but also do it through community.

So, umm, Josiah, I just kind of want to turn it over to you. You can tell the folks a little bit about yourself, umm, and then tell us what's going on between our frontline activists and what's happening in Shaker Heights with [inaudible 00:08:12]

Josiah Quarles: So first of all, I'll start with myself, right, I'll enter the conversation like I'm the person with perspective. I grew up in Shaker not wholly, but I graduated from Shaker, umm, I went to Shaker Heights High School. I live right on the border, the end of Lomond, across the street from the Sunoco station off Lee Road. Umm, you know, so I'm very familiar– I remember when I was a kid, I was one of the older kids, but my brother was younger, so my mom still wanted us to have a babysitter between her getting off of work for a while, right? And so, that house was on Scottsdale, and I just remember being like, "Why are there these walls here?" It was just so striking to me. It just made no sense. I was like, "Why is there a wall in the middle of the street?" Then you go down and it's like, there's another wall, and there's another wall. So like that, like, even as a very, you know, fairly young child, I was always like, "This is– this is weird." Then I got to know the communities that were on the other side and I was like, "Oh, okay, umm... this is interesting."

Umm, myself, I had– you know, I was in MAC Scholars – I was never in SGORRS, but I was in the MAC Scholars program, proud alum. Umm, I had a very enjoyable time at Shaker as far as scholastically, participated in a bunch of activities, umm, it was a very well-resourced school. Although, I did have my challenges, like in matriculating from middle school to high school, I was in honors classes, and several of my teachers did not recommend me being in

honors classes in high school, even though I had achieved Bs in their classes. So, my mother had to then go up to the school and get my classes changed and everything. Umm, so, you know, I don't know if that was just a random mistake, but I doubt it. Umm, and then—

Ashley (Co-Host): There was a similar story that came up in our conversation in the podcast, as well.

Josiah Quarles: Yeah, and then I also had like several interactions with Shaker Heights police department, umm, at my residence. Umm, being surveilled, harassed— in lots of ways. I'm not going to get into too much detail, because it's not entirely my story, but, you know, the south side of Shaker has a much different interaction with police than the north side of Shaker. And that's just reality. Particularly Black folks, particularly young Black males.

And, to bring it to Shakka, right— so, I've known Shakka for a really long time. I knew Shakka from the Heights area. We used to hang out. I worked up the street, and he used to come to like music events, umm, open mics, umm, and he was a really good piano player, had a nice voice, umm, could, you know, program some beats and stuff. So, he was always around. We collaborated a little bit, even made a song with him. I used to babysit his son, Pharaoh, for a little while when he just needed a break. Shakka's always been super involved in the community, a really active individual, an artist, a maker, and you know, just, I mean, just like high-energy positivity— like, that's what you get from Shakka.

So, when this situation happened, I didn't know who it was. I work with Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless, umm, so when I heard that there was an eviction standoff, I was like, "Okay, this is my alley. Let me show up and see what's going on." So, we got some outreach workers we brought down with us, tried to assess the situation. By that time, you know the standoff had ended and folks were over at Kings & Queens, and when I found out it was Shakka, I was like, "Whoa... like, what?" I really couldn't believe it. I didn't know that he was in any kind of, like, legal battle or anything about that, but also, just from knowing him as a person, like seeing him in that situation struck me as really strange.

You know, but, I think there's a layer— there's layers to this. On one layer, you have what the response from the city and the CPD was in that moment, what they thought was necessary, umm, bringing in armored vehicles, assault rifles, snipers, blocking off the entirety of Larchmere Street, umm, for a single individual with a housing dispute, right, who is a well-known community member. Umm, and there had honestly been really no engagement as far as any kind of mediation efforts or understanding. Umm, so that's one aspect. And then the other is what you have with the actual property and the landlord who owns that property. And you look at what happens with real estate and how that affects people's life, and we're talking about gentrification, we're talking about displacement. Umm, there are hundreds of these units that are pushing people out of them simply so that one individual, umm, can make a profit, and another

individual can take control and do whatever they want with those properties, regardless of the individuals who are depending on them for a roof over their head for themselves and their families. And the utter and total disregard, umm, for people's lives and the choice to just abdicate that responsibility, uhh to, you know, corporate interests... They're not going to do what's right. They're not invested in that way.

But there should be some sort of public trust, and that clearly is not there. And I don't think this same thing would happen in another place in Shaker, right, that's the last street in Shaker. It's barely even in Shaker ... Shakey Heights, as we call it. But like, I highly doubt that if, you know, uhh, they transitioned those really nice, new apartment buildings and condos to new ownership, that that new ownership would be like, "You know what? You guys all got to go. I want new people in here. I want to do some refurbishing, I want to do some updates, so you all are going to have to leave." Right? The rents— the leases are not rolling over into month-to-month. People are being offered to extend their lease. A lot of times, what happens is people aren't offered the opportunity to extend their lease, so then there is no obligation for anyone to be helped, right.

There's a lot that the city could do. I mean, you talk about counsel— part of the reason Shakka ended up in this situation is because he had to represent himself in housing court because he couldn't afford a lawyer, right. So, a place like Shaker should definitely have a right-to-counsel program so that people who are in these situations can have access to the same lawyers that the landlords have, umm, that the developers have, and that's not the case.

There's just so— there's so many different ways where Shaker has, has failed in investing in its people, particularly its Black and brown people, particularly in those concentrated areas. Obviously, like, there's Black people all over Shaker; there's Black doctors and Black lawyers, and that's all good and well, but they're largely insulated from the issues that face everyone else. Umm, and Shaker constantly wants to project itself as this panacea, this utopia, they've got it all figured out, umm, but in reality, that's just— that's just not the truth. And so right now, a father is separated from his son. Umm, all of his personal belongings are being withheld and are inaccessible. Umm, there are charges against the gentleman— he's currently incarcerated. I just picked up the few personal items that he had on him when he was arrested for, ironically, inciting a panic. And I think, you know, if anybody was inciting a panic, umm, it was the Shaker Heights police department that rolled down Larchmere with a tank, guns blazing, you know? I think that incited much more of a panic than one man saying he didn't want to leave his house, right? But that is leverage with the legal apparatus, which we know is racist, to disadvantage this individual and to deleverage him.

And so, right now, what's most needed is for our community to create that leverage. Umm, to create that circle and hold, hold his story and support him, support his family, and also like, support the changes that really need to be made. because this is a microcosm that applies to so many people, not just in Shaker but in Cleveland, in Warrensville— wherever. This is a real issue, and I'm

really glad that you're taking this on. Umm, I do encourage folks to give to the GoFundMe that was established, and anything that comes out of that, that will simply be going on bail and rehousing. Umm, and, you know, we have our fingers crossed about the legal proceedings, but we want to make sure that the powers that be in council, the mayor's office, umm, the police department, the housing court and just the general public understand that, you know, these kinds of practices... It's just not humane. It's not who Shaker's supposed to be. It's not who anybody is supposed to be. We should be caring for each other and not creating crisis points, umm, like this on such a regular basis. It's just— it's just not necessary.

It's tragic. But, you know, I'm all in. I'm 10 toes down, and I know there are others with me, as well. And we welcome *anyone* who wants to engage their talents and their efforts, umm, in supporting Shakka and his family in this really tough moment.

Shemariah (Co-Host): Yes. Thank you so much for sharing all of that with us. I want to tease out a few details, umm, for our listeners. So, umm, how Shakka even got to this point is that, umm, he is a resident of Shaker Heights, of a local realty company, Montlack Realty. Umm, so because of the conditions of the home that he was living in, owned by Montlack, he was actually paying his rent in an escrow account, is that correct?

Josiah Quarles: That is correct. He was doing his legal due diligence, advocating for himself, umm, following the process by depositing his rent with the court, umm, until his grievances regarding the conditions of his home were repaired.

Shemariah (Co-Host): Okay. So, this is what we mean when we talk about, "Okay, let's use the system." And this is why we push people to use the system to demonstrate that it's not working. So, he's using the system that's put in place that's supposed to keep his housing secure, even though his landlord is the one who is breaking the law, breaking the lease, by not providing the necessary updates, repairs, requests, whatever it was. But as a tenant, legally— okay, I'm going to set up an escrow account and make sure that landlord, the landlord company, knows this. They knew. From what we hear, it was public knowledge that this is not the only open housing case with this court in Shaker Heights. So, this is something that is happening with this particular company *and* in this particular part of, uhh, Shakey Heights.

Ashley (Co-Host): Can I expand on that, too? Because the city was suing the landlord.

Josiah Quarles: That's correct.

Ashley (Co-Host): And so, there's this cycle ... So, the city is very well aware of what's taking place, and yet it still escalates.

Josiah Quarles: Yeah, the city is suing, I believe over a property on Kemper, an apartment building on Kemper. So I mean, the city had full knowledge of the actions of Montlack, umm, or lack thereof, umm, and still pursued vigorously, umm, this eviction, which really was all about this— a sale of property for Montlack. These displacements were specifically for the sale of property. Now Shaker Heights is in a legal dispute suing this individual, and yet, is pursuing evictions on their behalf so that he can sell properties out— what kind of system does that make? Right? It's just— it's baffling.

But yeah, he was putting his money into escrow, but as I mentioned before, because, because the initial lease had expired, the language of most of them includes something about a month-to-month, and if that's not offered— if a new lease is not offered by a landlord, you default into that. So, it was a waiting game for Montlack to just wait those 30 days out and then go ahead and serve him. So, like, that's the difficult legal ambiguity of a situation like this. Where, you know, the resident didn't do anything wrong. They did everything right. They were actually advocating for themselves. But the system is just *built* repressively, and so the interests of that individual are really just not considered, and, you know, the interests of the landlord are.

Ashley (Co-Host): Can I ask a follow-up? Because... but this is way... It'll take us away from the exact conversation, so please tell me if, umm, it's too off-the-rails. I just sent a message to Shemariah and said, "I think this is more than an intro to frame a different conversation, and this is an episode in and of itself." I think the story that you're telling adds to— builds a lot of different conversations we've been having on the podcast. So my question to you is, given this story, and your story, how are, you know, how is Shaker, because of this two Shaker paradigm, basically *failing* to meet its democratic, kind of ideal of what it promotes itself to be?

Josiah Quarles: I mean, I think it's failing in a lot of ways. I remember when they redid the library, and it was supposed to be— there was supposed to be basketball courts there in the original design. Umm, there's no public basketball courts in Shaker. There was so much pushback, because they were like, "Oh, it's going to cause crime," and, "The wrong people are going to come over here," and blah blah blah blah blah. And it was just all codes for like, "It's going to be too many Black people, and we don't want to deal with that. You know, we don't want to be coming out of Heinen's and be looking at a bunch of Black people down the street." Umm, and, you know, so that's what it is. An investment in Thornton Park, okay, is not an equitable investment.

Okay, umm... there was a whole thing about moving the school into a giant school or whatever— that was the most ridiculous thing I ever heard. First of all, why would you want that many young kids in one place? Second of all, placing it over there is not equitable because one of the families of Black students live over there, and so, they do not have access to the school in the same way. The consideration's just not there of what the implications are of these decisions,

because there are just huge blind spots. And that's okay, but you have to be real about that.

Ashley (Co-Host): And they— So, and this is my perspective – I'm also a Shaker resident. I wasn't going to talk, but here I am. They've, umm, in many ways, in my perspective, from where I'm coming from, co-opted the language of equitability and equitable decision-making for many of these decisions, right? Umm, we can't provide, for a number of reasons that they've provided, umm, neighborhood schools to all communities, they are disproportionately in white neighborhoods, and so therefore, we will shut all of them down and put all of them where the middle school now is, which is a predominantly white neighborhood. And so, they used the language of equity for that decision-making process.

Josiah Quarles: And of course, this is actually shutting all the neighborhood schools in the Black communities down first.

Ashley (Co-Host): Right, right, absolutely. Also important to note.

Josiah Quarles: So, yeah. I mean, you could talk about ... like, the busing. There are so many things that people may have— many have high-minded ideas. That's fine. I'm not necessarily— you know, I'm not here to figure out what someone's intent is, you know? I can't get inside people's heads. But I do know what the outcomes are, I do know what the experiences are, and so at a certain point, it's like, "Okay, well, you know, that doesn't work. This is causing these results. This is what these people need. Why don't we provide *this* instead of what you have in your head that you think is the best option?" Umm, there's just umm, there's just a removal of people from the ground level of what their decisions actually mean in people's lives. Like, if you bus a kid over to Mercer, umm, what does that do for that child's experience? He doesn't know anybody over there. He can't have any relationships and play in the street and whatever, make friendships that are local. His parents can't get there, necessarily, right? That's— that's just not taken into consideration.

So, I think in a lot of ways, Shaker has a very good marketing team. They know all the jargon. They're well learning, they know what's hip in the equity circles and are good at projecting that, but when it gets down to the nitty-gritty, umm, you know they fail just like everybody else. It's just a refusal to accept that that's actually what's happening.

Umm, I mean, I had— Speaking of Shakka, like I literally— there was literally a police officer on the scene at the eviction standoff with Shakka who was talking to someone, and they were like, "You know, like, all of this, you have to understand how it would like threaten people and make people feel afraid," and he's like, "Oh, yeah, I mean, well, you know, we have to have our best practices," and blah blah blah blah blah. And it's like— she's like, "Yo, but people have witnessed people die and get shot." And he's like, "Well, people get shot all the time." And she was like, "Okay, yeah, but sure ... " He's like, "And that's unfortunate," and she's like, "Yeah, but like sometimes, it's by the police." He's



like, "I would, I would, I would argue that." I'm like, "What do you mean, you would argue that?" Like, this is the police officer saying that, like after the past five years, "I don't know, I would argue that like police don't ... " I'm like, "Okay, no one said you shot anybody, dude. Like, calm down." You know? It's just like—it's just a refusal. There can be no truth and reconciliation without first truth. Right. You have to have truth before you can have reconciliation.

Shemariah (Co-Host): And I think that that's a prime example that the folks who are in charge of these systems and institutions don't want reconciliation. And I think that's something that we, uhh, living in these multiple oppressed identities, we've got to understand that. We have to be able to decode the messages that they give us, right, and share them amongst ourselves and say, "This is what they really mean when they say..." you know, all this urban revitalization. That was something that you talked about. Right on Larchmere, we can see the development happening. We see it moving up into Shaker. So, there should have been some sort of institutional, municipal conversation around what's happening, not there should have been—there is. There have been lots of conversations about us, but they're not having those conversations with us. And that's where that missing point is.

And all of the things that they say about all these other communities around the city of Cleveland is not true. For that community, for that Buckeye-Shaker, or in the Larchmere community, because they have got clubs, and they are organized, and they have places where there are established, continuous feedback loops that if you wanted to be in conversation with community members, you could. But those things exist, but they're not tapping into them intentionally because that would interfere with their long-term goal, right, of this revitalization development. We know that as push-out, right? They're pushing us out to bring someone else in. They're redeveloping the neighborhood, not for the people who are there, but for the people they want to bring in.

And so, even if we think about the history and the legacy of Shaker— I don't live in Shaker. I've never really lived in Shaker. I lived in the Shaker Square area, but that was a long time ago. But, from my own research and what I know about cities and suburbs, and in addition to the Thornton Park story that you told about— the Thornton Park and even the library, no basketball courts... You know, when they were building the homes in that neighborhood, they intentionally built them without porches. And as Black people, as a communal people, we like to sit outside and watch the sights, right? Front or back, don't matter. But this community was built intentionally to keep us out, right? And it's continuing to be redeveloped, revitalized to limit how we move in community, and particularly not just how we move, but how we build community, we build power with one another. Because for us, that doesn't happen in silos, that happens when we're together, when two are three are gathered.

And so by, umm, the founding of the city and the revitalization really attempting to limit the spaces, the places, *and* the spaces where we gather— that's intentional. And I think that, you know, as folks who are moving in and out of

neighborhoods and, you know, even for renting, that matters, too. But even also for buying property. Beginning to understand the long-term implications of housing codes and city codes and really understanding how we got to this place and understanding how our decision, umm, either aligns or intersects those long-term goals. Umm, but thinking about that— and the other thing that I just wanted to add to that was, you know, there's only one fast food restaurant in Shaker Heights too, and that's the Wendy's. And *that's intentional*. People think, "Oh, it's just happenstance." No, those things are intentional.

Ashley (Co-Host): I had a conversation with someone recently, and I was like, so... I told them, I was like, "Look, the Van Aken District was built for me. I am a 40-year-old white woman, highly educated, works at university— it was built for me. It was built for my demographic, and I enjoy it. I recognize that. But there's something *deeply* wrong with the fact that it was built for me." I said, "You can't buy things, it's really expensive..." And their response was, "Well, there's a Wendy's across the street." I was like, "Oh, okay. Here we go. That's the resolution. Thank you. I appreciate that."

Josiah Quarles: I have great fond memories of walking with my grandmother to that Wendy's. We used to walk all the way up Lomond, all the way up Lomond to get some Wendy's, and walk all the way back. But yeah, I mean, Shaker is definitely an intentional community. I mean, the [inaudible 00:34:47] have made it all out, the way they wanted it to be. They didn't include me, but they did do a lot of smart things. The rail lines give people more access to the city than any other place in the Cleveland area. Umm, there's a lot of good things about Shaker, and there's nothing wrong with intentionality, but it's 2022, y'all. So like, the—

Shemariah (Co-Host): Even though it wasn't built for us, we have arrived.

Josiah Quarles: Yeah.

Shemariah (Co-Host): We're here, so what are you going to do? Are you going to continue to build like we're not here and like we don't matter and like our dollars haven't helped to build and sustain what's already here? You know, I don't know what's worse, the building it without me while I'm not here, or while I'm here, still building it without me in my face. Like, both of those are horrible paradigms to be in.

Josiah Quarles: Absolutely. Thank you so much for your work, umm, and your energy. If you ever want to talk again any time, just give me a shout. Umm, I'd be happy to.

Shemariah (Co-Host): Before you transition out, I just want you to leave us, uhh, leave our listeners, the community, a call to action for this case involving Shakka. What can folks do? How can they reach out to learn more?

Josiah Quarles: Uhh, so, I mean, a couple simple actions. Folks can definitely write the mayor, umm, call the mayor's office, umm, city council: the same. Write, call, bother them. If they get annoyed, that's good. You have to just let them know that

something matters. Umm, there is a recording of their previous— the last meeting I could not attend, but if folks want to dig into that and just see what they had to say, it is saved and archived if you just go to the council's website. If you umm, if you want to donate to the GoFundMe, that'd be great, because as soon as we can, we want to get Shakka out of there. Umm, because well, a lot of the time, we know that they hold people hoping for a plea deal, right? We hold you, we set your bond high, you can't pay your bond, so you plead out, even if you're not guilty, right? That's a leverage that they have in pre-detention, which, that's another conversation.

But we don't have a specific website or anything yet, so that's kind of like, in the works. I would definitely look out for social media tags with Shakka or Free Shakka or Justice for Shakka, anything like that attached to it, umm, because there'll definitely be action steps. We're planning something public, but I don't want to, like, tip anybody's hands at the moment. Definitely just be engaged ... If you have questions, again, I work at Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless, uhh, so you can go there on the website. That's got my contact information if you want to touch base directly with me, I don't have a problem with that at all. And thank you so much for having me here, and I look forward to continue seeing y'all on the show.

Shemariah (Co-Host): Awesome. Thank you so much. We appreciate your time.

Ashley (Co-Host): Thank you.

Josiah Quarles: Peace.

Casey (Co-Host): Thanks for listening to the Growing Democracy Podcast. Our podcast is edited by Gheramy Demery at Golden Ox Studio right here in Cleveland, Ohio. This podcast is supported by the Center for Pan-African Culture and the School of Peace and Conflict Studies at Kent State University, with additional support from Mark Lewine and the John Gray Paynter Program. If you like our show and want to know more, check out our website, [growingdemocracyoh.org](http://growingdemocracyoh.org). If you want to support the podcast as well as get access to behind-the-scenes content, live chat, and swag featuring designs by Donuts and Coffee, head over to [patreon.com/growingdemocracyoh](https://patreon.com/growingdemocracyoh). Join us next time when we continue this conversation around growing democracy.