



September is National Suicide Prevention Month; organizations work to raise awareness

By [Janay Reece](#)

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ROANOKE, Va. (WDBJ) - September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. According to the [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#), 1 out of every 8 emergency department visits involves a mental health or substance use condition.

[Health research](#) also indicates people with substance use disorders are almost six times as likely to attempt suicide at some point in their lives, compared to people who don't have them.

Multiple nonprofits and organizations throughout the region are working to remind people that they are not alone, as September also doubles as [National Recovery Month](#).

[National Recovery Month \(Recovery Month\)](#) began in 1989. It is a national observance held every September to promote and support new evidence-based treatment and recovery practices to help increase public awareness surrounding mental health and addiction recovery.

Multiple organizations in southwest Virginia are also working to help those with recovery, addiction and suicide prevention.

Earlier this year, WDBJ7 visited one of the region's newest [outpatient addiction treatment centers in Martinsville](#).

Employees say this is a chance to show help is here, lasting recovery is possible, and having the right support can make a big difference.

"With addiction, you really need to have that nonjudgmental air when working with them and creating a safe space where they're free to express themselves, but also explore the causes of their addiction so they can really get the recovery and achieve long-term stability," said Nicholas Cawby.

In the future, the treatment center in Martinsville hopes to expand and provide partial hospitalization and sober housing.

September 10 is also World Suicide Prevention Day. The [Suicide Prevention Council of Roanoke Valley](#) (SPCRV) and [Blue Ridge](#)

[Behavioral Healthcare](#) (BRBH) are sharing planned activities and ways people can get involved.

Officials say their efforts focus on suicide prevention and warning signs, and strive to reduce the stigma associated with suicide.

September 10, BRBH and SPCRv will host a free SafeTalk training. This is an alertness workshop that prepares anyone over the age of 15, regardless of experience or training to become a suicide-alert helper.

BRBH and SPCRv will also host a virtual talk 'Save Lives Presentation' September 20 and a Youth Mental Health First Aid Training September 27. All sessions are free to community members.

For more information and to register BRBH and SPCRv's events, visit brbh.org/suicide-prevention.

In case you or your loved one needs help or additional resources, the new [Suicide Prevention Lifeline is 988](#).

The [Veterans Crisis Line and Military Crisis Line](#) can also connect veterans and service members in crisis, their families, and friends with qualified U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text. The number is 1-800-273-8255, press 1.

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In Case You Missed It

The new [National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) number is "988." The 988 line has help for Veterans, Active Duty Service Members, National Guard and Reservist. Pressing "1" after dialing 988 will connect you directly to the Veterans Crisis Lifeline and those who support them. For texts, continue to text the Veterans Crisis Lifeline short code: 838255.

WARNING SIGNS OF SUICIDE:

The behaviors listed below may be some of the signs that someone is thinking about suicide.

TALKING ABOUT:



- ▷ Wanting to die
- ▷ Great guilt or shame
- ▷ Being a burden to others

FEELING:



- ▷ Empty, hopeless, trapped, or having no reason to live
- ▷ Extremely sad, more anxious, agitated, or full of rage
- ▷ Unbearable emotional or physical pain

CHANGING BEHAVIOR, SUCH AS:



- ▷ Making a plan or researching ways to die
- ▷ Withdrawing from friends, saying goodbye, giving away important items, or making a will
- ▷ Taking dangerous risks such as driving extremely fast
- ▷ Displaying extreme mood swings
- ▷ Eating or sleeping more or less
- ▷ Using drugs or alcohol more often

If these warning signs apply to you or someone you know, get help as soon as possible, particularly if the behavior is new or has increased recently.

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
Call or text 988
Chat at 988lifeline.org

Crisis Text Line
Text "HELLO" to 741741



www.nimh.nih.gov/suicideprevention

NIMH Identifier No. OM 22-4316

Everything you need to know about monkeypox

Questions and answers about monkeypox

**You Asked,
We Answered**

Monkeypox



VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

What is monkeypox?

Monkeypox is a contagious viral disease that is closely related to the one that causes smallpox, but the disease is generally less severe and less contagious. Unlike the [COVID-19 virus](#), which was a virus that was not known until 2020, monkeypox is a well-known illness that was first recognized in research animals in 1958.

Prior to the current outbreak, this infection was only found occasionally in some countries in central and western Africa. Prior outbreaks outside of these countries were small and short-lived.

Is the virus in the United States? If so, how is VA addressing it?

On May 7, 2022, the world was alerted to a confirmed case of monkeypox in the United Kingdom. Since then, the virus has spread to many countries including the United States, and the World Health Organization has declared it a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.

On Aug. 4, 2022, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) declared it a Public Health Emergency in the United States.

VA is working in close collaboration with local and state public health authorities, as well as other federal agencies like Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), to ensure Veterans have access to testing, treatment and prevention tools, such as antivirals and vaccines.

In addition, VA is closely following clinical, infection control, and occupational health guidance provided by the CDC.

How does the virus spread?

Monkeypox spreads in a few ways.

- It can spread to anyone through close, personal, often skin-to-skin contact, including:
 - Most commonly through direct contact with monkeypox rash, scabs or body fluids from a person with monkeypox.
 - Less commonly from touching objects, fabrics (clothing, bedding or towels), and surfaces that have been used by someone with monkeypox or with respiratory secretions.

- This direct contact can happen during intimate contact, including:
 - Oral, anal and vaginal sex, or touching the genitals of a person with monkeypox.
 - Hugging, massage and kissing.
 - Prolonged face-to-face contact.
 - Less commonly in the current outbreak, through touching fabrics and objects during sex that were used by a person with monkeypox and that have not been disinfected, such as bedding, towels, fetish gear, and sex toys.
 - A pregnant person can spread the virus to their fetus through the placenta.

How long does it last?

Monkeypox normally takes about two weeks to four weeks to run its course. If you are diagnosed, your provider will monitor you until the illness is resolved.

Is it fatal?

The less severe Clade II strain is causing the current world outbreak (2022). To date, no one has died from this outbreak in the United States. But monkeypox can lead to other problems (complications) like pneumonia and infections in your brain (encephalitis) or eyes, which can be fatal.

Should I get tested?

Ask your health care provider if you should get a monkeypox test if you have symptoms (like an unexplained rash).

- Your VA provider can help you get a test.
- [Get a list of monkeypox symptoms on the CDC website](#)
- [Send a secure message to your provider](#)

Can I get the vaccine at VA?

VA received an initial allocation of 13,000 vials (up to 65,000 doses) of JYNNEOS™ monkeypox vaccine from Department of Health and Human Services in August. VA will continue to receive additional allocation of vials of JYNNEOS™ to reduce the spread of monkeypox as more product is available within the supply chain.

What can you tell me about the vaccine?

For Veterans who need the vaccine, the series requires 2 doses per person, 28 days apart.

- Due to the limited supply, and to ensure availability for Veterans who need it, most Veterans will receive their

dose of the vaccine in the shallow layers between their skin (intradermal) on their forearm, as authorized by an FDA Emergency Use Authorization. This route, which is being used across the country, uses less vaccine per person and is safe and effective.

- Some Veterans who have had a type of scarring called a “keloid” will get a dose in the upper arm that is injected in the layer of fat below the skin (subcutaneous).

Who is eligible for the monkeypox vaccine?

Any person who comes in direct skin-to-skin contact with another who is infected may catch monkeypox. The current outbreak has, for now, disproportionately affected the gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men who should be prioritized for vaccine based on their personal risk of exposure.

Contact your nearest VA health facility for the latest information.

- [Learn more about monkeypox vaccines on the CDC website](#)
- [Find your nearest VA health facility](#)

By Ron Haskell

Director of Communication, Office of Patient Care Services

Camp Lejeune Water Contamination Claim

Camp Lejeune Justice Act of 2022

The Camp Lejeune Justice Act of 2022 is a bipartisan bill intended to ensure that individuals – veterans, their family members or other individuals living or working at the base between 1953 and 1987 – who were harmed by water contamination at Camp Lejeune receive fair compensation. Many of these individuals have had their claims inappropriately denied or delayed, resulting in additional harm.

The Bill is making its way through Congress as part of the Honoring Our PACT Act of 2022, which passed the U.S. House of Representatives on March 4, 2022. The Act will permit people who worked, lived, or were exposed in-utero, to contaminated water at Camp Lejeune between 1953 and 1987, to file a claim in U.S. federal court.



People or loved ones of those who lived, worked, or were stationed at Camp Lejeune who experienced a water toxicity-related illness may be eligible for compensation.

Camp Lejeune Water Contamination

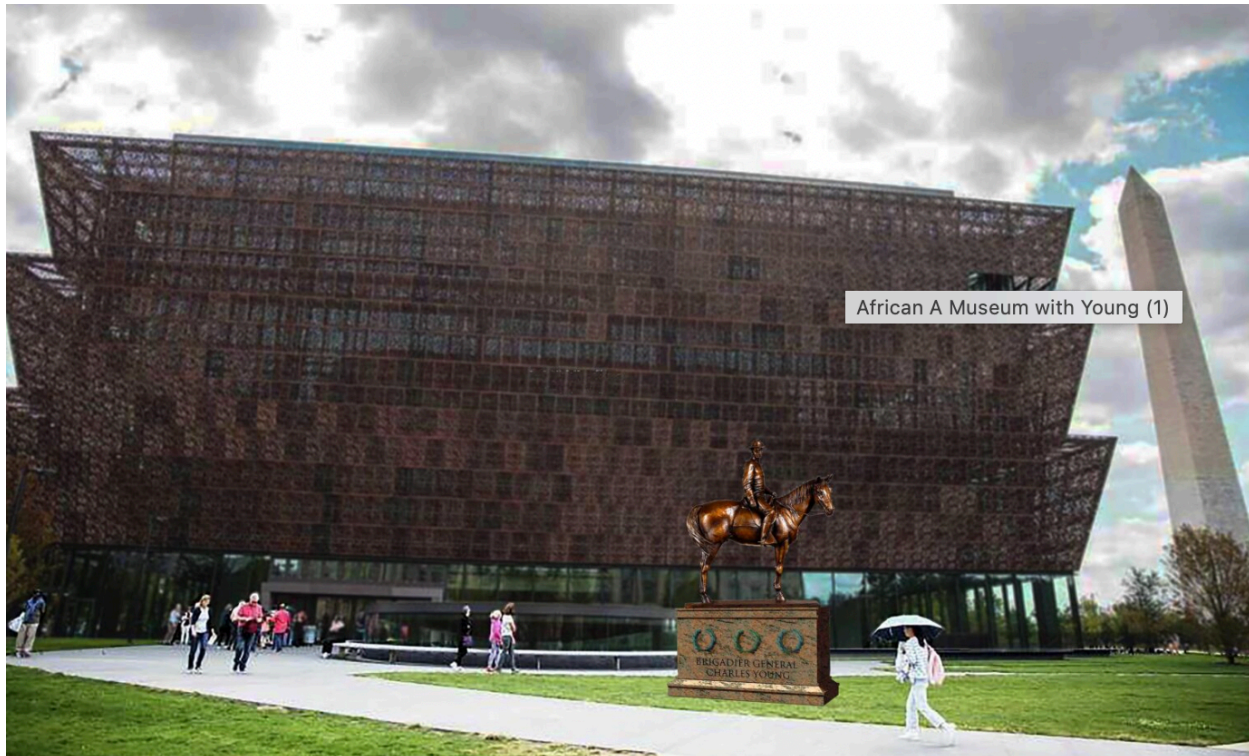
Routine water testing in 1982 found that drinking water sources at Camp Lejeune were contaminated with benzene, trichloroethylene (TCE), tetrachloroethylene, or perchloroethylene (PCE), and vinyl chloride (VC), all of which are known to be carcinogenic or harmful to humans. Contamination of water was documented at up to 300 times acceptable levels in some cases.



Camp Lejeune water contamination sources included leaking underground water storage tanks and waste disposal sites. The contaminated wells were mostly closed by February of 1985; however, those who had been exposed have faced cancer and other serious health problems related to the chemicals. Health conditions may include:

- > Bladder cancer
- > Breast cancer
- > Cardiac birth defects
- > Esophageal cancer
- > Female infertility
- > Hepatic steatosis
- > Kidney cancer
- > Leukemia
- > Liver cancer
- > Lung cancer
- > MDS (Myelodysplastic syndromes)
- > Miscarriage
- > Multiple myeloma
- > Neurobehavioral effects
- > Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- > Parkinson's disease
- > Renal toxicity
- > Scleroderma
- > Other injury

Black Veterans petition National Museum of African American History in Washington, DC



By tfondon -September 2, 2022

By: Charles Blatcher, III
Chairman, National Coalition of Black Veteran Organizations

(This article is free to use in publications and media sources with credit to author.)

Photo credit: Rendering showing proposed statue by Antonio Tobias Mendez.

Oakland, CA....The National Coalition of Black Veteran Organizations have launched a petition drive to place a statue of Brigadier General Charles Young on the grounds of the National Museum. The statue will memorialize the late Buffalo Soldier's 1918 walk/horseback ride from Wilberforce, Ohio to Washington, DC. The 497 mile ride demonstrated his fitness to return to active duty after a forced medical retirement from the segregated US Army in 1917. The statue will symbolize the honor and dedication of all Black Veterans for the merits of their contributions before what is known as the Civil Rights era. Black Military History is the cornerstone of the Civil Rights Movements dating back to abolitionist Fredrick Douglass. The coalition would like to make the statue a gift from the Black Veterans community to history and the Nation. There is no statue of a Black soldier/officer on horseback adorning any street in the nation's capital. Brigadier General Charles Young would be the very first.

In February, we contacted the National Museum making a request they allow the statue placement on the public grounds. With the request they received a video link to our Sculptor Antonio Mendez portfolio and video titled: Inspection of the Colonel Charles Young Maquette (You tube: Antonio Mendez Portfolios (tobymendezstudios.com) Inspection of the Colonel Charles Young Maquette – YouTube). We commissioned two castings of the maquette both are on public display at the Kentucky Center for African American Heritage and the Buffalo Soldiers National Museum in Houston, Texas. With deep respect and intent, we surveyed a dozen locations in Washington DC., seeking potential locations for the statue. The National Museum property proved to be the most favorable. The National Museum recently declined the request without explanation.

You tube: Antonio Mendez Portfolios (tobymendezstudios.com)
Inspection of the Colonel Charles Young Maquette – YouTube. We

commissioned two castings of the maquette both are on public display at the Kentucky Center for African American Heritage and the Buffalo Soldiers National Museum in Houston, Texas. One would think based on our history and preparation that we are serious about the project. We surveyed a dozen locations in Washington DC., seeking potential locations for the statue. The National Museum property proved to be the most favorable. The National Museum recently declined the request without explanation.

Despite the unexplained rejection, the property is the most appropriate public location for the statue. There is a direct association between the institution's Civil Rights theme, Black Military History, and the legendary Buffalo Soldier. Brigadier General Charles Young is an icon of Black military service, symbolizing longevity, dedication, and honor. In addition, the statue would give honor to World War I Black Veterans. Their service and personnel are the least recognized in our history. The question we pose to the National Museum of African American History is "why not." The statue would aid the limited presentation in the Black Military History gallery.

The National Museum has shown some deference toward the subject of our military history. Per my past mention, history institutions devote display space in accordance with their interest in the subject matter. The average gallery size in the three hundred and sixty thousand square feet facility is seven thousand square feet. With exception is Oprah's studio replication at ten thousand square feet, and sports and entertainment galleries comprising the top floor. The Black Military History gallery is limited to three thousand square feet. There are broom closets in the institution larger than the Black Military History gallery. Let me present that in another way; Oprah's fifty million dollars contribution is three times more valuable by square footage

example than the historical contributions of Black servicemen and servicewomen who have contributed to the nation and Civil Rights from the Revolutionary War forward. I use that example not begrudging Oprah. Quoting Billie Holiday, "God bless the child that's got his or her own." My point of reference is to emphasize how the history appears compromised in exchange for money. Again, an institution shows interest through the square footage it contributes to display a subject.

Let me be clear in what we have requested: We are asking for one hundred square feet (a ten foot by ten square foot) plot of land outside on five acres (two hundred and eighteen thousand square feet lot.) We are disappointed about this becoming a public fight. However, we are willing to fight for the location which is public property, and the most fitting for the statue. Its presence also lends to the historical appearance of the physical museum edifice.

We plan to visit the museum at the end of the month. We have invited the Museum to have its chief curator to meet with a small group to explain the Institution's design. The difference between a private museum like the Getty and the public institutions lies in public accountability. We plan to invite the media to join us for the visit. In the meantime, we have launched a petition drive seeking public approval for the idea. The petition is reachable through the following link below. Please sign your name and pass it on to others.

Sign the petition: The petition is reachable through the following link: [Petition · Black Veterans call for statue of B-Gen Charles Young on National AA Museum grounds in DC. · Change.org](#)
Please sign your name and pass it on.

For additional information contact: email cnmmmf@aol.com.

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**tfondon**

125th Anniversary Buffalo Soldier Iron Riders

The Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans (ACMV) Chairman, Bobby McDonald is featured on page 32 of the September edition of the American Legion Magazine. The article commemorates the 125th anniversary of the historical bike ride made by the all-black 25th infantry, the Buffalo Soldier Iron Riders, from Missoula to St. Louis in 1897.



 September 2022


Adventure cyclist Erick Enrique Cedeño and Buffalo Soldier re-enactors Ron Jones and Bobby McDonald, from left, stage a five-mile ride from the Historical Museum at Fort Missoula to downtown Missoula.

‘Like a family reunion’

Legionnaires among those in Missoula, Mont., commemorating 125th anniversary of Iron Riders’ 1,900-mile bicycle ride.

BY STEVEN B. BROOKS
PHOTOS BY JERIC WILHELMSSEN

Thirty years ago, while collaborating on a book about the legacy of historically Black schools within the landscape of college football, California Legionnaire Bobby McDonald came across something he didn't know: that in 1866, the 62nd and 65th U.S. Colored Infantry Regiments had pooled their resources to come up with \$5,000 to incorporate Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Mo. That prompted McDonald to learn all he could about the Buffalo Soldiers - an enthusiasm that was on full display June 14-19 in Missoula, Mont.

A member of Newport Harbor American Legion Post 291 in Newport Beach, Calif., McDonald was one of the primary organizers of

the Buffalo Soldiers Iron Riders Gathering, in commemoration of the quasiquicentennial of the group's historic bicycle ride from Missoula to St. Louis. In 1897, members of the fledgling 25th Infantry Bicycle Corps left Missoula for a 41-day, 1,900-mile ride to St. Louis. All Black enlisted Army personnel, known as Buffalo Soldiers, they were greeted by a crowd of more than 10,000 when they arrived in Missouri.

The weeklong gathering kicked off with a five-mile community bicycle ride and ended with a Juneteenth celebration at Fort Missoula. In between were an opening ceremony, presentations from re-enactors and historical experts, an Iron Riders Salute at a baseball game,



Bobby McDonald throws out the first pitch at a June 15 baseball game between the Missoula PaddleHeads and the Great Falls Voyagers.

a film festival and a high tea. For McDonald and other re-enactors, the purpose of the event was to illuminate an underappreciated and often unknown part of American history.

"There are positive stories about what the Buffalo Soldiers did," he said. "They built these towns. They marshaled the towns. They paved the roads. They painted the buildings. They were the law."

"The bottom line here is education. It's positive history and engaging different people. I'm very blessed to be involved with this."

Also passionate about telling the Buffalo Soldiers' story is Ron Jones, a member of American Legion Post 46 in Culver City, Calif., and a Navy veteran who served as a nuclear specialist on submarines. He was the only Black engineer on the three subs to which he was assigned; only later did he understand who made it possible for him to serve in the military specialty he did: men like his father, a World War II Army veteran and Buffalo Soldier.

Jones' father was one of the founders of the Ninth & Tenth (Horse) Cavalry Association, of which Jones is a member. After his father suffered a heart attack and underwent a quadruple bypass, Jones began to see him in a new light.

"He still was really active with the (Cavalry Association) ... and was like, 'Look, if I have to go to the meetings, I'll take you.' In my mind ... it was just a lot of old guys who got together and talked about their time in the military. I didn't

give a lot of thought as to the significance of their service. It didn't even dawn on me."

When he attended a meeting and heard some stories, Jones' perspective changed.

"I realized that these guys own a significant role," he said. "If it wasn't for these men, who showed this country that if you give a Black man some kind of equal opportunity, if you give them the proper training and then stand back and watch what they're capable of doing ... they proved that we as Black people can make a significant contribution to our country via our military service."

"What they ended up doing was showing the country that there was a role for these minorities, and they're very good at what it is that they do. And I realized that ... if it wasn't for the Buffalo Soldiers, who opened the door and showed this country what a minority could do, I would never have been given the opportunity to serve as a nuclear engineer."

The Buffalo Soldiers' influence on U.S. military history is far-reaching.

"You wouldn't have all the other minority regiments that really proved themselves," Jones said. "If it wasn't for the Buffalo Soldiers, we wouldn't have the Tuskegee Airmen or Montfort Point Marines or the Triple Nickels parachute unit or the Harlem Hellfighters or the 761st Tank Battalion. All these other Black regiments went on to distinguish themselves in the military because of the Buffalo Soldiers."

Further, without the Buffalo Soldiers, you



Kevin Smith, an interpreter with Missouri State Parks, gives a presentation on the 25th Infantry Bicycle Corps' historic experiment.

Watch a video about the Buffalo Soldiers Iron Riders Gathering: legion.org/magazine/videos

wouldn't have the 442nd Combat Regiment (all Japanese) or the Navajo Code Talkers, Jones adds. "They opened the door for all the minorities that came after them."

While Jones and others used the Iron Riders commemoration – and other Ninth and Tenth (Horse) Cavalry Association reunions and gatherings – as an opportunity to educate, they also enjoy renewing and building friendships they've made through shared interest in the legacy of the Buffalo Soldiers.

"It's like a family reunion," said Army National Guard retiree Leanna Rogers, the association's assistant treasurer and a member of the Greater North Carolina Chapter. "We develop a bond with each other. If you're in their town ... they offer to show you anything, take you out to eat, offer you a place to stay. It's like an extended family."

Jones, Rogers and others attending the commemoration were special guests June 15 at the Missoula PaddleHeads baseball game, where McDonald threw out the first pitch. On a deck overlooking the field, Maryland Legionnaire Michael Theard – a 23-year Army veteran and president of the Ninth and Tenth (Horse) Cavalry Association – talked about the common bond shared by re-enactors: the desire to educate Americans about the Buffalo Soldiers, partly through events like the Iron Riders Gathering.

"I think it's an awesome opportunity," Theard said. "This is the reason why our association exists: to promote opportunities to commune

with the locals wherever we are and share the legacy, history and achievements of the Buffalo Soldiers. Those guys served during some of the most exclusionary timeframes of the early development of this country. We have children throughout this country who are not aware of some of the challenges and the obstacles that these guys had to overcome.

"In community college, a four-year institution and even graduate school, none of that information had I been exposed to. I don't want the obscure segments of American history and Western expansion to ultimately disappear because they're not being shared."

Similarly, Jones didn't know about the Iron Riders until he'd done some research on the Buffalo Soldiers. An avid cyclist who routinely participates in 100-mile rides, he's made the Iron Riders the focus of his message for two decades now and is pleased to see them finally getting their due.

"This bicycle experiment that was performed is considered the greatest cycling experiment ever undertaken by men in the military," Jones said. "They weren't chosen because they were Black. They just happened to be in the right place at the right time. I am so pleased ... that here we are now getting press coverage, national coverage ... this is great. It's beyond my expectations where we are today." 🙌

Steven B. Brooks is social media manager for The American Legion.

HISTORY OF HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH



Every year from September 15 to October 15, Americans celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month by appreciating the community's history, heritage, and contributions of the ancestors of American citizens who came from Mexico, Spain, the Caribbean, and South- and Central America.

Hispanic Heritage Month originally started with one week of commemoration when it was first introduced by Congressman George E. Brown in June 1968. With the civil rights movement, the need to recognize the contributions of the Latin community gained traction in the 1960s. Awareness of the multicultural groups living in the United States was also gradually growing.

Two heavily Latinx and Hispanic populated areas, the San Gabriel Valley and East Los Angeles, were represented by Brown. His aim was to recognize the integral roles of these communities in American history. Observation of Hispanic Heritage Week started in 1968 under President Lyndon B. Johnson and was later extended to a 30-day celebration by President Ronald Reagan, starting on September 15 and ending on October 15. It was enacted into law via approval of Public Law 100-402 on August 17, 1988.

September 15 is set as the starting date for the month as it is important for many reasons. It is the independence anniversary for Latin American countries El Salvador, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Honduras. From here onwards, the independence days of Mexico and Chile fall on September 16 and September 18, respectively. Dia de la Raza or Columbus Day also falls within this month, on October 12.

Hispanic Americans have been integral to the prosperity of the U.S. Their contributions to the nation are immeasurable, and they embody the best of American values. The Hispanic-American community has left an indelible mark on the U.S. culture and economy.

	UPCOMING EVENTS		
Sept 11-14	Cal Vet Leadership Conf	San diego, CA	