

2023 Lincoln Theatre Walk of Fame Induction Ceremony

On the Induction of Rev. Dr. James Preston Poindexter and Rev. Leon L. Troy, Sr.

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I am deeply honored to be part of this celebration of two extraordinary men of faith and consequence who have bettered the lives of African Americans on the Near East Side. When you combine their years as ministers and community leaders, it amounts to nearly a century of service.

Before I go any further, allow me to recognize 2019 Lincoln Walk of Fame Inductee Bettye Stull. Bettye's art exhibit on the life and legacy of Rev. Dr. James Preston Poindexter is a moving visual tribute to this accomplished minister and leader. The exhibit opened March 8, 2020 – unfortunately right as the COVID-19 pandemic was exploding across the world. So, few people saw it in person. But you can view it online. All you have to do is enter “Stull” and “Poindexter” into your internet search engine and a link will lead you to this amazing collection of artworks celebrating Rev. Poindexter. Thank you, Bettye. Please join me in applauding her.

Our rich artistic and cultural history...

I've been coming to this stage to offer remarks on the rich artistic and cultural history of this community for many years now. And I thought I'd ask the rhetorical question “what actually IS history?”

Stay with me. I'm going to go from academic to authentic. You're going to have to pay close attention what I have to say. Mental concentration and critical thinking are good for maintaining healthy cognition late into life. And we **all** want that.

What is history?

It is the chronicle of human agency (what we think, say and do) across the realms of space and time.

But space and time cannot contain or diminish our history.

It flows from the past, surrounds us in the present and influences our future.

History cannot be revised and erased as long as there is one soul who is willing to share who did what, when where, and how.

As our fiery and eloquent poet Cynthia Amoah has declared:

“If you're gonna tell. Tell it all!”

And we're here tonight to tell the triumph tale of Rev. Dr. James Preston Poindexter and Rev. Leon L. Troy, Jr., two powerful pastors whose good works blessed not only their congregations but their entire community.

Samuel Langhorne Clemens got it right when he noted that:

History never truly repeats itself, but it **does** often rhyme.

The career paths of Rev. Poindexter and Rev. Troy, although undertaken in different centuries, are so chock-a-block with rhymes that Jay Z would be flabbergasted. Here are just a few uncanny parallels.

Both men led long lives. Rev. Poindexter reached the age of 88. Rev. Troy, God Bless him, is still with us at age 97.

Rev. Poindexter was an adviser to Columbus Mayors, Ohio Governors and Presidents – Hayes and McKinley.

Rev. Troy has been a close confidante to powerful political figures, as well: Columbus Mayor Buck Rinehart, Governor Bob Taft and Presidents Jimmy Carter, George Herbert Walker Bush and Barack Obama.

Rev. Troy was appointed to the Ohio Ethics Commission and is a member of the Ohio Civil Rights Hall of Fame.

And, of course, both men served as pastors of Second Baptist Church, the oldest African American Church in Columbus.

I could go on but...

THESE mighty men of faith are at the core of our rich cultural history.

You don't have to earn a doctorate to know history and, better still, to SHARE it.

Yes. We are here to celebrate the triumphal life journeys of Rev. Dr. James Preston Poindexter and Rev. Leon L. Troy, Sr.

But I want you to do more than celebrate them with us.

I want you to **evangelize** their histories. Leave here tonight and spread the word of their greatness.

Our Lives will be richer for it.

Thank you!

JRM (29 July 2023)

