



# First Friday News & Views



Monthly Newsletter of the First Friday Breakfast Club, Inc.

November 2023 | Volume 28 | Issue 11

**Next Meeting**  
**Friday**  
**November 3**  
**7:00 a.m.**



**Location**  
**Hoyt Sherman**  
**15<sup>th</sup> & Woodland**  
**Des Moines**



**Speaker**  
**Adam**  
**Equality**  
**Peters**



**Website**  
**ffbc Iowa.org**



## Retirement in Stages

by Byron Huff, Board President

Many FFBC members are nearing or in retirement, but I thought it would be interesting to pull some information about the stages of retirement which may help some of you understand the positives and pitfalls that many people find when they leave the full-time workforce. I found that retirement unfolds in stages, each marked by unique challenges and opportunities.

**Phase 1** is like vacation where you wake up when you want and do what you want. This initial stage often involves a sense of newfound freedom—a break from the structured routine of work. You may explore hobbies, travel, or simply savor the luxury of unstructured time. As retirees settle into this phase, they grapple with questions of identity and purpose often associated with going to work every day. This phase typically lasts about a year before you may feel there should be more to life.

**Phase 2** can lead to a feeling of loss; we lose many of the relationships we had when working, and many lose a sense of purpose leading to some mental and/or physical decline. This middle stage brings a deeper contemplation of financial sustainability and health. It's a time when retirees may reassess their living arrangements and consider downsizing or relocating. Health becomes a focal point, prompting many to adopt healthier lifestyles. Social connections also play a crucial role, with retirees nurturing existing relationships and seeking new ones to combat potential isolation.

**Phase 3** is often a time of trial and error. How can I make my life meaningful again? What do we like to do and do well? This can lead to disappointment and failure (condo board until tired of being yelled at). Keep trying to find activities that make you want to get up in the morning; failure could lead to slipping back into Phase 2...not a happy prospect.

**Phase 4** can be the happiest for many who make it to this point; not all do. It's a time to reinvent and answer tough questions. What is my mission? What gives me a sense of accomplishment? Almost always, this involves service to others such as charity work which can mean learning new things and interacting with others that give you a sense of meaning. This last phase of retirement is often characterized by increased reliance on support systems. Health considerations become more pronounced, and financial decisions may involve estate planning. Reflection on legacy (include a charity such as FFBC in your will) and the desire to leave a lasting impact on future generations can become paramount during this phase.

[continued on page 2]



## ["Retirement in Stages" continued from page 1]

Navigating these stages requires a blend of financial prudence, emotional resilience, and a proactive approach to health and relationships. Successful retirement planning involves recognizing the evolving nature of each stage and adapting strategies accordingly. In summary: Enjoy your vacation in Phase 1. Be prepared for the losses in Phase 2. Experiment and try as many things as you can in Phase 3. Squeeze all of the juice out of retirement in Phase 4.

Having personally retired on July 2, 2021, I do not seem to easily fit into the phases. A significant reason is that I worked from home most of the time even prior to the COVID lockdowns that hit in March 2020; this meant I did not feel the loss of social connections.

Jim and I downsized from a large home to a loft in 2019 with an eye toward retirement rather than waiting for retirement to think about this difficult move. I assumed the role of FFBC President in March 2021 (four months before I retired) which helped give me a new sense of accomplishment that filled the void left from not working. I thought that I might fill my time by reading books, but I found purpose in making sourdough bread and do not seem to find a lot of time to read, other than keeping up with emails (most of which are news feeds).

Jim and I will have a lot more to think about and experiment with when he retires in January 2025; I think that is when we will continue to experiment with what makes us happy as a couple and gives us meaning. Our current plan is to travel more (hence our motorhome purchases--we are on our third and largest, which is basically a very nice home on wheels).

As with coming out, we all will have a different journey that is unique based on many factors. I hope that this article helped you think about your life journey leading to or in retirement. Enjoy the ride because as you get older you realize how precious and short life really is.

[www.desmoinespridecenter.org](http://www.desmoinespridecenter.org)

# GLOW

## Pride Center Annual Awards & Recognition Event

### November 18



GLOW will give awards in Leadership, Service, Volunteers, and Allies. A new award will be presented to a person, group, or organization that has performed the greatest in our LGBTQIA community. GLOW will also have an art auction with local Des Moines people donating pieces, along with a dessert buffet.

## Briefs & Shorts



Thanks to **David Cotton** for introducing our October speakers: Hillary Gardner, Max Movitz, David Naert, and Mike Triggs. Thanks to **David Cotton** for managing our website, to **Nicholas Williams** for managing our Microsoft IT infrastructure, and to **David Wilfahrt** for managing FFBC's finances. Thanks to **Wade Petersen** for his work as our newsletter editor. *Thank you to all our newsletter contributors!*

The **deadline** for the 2023 **December newsletter** will be **November 20**. If you have something on your mind to share, type it up and email it to Wade ([wadecpetersen@gmail.com](mailto:wadecpetersen@gmail.com)) by the deadline.



**Fundraising efforts** are ongoing to fund our scholarship program. To date we have awarded over **\$450,000** for scholarships to Iowa high school seniors who have done remarkable, courageous things to reduce homophobia and teach about LGBTQ issues in their schools and communities. Please consider a tax-deductible **contribution** online or by sending a check.



A special thank-you to those FFBC members and friends who have chosen to designate FFBC through the **Donor Direct** program of **United Way**. Contributions through United Way are tax deductible. Those who have chosen this means of supporting FFBC have gone to the trouble of completing their United Way campaign worksheet by designating FFBC as the beneficiary of their generosity. FFBC is an eligible recipient of such funding designations.





oneiowa

# LGBTQ WORKPLACE CULTURE SUMMIT

Embracing Diversity. Transforming Workplaces.

Virtual Event Series  
Nov 1 & 8th | Dec 6 & 13th



The **LGBTQ Workplace Culture Summit** is an annual event where industry professionals share insights on building safe and inclusive workplaces. Attendees will gain a better understanding of the LGBTQ community, learn how to create inclusive policies, attract and retain LGBTQ talent, and become effective allies for meaningful change in their workplaces.

The event takes place over four virtual sessions in November and December.

Explore sessions and buy tickets at [oneiowa.org](http://oneiowa.org).

**Session #1:** November 1st / 2-4 p.m.  
"Love Without a Limit"

**Session #2:** November 8th / 2-4 p.m.  
Leveraging Employee Resource Groups  
for Meaningful Community Impact

**Session #3:** December 6th / 2-4 p.m.  
TBA

**Session #4:** December 13th / 2-4 p.m.  
Empowering Workplaces: Workplace Advocacy Strategies  
Against Anti-LGBTQ Legislation



oneiowa  
HEALTHCARE + WORKPLACE + LEADERSHIP

"I feel we're at this pivotal moment in the queer movement in terms of holding onto our rights, which are being chipped away at... We can't become complacent, and we need to make many alliances. People need to come together as one. There is power in numbers."

**Tom Daley**  
(British Olympic  
Gold Medal  
Diver)



# Future Speakers



**December 1:**

**Rev. Gregory Neal**

Pastor, Grace United Methodist Church

**January 5:**

**Jennifer Konfrst**

Iowa House Minority Leader

**February 2:**

**Ben Page**

Director, DSM Parks & Recreation

**March 1:**

**Rob Sand**

Iowa State Auditor

**April 5:**

**Melissa O'Neil**

CEO, Central Iowa Shelter & Services

**May 3:**

**Keenan Crow**

Director of Policy & Advocacy, One Iowa

**June 7:**

**Sarah Brown-Wessling**

2010 National Teacher of the Year





# A Proud Iowa History in the Balance

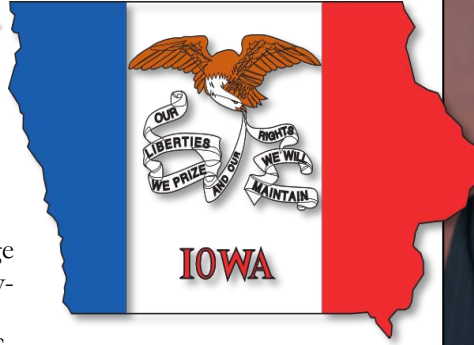
by Jonathan Wilson

Many are not aware of the proud, cutting-edge history of Iowa on the subject of civil equality for all law-abiding citizens of Iowa.

The very first decision of the territorial Iowa Supreme Court was *Regarding Ralph*, decided in 1839. Ralph was a slave in Missouri who made a deal with his slave owner to allow Ralph to emigrate to the Iowa Territory in exchange for installment payments totaling \$500 (not an insignificant sum in the early 1800s – my annual salary when I began practicing law in 1974 was \$14,500, and that was considered the higher end of compensation at the time). He came to Iowa, but eventually fell behind on payments to his former owner. The former owner hired a couple of bounty hunters to find and capture Ralph for return to Missouri and slavery. Thomas Wilson (not a known relative of mine) was one of the three members of the Iowa Supreme Court, and he became aware of Ralph's situation. A *writ of habeas corpus* was issued to stop his deportation, and the case was taken up by the new Iowa Supreme Court. At the time, the Iowa Territory was "free." To its credit, the Iowa Supreme Court held that, although Ralph still owed the balance of the agreed sum, a human being could not be treated as collateral for an indebtedness in "free" Iowa. A creditor could use a horse or a buggy as collateral to secure payment of a debt, for example, but could not use a human being as collateral property. The Court, in essence, ruled that if a person came into Iowa for residence, that person was no longer a slave – was no longer property. End of sentence – drop mic. Ralph lived out his days in Iowa as a free man.

In 1869, Arabella Mansfield (not a known relative of the current Iowa Supreme Court Justice Edward Mansfield) was admitted to practice law in Iowa -- the first woman to be admitted to practice law in the entire United States. Under the law at that time, she was not allowed entry to law school, but she "apprenticed" in her brother's law firm for a couple years, was allowed to take the bar examination, and passed it with flying colors. She was thereafter admitted to practice law by the Iowa Supreme Court. Male or female, if you pass the bar exam, you're a lawyer. End of sentence – drop mic.

There was a time when the law of the land was governed by the United States Supreme Court's 1896 decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, legitimizing racially "separate but (purportedly) equal" public schools. Schools attended by black students were demonstrably lesser than those available for Caucasian students – definitely not equal. That remained the law nationally until the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark 1954 ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* saying that separate is inevitably not equal, and public schools could no longer be "racially identifiable" (that decision has had its own problems; that's for another article). But get this,



in 1868, fully 86 years before *Brown*, the Iowa Supreme Court held in *Clark v. Board of Directors* that separate was not equal, could not be equal, and Iowa public schools had to admit students regardless of race. End of sentence -- drop mic.

Fast forward to 2009, specifically, April 3, 2009, when the Iowa Supreme Court ruled **unanimously** in favor of legalizing gay marriage. Iowa was the third state in the United States officially to **legalize** gay marriage (legalizing domestic partnerships or the like granting less-than-equal legal treatment with rights and privileges afforded to lawfully recognized "marriages," don't count). The first gay marriage in Iowa actually happened in 2007, a day or two after the original decision of Robert Hansen, the trial judge in *Varnum v. Brien*, before he stayed his ruling pending an anticipated appeal to the Iowa Supreme Court. The Iowa Supreme Court unanimously ruled that equal means equal – no special rights – just *equal* rights. Duh! End of sentence – drop mic. That ruling resulted in the martyrdom of three members of the Court, but the decision has stood for over 14 years.

It is not over regarding any of these rights and liberties, especially given the demonstrated lack of deference to established judicial precedent that has been shown by the current Iowa Supreme Court, coupled with a Republican governor and Republican-dominated legislature. A recent study by the Urban Institute found that black parents and their children are more likely to experience unfair treatment when seeking medical care. We've already seen the erosion in our schools with public funding going to "private schools" (slow-motion resegregation, Iowa style). We've also seen erosion of women's rights that my daughter enjoyed but my granddaughters don't have. And, in the year 2023, there were two bills introduced in the Iowa legislature seeking to reverse or diminish the fully recognized rights to, and equal treatment of, same-sex marriage.

The motto of the state of Iowa reads, "Our liberties we prize and our rights we will maintain." It is repeated on our state flag.

Our Iowa history is being written and re-written, daily. We, collectively, are writing and rewriting that history. The Iowa motto is not just a slogan; it's a perennial call to arms for those who want to preserve our proud history of civil equality for all law-abiding citizens of Iowa.





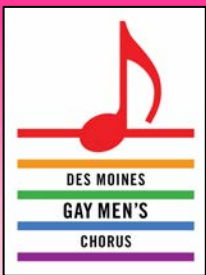


## November Speaker



# Adam Peters

Adam Peters' life is busy and full--just the way he likes it! Like most 30-somethings, Adam wears many hats: son, friend, uncle, activist, host, consultant, speaker, and general rabble rouser. He currently serves as the Director of Operations at the non-profit, Clock, Inc. LGBT+ Community Center serving the Quad Cities. He's a Scott County Democrat and currently a member of the Iowa Stonewall Caucus in which he serves as its "Designated Survivor." He's been an outspoken advocate for LGBT+ Iowans and has truly enjoyed ruffling the feathers of the circus of anti-LGBT+ candidates who have barnstormed the state over the last 15 years. Adam got his start in politics by volunteering as a Precinct Captain for then Senator Barack Obama's remarkable Iowa Caucus win. He has worked in a professional capacity on Pete Buttigieg's campaign in Iowa and California, President Biden's digital team in Pennsylvania, and for Admiral Mike Franken's senate campaign in Iowa. Adam also spends part of the year as a traveling consultant for high school show choirs across the country, spending time as a clinician, show designer, collaborator, and adjudicator.



## Des Moines Gay Men's Chorus

### Announces Season 23

Season Tickets Available: [dmgmc.org](http://dmgmc.org)



#### DECEMBER CONCERT

##### *Light of the Season*

Saturday, December 2, 2023

7:30 PM

Hoyt Sherman Place



#### MARCH CONCERT

##### *Kelly: We All Need an Idol*

Friday/Saturday, March 22 & 23, 2024

7:30 PM

Scottish Rite Consistory



#### JUNE CONCERT

##### *United in Song*

Friday/Saturday, June 14 & 15, 2024

7:30 PM

Temple Theater Ballroom





# FFBC Hosts Coming Out Panel

by Gary Moore

Wednesday, October 11, is **National Coming Out Day**. As any LGBTQ+ person knows, coming out is a lifelong process. For many, the first time they share their own self-awareness with a friend, family, or significant others can be a traumatic occasion and one they usually remember for the rest of their lives. For most, there will be several occasions to come out. The first time you admit to yourself, tell a close personal friend, a family member, or someone whose respect or affection you fear losing is an event long remembered.

Prior to convening the panel, new attendee welcomes and announcements demonstrated the growth and expansion of the LGBTQ influence, including the introduction of Wes Mullins, the new Executive Director of Capital City Pride by Hillary Blackford-Gardner, one of today's panelists; Chad Johnston, who announced the upcoming October 18 creation of a Gay Chamber of Commerce

Association in Iowa at Bubba's; the October 11 Des Moines Gay Men's Chorus Gala; the October 13 Iowa Safe Schools Spirit Awards; and the Plymouth celebration of 30 years of being a welcoming congregation on October 14; and finally, Jeff Savage requesting support for his run for Polk City Councilman. What a month to celebrate the LGBTQ community!

To mark this National Coming Out Day, the FFBC Vice-President David Cotton arranged a panel of four presenters to share their stories and moments in their lives about Coming Out. The program must have proved popular for the Gallery at Hoyt Sherman was filled with a crowd not seen since before Covid 19.

**David Naert**, former president of the Capital City Gay Sports League, spoke of his 13 years of parochial education. It was while returning to his junior year at Illinois State College in Normal, Illinois, that he teared up and realized his years of praying were not going to change his being gay. He rushed to campus to tell his best friend. His Republican, Catholic family was accepting, although his father needed some time to digest the news.

Next to speak was **Hillary Blackford-Gardner**, President of Capital City Pride. Hillary noted that, as a middle-aged white woman with three children, she generally can walk into a room and feel safe. When her 24-year-old daughter moved to the East Coast and came out, it became apparent to Hillary that her daughter did not feel safe doing so at home in Iowa. This sparked her natural instinct for advocacy, education, and human rights. Hillary has been involved in cis and gay relationships and noted the dream would be where sexual or gender identity would never even be a concern. Until that far-off time, the LGBTQ community must be loud and their stories heard if we are to make sure no child has to leave home to feel safe.

**Max Morwitz** (they, he), Program Director at One Iowa, grew up in Des Moines and still lives in the home where he was raised in Sherman Hill. Max was a 2011 FFBC Scholar years ago. Having come out in high school, Max has been a long-time advocate for the LGBTQ community. Max (as "Sarah" back then) had a best friend in high school with whom she spent a lot of time. Her friend one day said they were more than friends; they were dating. His story is more involved and in the following years, relationships brought him to see his self more as trans. Each transformation was the result of a "snap moment," a moment of clearer self-awareness. He is now living with his husband and dog. He is a baker, a harpist, a powerlifter, and an abolitionist, and most recently enjoys playing softball with the Pride Sports League. Max is an articulate educator in sexual and trans issues and history. He can speak his truth so distinctly and quickly that one must pay attention as he displays this breadth of knowledge.



Last, but definitely not least, to tell his story was author **Mike Triggs**. Mike did not so much come out as he was outed by the press. Mike noted he was a deeply closeted man involved in Republican politics for the early part of his life. A confrontation with being gay before he had even acted on "his sexuality" would end his political career in 1992. A part-time job for Nordstrom led to a career in retail men's clothing. His book *You Can't Make This \$#!+ Up!* is on sale at Amazon.

The conversation that followed the panel's presentation displayed the wide range and individual nature of experiences in coming out. Issues with sexuality and gender identification are challenging, but we need to be **loud** to help educate society to raise awareness of LGBTQ history. We need to honor the diversity that has always existed, even though some current political forces are trying to erase our autonomy and agency.



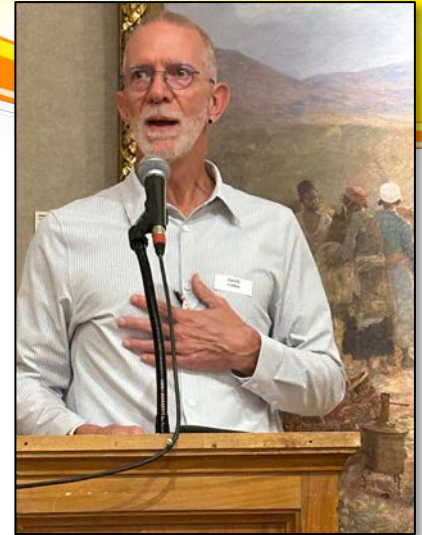
October  
Speakers





# October Meeting Photo Gallery

Photos by  
Gary Moore & Wade Petersen



FFBC Vice President David Cotton  
Moderates the Panel Discussion



## "Coming Out" Panel of Speakers



David Naert



Hillary Gardner



Max Movitz



Mike Triggs







## IOWA LGBTQ CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

**Iowa LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce is working together to advance the common business interests, economic growth, and equality in the workplace for Iowa's LGBTQ+ business community and its allies.**



**[iowalgbtqchamber.org](http://iowalgbtqchamber.org)**



### The Spirit Awards



Several FFBC Board Members attended the Iowa Safe Schools Spirit Awards on Friday, October 13.

The mission of Iowa Safe Schools is to provide safe, supportive, and nurturing learning environments and communities for LGBTQ and allied youth through education, outreach, advocacy efforts, and direct services.



## FFBC Membership

FFBC membership is open to men who self-identify as gay, bisexual, or transgender, and their allies. We welcome all guests, regardless of sexual orientation or gender. Meetings are held the first Friday of every month from 7:00 a.m. - 8:15 a.m. at Hoyt Sherman Place in Des Moines. The following membership and guest rates help us cover our food and facility costs.

### In-Person Meeting Rates (Members & Guests)

**Annual Rate: \$180**  
(12 consecutive meetings)

**Quarterly Rate: \$48**  
(3 consecutive meetings)

**Month-by-Month: \$18**

**First Time or  
One-Time Attendee: \$15**

**Full-time Student: \$8**

**No charge to attend via Zoom**

### Payment Options

Cash or check at the meeting

Credit card prior to the meeting at [www.ffbciowa.org](http://www.ffbciowa.org); visit the Membership tab

### Meeting Schedule

**6:30 a.m. - Doors open**

**6:45 a.m. - Breakfast service  
begins**

**7:00 a.m. - Meeting  
begins**







# 2023 Community Betterment Grants



The Polk County Community Betterment Grant Program was designed to provide financial support to non-profit organizations that provide cultural, recreational, educational, and human needs services to our residents. There was a promise for greater transparency regarding these grants. The list below are grants distributed in 2023 that were supported by Supervisor Matt McCoy.

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Award</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Award</u>	<u>Date</u>
Lincoln High School Senior After Prom	\$5,000	3/7/23	Planned Parenthood of the Heartland	\$7,000	6/27/23
Roosevelt High School After Prom	\$5,000	3/7/23	Raccoon Valley Little League	\$5,000	6/28/23
Valley After Prom	\$5,000	3/7/23	Parks Area Foundation	\$2,000	7/11/23
Capital City Pride	\$15,000	4/4/23	Cultivate: Local Food Connections	\$5,000	7/11/23
Parks Area Foundation	\$10,000	4/4/23	Parenting Way Inc.	\$4,000	7/11/23
First Friday Breakfast Club	\$5,000	4/4/23	Food Bank of Iowa	\$4,000	7/11/23
Waveland Park Neighborhood Association	\$4,000	4/18/23	Salisbury House Foundation	\$6,000	7/11/23
West Des Moines Student Scholarship Fund	\$2,000	4/18/23	DMPS - Multicultural Programs	\$3,000	7/11/23
Watrous South Neighborhood Association	\$6,200	4/18/23	Ellipsis	\$10,000	7/11/23
West Des Moines Historical Society	\$7,500	4/18/23	ChildServe Foundation, Inc.	\$6,000	7/11/23
Taste of the Junction	\$3,500	4/18/23	Civic Music Association	\$7,500	7/11/23
Make-A-Wish Foundation	\$4,000	4/18/23	Wallace Centers of Iowa	\$7,500	7/11/23
Iowa Safe Schools	\$10,000	4/18/23	Girls Rock Des Moines	\$4,000	7/11/23
Des Moines Downtown Neighborhood Association	\$5,000	5/2/23	Girl Scouts of Greater Iowa	\$6,000	7/11/23
Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden	\$5,000	5/2/23	DMPS - Brody Middle School	\$2,000	7/11/23
Des Moines Performing Arts	\$10,000	5/2/23	Edmundson Art Foundation/Des Moines Art Center	\$14,000	7/11/23
Build Lincoln Higher Booster Club	\$5,000	5/2/23	Best Buddies International, Inc.	\$5,000	7/11/23
Animal Rescue League of Iowa	\$3,500	5/2/23	Des Moines Public Library Foundation	\$2,000	7/11/23
Des Moines Metro Opera	\$5,000	5/16/23	Watrous Heights Neighborhood Association	\$5,000	7/11/23
Clive Parks and Recreation	\$5,000	5/16/23	DMACC Foundation	\$5,000	7/11/23
Easter Seals Society of Iowa	\$10,000	5/16/23	Link Associates	\$7,000	7/11/23
Des Moines Gay Men's Chorus	\$10,000	5/16/23	CultureALL	\$3,500	7/11/23
IA Radio Reading Information Service for the Blind	\$14,438	5/16/23	Youth Justice Initiative	\$2,000	7/25/23
Eat Greater Des Moines	\$8,000	5/30/23	Aging Resources of Central Iowa	\$3,000	7/25/23
Iowa Latino Community Center Inc.	\$4,000	5/30/23	Clive Community Services	\$10,000	7/25/23
Greater Des Moines Music Coalition	\$6,000	5/30/23	Jewels Academy	\$2,000	7/25/23
Des Moines Symphony Association	\$10,000	5/30/23	DMPS Foundation	\$3,000	7/25/23
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Iowa	\$10,000	5/30/23	Lincoln High School	\$4,000	7/25/23
Latino Resources Inc. (Latino Heritage Festival)	\$10,000	5/30/23	Iowa Migrant Movement for Justice	\$7,000	7/25/23
The Riders Club	\$5,000	5/30/23	Hospice of Central Iowa Foundation, EveryStep	\$1,000	7/25/23
Latina Leadership Initiative of Greater Des Moines	\$7,000	5/30/23	African Immigrant & Refugees Transition Services	\$2,000	7/27/23
Ingersoll Grand Municipal Improvement District	\$6,000	5/30/23	On With Life Foundation	\$5,000	8/8/23
Planned Parenthood of the Heartland	\$10,000	6/13/23	Meals from the Heartland	\$6,000	8/8/23
Joppa	\$7,500	6/27/23	Clive Community Foundation	\$5,000	8/8/23
Iowa Homeless Youth Centers (IHYC)	\$10,000	6/27/23	Neighborhood Investment Corporation	\$3,000	8/8/23
Latinx Immigrants of Iowa	\$6,000	6/27/23	Stagewest Theatre Co.	\$2,500	9/5/23
			Des Moines Composite Squadron, Civil Air Patrol	\$1,000	9/5/23

Grant funds are not derived from levied taxes, but rather lease proceeds from Prairie Meadows Racetrack & Casino.







# 2023 Community Development Grants



The Polk County Community Development Grant Program supports a limited number of large-scale projects within Polk County with funding typically in the range of \$10,000 to \$100,000. There was a promise for greater transparency regarding these grants. The list below are grants distributed in 2023 that were supported by Supervisor Matt McCoy.

## \$100,000

Ellipsis - 1/24/23

Critical Maintenance needs

Italian American Cultural Center - 5/2/23

Roof repairs

Roosevelt High School - 10/17/23

Library renovations

Primary Health Care, Inc. - 10/17/23

Expand exam rooms & behavioral health flex rooms

## \$99,483

Caring Hands Outreach Center - 1/10/23

Expanding food pantry, thrift processing area, and gardens

## \$75,000

Children's Cancer Connection - 2/21/23

Renovations & Playground to ensure ADA accessibility

Golf Charitable Foundation of Greater DSM - 4/4/23

Principal Charity Classic

Drake University's Robert D. & Billie Ray Center - 6/27/23

The Ray Center's CHARACTER COUNTS! programming

## \$65,000

Des Moines Arts Festival - 3/7/23

Supporting annual Des Moines Arts Festival

## \$52,640

Highland Park Post No. 374 American Legion - 4/18/23

New Roof

## \$50,000

Ingersoll Grand Self-Supporting Municipal Improvement District - 1/10/23

Grand Trees Staircase

Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden - 8/22/23

HVAC Improvement Project

Living History Farms Foundation - 9/5/23

Development of the Cultivation Complex

Orchard Place Foundation - 9/5/23

Capital improvements for residential program

## \$41,715

Roosevelt High School Softball - 5/16/23

Subsurface drainage system

## \$35,000

Skate DSM - 8/22/23

Supporting Streetstyle Open

## \$25,000

Hoyt Sherman Place Foundation - 7/11/23

Lawn enhancement project including plaza & stage

DART - 8/8/23

Expanding on-demand service to vulnerable populations in 50314





# Killers of the Flower Moon

A Film Review by Mark Turnage

Part horror film, part Western, and part true-crime procedural, Martin Scorsese's *Killers of the Flower Moon* is a bloody, bleak 3.5-hour examination of institutionalized racism and its destruction of Native American lives for greed. It's being hailed as a cinematic masterpiece due to its historical scale, Scorsese's impressive body of work, and its unflinching look at one of the darkest times in Native American history. Yet despite its screenplay's more personal shift in narrative from its source material, *Killers* needs more Native American/ Osage triumphs to balance its grim, relentless focus on the perpetrators of their tragedies.

1919: Fairfax, Oklahoma. The Osage Nation, displaced from Missouri by the U.S. government to Oklahoma, discovers oil on their land. With the Osage newly prosperous (and with the legal caveat of white financial guardians), the town grows and attracts white residents looking to make it rich, and unsolved murders of Osage women begin to rise. Perpetually sour-faced WWI vet Ernest Burkhart (Leonardo DiCaprio), returns to Fairfax to seek work from his uncle, folksy influential rancher baron William "King" Hale (Robert De Niro), who between praising the virtues of the Osage urges Ernest to get closer to Mollie Brown (a fantastic Lily Gladstone), a no-nonsense Osage oil heiress part of a large, wealthy Native American family. At the same

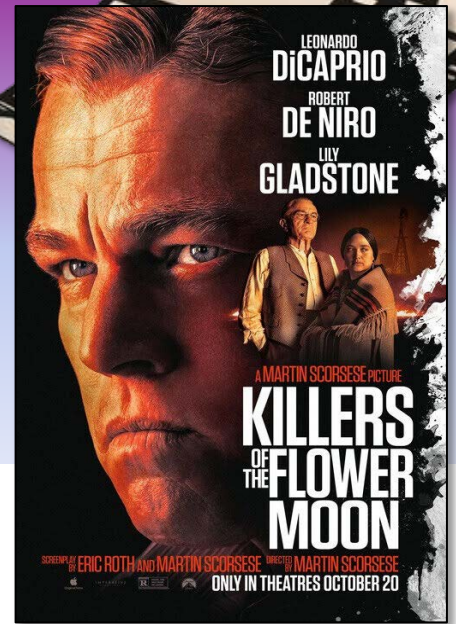
time, Ernest becomes involved in criminal activity, staging masked robberies of wealthy Osage citizens with a small crew.

The pull between Ernest's romance with Mollie and his criminal involvement begin to wear away at him steadily as more of Mollie's family is targeted, and even when the true culprits are steadily revealed early on, apathy, betrayal, and racism meet the victims far sooner and longer than justice ever does. Aside from her mother and one of her sisters, we don't really get much character development for Mollie's family members—but we do see how senseless (and stupid) the circumstances surrounding their murders are, and there are many. It's a hard watch thanks to its true-crime and historical roots, but also because of its skillful depiction of a culturally-accepted white echo chamber that controls nearly every aspect of Mollie's life, down to the KKK being amicably greeted by a character in the town parade. When a seriously ill Mollie travels to Washington D.C. to beg the president for help, President Coolidge grants the Osage an audience for show—then ignores her. The film is loaded with the most vicious examples of performative allyship and contradictory behavior, and *Killers* shines brightest in its commentary of a historically two-faced America.

Scorsese's screenplay shifts the focus from the investigation of the murders to the romance and

relationship of Ernest and Mollie, choosing to expose its culprits and central mystery at the conclusion of the first act. This shift frames the narrative a step closer to its native Osage characters but is told overwhelmingly from the perspective of the white perpetrators of their misery, and it's what stops me from calling this movie a "masterpiece." In such a merciless film with cultural erasure as one of its main themes, the Osage beyond Mollie need more personal triumphs of their own that give them more dimension than just murder victims. *Killers* is ultimately a marriage story, but also a tale about community complicity in killing and stealing from minorities.

At one point, Ernest reads an Osage children's book that asks, "Do you see the wolves in this picture?" In *Killers*, the wolves are in plain sight and attack without compunction. They may even be us. This is a film about complicity, and Scorsese makes his audience a part of it through his narrative choices. But the drumbeat of the Osage's perseverance needs to be loudest for this film to be masterful.



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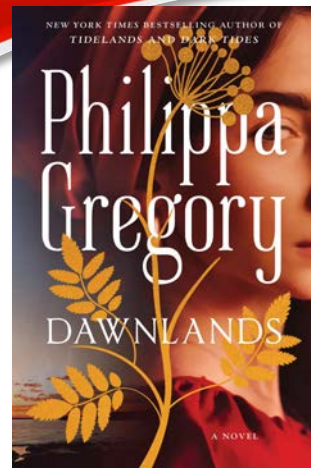
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# Dawnlands

By Philippa Gregory

A  
Book  
Review by  
Steve Person



Philippa Gregory is a prolific author, penning no fewer than forty books—most of them historical novels. I have read nine of her books and actually enjoyed *Dawnlands* up until the last page, that is. I was under the impression that *Tidelands* and *Dark Tides*, the first two works in this series, set up the reader for the final book in what I assumed was a trilogy. Although the endings of the first two books left the reader hanging, it was understandable since they would lead the reader into the third volume.

The final page of this book did not resolve at all the trials and tribulations of the Ferryman family over the decades that preceded this story. This sprawling narrative takes place not only in the docks along the Thames in London, but also across the ocean to Boston in New England. It continues to Venice in Italy and eventually to the seventeenth-century sugar plantations of Barbados in the Caribbean.

Central to the story is its timing. It begins in 1685. England is awash with dissatisfaction of the reign of James II. James is a Roman Catholic and the brother of the deceased Charles II. Although Charles claimed to be a follower of the Protestant cause during his time on the throne, upon his deathbed, he converted to the Church of Rome. The Church of England does not recognize the authority of the Pope. Thus, the dissatisfaction of a large percentage of the English people.

Ned Ferryman, as a young man, fought in the English Civil War on the side of Cromwell. Ned firmly believed in Cromwell's cause of disbanding the monarchy. When Cromwell's experiment in parliamentary rule came to an end, Ned fled his country for the New World. He thrived there many years, befriendng the native populations. When he decides to return to his homeland, he takes passage on a slave ship. With his knowledge of native languages, he rescues a young Indian by purchasing him from the ship's captain. As the ship sails away from Boston, Ned makes a surprising discovery about the young Indian he has saved.

Eventually, Ned and his family members, travel to areas they once thought they would never see. His niece, Alys, runs the family's shipping business and keeps the family going, although it not an easy existence. Money is hard to come by, but she manages to stay out of debt—at least for a while. Amazingly, the family comes in contact with Mary Beatrice, the Catholic wife of James. Plans to smuggle out of England and to France fall through the first time around.

Eventually, in 1688, the so-called Glorious Revolution, outs James and Mary Beatrice to exile in France. James's niece, Mary Stuart, and her Protestant Dutch husband, William, are proclaimed King and Queen by Parliament.

The vilest character in this series is introduced in the second volume. Just like the proverbial bad penny, this person returns to end the story in this third volume in a most unsatisfactory manner. The stories include lesbianism, infidelity, and necromancy. This leads me to believe this is not a trilogy at all, but a prelude to another book. Time will tell.

