

## UPF Connecticut, USA Conference Discusses History of Africans in America

Roger Wetherall  
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CARP, SLAM and YSP team

**Connecticut, USA** -- Recently, a new museum opened in Stratford, Connecticut. The Ruby and Calvin Fletcher African American History Museum is the only museum in the New England region of the U.S. that explores the impact and history of African-Americans and slavery. The UPF executive directors in Connecticut, Roger and Daniela Wetherall, met with the director of the museum, Mr. Jeffrey Fletcher, in March and discussed their intention to hold a program that would help promote the mission of the museum and discuss the issue of Race and Tribalism that is at the root of so many conflicts in our world, and especially in America.

### Mr. Jeffrey A. Fletcher

President of The African American Collections, Inc  
Executive Director, The Ruby and Calvin Fletcher African American History Museum.

Jeffrey is a lifelong resident who was raised in Southeastern Connecticut. He is one of four children whose parents migrated from the south during the "Jim Crow" and turbulent Civil Rights movement. After graduating from high school and college, he began collecting African American artifacts and memorabilia.

Jeffrey spent fourteen years employed within the State of Connecticut Department of Mental Health and twenty-one years as a Police Officer in the City of New Haven, where the community he served was a multi-cultural community comprised of African American and Latino neighborhoods.



The outcome of this discussion was that on Saturday, May 7, about 45 clergy, community leaders, and concerned citizens gathered in the Stratford Room of the Fishbar de Milan Restaurant to build understanding, awareness and empathy among people from varied backgrounds and races through learning about and discussing the issues of race, slavery and the history of Africans in America.

The conference began with an Invocation from Bishop Franklin Fountain and the reading of a letter of support from the Mayor of Stratford, Laura Hoydick, who has been a big supporter of the museum and its mission.

There is nothing more central and important to U.S. history than the story of race relations. That story is

still unfolding, causing new divisions within the United States. Divides that were once racial and geographical are now ideological. The three presenters at the conference, Rev. **Zagery Oliver** (Moral Black Leadership Foundation), Mr. **Jeffrey Fletcher** (African American Collections), and Mr. **James Edgerly** (Higher Purpose Forum) have researched and studied these issues for many years. They presented on the origins, ideology and history of racism and ideas for resolving the current division. Conference participants were then able to share their thoughts through round-table discussions in small, diverse groups.



The conference was our first in-person event in more than two years, and it was successful in changing the discussion from one of anger and resentment to one of compassion, and recognition of the value of each individual and culture, irrespective of their color. To conclude the conference, Mr. Jeffrey Fletcher gratefully accepted his appointment as an Ambassador for Peace and committed to continuing to promote understanding and cooperation among people of different races and tribes.

UPF also worked with the local Youth and Students for Peace (YSP) chapter to plant gardens around the museum.

