

GUEST COLUMN
For the Thursday, February 23, 2017 Edition
From: Mayor James E. "Jamie" Mayo

Think About the Opportunities that Black History Makers Have Created For Us

On February 25, many of us will take part in the Monroe Renaissance Committee's annual Black Heritage Program. This week, I thought I talk about our heritage. Before our ancestors were brought over to this country on slave ships, our people helped design and build the great pyramids of Egypt. We had great military leaders like King Hannibal. King Mansa Musa I (from Mali) ruled over a kingdom that had a net worth of over \$400 billion in today's currency – making him the richest man to have ever walked the earth.

Bible study teaches us that Cush was son of Ham, the son of Noah. Bible study and history books tell us that the Cushites were black people. As a matter of fact, they were Ethiopians. Taharqa ruled as the King of Cush for over 30-years. Our bibles tell us, in Isaiah 37:9 and 2 Kings 19:9, that King Taharqa led his armies against the invading Assyrians in defense of his ally, Israel. And by the way, he was just 16, when he did this. We literally do come from kings and queens.

Brothers and Sisters, I shared these black history facts with you because we should all be motivated to know what black folks can do when given an opportunity. A scholar defined "**opportunity**" as – *a set of circumstances that make it possible to do something*. Those of us who are now Mayor, City Council persons, Police chiefs, Sheriff's, business owners, and more...will tell you that we were able to take advantage of opportunities created by those who came before us.

Now, it is our responsibility to support and encourage our children and grandchildren to know they can...Dream like Martin Luther King, Lead like Harriet Tubman, Think like Marcus Garvey, Build like Madame C.J. Walker, Challenge like Rosa Parks, and Achieve like President Barack Obama! These are just the well-known black history makers. There are so many others that history has failed to record.

There is an old saying that goes "All I need is a time and opportunity." Now is the time! Seize the opportunity to do great things and create new black history that we can all be proud of! By working together, we are making a difference. Monroe is one city, with one future!