



Vol. 7 Number 4 – Nov. 2025

MAC Arrow

Unitarian Universalist

Multiracial Unity Action Council
(UUMUAC)

“For the Unity of the
light and dark skinned
people of the world.”

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Preamble

Racism and related forms of prejudice are revealed when someone treats another person differently due to their perceived race or ethnicity. These prejudices affect people around the world. Such disrespectful conduct is especially harmful in religious communities because of their commitment to strong ethical and moral standards.

Vision Statement

We envision our congregations, associations, and communities as being not color blind but color appreciative; as judging and treating people by the content of their character, not the color of their skin, their cultural heritage, or other identity; and as treasuring all forms of diversity in the context of Martin Luther King’s Jr’s “Beloved Community.” We call this vision Multiracial Unity.

Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Council to foster activities for multi-racial unity and to counter racism and neo-racism through worship, education, bearing witness, and other actions, and to find and engage like-minded individuals and groups.

We affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person, and strive to defend freedom, reason, and tolerance as articulated in the Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism adopted in 1985. This includes promoting their use in individual congregations, through congregational autonomy, and in our own actions.

Note: Articles reflect their author's views. They do not necessarily reflect a position taken by the UUMUAC Board of Directors

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**THE MINISTRY AND MORAL ACTIVISM
OF REV. DR. WILLIAM J. BARBER II**

By Rev. Jack Reich

On a journey through Barber's life and work, i shall trace the threads from Martin Luther King Jr.'s Poor People's Campaign, to James Baldwin's searing critiques, to the dignified resistance of James Earl Jones, and see how they come together in Barber's ministry—a ministry that insists our national soul is measured by how we treat the poor and marginalized.

Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II was born in Indianapolis on August 30, 1963, just days after the March on Washington. His family soon moved to North Carolina, participating in the desegregation effort that upended both personal and community life. Barber's father, a physics teacher and pastor, and his mother, a school office manager, taught him early that faith is incomplete unless it bends toward justice.

At 15, Barber became president of the local NAACP youth council. At 19, he was student body president at North Carolina Central University. After earning a BA in political science, he went on to obtain a Master of Divinity from Duke University and a Doctor of Ministry from Drew University, specializing in public policy and pastoral care. Early in adulthood, an incurable spinal disease left him in chronic pain [but the struggle only deepened his resolve].

Barber went on to pastor the Greenleaf Christian Church in Goldsboro for thirty years and serve as the president of the North Carolina NAACP, transforming it into a force for justice through multiracial, multifaith "fusion coalitions." This man has more honorary doctorates, awards, and arrests than needed for a Civil Rights Hall of Fame nominee.

By 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had come to believe that civil rights without economic justice was a half-finished symphony. He called for a Poor People's Campaign, aiming to unite people of all colors in a fight against systemic poverty, war, and racism.

King's activism was never just about sit-ins or marches; it was a profound critique of the soul of America—a belief that democracy must mean economic security for all, not just the privileged few. King's original Poor People's Campaign marched on Washington, built Resurrection City, and demanded not just integrated lunch counters but jobs,

.housing, and decent wages. After his murder, his widow and others carried on, but the momentum waned. Still, as the National Civil Rights Museum reminds us, King’s legacy has endured as a model for how movements are built and why the struggle continues.

Forty five years later, Dr. Barber picked up this torch in North Carolina. In 2013, he convened the “Moral Mondays” - a trickle that soon became a river—thousands drawn together in the old fusion spirit, demanding living wages, access to healthcare, racial justice, and the right to vote.

As Barber puts it, “We decided that if they were going to crucify healthcare, crucify voting rights, crucify living wages, crucify employment, we had to have a witness... we didn’t have the majority, but we had our moral voices. We had our right to protest.”

In 2018, Barber went national, co-chairing with Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis to relaunch the Poor People’s Campaign as a “National Call for Moral Revival.” In the spirit of King, the campaign aims to confront what Barber calls the “five interlocking evils”: systemic racism, poverty, ecological devastation, the war economy, and the false moral narrative of religious nationalism.

Barber insisted: poverty is neither an accident nor a personal failing. It is a product of policy choices, of “mean and hurtful public policies,” and it affects over 140 million people in our rich nation—nearly half the country.

Their 14-point "Third Reconstruction Agenda" is a call to reshape American democracy in practical ways: living wages, healthcare for all, fair housing, voting rights, and the abolition of policies that criminalize the poor.

Barber echoes King: “It didn’t cost the nation one penny to integrate lunch counters, but now we are dealing with issues that cannot be solved without the nation spending billions of dollars and undergoing a radical redistribution of economic power”.

If King was the movement’s preacher, then James Baldwin was its conscience. Baldwin, the novelist, essayist, and gay Black man saw clearly that “not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.” He challenged America to confront its darkest contradictions.

Baldwin’s legacy for Barber is powerfully clear: truth-telling is a moral act. Baldwin did not let America off the hook, and neither does Barber. Both men are masters of what Baldwin called “bearing witness”—naming the lie so that the nation “might become true,” as Baldwin put it. Barber frequently deploys the incisive language of Baldwin, reminding us that “love is a battle, love is a war; love is a growing up,” and that to love America is to hold it accountable to its unfulfilled promises.

Baldwin's work continues to underwrite so many modern activists, including Barber's focus on intersectionality: poverty is not just about class, but race, gender, and sexuality. Indeed, Barber, like Baldwin, insists that the struggle for justice must cross boundaries—must become, as Baldwin once wrote, “a lover's quarrel with the world”.

Barber's ministry, in turn, translates Baldwin's existential clarity into concrete action. Baldwin's assertion (“I can't be a pessimist—because I am alive...”) is mirrored in Barber's relentless hope and refusal to settle. Even in the face of repeated defeat or heartbreak, Barber is rarely to be found sulking. Rather, his message is: “It's not enough to conquer the opposition. In a nonviolent struggle, we are committed to fight on until we win our adversaries as friends”.

Now, how does James Earl Jones—Darth Vader, Mufasa, the booming voice of gravitas—fit into this story?

Jones, like King and Baldwin, came of artistic age during the upheavals of the 1960s. Instead of speeches and essays, he gave us presence: the sense that to be unapologetically oneself—the Black man on the stage, the stutterer whose voice would one day move mountains—is itself an act of resistance. In the fraught 1960s, when he starred in “The Great White Hope,” his performance as Jack Johnson wasn't just acting; it was activism through art, embodying the confident dignity and subversive hope of Black power on the American stage.

Jones' activism was subtle, sometimes silent, sometimes thundering. He saw art as activism—a means of changing the culture, as much as government or policy. He showed, as Barber's own oratory does, that “sometimes, activism can be as simple as making art to the best of your abilities—or as W.E.B. Du Bois wrote, ‘to use beauty to set the world right’”.

Barber, too, is an orator whose sermons echo with the musicality and drama of Jones. His public prayers—whether before thousands at the National Cathedral or while being carried to jail for civil disobedience—are performances in the best sense: acts designed to stir both conscience and courage. In an era when too many mistake volume for authority, Barber's “thundering” voice carries both conviction and compassion.

Barber's ministry is guided by a simple but radical premise: “Don't you come talking to me about Jesus unless you're standing with the poor.” Faith divorced from justice, in his view, is no faith at all. Here are 6 key goals that animate his work:

1. Building Fusion Coalitions

Barber's method, inspired by both Reconstruction-era fusion politics and King's cross-racial alliances, is to unite the “rejected stones”—people left out of the American promise—into powerful coalitions that cut across race, class, sexuality, and faith traditions.

His Poor People's Campaign is not just a repeat of the 1960s, but an explicitly intersectional, grassroots movement—multiracial, interfaith, locally led, nationally coordinated.

2. Confronting Poverty Head On

Barber calls poverty “America’s real epidemic.” Over 140 million people are poor or one emergency from poverty in the richest nation in the world. He argues that this is not natural or inevitable, but a result of deliberate policy choices: austerity budgets, regressive tax codes, lack of living wages, unaffordable healthcare, housing insecurity. If it’s made by policy, it can be unmade.

3. Reframing the National Moral Narrative

Barber insists that morality does not mean controlling culture wars, but loving your neighbor through policy. He rails against “the false moral narrative of religious nationalism,” which elevates “personal piety over public love.” In both his sermons and his organizing, he reclaims faith as a source of solidarity and prophetic dissent.

4. Nonviolent Direct Action

Like King, Barber knows that some truths must be enacted. Hence the relentless use of civil disobedience, the willingness to be arrested—over 15 times now—in solidarity with the marginalized. Demonstrations, voter registration drives, 40-day campaigns of action, and mass marches all flow from the belief that faith without works is dead.

5. Training the Next Generation

Barber is both pastor and professor—now at Yale Divinity School, where the Center for Public Theology and Public Policy trains a generation of faith leaders to see the connection between the pulpit, public policy, and moral movement-building.

6. Insisting on Hope Over Despair

Above all, Barber preaches what we might call “stubborn hope.” He quotes the prophets: “The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.”

So what can we, as ordinary Americans, do?”

Barber lays out a clear and actionable path. Again, 6 steps;

1. Join the Movement

This isn’t just cheering from the sidelines. Find your local Poor People’s Campaign committee. Sign up for the Moral Mondays, the voter outreach canvasses, the rallies that put the poor at the center. And by the way, join us in UUMUAC, the UU Multiracial Unity Action Council, for just \$30 a year - 58¢ a week! There’s probably no one here who can’t afford 58¢ a week! (<https://www.uumuac.org/>, click “Donate”)

2. Fight Not Just for Yourself, But with Others

Barber’s central insight is that every movement needs “fusion” friends. If you’re a minimum wage worker, fight for voting rights. If you’re a healthcare advocate, defend the undocumented. Step across lines you once thought separated you.

3. Challenge the Narrative

When politicians or talk show hosts sneer at the word “poor” or scapegoat the suffering, challenge them—publicly, persistently, but always with the generous ferocity Barber models. “Don’t just give charity; give justice”.

4. Vote with the Margins in Mind

As Barber says, “If you mobilize just 10% of the poor around an agenda, you can fundamentally shift every election in this country.” Don’t let your vote be taken for granted. Support candidates and measures that address poverty, not just pander to fears.

5. Practice Prophetic Imagination

Like King, like Baldwin, like Jones—dare to imagine that things can be otherwise. Hope is not a mood; it is an act. Barber quips, “It’s better to die having fought for justice than to live and stay on the sidelines and watch injustice have its way”.

6. Bring Humor and Joy

The struggle is long; bring your best jokes with you. Barber himself often laughs about his considerable size, his impromptu sermons, or his collection of arrest records—because hope, like any great movement, needs both gravity and levity.

We have recalled giants—Dr. King the preacher, Baldwin the poet, and Jones the actor—each a reminder that greatness is less about self-promotion and more about self-giving. These legacies converge beautifully in the work and witness of Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II.

Barber is the prophet who keeps knocking, the teacher who refuses to lose hope in America, the organizer who is never satisfied with handwringing. He calls us to be “the moral defibrillators of our time, shocking the heart of this nation with the power of love, justice, and truth”.

So what can we do? We can join him. Stand up for the poor and the marginalized. Challenge every false narrative, every cheap piety, every policy that puts profits over people. Build the fusion coalitions. Resurrect the hope. And never, ever underestimate what you can do—especially if you bring a little humor, a lot of stubbornness, and wear comfortable shoes.

James Baldwin often insisted, “We made the world we are living in, and we have to make it over.” Friends, the hour is late, but it is not too late. The movement is gathering. And as Dr. Barber might say—if you can’t find hope today, turn to the person next to you. You’ll find it there, in the “togetherness that becomes the instrument of redemption.”

Let’s get to work.

Multi-Racial Unity Book Club's next read is:

Walking with the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement (2015)

by [John Lewis](#) (Author), [Michael D'Orso](#) (Author)

An award-winning national bestseller, *Walking with the Wind* is one of our most important records of the American Civil Rights Movement. Told by John Lewis, who Cornel West calls a “national treasure,” this is a gripping first-hand account of the fight for civil rights and the courage it takes to change a nation.

In 1957, a teenaged boy named John Lewis left a cotton farm in Alabama for Nashville, the epicenter of the struggle for civil rights in America. Lewis's adherence to nonviolence guided that critical time and established him as one of the movement's most charismatic and courageous leaders. Lewis's leadership in the Nashville Movement—a student-led effort to desegregate the city of Nashville using sit-in techniques based on the teachings of Gandhi—set the tone for major civil rights campaigns of the 1960s. Lewis traces his role in the pivotal Selma marches, Bloody Sunday, and the Freedom Rides. Inspired by his mentor, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Lewis's vision and perseverance altered history. In 1986, he ran and won a congressional seat in Georgia, and remained in office for over 30 years, continuing to enact change.

The late Edward M. Kennedy said of Lewis, “John tells it like it was...Lewis spent most of his life walking against the wind of the times, but he was surely walking with the wind of history.”

The UUMUAC Multi-racial Unity Book Club meets on the first Saturday of the month, between 3 and 4:30 p.m. Central Time (starts 4 p.m. Eastern, 1 p.m. Pacific). If you would like to join this book club please send an email expressing your interest to: uumuac@gmail.com

A Look at UUMUAC's Chicago Area Chapter

by Allan Lindrup

UUMUAC's founder, the Rev. Dr. Finley C. Campbell, had hoped to build a stronger UUMUAC through groups of UUMUAC members in a congregation or a geographical area organizing as chapters or smaller clusters. Unfortunately, UUMUAC membership tends to be spread out geographically, so that has not been a realistic option for most UUMUAC members. However, with 17 members in the Chicago area, we have been able to have a Chicago Area Chapter.

The Chicago Area Chapter (CAC) meets by Zoom most months. One thing that it does is to monitor for racist incidents in the Chicago area. Usually, some type of racism comes to our attention about every two months, so we try to respond as we deem feasible. Most of these incidents or racist patterns have targeted African American, but in one case they were targeting white teachers through critical race theory. Our responses have usually been letters of support to the targets of racist attacks, plus letters of complaint to public officials, where public employees or public policies have been the cause. On occasion they have involved testimony.

Acts of public witness have included demonstrating in support of a multiracial union that was on strike for better working conditions, and a demonstration in support of a higher minimum wage. Some public witness activities are enjoyable, such as outings to the annual black rodeo held at the South Shore Cultural Center in Chicago, or an outing to the Pullman Historical Park, to learn more about the Pullman porters and their female counterparts, who did sewing and maid services.

We show movies with a multiracial unity theme, which are followed by discussion, at 4 area UU congregations, on a sort of rotating basis, about three times a year.

The chapter has also been involved with environmental justice efforts. Most of these have focused on the far southeast side of Chicago, where most communities are majority black or brown, with a history of heavy industry, landfills, toxic dumping, and more, with above average air, land, and water pollution. We were involved with the fight to keep General Iron, a metal scrap company with a history of environmental violations, from relocating to the area. Now we are assisting ETHOS and the Alliance of the Southeast as they try to prevent the community from being poisoned with toxic chemicals, and get a Community Benefits Agreement, as the former US Steel South Works site is slated to be redeveloped into a giant quantum computing and microelectronics park. The land is a toxic brownfield, toxins that are likely to be thrown into the air and washed into the groundwater and Lake Michigan during construction. The federal, state and local governments have committed \$1.8 billion to the development, so the community is fighting more than just corporate powers. Chapter members have given testimony before government bodies and have donated \$400 to UUMUAC to go toward yard signs that ETHOS is using to help raise public awareness and show community concern. See the accompanying article for more details on that battle.

“Clean Dirt: an Oxymoron for Black and Brown, Working-class Communities on Chicago’s Southeast Side”

by A. Anne Holcomb, ETHOS Co-chair & itinerant U.U. preacher



On July 25, 2024, Illinois Governor Pritzker literally flew over my head in a helicopter. The helicopter landed out-of-sight, just yards away in Steelworkers’ Park, an urban, southeast side, Chicago City Park that had been named for the multi-racial, working class workers who had previously toiled on that land for the US Steel Corporation for over a century. The park had been cordoned-off, with a wide security perimeter, denying access unexpectedly to local park users who were accustomed to using it for their morning routines of walking their dogs, jogging, strolling with baby carriages, while enjoying nature and Lake Michigan views. I was there simply to pass out flyers announcing the next in-person meeting of my multi-racial, multi-generational, grass roots environmental justice group, Environment, Transportation, Health, and Open Space (ETHOS). ETHOS had been in a state of pandemic hibernation since late 2019 and had not been meeting at all. I knew why the Governor was coming and this reason was the very reason why ETHOS needed to begin meeting again, as soon as possible.

The Governor was coming to announce The Illinois Quantum Microelectronics Park (IQMP), a planned industrial development that would eventually fully occupy the largest swath of open land in Chicago: prime (but poisoned) lakefront property of over 440 acres. Its address of record is 8080 S. DuSable Lake Shore Drive. The land is located on both the East and West sides of South DuSable Lake Shore Drive (US Highway 41), extending from 79th Street on the North end to the Calumet River on the South end. It transverses two majority black and brown working class Chicago communities: South Shore and South Chicago, areas that have been historically overly burdened by industrial pollution, as well as areas that were under-resourced, redlined, historically impacted by racist restrictive covenants and white flight. The entire swath of open land, commonly called, “US Steel South Works” or “USX,” is a brownfield, saturated with over 17 different toxins, including heavy metals, volatiles, and arsenic; left behind by over 100 years of steel mill production. Some of these toxins are “*Erin Brockovich- bad*”. Some of the same toxins Brockovich discovered that were poisoning residents who lived in Hinkley, California, in 1993 –findings in a historic environ-

mental justice lawsuit that became an Oscar-winning film-- were still in the ground at South Works, such as: chromium and cadmium.

US Steel had gradually shut down operations of the South Works USX plant over a number of years, finally closing it all down in 1992. Shortly thereafter, US Steel conducted an initial clean-up of the site. Buildings were razed, stockpiles of steel-making by-products and raw materials were removed, but they did not do extensive environmental remediation. Since that time US Steel turned over acreage along the Lake Michigan shoreline to the Chicago Park District to create the now partially developed Steelworkers' Park, and what remains an undeveloped park, simply identified as Park 566. US Steel planned to sell off the remaining 440 acres, but the land has remained fallow and unused except by residents and wildlife as open green space. It has become a haven for coyotes, deer, smaller mammals, as well as several somewhat rare migratory birds. A couple of bald eagles have been seen there on occasion.

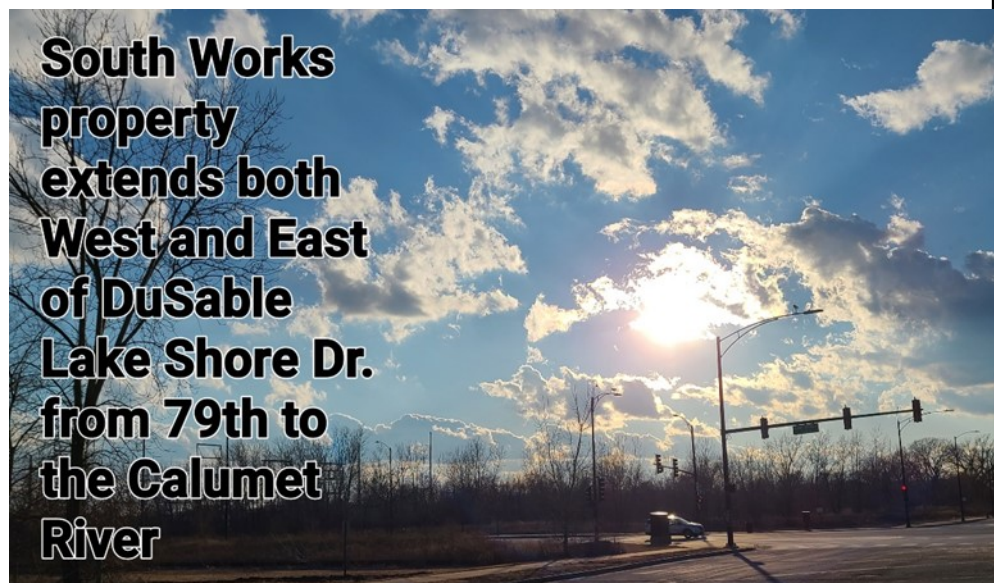


Over the past twenty years, several developers flirted with purchasing all or some of the land. Most notably, there was McCaffery Interests in 2004, which wanted to build a mixed-use development with designer retail stores and upper-income residential high-rises- compete with penthouses in a large gated community and a private yacht slip. Between April 2012 and October 2013, Former Mayor, Rahm Emanuel supported McCaffery's plans by building a two-mile long extension to Chicago's famed Lake Shore Drive (now called South DuSable Lake Shore Drive). Running roughly down the middle and slightly off-center through the old South Works land, it cost nearly \$64 Million in City and State public dollars, and relocated US Route #41.

Around this same time, Emanuel became famous for expediting the largest number of public school closures in American history, supposedly to "save" money. These 50 closed schools were mostly in Black and Brown communities. There is a reason why a number of Southeast Side residents still refer to Emanuel as "The Rahmonster" or by other names

which I cannot print here. The local alderman agreed to work with McCaffery to then make the residential South Shore Drive into a six-lane expressway to connect the original Lake Shore Drive with the new extension. McCaffery wanted this because he wanted to advertise to his high-end buyers, who were projected to own 2.5 cars per household, that it was only a 15 minute drive to downtown Chicago. ETHOS, starting merely as a South Shore block club, was birthed in resistance to the South Shore Drive expressway plan, which not only would have become an environmental nightmare for close-by Lake Michigan, but also would have displaced thousands of South Shore residents. Fortunately, the resistance paid off and the South Shore Drive expressway plan never happened. Rahm's newly constructed highway didn't save McCaffery's plans either. Advertised as "The New South Loop," McCaffery's development plan failed in 2014 with a "mutual parting" between McCaffery and US Steel. US Steel retained ownership of South Works.

The next serious developer was Emerald Living, an Irish green technology developer which teamed up with Barcelona Housing System, a modular home builder in 2017. Their plan was to build 20,000 middle class and affordable homes with a number of green amenities. Most existing



community residents supported this development and respected how this developer included community dialogue from the beginning by meeting with community groups and modifying their plans based upon this input. Barcelona Housing pulled out of the deal quietly, followed abruptly in 2018, by Emerald Living after they had conducted extensive soil sampling. Officially, they did not name pollution as the reason but said in press releases to the media: "Challenges posed by parcel's *industrial heritage* were a factor in the deal ultimately not going through." US Steel required Emerald Housing to sign non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) preventing residents from getting access to the information on what toxins they had found. However, I attended a small community meeting at that time, and sat next to a legal assistant who was employed by Emerald Living. She whispered to me after the meeting:

“You need to find out what’s in the ground. I can’t tell you what’s there because of the NDAs, but it is bad stuff. That’s why we pulled out... and there will eventually be other developers.”

Fast forward to July 25, 2024: Pritzker announced that the anchor tenant of IQMP was to be PsiQuantum, which was anticipated to build the largest quantum computer in the world. Building first, on 128 acres of the site’s master plan, near 87th Street, Psi Quantum was to create and operate the computer, including a massive freezer called a “cryogenic cooling facility,” which is needed to keep the computer running at extremely cold temperatures (absolute zero, approximately -460 degrees Fahrenheit).

PsiQuantum, a Silicon Valley start-up, had been partially incubated at the Pritzker School of Molecular Engineering at the University of Chicago. Back in 2015, the Pritzker School became the first school of molecular engineering in the United States—and the first to offer a PhD in quantum engineering. Then in 2017, the Pritzker School was key in forming The Chicago Quantum Exchange, connecting academic institutions, national laboratories (Argonne, Fermi), federal, state, county, and city governments, with industry, in order to build a strong, vigorous, quantum economy. Out of these combined efforts, PsiQuantum was born.

At the big July 25th, announcement in 2024, the Chicago Mayor and the Cook County Board President were there, as well as the CEOs from IQMP and PsiQuantum, and the presidents and/or high ranking academic department heads from the University of Chicago, University of Illinois, University of Illinois at Chicago, as well as other academic institutions of higher



learning. Additionally the chosen developer was there, Related Midwest and its Related subsidiaries, along with CRG, a regional, real estate investment firm, and PsiQuantum. Executives from ClayCo, the chosen builder with end-to-end experience in building tech facilities and data centers was there too. A crowd of around a hundred or so others, investors, high ranking staff from the national laboratories, corporate CEOs, some military officers, arrived by limousines and charter busses that surged by me as I passed out my meeting notices standing on the public sidewalk. I witnessed that there were only a few black and brown

PAGE 12 faces among those arriving. All were dressed in their professional finery in custom

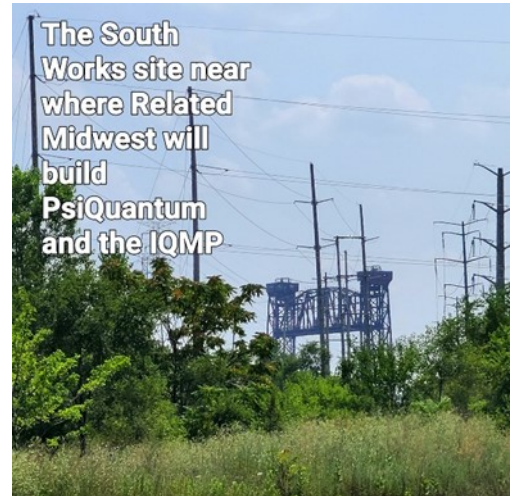
tailored blue or black suits, or designer dresses. One African American park patron who was turned away from the park remarked to me, “Well, they all look like they are dripping money. They sure don’t look like they’re from around here!” I thought to myself that some of their clothing probably cost more than my used car.

A few concierges stood behind a portable check-in table at the Steelworkers’ Park entrance flanked by both on-duty and off duty Chicago police officers providing tight security. The concierges made sure that only invited guests got in, who were then directed to a large white tent (that I later saw on the television news) where there was a stage and seating for the big announcement. Take a guess at who wasn’t invited: The working class residents of South Shore and South Chicago!

It was then that I was threatened with arrest at this event. I was alone and not protesting. I did not try to get into the event. I was walking with my cane on the public sidewalk, outside of the park, trying to pass out my ETHOS meeting notice to residents who were coming to use the park. They didn’t know anything about the forthcoming quantum campus, hadn’t heard about Pritzker’s event, and were angered that they weren’t allowed in to use their park for their daily routines. A security guard approached me and waved two CPD officers over. She said I had to leave or would be arrested. I asked her, what would I be arrested for, since what I was doing was not illegal? She replied that the Chicago police would find a reason.

I moved away, but found that I could stand behind one of the parked, posh, charter buses, out-of-sight and still pass out my flyers. I wasn’t arrested. However, this incident metaphorically illustrated to me, in no uncertain terms, how South Shore and South Chicago residents are often treated by our government, despite the fact that we are voters and our tax dollars will be subsidizing the developments. We are frequently not invited and left in the dark in the planning stages of planned developments impacting our communities (Emerald Living was the exception!), or a sham of public engagement is made after all the decisions have been made behind closed doors. Most residents, unless they are members of a Southeast Side group like mine, still don’t know that big changes are coming because Pritzker has not met with any of the established community organizations in the area, nor held a public Town Hall meeting in South Shore or South Chicago.

The City of Chicago has held a handful of public meetings over the last year (the mayor has never attended any of these), publicized mostly by email (a lot of Southeast Side residents don't use email). These city meetings have been PowerPoint presentations and dog-and-pony shows rather than real meetings where resident questions are fully answered and resident feedback is encouraged, recorded, with changes made based upon that feedback. The most recent city meeting was held in March 2025. After months of asking the City and the Illinois Environmental Protec-



tion Agency to turn over Related Midwest's new soil testing data and being stalled or stonewalled at every request, we knew we had to make some good trouble in order to get heard. We obstructed that March city meeting with shouts of "*Don't Poison Us! Don't Displace Us!*" and we called out the names of the Related Midwest's and PsiQuantum's decision-makers for their lack of responsiveness. Our obstruction opened up the meeting, so the city staffer leading the meeting finally found a portable microphone which allowed residents to finally voice their questions and concerns. However, since March, there hasn't been any more meetings scheduled.

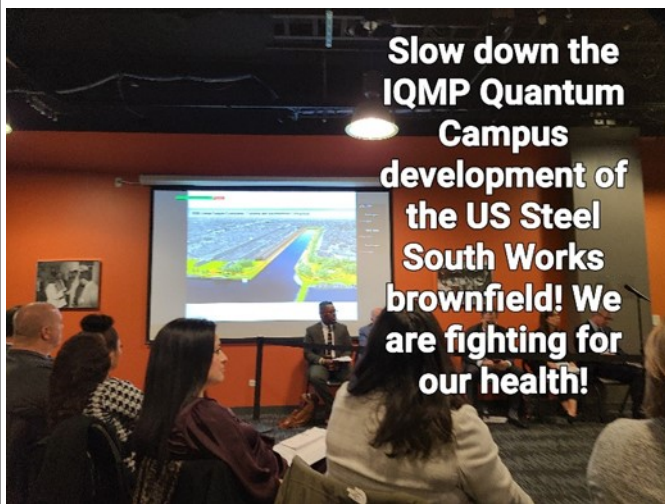
The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), which works at the behest of the Illinois Governor's Office and is not to be confused with the federal EPA, has attended and spoken at these city community meetings. The IEPA continues to waive around a 1997 "No Further Remediation Necessary" (NFR)" letter that they issued, essentially saying the brownfield is safe for building and for operations. ETHOS, however, has plowed through about 7,000 pages of randomly organized, open source documents, on the IEPA's archival website to discover a plethora of correspondences and environmental test reports dating after 1997 that indicate the toxins are still in the ground. ETHOS found correspondence dating from 2003 concerning the topic of making South Works into a designated Superfund site for federal environmental remediation. Suddenly, this correspondence halted and the topic was not brought up again. I have hypothesized that this was a political decision. US Steel was a motivated seller. South Works was a very large, valuable lakefront property (albiet poisoned). McCaffery was, at that time, a highly interested re-developer. Superfund sites tend to be very long processes tied up in layers of federal bureaucracy. A much smaller derelict steel mill property with bankrupt ownership in a neighboring Southeast side community

was designated a Superfund site and has sat idle for decades. Politically, I suspect that the capitalistic powers behind South Works did not want to wait for more remediation.

ETHOS also found a “smoking gun” challenging the validity of the IEPA 1997 NFR letter: It was a very dark, badly printed by FAX, later scanned into the achieves, that discusses a decision that was made at that time to conduct less than one-third of the standard protocol of environmental soil samples. The justification for this decision was that the entire property had been a steel mill, therefore the soil on the property had to be homogeneous. ETHOS discovered from old photographs and maps of the steel mill, plus a scattering of environmental reports, that the South Works USX campus was not at all homogeneous. Different parts of the campus were used for different purposes. Locations where power plants existed, blast furnaces were located, rail and barge depots where raw materials were off-loaded and rail lines where uncovered train cars sat with pet coke, are particularly hot-zones for toxic ground. Additionally, retired steel workers who once operated bulldozers tell stories about how a supervisor would hand them a \$100 bill to go dig a hole somewhere on the campus that was no longer in use, dump some nasty waste, then cover it over with dirt. No map exists where this illegal dumping was done.

Also, ETHOS has thus far been unable to locate any maps of underground, chemical storage tanks. We know there were at least three but suspect there are many more. The three underground tanks were found because when the tops of these tanks rusted through, they caved in and created a sink hole that forced immediate remediation. Two were documented by the IEPA. One I witnessed. In 2020, during the pandemic, a sink hole caused 79th Street at Exchange Ave to cave in. I drove down 79th Street regularly to get to work at that time. One night, around 3AM, when no Chicago Department of Transportation repairmen were around, I got curious as to why most of 79th street at that intersection had been closed off for months, so I decided to get out of my car and have a look. I wedged myself between the tall barricades that the Chicago Department of Transportation had erected, and using my tactical flashlight, looked down to where I saw the rusted through tank. A raspberry-colored, jelly-like substance was dripping out the bottom of this tank. A rail line feeding supplies to South Works had once run along 79th Street. During street resurfacing I could see the tracks, so it made some sense that an underground tank would have been located there for past railroad use.

Before the 2024 winter holidays, two City ordinances speeded rapidly through city hall. The first ordinance, which barely got media attention, provided a substantial property tax break for 30 years and waived a number of permit fees for the South Works developers, owners and tenants. The second ordinance rezoned the entire 440 acres for industrial use with waterway rights. No architectural renderings were included in the blanket rezoning ordinance except preliminary sketches for PsiQuantum and IQMP (Illinois Quantum and Microelectronics Park), but the zoning will allow Related Midwest to build up to 17-story buildings on any part of the property. Both ordinances passed quickly, despite organized community resistance in the form of testimony at City Hall and press conferences by ETHOS and by the South Works Coalition for a CBA. ETHOS by that point had grown to around 140 members and made the



decision to join the South Works Coalition as an organizational member. At that time, Related Midwest optimistically declared that the closing of their purchase on South Works with US Steel, followed by their official ground-breaking would occur in February 2025.

The Chicago Planning Commission reviews zoning changes. Late fall 2024.

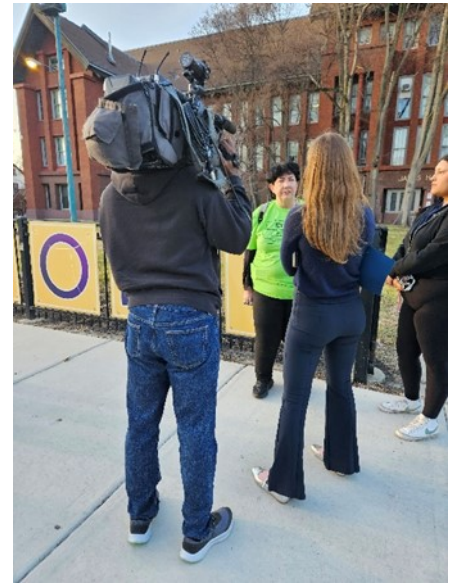
February came and went and more months passed. We could only make educated guesses why. Political instability in Washington, D.C. could have been a factor. We also knew that Related Midwest wanted to fill the whole property with more tenant agreements in order to arrange optimal financing. To date, the named tenant partners consist of: Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), a research and development arm of the U.S. Department of Defense; University of Illinois' Discovery Partners Institute (relocated from another politically loaded planned development called "The 78"); the National Quantum Algorithm Center; IBM; Related Digital (a subsidiary of the developer to create a large data center); Diraq (an Australian Quantum start-up); Inflection (a Colorado quantum software company); Pasqal, (a French quantum company); and a somewhat uncharacteristic addition, a new but much smaller Advocate Trinity Hospital (the large existing hospital, which is located more centrally in the South Chicago community, is to be torn down). Related Midwest is also negotiating with Nvidia, an agentic artificial intelligence data system and chip-making company that recently traded for \$5 Trillion on the stock market.

Back on that hot July day, one year ago, Pritzker said that this quantum campus will be a gift to the world, but those of us who live in South Shore and South Chicago want gifts too. Most of us are resigned to the fact that we don't have the capacity to stop it but are determined to get something out of it. One way to do this is to demand a Community Benefits Agreement with the developer. It is estimated now that \$1.9 Billion will be subsidizing this development. At the very least, we don't want them to poison us by toxic construction dust, storm water run-off from their structures through toxic ground, or by noise pollution and infrasound during operations, the release of heated steam and water, or industrial accidents from cryogenic cooling chemicals. US Steel left behind a big corporate mess with that toxic ground. We want Related Midwest to use big corporate money to clean it up. We want guaranteed access to our lakefront Chicago Parks like Park 566 and Steelworkers, despite the fact the parks will be largely surrounded by private property. We also expect the developer to invest in amenities for those parks and to see that they get comfort stations, field houses, ball fields, nature sanctuaries, and play equipment just like the parks on Chicago's more privileged Northside get. We want our wildlife protected. We demand to not be displaced from our homes by rising property taxes (where is our tax break since they got one?), soaring rents, power, and water bills. We demand that they build a community reinvestment center that contains a credit union for residents and credit counseling services. We demand investment into resident-owned, roof-top solar power, to help off-set the power costs that will surge. We demand local hiring for the construction jobs and a job program to assist residents in getting some of the permanent jobs that don't require a PhD. We also demand that they invest in our local public schools.

That March City meeting was held in Bowen High School, in the auditorium. The Bowen building had been constructed in 1910 and was one of only three public high schools serving the surrounding communities. Bowen is one of several aging, non-renovated, "under-resourced," high schools, located in black and brown communities on Chicago's South and West sides. While the expensive, fancy suits on stage began presenting their slick, bright, colorful PowerPoint sales presentations to residents on PsiQuantum and Related Midwest, one couldn't fail to notice the disparity between what was going on on-stage with the dingy condition of the Bowen auditorium (emblematic of the condition of the rest of the school). Obvious roof leaks had caused plaster to fall from the ceiling, water spots tainted other parts of that ceiling causing the paint layers to peel, and a light, but pervasive smell of mildew was in the hall. Where the plaster had fallen, one could see the edges of the

of the holes where there were layers upon layers of different shades of paint—no doubt some of those paint layers dating to early in the 20th Century, paint that was inevitably full of lead. Then there was the very dirty, heavy velour-like curtains framing the stage. I had once worked as a stage manager in professional theatre, and I know old asbestos curtains when I see them. It was impossible to miss the many broken and splintering wooden auditorium seats—so many that some of the residents attending were forced to stand. All of these hazards were in a place where our community’s youth attended school. Due to the fact that Bowen High School’s dropout rate is 32.7%, significantly higher than the rest of the district, Bowen has been designated as an “Intensive School” by the State.

In our CBA we demand that Related Midwest and PsiQuantum, as well as the other forthcoming high-tech tenants, invest in our public schools so our children have the opportunity to attend school in a safe, modern environment and get the STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, & Mathematics) skills needed to potentially work at PsiQuantum someday. Less obvious is the fact that some of our area middle schools don’t even have a science teacher on staff or they lack a functioning computer lab! None of our area schools have been designated as STEAM or STEM schools by district initiative, with the appropriate funding allocations that this designation would require. PsiQuantum has said that about 60% of its workforce will need a PhD in a STEM or STEAM field. Given these realities, in working with the ASE Coalition, we decided to make our CBA a four-legged stool, adding benefits for our area schools in addition to demands for environmental justice, local hiring, and housing retention.



ETHOS and the South Works Coalition for a CBA used the ground-breaking date delays to our advantage. ETHOS grew to 200 members and got organized. We have collectively put together our Community Benefits Agreement Demands for the developer as well as policy demands for our policy makers. ETHOS was charged with composing the CBA section on environmental justice after consulting two environmental remediation engineers and directly involving over 50 residents in the brainstorming of the demands and the wording. We’ve used the media regularly for leverage and to get resident voices heard. We’ve not only testified, but we’ve protested, picketed, and obstructed City and PsiQuantum meetings. The

goal is to get Related Midwest to the negotiation table to hammer out a written, legally binding Community Benefits Agreement and to get city and state policies in place to not only protect us, but to help us thrive.

Then on September 30, 2025, it finally happened: the groundbreaking. The sale had closed and Related Midwest had purchased the property from US Steel. Just like the Governor's big initial announcement in 2024, area residents were not informed, nor invited to



the event. Several of us had been doing regular drive-bys of the site. As mere volunteers working in our homes on aging or refurbished technology, ETHOS lacks the capacity to use drones for surveillance of the site. Our first indication that the groundbreaking was truly imminent was when we saw that someone had cleared the PsyQuantum parcel of weeds and saplings. Then we saw gravel being trucked in, followed by white event tents being erected. Lastly we saw a few semitrailers trucking in dirt. The dirt was a golden color, very unlike the dark gray-brown dirt in the area. We pondered what that dirt might be for...

Neither our public officials, nor the developer, put out a press advisory until the very morning of the groundbreaking. We suspect they did this thinking we wouldn't learn of the event in time to protest or hold a press conference. They thought wrong. ETHOS had a yard sign crew out before dawn to install green "Don't Poison Us!" signs around the site. (The signs had been funded, in part by members of the UUMUAC Chicago Chapter). Then, with the ASE coalition, we scooped their event by holding our own press conference an hour before their festivities started. We got wide media attention in both English and Spanish language media. Two network affiliated local news shows then asked us for two more, on-site, press conferences later in that afternoon. Both Chicago NBC and ABC showed the footage. Then we had another yard sign crew ready to install more signs right before the Governor was to speak at 3PM, knowing that it was very likely most of the signs we had installed before dawn had been removed by then.

The Governor had initially branded the development as “Chicago’s Silicon Valley.” Later it had been branded, “The Quantum Prairie,” at a global Argonne National Laboratory event. At the groundbreaking, Governor Pritzker called it “Quantum Shores.” From the photos of the groundbreaking shown in the media, we realized why they had trucked in that golden-colored dirt. We saw a long, narrow mound of that dirt, with 31 dignitaries standing behind that mound, in their expensive, mostly blue suits, each with a new, shiny shovel in their hands, while cheesing for the cameras. That dirt had been trucked in so these dignitaries would be sticking their ceremonial silver shovels into clean dirt --and not the toxic soil. As we expected, the governor, was in that photo, as was the Chicago mayor, the Cook County board president, two area alderman, high ranking representatives from Related Midwest, Psi-Quantum, Clayco, other investors, and representatives from the growing list of future tenants.

Photo from the IQMP website, showing the trucked in clean dirt.



They didn’t waste any time. The day after the groundbreaking, Clayco began site preparation on the PsiQuantum parcel. About a week later,

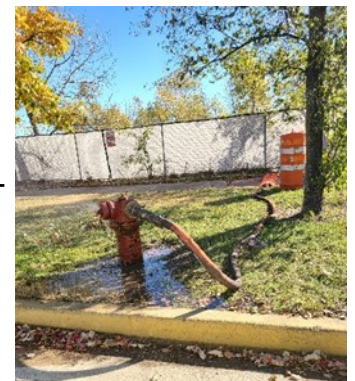
they fenced off the 128 acres of this parcel and then they shimmed the inside of the fencing with opaque material, so it became difficult to see what they were doing. Then on October 20, 2025, I was doing my driveby when I saw a cloud of dust hovering in the air high above the fencing. I got out of my car and walked the fence line until I found a hole I could stick my hand with my cell phone through to take photos. Sure enough, I got a photo of bull dozers digging up the toxic soil and throwing dust. No spraying of water or any other dust mitigation measures were being used. I had just witnessed a “fugitive dust event,” something that the environmental remediation engineers ETHOS had consulted months ago had warned us about. To make this more crucial, the New Sullivan Elementary School was located close by. I notified the City of Chicago’s Commissioner on the Environment as well as a project manager for Clayco. I sent them my photos by text to their cell phones. The next day the site was “dark” and there was no construction activity. The day after that, they had

hooked up huge firehoses to fire hydrants as a water source, and they were spraying water for dust mitigation. Now they knew we were watching!

Then on October 31, 2025, I received a surprise email from the IEPA. This is the same IEPA that still had not answered the five pages of questions we submitted back in October 2024. The email announced that Related Midwest had enrolled the site into the IEPA's Site Remediation Program (SRP). Attached to the email were links to their Comprehensive Site Investigation Report, the Remediation Objective Report, and the Remedial Action Plan for the entire "Quantum Shores" development... a total of over 5,000 pages and a file so big my 15 year old desktop computer couldn't download it. I forwarded the email to a commercial printer and got back a nearly full, 10-ream, copy paper box filled with the document printed on paper. I and others will have some "interesting" reading to do over the forthcoming weeks. I'm sure that Related Midwest will want to do the least and ETHOS will want them to do the most, but we have a 90-day window period for us to do advocacy with the IEPA.



How toxic is this dust? Site prep 10.20.25



Dust suppression techniques in use after a brief site shutdown, 11.03.2025.

We have won a big battle, but the war isn't over. We are going to stand in this fight until they build it right! Don't poison us! Don't displace us! Jobs for residents! Educational investments!



ETHOS leaders are presented with the "Community Power Award" at the Alliance of the Southeast gala 11.06.2025