

FACES OF TIME

Sharing our lived experience provides an opportunity to discover new perspectives. As a bicentennial commemorative project, this series of photographs highlight the stories of Manchester residents whose perspectives represent community, progress, and leadership.

Through projection, their stories become a visual part of their complexion – emphasizing the beauty within age, and wisdom within experience. These photographs portray the idea that we are perceived, not only as physical beings, but as the result of unique collected experience.

– Zack Carroll



rhonda philbert

I was born on August 14, 1957 in Brooklyn, N.Y. and moved to Manchester, Connecticut in 1994. I received my Bachelors of Science degree from the University of Hartford in 1975 and a Masters in Public Health degree in 2014 from Southern Connecticut State University. I've had the awesome experience of working for the Hartford Health Department and Manchester Public Schools. I am an educator and recently retired from Manchester Public Schools as a Race and Equity Coordinator after 27 years of working with colleagues, thousands of students and their families. I am also an advocate/activist for social justice and currently the president of The African American and Black Affairs Council of Manchester, which was established in 2018.

When I moved to Manchester, this town struggled with race relations because of an increase in the racial and cultural diversity among its residents. However, with the passage of time, Manchester has evolved and is more inclusive and equitable. At the present time, it is evident that Manchester continues to acknowledge the importance of everyone's and lived experiences by its willingness to have

honest and difficult conversations. As a result, there have been many changes such as the increase in diversity among town employees and leadership.

As a result of living in this town for 30 years, I've had negative experiences related to my race. However, I've seen Manchester residents of different races, religions, languages, genders, sexual orientation and cultures come together during the largest protest in this town's history during the summer of 2020 as a response to the murder of George Floyd as a result of police brutality.

Therefore, Manchester is striving to become a town where everyone's humanity is acknowledged even though there continues to be room for improvement. I am hopeful that my grandchildren will grow and thrive in Manchester because of its continuous efforts to become a town that exhibits equity, inclusion and justice for all.



bill o'neil

TIME - 85 years so far—more than 50 years in Manchester. 10-15 more to go.

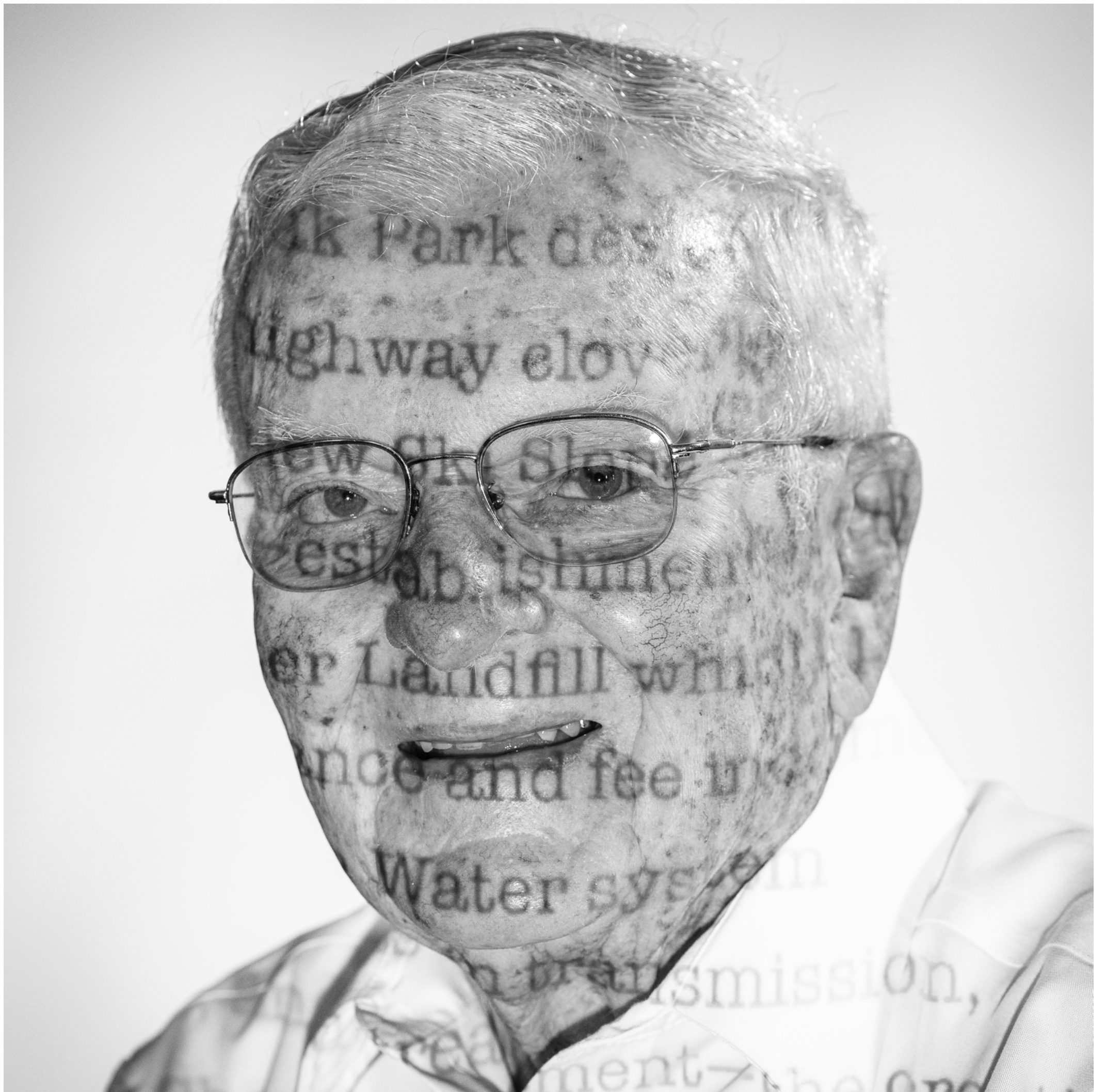
My path to Manchester: born in Canton, Mass—UMass Civil Engineering— Army Corp of Engineers—Navy SCUBA diver—UConn MBA—Assistant Town Engineer, Windsor—Town Engineer, South Windsor—Director of Public Works, Manchester—Fuss & O'Neill Consulting Engineers—Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee.

Some of my Manchester projects: Charter Oak Park design with playing fields in highway cloverleaf—creation of Northview Ski Slope at the former Nike Site—establishment of the Manchester Landfill which provides cost avoidance and fee income for the Town—Town Water system improvements in transmission, storage, and treatment—the creation of the Charter Oak Greenway and Cheney Rail Trail—Union Pond Park with skating pond, accessible fitness trail, fishing, and boat launch

Organizations and Programs: SBM Charitable Foundation—SCUBA Instructor for Park and Rec—MMH Incorporator—Manchester Land Trust—Saint James School Foundation—East Coast Greenway Alliance

The above are some memories of time spent in Manchester. What's most important are the people who lead, guided and consulted, thus making Manchester better. From Bob Weiss, the Town Manager, Walt Fuss, Jay Giles, Chris Silver, Mayors - Thompson, Agostinelli, Penney, Moran, and many more.

"Thanks for Manchester's Greenway Vision. You are collectively building paths that connect people to people, people to nature, people to places, and our generation to the next. Happy trails."



lewis kelley

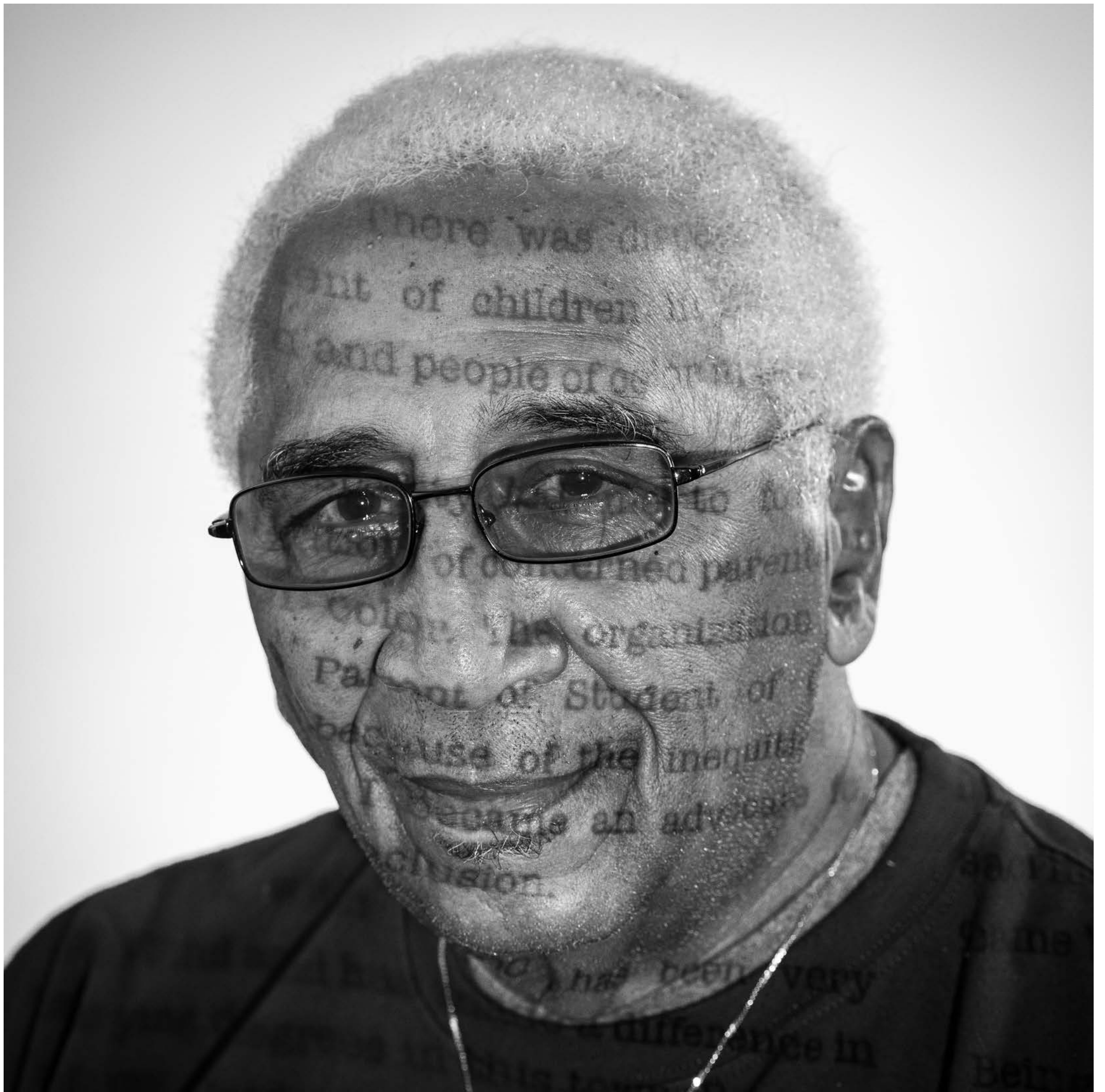
When I first moved to Manchester, the climate was not welcoming for people of color. There was disparity in the treatment of children in the school system and people of color in town. This disparity led me to form an organization of concerned parents and staff of color. The organization was named Parent of Student of Color (SOC) - because of the inequities in this town, I became an advocate for equity and inclusion.

My work with SOC has been very impactful and has made a difference in varying degrees in this town. Because of my leadership in SOC, people of color in Manchester have become a vital political force. Our impact within the school system has garnered improvement in how children of color are treated as well as holding the school system more accountable for our children's education.

Because of my persistent leadership, we have opened doors between the Superintendent, the Board of Education, the Board of Directors, the Police Department, the Town Manager and the Mayor.

Currently, I believe that because of my work in this town, we have made great gains in welcoming all communities; but there is much more work that needs to be done in acknowledging the sacrifice made by many others that came before me.

Being honored as one of the few Black Veterans of the Town of Manchester gives me hope that the changes in Manchester can build good relationships for the future.



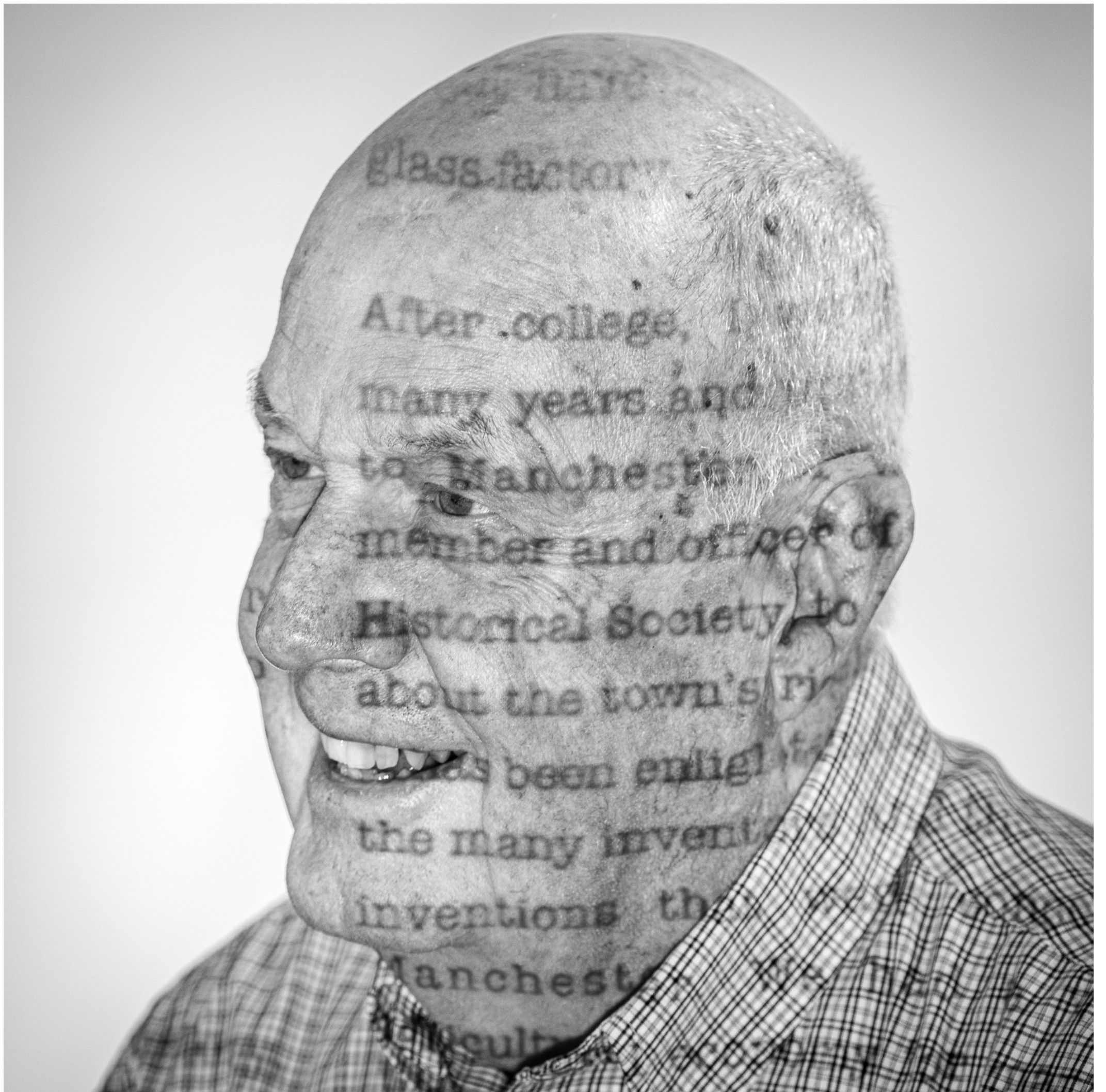
dave smith

Growing up in the 1950's was probably the best time to be a kid in Manchester. There was much to do, and our parents did not seem to worry about us getting into trouble. We became self-reliant and responsible for our actions. We got ourselves to school, either by walking, bicycling, or taking the school bus when we went to the distant junior high school at Barnard.

I did not have an interest in history, especially local history, until junior high school. Growing up near the old Pitkin Glass Works ruins sparked my first interest in earlier times, and finding pieces of old glass in the excavations of nearby house foundations made me wonder what it might have been like working in the glass factory.

After college, I worked overseas for many years and upon returning back to Manchester, I was able, as a member and officer of the Manchester Historical Society, to learn much more about the town's rich and varied past. It has been enlightening to learn about the many inventors and the variety of inventions that were conceived in Manchester. We had a vibrant

agricultural economy for many years that was superseded by textile, paper and other mills that gave way to the suburban town we now know. All these endeavors and the people involved have left their legacies for us to preserve and continue to learn from and about. This to me is what makes our history so interesting and worth studying.



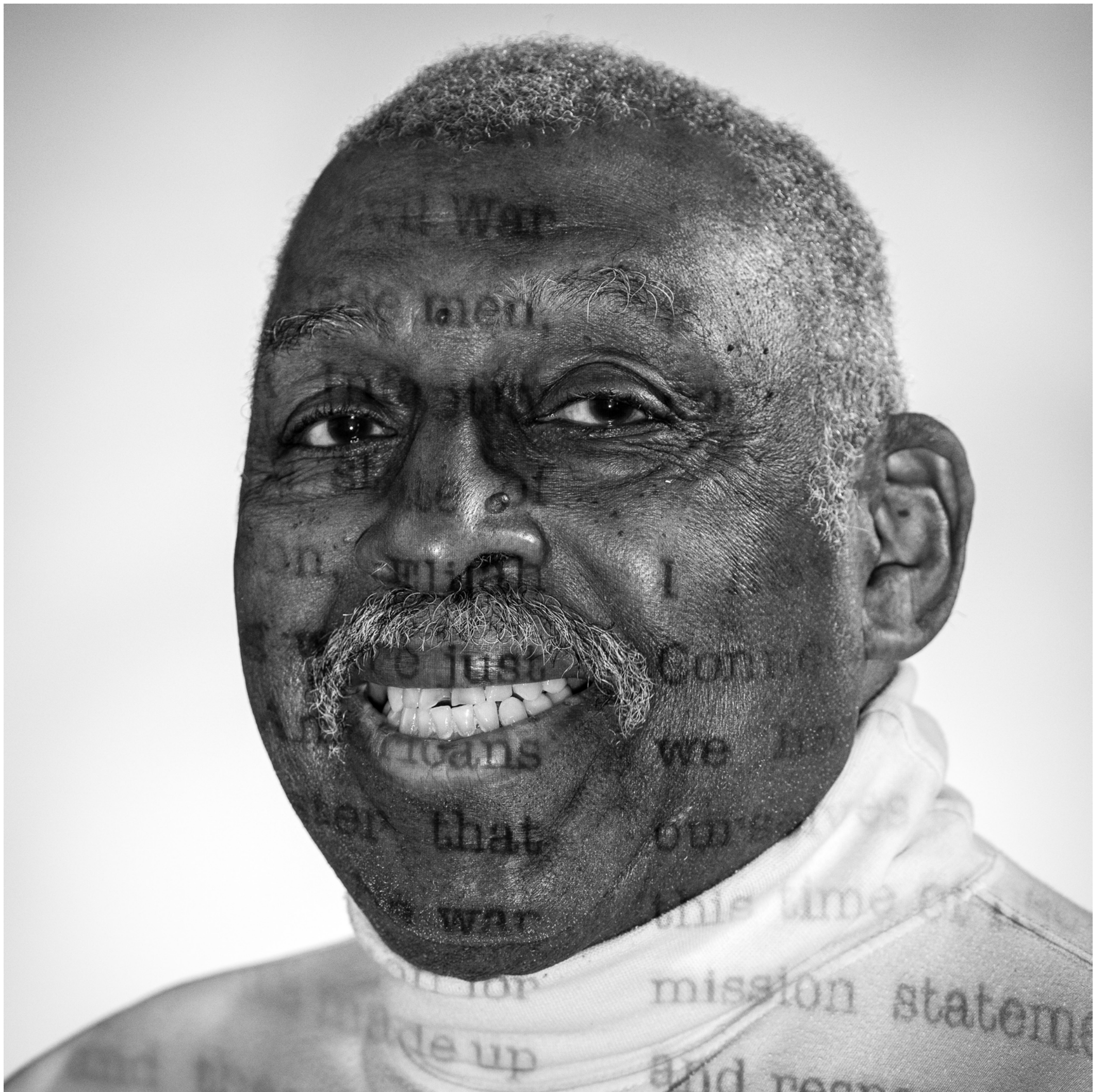
robert harris

There were 179,000 African Americans who fought in the Civil War on the side of the union. Of these men, 1,699 made up the 29th Infantry Colored Regiment from the state of Connecticut. Peter Johnson, Elijah Williams, and Winfield King were just three of the many African Americans from the town of Manchester that made up the regiment. When the war ended, Congress passed legislation for the formation of several units made up of Colored Troops, and these troops would become known as the Buffalo Soldiers.

Those men committed and dedicated themselves to service to the country in a time of need. In 1993, Chicago Police detective Ken Thomas created the Buffalo Soldiers Motorcycle Club to keep that legacy alive and to pass it on to future generations. The club has grown to one hundred and twenty-five chapters throughout the United States, including chapters in Hawaii, South Korea, and West Germany, with a mission statement of "service to the community."

I have been a member of the Connecticut chapter since 2011, and we have committed and dedicated ourselves to serving the community in this time

of need. In keeping with our mission statement, we promote safe and responsible motorcycling and are active in the community. Our chapter has been involved in such activities as: Toys for Tots funding at Christmas, providing escort with the State Police for the Special Olympics, participating in charities rides for fallen law enforcement officers, hosting fundraising events for food pantries, providing scholarship for graduating high school students, and providing funds to the UConn Medical Center sickle cell research program.



chris silver

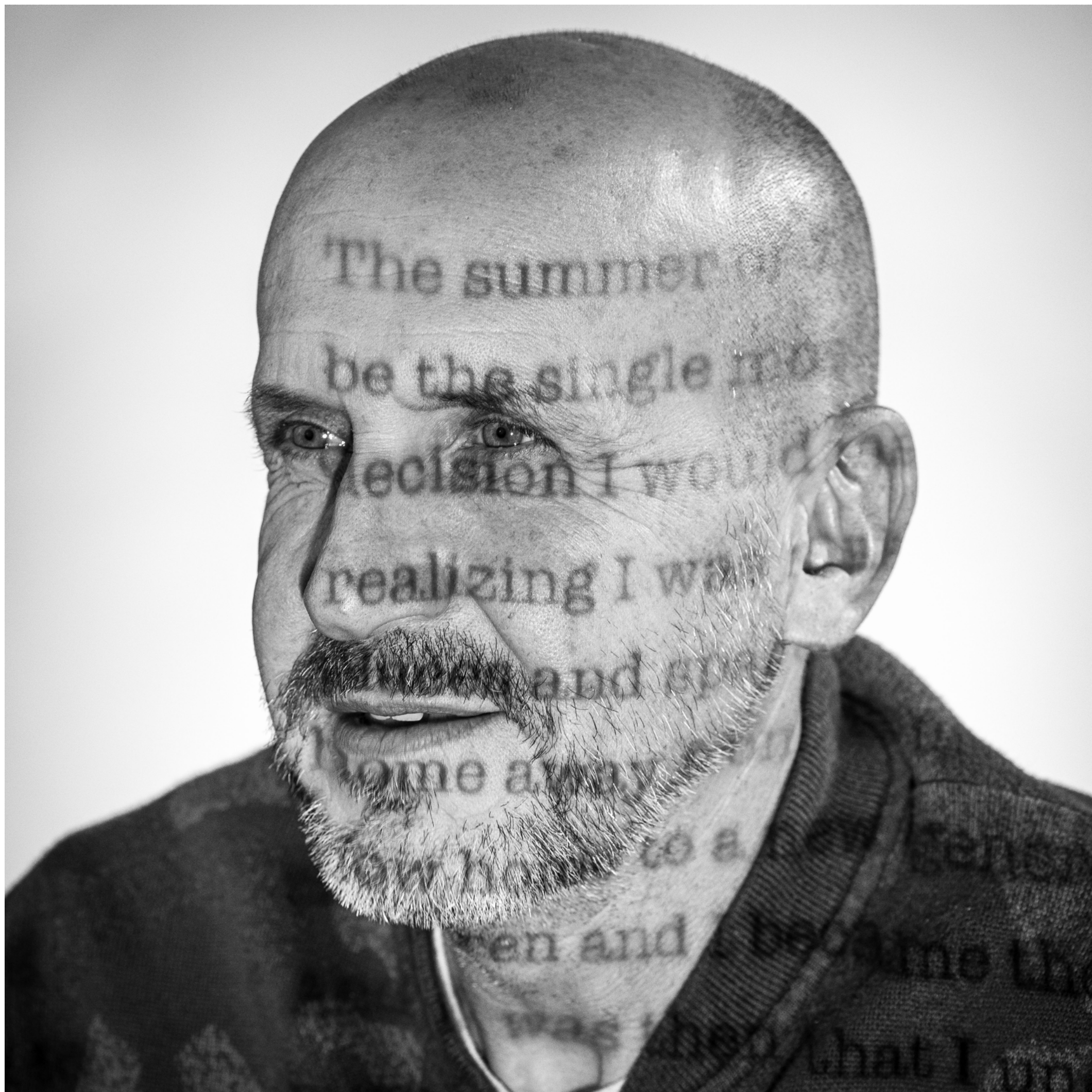
I, and I would imagine most of you, who were and are lucky enough to live and play in this town understand firsthand the vast opportunity we have with spaces, places and programs to learn, play, grow, and succeed.

The youngest of eight, I, along with my seven siblings, were born into recreation. By the time I arrived in 1967, my father Carl Silver left his post as a police officer with the Manchester Police Department to take the Assistant Recreation Director job with the Town of Manchester.

His position proved to be very beneficial to a family of eight children. We gained access to recreation centers, summer playgrounds, swimming pools, athletic fields, and basketball courts. There was no lack of play for this family and certainly an abundance of places to do that. And let's not forget it was the 70's and as children, we were free to roam. So, roam we did.

Later, the summer of 1984 would prove to be the single most important career decision I would make without even realizing I was making one.

These places and spaces that were once a home away from home for me were now home to a new generation of children and I became the rec leader. And it was then that I understood my purpose. Appreciate those that have supported you during your most formative years, give back what was given to you and make life better for others, so that they too have the chance to thrive.



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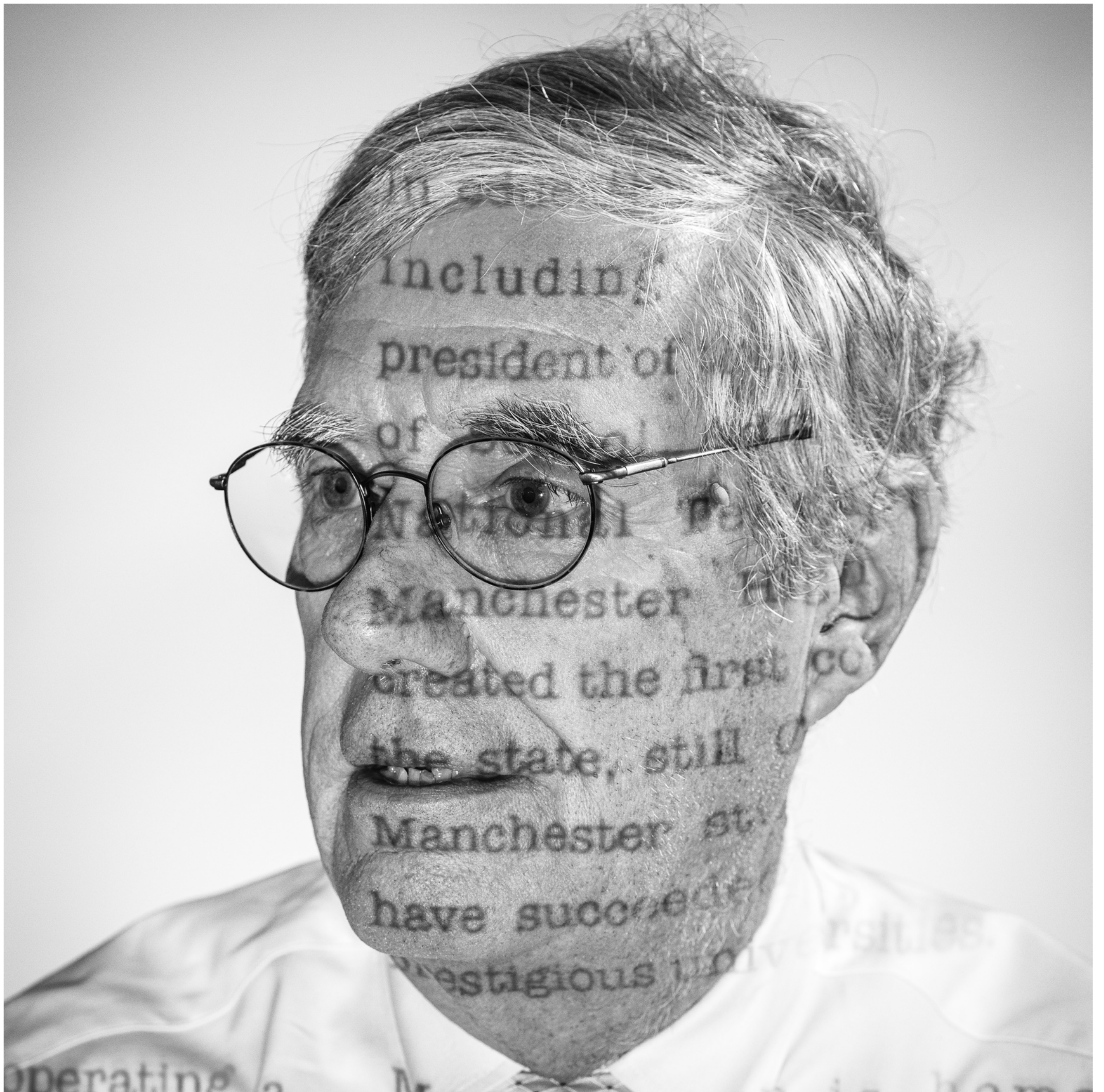
This is a celebration of Manchester, in many ways a unique community: likely the most socio-economically and racially balanced in the region; both a bedroom community to Hartford and a hub for the smaller towns to its east. Since the mid-1800's, thanks to the home-grown Cheney Brothers, the world's largest silk manufacturing company, Manchester has enjoyed a multi-ethnic population. More recently, its minority school district population has grown to over 50% today.

It's been well governed, operating a council-manager form of government, implemented nationally and the brainchild of Manchester native Richard Childs. We've had a town manager selected by the International City Managers Association as one of only 15 members nationally for a major panel. Manchester people created their own hospital in 1919 following the flu epidemic, and many such private charitable organizations exist today.

In education, we've been well-served, including a superintendent as president of the American Association of School Administrators and a National Teacher of the Year. Manchester High

School teachers created the first community college in the state, still Connecticut's flagship. Manchester students for generations have succeeded in the nation's most prestigious universities.

Manchester is home to the Manchester Road Race, staffed by over 500 volunteers and several hundred town personnel, which raises about \$100,000 for local charities and is recognized as the best race in the country on Thanksgiving. The Cruisin' on Main classic car show is one of the largest in the northeast. All in all, not a bad record for the old hometown!



rodolfo ramirez-tirado

I moved to Connecticut in January 1999, when I was 33 years old. A job promotion was the reason I decided to move to the USA. Connecticut adopted me, and have never lived or had intentions to move to other parts of the country.

Manchester became my home from day one, originally because it was close enough to the city of Hartford, (where I eventually met my current partner in life - we've been together since, 24 years today).

Manchester has always fascinated me for being a strong part of the history of New England. One of the first landmarks that captivated me was the Cheney Mills district, which is where I currently live. My garment and textile design background drove me into the fascination of living in a place that used to be textile mills.

In 2008, I became a Zumba instructor and many opportunities opened their doors; I quickly became well known in town. I've taught classes at places like Manchester Community College and currently at the Manchester Senior Center and,

occasionally, at the Youth Service Bureau.

In 2013, I became a US citizen which was a huge milestone in my life. As a Mexican immigrant and a part of the LGBTQ+ community, I've found priceless times the warmth and sense of community in Manchester that keeps me attached to it. I find in Manchester a beautiful place to thrive, to enjoy the peace and quietness I was craving for, yet getting some of the perks of a big city.



laura dunfield

In 1972, I was recently divorced and looking for activities to keep myself busy. I have a degree in Physical Education and love sports. I wondered why there were all these men's softball leagues and nothing for women. So, I went to the Recreation Department and asked [Recreation Superintendent] Carl Silver why. He said there had never been enough interest. I offered to run the league if he would try again. He advertised a tryout and 150 women showed up. We had an eight team league. The same thing happened in the fall with volleyball; they hired me part-time to officiate the leagues and also to teach exercise and dance classes. Three years later, I became full-time, in charge of pools, playgrounds, ice skating and recreation centers, and also taught First Aid/CPR to all part-time staff.

I also became the first female ASA softball umpire in town. I retired in 2000 and started a part-time position with the Senior Center doing evening programs and creating new exercise classes - this lasted 19 more years. Knee issues finally sidelined me

in 2019 with 49 years experience working for the Town of Manchester.

Needless to say, I love this town.



syeda nessa

I am Syeda M Nessa, resident of Manchester, CT since 2008. Over the past 15 years, I have had the privilege of benefitting from the resources offered by the Town of Manchester. I enrolled myself in the ELL, Math, and REACT program at MHS and MCC to improve my linguistic and mathematical skills. Then I was able to utilize these skills to serve as a bilingual, math and science tutor for the Manchester Board of Education serving the immigrant community in Manchester.

I raised four daughters in Manchester, who attended Manchester High School and Manchester Community College. The education offered at both institutions prepared my daughters to pursue their undergraduate degrees at University of Connecticut.

Town of Manchester celebrates diversity. The Muslim community was able to build a mosque for daily prayer services. There's also multiple Asian groceries and restaurants which cater to the multicultural community in Manchester. The Bangladeshi American Association of Connecticut [BAAC] was able to open a Bengali school in Manchester which helped children

learn the Bengali language and culture.

The various programs offered at Spruce Street adds life to the local residents. The Town of Manchester arranges many valuable programs for children at Nathan Hale. It gives local children fun activities to enjoy, grow their social skills and make lifelong friends.

The Neighborhoods and Families Division holds a Farmer's Market on 153 Spruce Street every Wednesday, where local vendors are able to sell homegrown food, vegetables and other locally made goods. They also have a Community Garden, which has several gardening plots. They distribute the plots to the residents for one year where they can produce their own produce. It helps to make Manchester a more sustainable city.

I am very thankful for the resources that are available for Manchester residents by the Town of Manchester. Over the years, the Town of Manchester has become more diverse, and the town has diligently added more and more programs to facilitate resident's needs regardless of their faith, culture and age.



