

Sheridan name may be erased

by Cynthia Sowden
Editor's note: The Northeaster did its own historical research on Sheridan. See "Who was Philip Sheridan?" on p.12, and at mynortheaster.com.
 General Philip H. Sheridan does not have a statue erected in his honor in Northeast Minneapolis. However, a school, a park and a neighborhood bear his name. That may be about to change.
 Two groups – the Sheridan Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and the Sheridan Neighborhood Organization (SNO) – say it's time to rid the area of the name of a man who was considered a military hero in his day but is now looked upon as racist.
SHERIDAN RENAMED? ▶ 11



by Marla Khan-Schwartz
 Most people who frequent the Coffee Shop Northeast at 2852A Johnson Street NE, especially pre-COVID-19, probably know and have talked to Courtney Ross, who managed the shop. Ross, who has worked at the coffee shop through changing ownership and locations for 22 years, has lived in Northeast most of her life. She was also the partner of George Floyd, who was killed at the hands of police on May 25, 2020.
 Ross, who isolated and withdrew from the community, has been unable to work since Floyd's death. She has concentrated on healing and finding ways to use her support system to help the process.

Courtney Ross speaks out

"I am so lucky that I found a wonderful grief therapist who offered her services to me from the moment that Floyd passed away," said Ross. "I talk to her two times a week because it is such an extreme case. I have a supportive family here in Northeast. It goes beyond my blood family and includes my family at the coffee shop, my family in the public school district, and my community family. I get support from them every single day and it lifts me up."
 Northeast community members helped Ross's family by sending meals, packages, cards and other necessary items so Ross and her two children, who are 20 and 12 years old, could continue to heal and grieve together without worry.
 "My entire community has supported me mentally, emotionally, psychologically, and even financially," said Ross. "In all honesty, I do not know how I would have gotten by the past six months without them. We were down to the ground. My son and I both worked at the coffee shop and neither of us could work. My family was hanging on by a thread."
 Floyd and Ross met at the Salvation Army during the summer of 2017, where Floyd worked. Ross visited the center because the father of her children resided there during a difficult separation.
COURTNEY ROSS ▶ 4

Third Avenue Bridge closing until November 2022

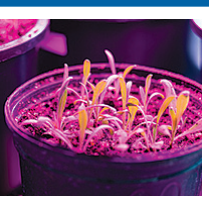


by Mark Peterson
 Of the 20 bridges that span the Mississippi within the city limits, the Third Avenue Bridge is Minneapolis' longest, and most in need of major repairs. The hundred-plus-year-old structure has had two facelifts, in 1939 and 1979, and the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) has been working on a third since last May. The next phase of the work will close the bridge to all traffic for an estimated 22 months, beginning Jan. 4, 2021.
 MnDOT Construction Engineer Tim Nelson said workers will take the bridge, in his words, "All the way down to the arches," making it impossible to work with any traffic lanes open. He added, "There will be noise, dust and lights; unfortunately, noise will echo down the river." After lower structural repairs are completed, the bridge deck will be rebuilt. The uneven areas beneath the bridge make it unfeasible to do any work from below.
 The bridge is one of 24 selected by MnDOT for long-term preservation, and its rehab will address structural deterioration over the past 40 years. Originally called the St. Anthony Falls Bridge, construction began in 1914 and finished three years later. The bridge is distinguished by its use of large arches and open spandrels, and a "reverse S-curve" design that avoided placing the arch footings in parts of the river near the falls that have unstable foundations. The span is part of State Highway 65, and the lanes become Central Avenue when they reach the Northeast bank of the river.
 At a virtual informational meeting on Nov. 12, MnDOT spokesman Dave Aikens outlined the scope of the project and answered questions. He said the bridge will be closed to all traffic on Jan. 4, and the main detour route will be Hennepin Avenue for vehicles and the Stone Arch Bridge for cycles and pedestrians. He noted that the 10th Avenue Bridge, whose construction finish will overlap the Third Avenue Bridge's start by a few months, is not considered a detour. There may be some single-lane closures on Main Street, and the RiverWest condos will have access throughout the project's duration. On the west side, the sidewalk beneath the bridge will be closed, and West River Parkway will have temporary closings.
 Aikens said that besides the structural fixes, MnDOT's aim is to preserve the bridge's history by retaining its unique architectural elements, including the "Classical Revival" piers, the projecting pedestrian bays and the metal railings. The north side stairway to the bridge from Main Street will be rebuilt, but a proposal to add a stairway on the south side was cancelled. Aikens said that a new stairway would have to be ADA-compliant, and the design couldn't be made to match the existing stairway style. The bridge will get a light beige paint job, to match the existing color. Other improvements will include lighting, pedestrian barriers, and minor approach grading. There will be four vehicle lanes and pedestrian and cycle lanes.
 The 1914 bid to build the bridge was \$872,000. The current estimate for this latest rehab is \$129 million. MnDOT expects the repairs to add 50 years to the bridge's life.

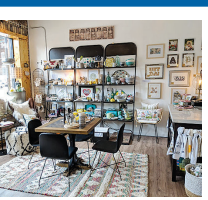
Top: South side of Third Avenue Bridge, with railing removed. **Bottom:** North side, with scaffolding, over the falls. After the lower structural repairs are complete, the bridge deck will be rebuilt.

(Photos by Mark Peterson)

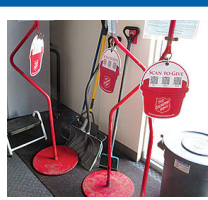
Columbia Heights filmmaker in the big leagues..... 3
 NE family tests out "the farm of the future"..... 5



Small businesses find creative ways to survive.....8
 Drainage work at Columbia Golf Course.....10



Pioneer statue vandalized.....12
 Kiwanis refurbish SA kettles.....13
 My Very Own Bed.....13



Editorial, Letters.....2
 In Business..... 7 / Items of Note9
 Worship Directory.....10
 The Northeast Experience.....14, 15
 Public Notices, Classified Ads.....15
 Shop Northeast.....16

Reflecting on “Floyd” 6 months after his death

1 ◀ COURTENEY ROSS

Ross said she fell in love with Floyd immediately and remembers telling him “I love you,” the evening before he died.

Reflecting six months later, Ross believes that George Floyd still symbolizes a fight for justice and race equity. “Floyd,” as Ross fondly called him, stood for many of those values through his own personal morals, values and actions.

“I have Floyd and the world has George Floyd,” said Ross. “What the world sees Floyd standing for, is similar to what I see, but based on our personal relationship, I know exactly what Floyd was all about. One of the main things that Floyd stood up for was the marginalized, vulnerable and struggling. He did not judge people based on what they had, what they looked like or where they lived. That was not important to Floyd. What was important to him, were humans in general. He cared for people so much and I feel like the world has taken him on as an image to really make a change in this system. That ties into where he was on a human level.

“He always cared for the people that needed help, and on a systemic level, that’s what really needs to be changed. If we change the system, eventually it will trickle down to where we need it to be—to the people that need help, assistance and resources. It is a grand scale of things. People see George Floyd as this amazing worldwide symbol of change and justice.”

Before Floyd’s death, Ross said they talked about the social and race injustices in the world. Floyd had already experienced loss of friends and family in the Third Ward of Houston, Texas, where he grew up, including the young daughter of a family friend. Well known in Houston’s hip hop community, Floyd appeared in the video “Hood Cry,” by friend Cal Wayne, along with the young girl who died. Eerily, the video begins with a statistic about Black men killed by the police.

“The entire song is about the ‘hood that cries out for all of these things, and it’s almost like we are not listening,” said Ross. “Now I watch the video and not only is this little child gone, but Floyd is gone, too. That’s just one song specifically saying, ‘We are hurting, our children are dying, our people are dying, and we are just singing a song for you to maybe hear us.’

“I remember when that happened, the stories just poured from him about the kids and hanging around that family. That group of rappers all hung out with each other. When you don’t have a lot, at least you have each other, but then they don’t have each other because they keep getting murdered. Babies were shot; Floyd was suffocated. Nothing is natural about this.”

Ross attended Floyd’s funeral with her two sons and expressed disappointment about those allowed to attend, saying it was not representative of Floyd’s support system. Although the funeral primarily consisted of members of Floyd’s family, many of the attendees in view of the camera were not people Floyd personally knew, but rather “famous people and politicians,” according to Ross. During the funeral, Ross said she was asked to sit at the back of the church. She said many of the people that were on the VIP list were not allowed into the funeral and turned away. Ross blames those who she believes organized the funeral.

“The only reason why I got in is because the manager of the property knew who I was and let me in with my pass, but all the people from the Salvation Army who were supposed to be on the VIP list never got in,” said Ross. “They were outside and no one let them in, including the people he worked with and some people who are clients there [Salvation Army] who loved him. I have messages back and forth with all of these people who guaranteed me we would all be on the list to get into this memorial service.”

Ross recently visited the memorial site (38th and Chicago Avenue South) for the first time since late May because she finally felt ready. Ross hopes that the area can focus

on the needs of the community and the people who live there, while also preserving the memorial. “I truly hope the city decides to upkeep and put more funding into it so it can really become a true memorial site for Floyd,” Ross said.

According to Ross, Floyd was not a political person and was not allowed to vote due to his past felony record. She believes that the recent election attracted droves of people, especially youth, who want social justice and race equity changes.

“I truly believe Floyd gave his life for us,” Ross said. “I think it caused a movement particularly in young people. It sparked something in them. They decided they were not going to take it anymore. They showed that in the polls. He knew this country needed a change. His life spawned that change. I truly believe he was the changing factor in pushing the election to the democratic ticket.”

Ross thinks the momentum for positive change continues to move forward. Police reform, de-escalation tactics training, and race equity training are on Ross’s agenda for immediate change. She believes that it is possible if we can allocate resources and funding to the right places.

“When people think of reforming the police, they think it’s not having any police, and that is not the case,” Ross said. “What I would like to see in a perfect world, relies on social work and social justice. I would like to see funding moved in a direction where we train people to go to situations where we may not need police. We don’t need police when it comes to so many situations they respond to. We do need people who deal with mental health issues and drug addictions [like] counselors, advocates, and police who are willing to take those roles.”

As for the police union and its long-time president, Bob Kroll, Ross would like to see a major restructuring. Ross believes different representation and leadership is necessary for the systems in place to work. She said it was hard to see Kroll support and advocate for Derek Chauvin and the other three officers indicted in Floyd’s death.

“I have been upset with him [Kroll] from the beginning,” said Ross. “I think people are starting to make their statements known and he will eventually have to stand down and leave, but that will be a process. Some of the things that he said about Floyd disgusted me, like his backing of the officers, and the blue line he would not cross. It was a matter of humanity and he couldn’t even show his human side. It was hard to see him talking about him [Floyd].”

Ross believes that change has everything to do with the way you offer support to diverse communities and other areas that need change. In order to activate in the community, Ross said that people, especially white folks, need to first think about how they are truly supporting communities of color and make changes that clearly support diversity.

“It is time to take ourselves out of our comfort zones and do things we are not used to doing so we can really make those changes,” Ross said. “Go into places you don’t usually go into, and talk to people you haven’t met before, because it is easy for a white person to say they support change and wave their flag, but then what are you doing with your dollars? Where are you going to eat, and hang out? Who are you inviting to your house? It takes more than that.”

Floyd’s death drives Ross’s passion to protect other people of color, including her own children. Ross has two bi-racial children from her previous relationship. Her fears have increased, not only because she and her family have received death threats through social media since Floyd’s death, but because her 20-year-old son has had his own experiences with law enforcement.

“I know it was based off of the way he looked and not what he was doing,” said Ross. “Just as most mothers [feel], it’s really scary. I’ve been harping on him more as a mom to make sure where he is, and where he is going even though he is 20. I make sure he knows not to get caught up on anything. If someone else is doing something that can get you in trouble, get away. I don’t want him around anything that would possibly have people look at him twice. I



Big Floyd’s clothing represents his security job at the Salvation Army shelter, and his love of athletics. Personal memories for Courtney Ross in a world that remembers his death as a turning point for society.

(Photos by Mike Madison)

make sure he has his identification on him constantly. He does a lot of exercise in the community, runs, and plays ball. That’s a big thing with a young person and if the cops pull him over, and he doesn’t have identification, that can sometimes be an instant pathway to jail.”

Ross plans to continue to use her voice to help communities of color and continue to fight for social justice issues. Ross said other white community members need to use their voices to also advocate and listen to diverse communities.

“It’s so hard right now because we have some major changes that need to take place,” Ross said. “As a white woman, I have to continue to use my voice like many white people have in the last six months. I feel like a lot of people are stepping up to the plate.

“I don’t want any more band-aids; I want real structural changes. I want to see it in the police, educational system and everywhere.”

OIL CHANGE
\$24.95
 Disposal Extra

Lube, oil & filter change. Check fluids. Up to 5 quarts 5W30 oil. Most cars/light trucks. Synthetic/Dexos additional. Expires 12/15/20

Mr. Tire

Mon-Fri 7am-7pm; Saturday 8am-4pm
 1227 Central Ave. NE
 (Central & Broadway)
612-623-3700

Affordable Plans-Save!
www.affordableresourcecenter.com

\$956* Bankruptcy Debt Relief
Custody / Divorce \$570*
Criminal / DUI etc. start at \$330*

The New Justice System

612-326-3300

- WE ACCEPT PAYMENTS
- NO CO-SIGNER REQUIRED

*court fees additional

In times like these you need a

BANK THAT CARES.

Count on us to be your reliable guide through every economic cycle, providing advice and support. Call us for a business partnership that is made to last.

UNION BANK AND TRUST

312 Central Avenue SE • Minneapolis
 612-379-3222
www.ubtmn.com • Member FDIC
 A Tradition Since 1976

EQUAL HOUSING LENDER