

**Dr. Sydney Freeman, Jr.**

**Idaho State Historical Society's 2022 Esto Perpetua Award Acceptance Speech**

**Monday, June 5, 2023**

**Idaho State Museum**

A wise person once openly queried, "What would you be doing if you were living during the civil rights movement?"

I wake up every day asking, "What am I doing during a time when the state of Florida is banning the teaching of Black history?"

I wake up asking, "What am I doing during a time when a White student [can] brutally rape and sexually assault a Black special needs student at Dietrich High School in Dietrich, Idaho. And the Black student victim endure taunts at school from his teammates and football coaches, who called him ["fried chicken"](#), ["grape soda"](#), ["n-word"](#) and many other racial slurs [and there is not statewide outcry]?"

I wake up asking, "What am I doing during a time when [31 members of a white nationalist organization known as the Patriot Front](#) are arrested near a Pride event in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho?"

I hope that the work of the Black History Research Lab answers this question as it counters the pervasive anti-intellectualism and anti-Blackness's that infects our society. And seeks to diminish research such as mine to "woke" scholarship. Instead of work that empowers and liberates.

I would like to thank the Idaho State Historical Society for this distinguished honor. It means the world that you would acknowledge the importance of the contributions that Black people have made to this Gem of a state.

I would like to thank my wife, Dr. Lynda Freeman for her love and support. I would also like to thank the University of Idaho's President Scott Green, the University's Library Staff, the History Department, our College of Education, Health and Human Sciences, and my staff including Mr. Brody Gasper and Ms. Rim Tekle for their partnership collaboration and support of the vision of the Lab. And lastly, I want to say thank you to all who came to support me in receiving this honor.

Congratulations to all the other honorees!