

Black History Month | Kim Helms

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We're kicking-off Black History Month with Kim Helms, MGC Myrtle Beach office services coordinator.

What does Black History Month mean to you?

"Black History Month means a lot to me. I grew up celebrating Black history every day but I am grateful that it has been given a space in the year so that those who may not typically focus on African American history as much, if at all, are encouraged to do so. There is so much of our history left out of the school curriculum so it is nice to see an emphasis on other people and events in Black history. The focus tends to be on MLK Jr. and Malcolm X, and though they were both hugely significant to history in general, we have way more Black history that goes untold."

What is a moment in Black history that influenced or shaped your career/life or that particularly resonates with you?

"A period in Black history that still influences and resonates with me is the Harlem Renaissance. I am a lover of all things creative and musical so that era in history always makes me feel even more proud as an African American. Just thinking of all of the literary and musical jewels like Romare Bearden, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston and Duke Ellington that flourished during that time period is awe inspiring considering the racial state of the country at that time. The fact that they still managed to persevere despite the climate of the country and the world at that time is definitely monumental."

Tell us about a moment in Black history that most might not know about.

"Romare Bearden was a great African American artist but he also excelled in baseball. The Philadelphia A's baseball team tried to recruit him but it was under the condition that he agreed to pass as being white. He refused to do so and turned down their offer and decided to focus on his art. Today there is a Creative Arts park named in his honor in his hometown of Charlotte, North Carolina. It was constructed while I still lived in Charlotte so I had the opportunity to visit it and attend many of the functions that happen there before I moved to Myrtle Beach."

How do you celebrate Black history every day?

"I celebrate Black history daily by supporting Black and women-owned businesses, mostly online these days due to Covid. As far as my favorite Black owned businesses, I am a little biased because I have my own. I have an online handmade soaps and body products business, FRESH Handmade Soapery. As far as other local brick-and-mortar Black-owned businesses that I love, I would have to say Clarendon Cuisine restaurant and La Touche Elite Aesthetics are great places of business with awesome customer service."