

# CRR19 THE CHICAGO RACE RIOT OF 1919 COMMEMORATION PROJECT

## **Eugene Williams Scholarship: Guidelines**

With the support and guidance of the Greater Bronzeville Community Action Council (GBCAC), we announce the Eugene Williams Scholarship (EWS) program which will award four \$500 scholarships to young people attending school in the Greater Bronzeville community.

Two prizes will be awarded to students completing 8<sup>th</sup> grade and two more to those completing 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Each winner will receive \$500 and the opportunity to be mentored by the co-directors of the Chicago Race Riot of 1919 Commemoration Project (CRR19) this summer and beyond.

This scholarship was created to honor the memory of Eugene Williams, a 17-year-old African American who lived on Chicago's Southside. On Sunday, July 27<sup>th</sup>, 1919, Williams was killed while swimming with friends in Lake Michigan, just east of what is now 29<sup>th</sup> Street. His murder sparked the long-ignored Chicago Race Riot of 1919, in which 38 people were killed and 537 injured and which remains the worst incident of racial violence in city history. Williams had committed no crime; instead, he was killed by a white man merely for swimming in a so-called "white" part of Lake Michigan on a hot summer day. Of course, Williams was not the first Black child to be killed in Chicago and, sadly, far from the last. The failure of the Chicago police to arrest Williams' killer sparked the existing racial tensions to explode that night as gangs of white men and boys started attacking innocent Black people in their neighborhood which now is called Bronzeville. Further information on this history can be found at:

<https://chicagoraceriot.org/>

In 2020, a few months after George Floyd's murder, a descendant of one of the main sponsors of one of the white gangs responsible for the violence of 1919 made a major donation to the Chicago Race Riot of 1919 Commemoration Project (CRR19), endorsed by GBCAC in 2019, the centennial of Williams' killing. The co-directors of CRR19 decided this donation could do the most good by putting the money back into the hands of Black children who themselves are the metaphorical descendants of Eugene Williams.

We invite current 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students from the Greater Bronzeville community to submit either a written essay (500 to 750 words) or a video (3-5 minutes) application and to get a letter of support for your application.

## Application for the 2022 Eugene Williams Scholarship

In your submission, please respond to both prompts:

Question 1: Describe a situation in which you faced a challenge *or* are facing a challenge. How did you respond to this obstacle?

Question 2: Describe how you think Chicago is still impacted by the legacy of Eugene Williams' killing and the Chicago Race Riot of 1919. Also include how you think we should respond, as a community. How can we address inequalities, encourage resistance to oppression, and foster resiliency?

Submissions will be considered in the following ways:

Question 1:

- Did you tell a clear story that shows a challenge or obstacle?
- Is it clear how you overcame or are overcoming the challenge or obstacle?
- Could the reader/ viewer of the submission recognize the importance of the story and what it says about you?

Question 2:

- Did you integrate information about the legacy of Eugene Williams' killing and the Chicago Race Riot of 1919?
- Does your submission include specific ideas for the community to respond to the realities of racism and racial violence?
- Did you discuss resistance and resilience?

Please submit a letter of support from a counselor, teacher, school administrator, faith leader, or some other elder OR contact information (email address and phone number) for them.

Submit all materials to: [chicagoraceriot1919@gmail.com](mailto:chicagoraceriot1919@gmail.com)

**The EWS Committee will consider all applications submitted by Friday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>.**  
Semi-finalists will be interviewed by members of the EWS Committee.