

## Racism in the Age of Obama

In an era that has seen an African American elected president, it seems difficult to believe that racism is still alive.

Recently, Louisiana Judge Keith Bardwell refused a couple a marriage license on the basis that they were an interracial couple, and the reason he cited was that "most of black society does not readily accept offspring of such relationships, and neither does white society."

"Let's not forget that our President is the son of a white American mother and a black Kenyan father," said Anita Royston from Five Sisters Publishing [www.5sisterspublishing.com](http://www.5sisterspublishing.com), co-author of *Our Black Fathers, Brave Bold and Beautiful!*, and the grandmother of five happy bi-racial children.

"According to the US Census Bureau, there were 1.67 million interracial married couples in America in 2002, where one spouse was either white or black. Compared to two decades ago when that number was only 697,000, interracial marriage is more than just a sign of the times. It's a statistic that trumpets the fact that love trumps race."

Royston believes that the story about Bardwell's refusal, which led to his recent resignation, is not the rule, but rather, the exception, and that the discourse about race and family should be more positive.

"In this world we are more alike than different and our essence and experiences should not be diminished, devalued or ignored because they are opportunities to learn," Royston said. "In addition, all of us can draw inspiration and wisdom from one another regardless of our socioeconomic status, ethnicity, gender, race or marital status."

Royston also believes that the United States is at a critical point in its development as a culture, and that it is time to stop using stereotypes as a way of defining minority cultures.

"Race is a subject we dance around in society, but we need to dispel the dangerous stereotypes that threaten to unhinge our American culture from within," she said. "Stories of strength, wisdom, challenges, fears, failures, transformation, survival and triumphs happen in every race, in every corner of the world. We still grapple with the reality of an African-American president and his sometimes struggle to gain respect from the American people."

When it comes to the trials and tribulations of black fathers in a nation where racism can still present obstacles, Royston believes that telling the stories of those who succeed is a way for the country to transcend its differences.

"The American family is not, nor should it be perceived to be, about color," she added. "Families are about mothers, fathers, children and extended family members. Black fathers have more than their share of challenges to escape trends and conditions that vex them. Our fathers had to create a life where their children were embraced, if not by society, then at least they were determined to be there for us."

### About the Author

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Source: <http://wisdomwriters.articlefacility.com>