

Upcoming Holiday History

Holidays began as moments to pause ordinary life and honor something bigger. The changing seasons, the harvest, survival through winter, spiritual beliefs, or community milestones. Long before calendars, people gathered to eat together, light fires or candles, exchange gifts, and tell stories. At their heart, holidays are about connection, gratitude, remembrance, and hope.

Hanukkah

Hanukkah commemorates a victory for religious freedom in ancient Judea. After reclaiming the Temple in Jerusalem, a single day's worth of oil is said to have miraculously lasted eight nights. Today, the lighting of the menorah, spinning the dreidel, and gathering with loved ones celebrate resilience, faith, and perseverance.

Kwanzaa

Kwanzaa was created in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga as a cultural celebration honoring African heritage and values. Celebrated over seven days, each day focuses on a principle like unity, creativity, and collective responsibility. Kwanzaa emphasizes community, self-determination, and honoring the past while building the future. The seven principles of Kwanzaa are Umoja, Kujichagulia, Ujima, Ujamaa, Nia, Kuumba, and Imani.

Bodhi Day

Bodhi Day marks the moment Siddhartha Gautama attained enlightenment and became the Buddha while meditating under the Bodhi tree. Observed by Buddhists around the world, the day centers on reflection, compassion, learning, and mindfulness rather than celebration or gifts. It's a gentle reminder of inner peace and understanding.

Omisoka (Japanese New Year's)

Omisoka is a time of cleansing and renewal in Japanese culture. Homes are cleaned, debts are settled, and temple bells are rung 108 times, symbolizing the release of earthly desires. Families reflect on the past year and welcome the new one with clarity, humility, and hope.

New Year's Day

Celebrating the New Year dates back thousands of years to ancient civilizations who tracked time by the moon and sun. Today, it marks a fresh beginning. It is a chance to reflect, let go, and look forward. Fireworks, countdowns, and traditions across cultures all share one idea: hope for what's next.



HANUKKAH



BODHI DAY



OMISOKA



Happy Holidays!!



NEW YEAR



KWANZAA



Creative's Corner



Disclaimer: These students put hard work in their work and its only appropriate to share their entire works on top of extra work in the QR code! Well Done!



Low-income Housing - Bryce Burnett

"low-income housing / graveplates in cemeteries / full of black talent / life ends at 22"

Summary

This short, stark poem compresses urban precarity and racial loss into a sequence of images. It links poverty, premature death, and wasted potential—"full of black talent" cut short—to a survivalist logic ("a competition / to outlive the opposition"). The language is spare and urgent, presenting violence and structural neglect as everyday facts that shape young Black lives.

Learning to just be ok - Jenny Alcala

"I believe that even though we will never be alright it's never the right choice to harm yourself because the scars can heal but the painful memories can still linger in our minds. I also wouldn't have done this without the help from my friends and mentors to push through my problems, you can always count on those around you and learn to just be ok."

Summary: Alcala recounts episodes of self-harm, bullying, and isolation, and shows how support from family and mentors helped her survive. The narrative emphasizes that recovery is ongoing and that connection with others makes coping possible.

I am but a little creature - Marin Maple Ortiz-Herrera

"I understand that you like me, though, and I like you back. And maybe that's enough."

Summary: Ortiz-Rivera writes from the perspective of a small animal who forms a gentle bond with a human. The poem uses sensory detail to explore trust and companionship, suggesting that simple affection can bridge profound differences.

Hey Nia - Matt Miller

"It's okay if you feel sad. I'm sad too. But you're big and strong, and you have me, so it's gonna be okay."

Summary: The prologue dramatizes a family breaking apart as a veteran, Caleb, struggles with trauma and his marriage collapses. His daughter Evie becomes his emotional anchor, and the scene sets up themes of healing, parental responsibility, and the uneasy role of technology in intimate life.

In a Cold Starry Night - Sasha States

In a cold stary night / stars shine and glow / its just so bright / As me and him go on a stroll / We find each others hearts intertwined / With the warmth of our soul in mind / We find each other unwind

Summary:

This lyric sketches a quiet, intimate moment between two lovers. The poem contrasts the chill of a "cold starry night" with the warmth of shared feeling, using simple, direct images—strolling, intertwined hearts, and repeated references to sight and memory—to convey closeness and emotional safety. The closing lines return to the night image, suggesting that the moment feels timeless and held in memory.



Magical Child Inspired Poem - Zameyah Coleman

"Now I see clearer with one eye / Than I ever did with two. / I see that love is power, / That being different doesn't make you any less worthy. / That what makes me different / Is what makes me special."

Summary: Coleman turns a childhood struggle with partial blindness into a statement of self-acceptance. The poem traces a move from shame to strength, arguing that difference becomes a source of identity and resilience

Sunsets - Sasha States

Red, orange, yellow and blue / With him I forget all my regrets / This feels too good to be true.

Summary

This poem celebrates a new, healing love that transforms the speaker's sense of loss into hope. Vivid sunset imagery mirrors emotional warmth: the sky's colors reflect in the beloved's eyes, birds and wind underscore a peaceful moment, and the speaker moves from past regret to a sense of completion. The closing lines—addressing "Mr Sandman"—frame the relationship as a dream fulfilled and mark a quiet, confident recovery from earlier pain

The Windmill - Bryce Burnett

the windmill / What does this windmill sound like? / How loud are the birds? / Painting has long dried and shows it's age / Capturing sound we'll never know

Summary: A quiet meditation on absence and representation. The speaker notes that a painting preserves an image but cannot recover the original sounds, suggesting a gap between memory and what art can capture.

Analysis of a Visual Argument - Jenny Alcala

Alcala

"In conclusion, the image mainly incorporates the artist's desire to share his moment he had with this rare bird encounter and visualize the moment so he can be able to finally share his story."

Summary: Alcala interprets Tony Fitzpatrick's collage of a rare bird as a personal memory rendered into public art. She reads the bird as a symbol of longing and wonder, and explains how the collage uses visual fragments to tell a layered story about Chicago and memory.



Evolution - Bryce Burnett

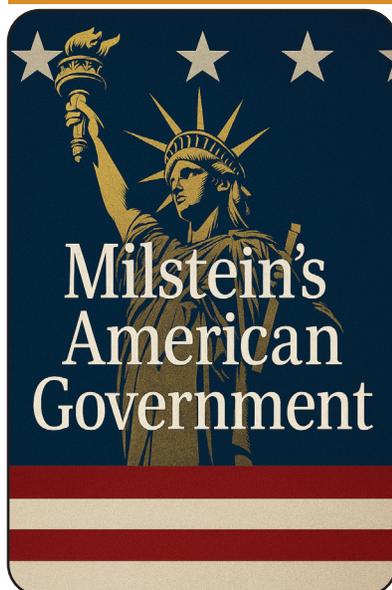
i'm a mental gymstar / i run from all my problems / getting better is exhausting / i'm afraid of change / i know that i have to / before i'm indebted to karma / i only pay with card / i'm afraid of change
Summary: A candid, conversational poem about the fatigue of self-improvement. It balances urgency and humor while admitting fear of change—progress feels necessary but emotionally draining.

Evaluation Essay: Kendrick Lamar - Jenny Alcala

"I have thoroughly evaluated Kendrick Lamar and proven he is the greatest rapper of our time and I don't believe he can be easily overthrown unless another rapper can also go through the same criteria."

Summary:

Alcala evaluates Kendrick Lamar using criteria such as influence, critical acclaim, lyrical complexity, storytelling, and cultural impact. She argues that Lamar meets these standards—citing awards, narrative songs, and public influence—and concludes he stands out as a defining artist of his generation

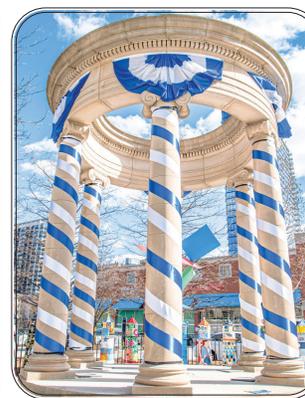


"In cities like Chicago or New York, neighborhoods like Chinatown or Little Italy allow cultural traditions to be preserved while also being shared with others. These areas are not just for one ethnic group—they are part of American life and attract people from all backgrounds. This reflects both multiculturalism (preserving identity) and the melting pot (sharing and blending into American culture)."

Summary: Boyd contends that the United States has already entered a blended stage in which multiculturalism and the melting pot coexist. He illustrates this through examples of ethnic neighborhoods and language education, which simultaneously preserve cultural identity and integrate it into the broader American experience. For Boyd, the debate between the two models is increasingly obsolete, as American society demonstrates a synthesis of both approaches.

"We are increasingly recognizing and accepting, respecting and celebrating, our cultural diversity."

- Julie Bishop



"Immigration policies often reflect these competing models. For example, debates over language requirements, citizenship tests, and support for ethnic enclaves illustrate divergent priorities. Political parties and leaders frequently invoke either assimilationist or multicultural rhetoric influencing legislation and social programs."

Summary: McVeigh maintains that the debate between assimilation and multiculturalism remains unresolved and continues to shape policy. She situates the discussion within immigration law, education, and cultural controversies, emphasizing that these competing visions of national identity have tangible political consequences. For McVeigh, the persistence of the debate underscores its relevance to the future of American democracy and inclusion.

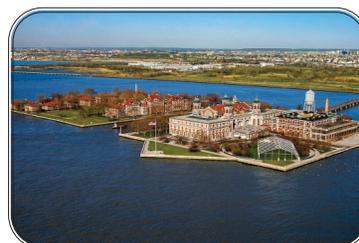


"Everyone comes from different backgrounds whether we want to try to understand them or not, with their own foods, belief systems and values, diversity should be seen as a huge strength because we could all learn from one another rather than erasing it."

Summary: Harris privileges multiculturalism as a democratic strength, arguing that diversity enriches society rather than undermines it. While acknowledging the melting pot's historical role, she critiques its tendency to erase individuality. Instead, she envisions a blended model that respects cultural traditions while fostering civic unity, suggesting that democracy thrives when individuals are free to maintain their identities within a shared national framework.

"The melting pot shouldn't be viewed as a blend of 'American Values' but rather as the Values of the Americans. Even as individuals, because the country wouldn't be what it is without all these diverse parties. Our country's strength lies in its diversity, and we must come together to adapt and refine our shared ideals."

Summary: Silva advocates for a melting pot-forward model, stressing unity as a remedy for contemporary political division. While acknowledging multiculturalism's role in preserving heritage, he argues that cohesion is essential for national strength. His reframing of the melting pot as "the values of the Americans" suggests a more inclusive vision of unity, one that incorporates diversity into a shared civic identity.



"Being American should not require the abandonment of one's roots; instead, it should mean being part of a nation strong enough to embrace multiple cultures without losing harmony."

Summary: Del-Moral endorses a hybrid model that balances unity with cultural preservation. She critiques the melting pot for erasing traditions and multiculturalism for risking fragmentation, ultimately arguing that a blended approach best sustains democracy. Drawing on personal experiences with immigration pressures, she underscores the need for policies that respect cultural roots while fostering trust and safety within immigrant communities.

"The study of geography is about more than just memorizing places on a map. It's about understanding the complexity of our world, appreciating the diversity of cultures that exists across continents. And

in the end, it's about using all that knowledge to help bridge divides and bring people together."

- Barack Obama

"Unity, not uniformity, must be our aim. We attain unity only through variety. Differences must be integrated, not annihilated, not absorbed."

- Mary Parker Follet



Scan QR code to see full work!



"We become not a melting pot but a beautiful mosaic. Different people, different beliefs, different yearnings, different hopes, different dreams."

-Jimmy Carter

"I believe multiculturalism will best serve democracy because it will further prevent historical erasure while also showing citizens that their traditions are respected and a contribution to national unity."

Summary: Hancock strongly favors multiculturalism, grounding her argument in the African American experience of historical erasure. She contends that preserving heritage is essential for equality and cohesion, and that multiculturalism ensures all groups are recognized as contributors to national growth. For Hancock, democracy is most authentic when it honors diverse traditions rather than enforcing assimilation.

"We are united by our values, not our culture. What brings us together is our shared belief in ideas like free speech, equal justice, and the power of our votes."

Summary: Patel proposes a modern blended model that integrates multicultural respect with civic unity. He argues that democratic values, rather than cultural conformity, should serve as the foundation of national identity. At the same time, he emphasizes the public celebration of cultural differences and reciprocal integration, envisioning a democracy that is both inclusive and cohesive.

American Government



Overview

This page explores a vital truth: individuals are not responsible for the actions of their governments. In moments of war, injustice, and political conflict, people often carry the weight of decisions they did not make. Cultural identity becomes politicized, and heritage is mistaken for endorsement. We separate people from power, culture from policy, and identity from state violence. We name the harm caused by systems — war, deportation, discrimination — while honoring the voices of those who resist. We center empathy without erasing accountability. And we invite readers to think critically, act compassionately, and protect the

People are NOT Governments

A person's culture — their language, food, religion, and family traditions — is not a political statement. Yet in times of conflict, people are often judged by the actions of their governments. This misjudgment leads to shame, silence, and fear. Students may feel pressure to hide their identity, avoid speaking their native language, or distance themselves from their heritage.

Governments make decisions, but people live with the consequences. Recognizing this protects cultural pride and allows individuals to celebrate who they are without being forced to explain or defend state policy. It also opens space for those who oppose their governments, speak out against injustice, and work for peace.

Power and Systems

Injustice is not random. It is produced by systems: governments, laws, institutions, and enforcement practices that concentrate power and shape outcomes. These systems create war, displacement, racial profiling, and deportation. They decide who gets protected and who gets punished.

Focusing critique on systems clarifies responsibility. It helps us understand that harm is not just about bad actors, but about structures that enable and normalize violence. And because systems are built by people, they can be changed by people. Policy reform, legal advocacy, and civic action are tools for transformation.

On campus, this means teaching students to identify systemic causes of harm and to organize for change. It means shifting the conversation from “Who do we blame?” to “What do we fix?” And it means empowering students to challenge institutions with clarity and purpose.

Perception and Social Media

Social media moves fast. It rewards outrage, simplicity, and viral content. Complex histories become hashtags, and cultural identities can be turned into political targets. Individuals are often pressured to represent entire nations, even when they disagree with their governments.

This distortion causes real harm. People with visible cultural markers — names, clothing, accents — may feel unsafe or misjudged. Dissenting voices inside a country can be drowned out by extreme narratives, and genuine empathy is sometimes replaced by performative outrage.

We must encourage students to pause, think critically, and prioritize accurate information over political propaganda.

PEOPLE ARE NOT THE GOVERNMENT

Global Voices for peace

Around the world, people resist injustice. Ukrainians defending their homes. Iranians demanding rights. Sudanese and Myanmar activists confronting military rule. Colombians working toward reconciliation. Hong Kongers advocating for democracy. These movements show that resistance is global.

They also show that hope is global. People wage peace even when governments wage war. They organize, protest, build community, and imagine better futures.

Their courage reminds us that change is possible and that solidarity matters.

On campus, we can learn from these movements. We can study their tactics, support their causes, and connect their struggles to our own. Global empathy is not abstract — it's a practice.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

1ST AMENDMENT

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.



Deepen Empathy for Palestine

Palestinian suffering is urgent and undeniable. Families have lost loved ones. Communities have been displaced. Children live with trauma, and civilians face daily threats to safety and dignity. Naming this pain is not political, it is human. Silence feels like erasure. Recognition is a form of respect.

Empathy for Palestine means amplifying survivor voices, supporting humanitarian aid, and resisting narratives that reduce people to political pawns. It means acknowledging grief without excusing violence. And it means creating space for Palestinian students to speak, organize, and heal without fear of backlash.

Immigration, Deportation, Fear in U.S.

In the United States, many immigrant families live with the constant fear of deportation. That fear shapes how students learn, how families move through public space, and how communities connect. It creates silence, stress, and trauma. And it often goes unseen by those who feel safe.

Recognizing this reality means naming the systems that produce it: immigration enforcement, legal precarity, and discriminatory policy. It means protecting vulnerable students, supporting legal aid, and advocating for humane reform. And it means listening to immigrant voices and stories of resilience, contribution, and fear — with respect and urgency.

On campus, this can look like sanctuary policies, multilingual support services, and public programming that centers immigrant experience. It's about turning empathy into action and making safety a shared responsibility.

Diversity within Nations

No country is a single voice. Within every nation, there are dissenters, peacebuilders, people who resist injustice. Not all Israelis support war. Not all Palestinians support violence. Not all Russians back their government. Not all Americans agree with their leaders. Saying it aloud matters. It protects individuals from collective blame. It honors the courage of those who speak out. It creates space for solidarity across borders. When we recognize internal diversity, we stop asking “What side are you on?” and start asking “Who is working for peace?”

On campus, this means highlighting stories of resistance, amplifying marginalized voices, and refusing to flatten people into stereotypes. It means seeing complexity as a strength, not a threat.

Empathy paired with Accountability

Empathy and accountability are not opposites. They are partners. Empathy means seeing the people who suffer and the people who resist. Accountability means naming the systems that cause harm and demanding change. Together, they create a path forward. This balance prevents two common mistakes: sentimentalizing suffering without addressing causes, and weaponizing blame without honoring humanity. Instead, we grieve, we learn, and we act. We support humanitarian aid. We back nonviolent movements. We push for policy reform. And we protect those who speak truth to power.

On campus, this means creating spaces where compassion leads to action and where justice is pursued with both heart and strategy.



EAST-WEST QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS



Intercultural day

Intercultural Day transported us around the world in just a few hours. We sampled cuisines from multiple cultures. From Mexico to South Korea. We took turns smacking the piñata, and some even got to enjoy beautiful henna art drawn on their hands. Each presenter offered valuable history and personal insight into where they were from, turning the day into an immersive celebration of heritage and community. It was a great moment for the university to come together.

EWU's Electronics Engineering Technology Program Capstone Project Showcase

This showcase highlighted the brilliance and dedication of EWU's talented Engineers as they presented the results of their hard work. From concept to creation, the projects on display reflected innovation, skill, and countless hours of effort. Our future is bright.

East-West Poetry Slam Participants

DeDe Porter – Born in Jamaica and raised in Chicago. She's a Biological Science major and came very close to winning last year's Story Slam.

Nefertiti Ruffin – Her family is from Louisiana, she's from the South Side, and she does not like to be interrupted — so don't be interrupting her now!

Mishaal Khan – From the exotic region of Kashmir, where they produce Cashmere wool, one of the finest fabrics on earth.

Ravinna Harris – Age 33, Chicago-born, living in a city full of noise, motion, and stories. She studies in the medical field, carries a few mystical gifts, and loves to cook.

Kendall Lewis – Chicago born and raised on the West Side. A Computer Information Science major and the very definition of a jack of all trades.

Davon Simpson – Shared a valuable life lesson about the consequences of not obeying his father.

Shellicia Rogers – A Senior born in the city and raised in the suburbs. An upcoming Erotic/Fiction/Creative Narrative author and poet. Hosted by Dr. Hillman, this year's Story Slam featured seven contestants battling it out for the ultimate prize: the championship belt and a crisp \$100 bill. The stakes were high, the stories were fierce, and the audience was locked in from start to finish.



Open Mic

Open Mic Hour was a vibrant two-day event where students got to showcase their creative works, tell their stories, and even sing their hearts out. Dr. Hillman graced us with some passages from his new book *White Flight*, and Mr. Bailey shared some of his powerful poetry. The room felt alive. A space was created where students and faculty connected through art, words, and courage (because trust me it took some courage to get in front of everyone and share).

Fingerprinting Lab – Professor Cooper's Class

Students in Professor Cooper's class participated in a hands-on fingerprinting lab designed to introduce them to fingerprinting concepts and techniques. The lab gave students an interactive opportunity to engage with the material and explore how fingerprints are used in identification practices.

Media Day

"New Era" explores the evolving culture of East-West University basketball, highlighting a season defined by growth, discipline, and unity. It offers a glimpse into a program learning, building, and moving forward together.

Check out their featured article! Page 12

The Lyric & I

My Trip to the Lyric Opera House

It all started with an email telling me the deadline to apply for the Lyric Opera Ambassador Program had been extended to Friday on a Thursday afternoon. I emailed my advisor to ask if it would be a good idea to go. She agreed that it would be both fun and beneficial—for me and the University—as an academic experience. As it turns out, she was correct.

I filled out the Google form, and guess what? I got it. I now get to see performances for free or, at the very least, at a student discount. Just \$25 each for a friend and me to enjoy a luxury night out at the Lyric Opera House—just steps away from the Metra station and the CTA Green, Pink, Blue, and Brown Line trains. At the first meeting, I was nervous, but we brainstormed some great ideas for College Night. College Nights are events the Opera holds to get college students more involved.

Lights, camera, action! I was walking the red carpet on opening night. The show? An Evening with Brian Stokes Mitchell and Laura Benanti, two Broadway stars. I'll admit, I was a little hesitant, but it ended up being a phenomenal night. They were witty, fun, and sang tunes I could easily follow along with, such as *The Sound of Music*, duets, and pop-cultural songs. But one of my favorite parts of the show? Being serenaded by a beautifully harmonious orchestra. I recall the sounds coming from the alluring stage—a perfect way to put the phone down and disconnect.

Before stepping in, guests are greeted by a hologram that says “Lyric” on the ground. It feels magical from the start. Dressed in my favorite outfits, I stepped inside the nearly empty halls—I had been early each time. When you first enter, the short hall is filled with performance pieces from past shows. The great room glitters with gold accents and backdrops so patrons can commemorate the evening with photos. I had never experienced it the way I did on my first night—or those thereafter. I had floor seats! I witnessed the power of MEDEA from the center row.

MEDEA was sung in Italian, and it was DRAMATIC. Medea is a Greek myth about a sorceress betrayed by the man she loves, Jason, when he leaves her to marry a princess and takes their children away. Grief-stricken, Medea does the unthinkable—she kills their children in an act of revenge. The crowd was moved to tears and gave an almost ten-minute-long standing ovation.

The latest show was a double performance: *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci*. Both were one-act performances sung in Italian, each offering a unique view of spurned lovers. The first takes place on Easter Sunday: a woman discovers her lover has returned to his former love, who is now married to a powerful man. Beside herself, the scorned woman tells the powerful man, and in the end, her lover is killed.

The second performance features Canio, a clown in a comedy troupe, who discovers his wife is cheating on him. He decides to stage a show about a cheating wife. At first, it is funny, but his rage gets the best of him, and he kills his wife (also part of the troupe) and then her lover. “The comedy is over.” It begs the question: is life imitating art, or does art imitate life? Oscar Wilde believed the former.

Friends poked fun at me for attending three performances in three months, but if they joined me, they would understand. Some might find it overwhelming by the constant singing and loud orchestra—but not me. I was immediately taken in. Who can't be engrossed in the performance? All these people around you, and yet the stage is the focus. The opera is deeply an immersive experience. You laugh, sigh, and clap. You savor the subtleties of the orchestra. Not only are the singers belting out magnificent lines, but they are delivering emotional performances that leave you almost impatient to see what happens next. And when it's over, you realize your brain has been processing so much—the orchestra, the scenery, the motions, the story—that you literally jump to your feet with the urge to yell “BRAVO!!!” in real life, not just like in a Looney Tunes short. I can't wait to do it again.

If you're looking to be bad and bougie, the Lyric Opera is the way to go.

— Shellicia Rogers

1. The Building: History & Architecture

Official Name: The Civic Opera House (home of Lyric Opera of Chicago)

Address: 20 N. Wacker Drive, Chicago

Opened: November 4, 1929

Architects: Graham, Anderson, Probst & White — same architectural firm behind Chicago icons like the Merchandise Mart.

Style: Art Deco + Art Nouveau influences with pale limestone, dramatic vertical lines, and gold interior accents.

Capacity: About 3,600 seats, making it one of the largest opera houses in the U.S.

Fun Detail: The building's shape from above resembles a giant “throne,” which has led to the nickname “the world's largest seat.”

2. Its Importance (Why It Matters Culturally & Artistically)

One of the “Big Three” American opera companies (along with the Met and San Francisco Opera).

Known for world-class productions, international singers, and lush orchestral work by the Lyric Opera Orchestra.

A leader in new opera development, regularly premiering new works and contemporary adaptations.

Instrumental in Chicago's cultural identity — it anchors the city's classical arts scene and draws global attention each season.



Offers community outreach, educational initiatives, and accessible programming for young audiences and new opera lovers.

3. The Lyric Ambassadors Program

Launch Date:

The Lyric Ambassadors initiative began around 2011–2012 as part of Lyric's push to grow young audiences and create community partners.

Purpose:

To build a network of passionate volunteers and supporters who promote opera in their communities, campuses, and workplaces.

What Ambassadors Do:

- Spread awareness of Lyric's productions and programs
- Bring new audiences to performances
- Attend special events, previews, and behind-the-scenes experiences

Who It's For:

Community members, students, and young professionals who love the arts and want to represent Lyric.

4. Opening Night (Season Kick-Off)

Lyric traditionally opens its season in late September or early October each year.

Opening Night Gala often includes:

- A red carpet arrival
- A festive pre-show or after-party

Opening Night is known for being the most glamorous, high-energy evening of the season — gowns, tuxes, and Chicago's arts community all under one roof.

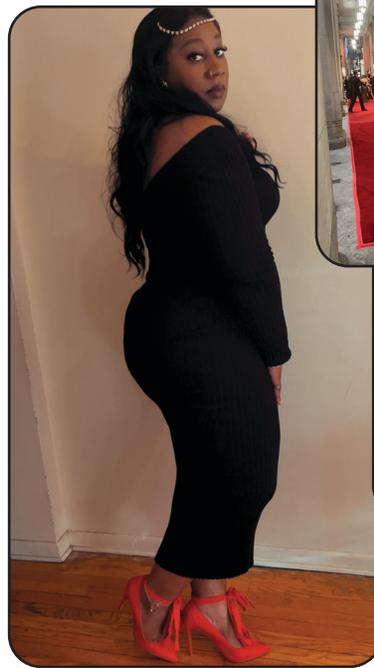
5. The Season (General Structure)

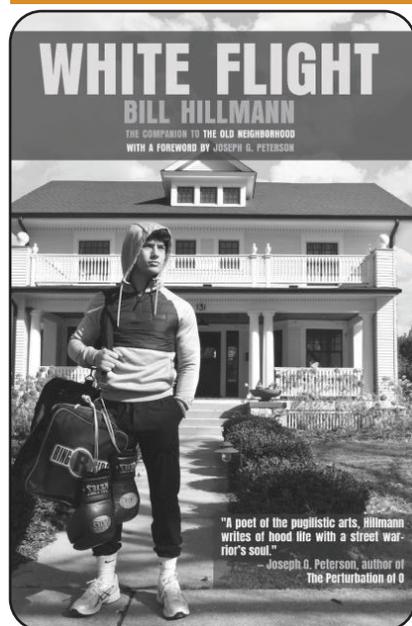
Runs from September through May each year.

Usually includes 6–8 full opera productions, mixing:

- Classics (Verdi, Puccini, Mozart)
- Contemporary works
- New commissions or American debuts

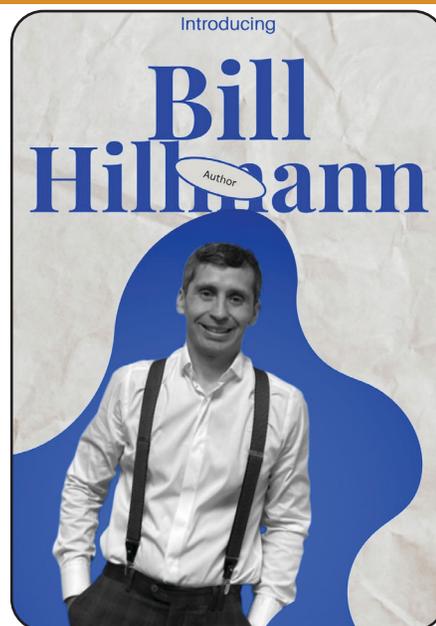
It is important that the younger generation be introduced to the Opera. The misconception that the experience is boring or only for older rich people should be thrown into the deepest part of the ocean because it is just not true. I propose that more programs like the ambassadorship make its way to not only college campuses but high school as well. It is necessary that the art form live on.





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You can learn more about Bill Hillmann's book and his inspiration for creating this novel here:

White Flight Full Interview



Bill Hillmann read an article to his class by Rick Kogan, an author for the Tribune Magazine where you can read right here!

Tribune
Magazine



<https://www.chicagotribune.com/2025/10/21/bill-hillmann-white-flight-novel/>

*Bill Hillmann is an American author, journalist, storyteller, and professor at East-West University, Chicago. He is the author of *The Old Neighborhood* and its most recent companion piece, *White Flight*. Beyond writing, Hillmann is known for his real-world intensity. An Associate Professor in the English and Communication Program, he is an experienced bull runner and a former boxer. He currently heads up East-West University's Boxing Club, where his background in discipline and resilience shapes both his leadership and mentorship.*

As an educator, Dr. Hillmann is deeply encouraging and consistently present for his students. Whether in the classroom or beyond, he makes himself available, offering guidance, support, and a genuine belief in his students' voices and potential.

What first pulled you back into this story after *The Old Neighborhood*?

I wrote a full draft of *White Flight* about nine years before *The Old Neighborhood* came out. My sister-in-law, who'd only recently joined the family, asked why I chose to have the character based on my sister die at the end. I was surprised she was so sure Rose had died; I wanted it to be a cliffhanger. I was sitting in the Jumping Bean Café on 18th Street in Pilsen, looking across at the big old stone building full of artist spaces. It was partly addressed to my sister-in-law and to readers who thought Rose might have died. A simple line came to me: "Rose lived."

My sister being shot in real life and having to be brought back to life several times when I was fourteen was a major traumatic event for my family and my adolescence. My father spending endless hours at her bedside revealed how much he loved her and us. When you're a teenager you rebel and don't really understand the unfathomable love your parents feel; when it finally sinks in, it can be shocking and life changing. I wrote a few lines about my dad staying at her bedside and tears started rolling down my cheeks. I knew I'd begun a new journey: a second look at a book I'd written as an insecure guy in his early twenties. Now it was time to investigate those emotions and turn them into something I could be proud of.

How has your relationship to this material shifted over the ten-year span between the two books?

I'm constantly growing and making peace with the past I lived through in those years. Wounds never fully heal, and you can fall back into earlier states of maturity in an instant if you're triggered. I try to let whatever comes up do so organically when I reflect on those years: rage, humiliation, regret, triumph, vindication—there are a million ways to feel through those tumultuous times. The main point is not to let those feelings interrupt your progress.

When old feelings emerge, I tell them: Hello, old friend. I remember you. I'm sorry you suffered, but I won't let you hurt my life again. You existed and still exist, but you have no power over me anymore. Love heals, and healing is a daily practice if you've been deeply wounded. To some people my wounds seem colossal; compared to others they may seem mundane. It's not about measuring trauma: a small wound can disrupt an entire life, and that is tragic; a massive trauma can be made peace with quickly, and that's a triumph.

In the end, we must work to heal, choose love over fear, and do that work daily. My relationship with the years the book is based on is worse, the same, better, and wonderful all at once. My ability to process it and live in peace has grown tremendously, but if I let it, I can fall back into hell with those memories in a split second. Because of that, I have to stay vigilant and do the work of healing every day.

Reviews from our Students!

Yesterday I got the pleasure of meeting one of poetry's finest. A man named Chuck Perkins. He not only opened up my eyes to the world of spoken word but also he showed me how talented our people really are. His memory is incredible. He can recite beautifully written poems back to back. It was truly amazing seeing someone use their mind and words in such a powerful way. As a student studying psychology at East-West University Chicago it was inspiring to see what the human brain is capable of. Thank you Chuck Perkins for coming to my school and dropping some knowledge on the youth.

- Isaiah Ross

New Orleans poet travel to Chicago to teach college students the way of poetry - Yanalise Swift

On Oct. 20, 2025, Chuck Perkins from New Orleans was a guest speaker at East West University. I was glad to be one of the students who attend East West University to see his performance. He arrived with a positive attitude and high-spirited energy. Mr. Perkins began by introducing himself and telling my classmates and me about the book he recently published, *Beautiful and Ugly Too*. The book was published in July of this year, and he spoke very proudly about it. Mr. Perkins stated that the book is a collection of poems and essays he has written over the years. He then read a few poems that astonished my peers and me. The room fell silent and then flooded with applause. The poems and essays are about his past experiences, things that affected him, and inspiring words for those around him. Mr. Perkins's words can be very impactful and uplifting to young people.

I interviewed one of the student administrators, Ms. Rehich, who also attended Chuck Perkins's spoken-word performance. She said it was a great performance and that it could be impactful for students. Ms. Rehich also said it was nice to hear someone else's point of view and to learn how Mr. Perkins dealt with violence growing up and turned that experience into poetry, which she called beautiful. Chuck Perkins also said he owns a café called Café Istanbul in New Orleans where he performs his work. He invited my classmates and me to visit his café if we ever get the chance to go to New Orleans, which I thought was generous and kind.

My take on the performance is that I enjoyed it and was able to relate to his poems in certain ways. All in all, I think Chuck Perkins is an amazing poet; I would love to see more of his work, and I hope my readers will feel the same way.

Meet Your Advisors

Rob Bailey

ABOUT ME



The first thing you should know about me is that I believe in you. Each and every one of you. College is a pivotal point in life, and I'm honored to play a small part on your path. Step out of your comfort zone, find your passion, and stop by my desk whenever you'd like an ear. Not literally, who am I, Van Gogh? For real, though: who am I? Well, I grew up in the south suburbs, and I've lived all over the city--Lincoln Park, Lakeview, Uptown, Gage Park, Hyde Park, and now South Loop. I studied Journalism and Sociology at DePaul before joining City Year, an education nonprofit that partners with CPS schools. Though I love teaching, I knew I would regret it if I didn't pursue creative writing seriously. So I gathered my lyrics and my courage and applied to MFA programs, which brought me to California College of the Arts in San Francisco. Best decision of my life. Second best. The best was committing to my partner, Zoey. At CCA, I had incredible professors--practicing authors--who pushed me to grow from a journalist with a poetic impulse to a published author of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. In truth, it took five years after graduation to fully internalize what I had been taught. I spent some of that time at artist residencies in Iceland and Upstate New York, but this path is not glamorous. I spent most of the time working in coffee shops and writing on blank receipt paper. Over the years, I drafted and revised what they call a drawer novel: a book I poured my heart into that may never see the light of day. Then my mom died. I began working on short stories, cathartic and more manageable in scope for my grieving mind. The vision: a collection that honors my mom and Chicago and the sports that brought us together. So far, I've published four of the nine stories--still a long way to go. But here's what you should know: when I encourage you to find your passion, when I encourage you to follow your heart, when I encourage you to work your hardest, I'm speaking from experience.

About Me

Hi, I'm MIEREL!

Role: Counseling & Student Affairs (CSA)

Advisor:

Zodiac Sign: Scorpio

City Born in: Chicago

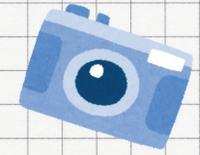
Ethnicity: North African & Middle Eastern



LUNA

MY HOBBIES:

- Reading
- Running
- Coffee!



I work with juniors and seniors, and I'm here to support you whether you have questions, need help planning, or just want to talk things through. If I don't have the answer, I'll connect you with the right person or resource.

Come by and say hi!

Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 9 AM - 5 PM

Office: W824

HOW I CAN HELP:

- Plan Your Classes
- Find Campus Resources
- Set Goals
- Talk Things Through - academics, life, or both
- Explore Careers
- Student events/activities
- Check In Anytime - even if you just need to chat

And so much more!

MY MOTTO

Together, we make it happen.

Follow East-West on Social Media!

East-West University Chicago
Service to humankind through relevant, affordable, multicultural education
Education Administration Programs • Chicago, Illinois • 5K followers • 2K alumni

Message Following

East-West University Chicago
@ewu_chicago

150 Following 137 Followers 3,933 Likes

Message

Vibrant multicultural small private university
www.eastwest.edu
Chicago

East-West

Directory



Upcoming Chicago Developments



400 Lake Shore Drive

What it is: A two-tower residential development on the former Spire site by Related Midwest and SOM, bringing high-rise housing and new public green space to the lakefront. The north tower is planned as a 72-story residential building with a large podium and roughly 1.1 million residential sqft; the project includes about 4.5 acres of space and a lakefront! Phase One has begun with curtain-wall installation and rising concrete floors reported as the north tower climbs past the podium level

The 78

What it is: A 62-acre master-planned neighborhood on the South of the Chicago River conceived as a dense, mixed-use extension of downtown with housing, offices, retail, parks, and an extended riverwalk. The site is being developed in phases to stitch new blocks into the riverfront, with early infrastructure and riverwalk work setting the stage for taller towers and public realm amenities. The 78's visual identity will be a cluster of contemporary towers and generous public spaces that reframe the Near South Side's relationship to the river.



Google / Thompson Center renovation

What it is: An adaptive-reuse transformation of the James R. Thompson Center into a modern office campus for Google, featuring a new glass curtain wall, expanded public plaza, and interior reconfiguration for collaborative workplace uses. The project converts a distinctive civic shell into a luminous, street-facing building that folds public life into corporate space; façade enclosure and plaza sequencing are the near-term visual markers of progress.

Michael Reese Redevelopment (Bronzeville)

What it is: The transformation of the former Michael Reese Hospital campus into a mixed-use innovation district on Chicago's South Side. The plan includes housing, life-sciences labs, research facilities, retail, and green space, all designed to anchor Bronzeville's economic revival. The site is envisioned as a health-tech and community hub, tying into nearby McCormick Place and the South Loop.



Obama Presidential Center (Jackson Park)

What it is: A nearly 20-acre civic campus in Jackson Park combining a museum, auditorium, library branch, athletic facilities, and extensive landscape restoration intended to serve as a cultural and community anchor for the South Side. The campus integrates building massing with restored parkland and accessible pathways, producing a park-forward composition that emphasizes public programming and neighborhood connectivity; landscape completion and exhibit fit-out are the milestones to watch



Lincoln Yards

What it is: A large North Branch redevelopment concept reimagined as a mixed-use spine of parks, offices, housing, and riverfront public realm across a substantial acreage. The project has undergone iterations in scope and ownership but remains a potential generator of new skyline massing and riverfront activation. Expect phased site remediation, infrastructure sequencing, and incremental parcel development rather than a single continuous build-out.

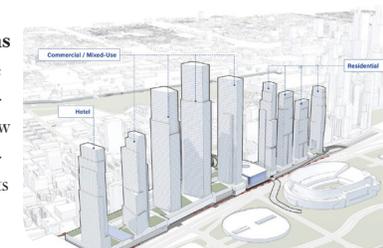


Navy Pier redevelopment

What it is: A multi-phase reinvention of Navy Pier focused on modernizing attractions, reconfiguring public spaces, and improving waterfront access through new programming, lighting, and amenity upgrades. The pier's visual transformation will emphasize refreshed promenades, event-ready plazas, and nighttime activation, with phased construction and programming rollouts shaping the visitor experience.

McCormick Place / South Loop expansions

What it is: Incremental and programmatic expansions around the convention campus that add exhibition capacity, hospitality inventory, and support infrastructure to strengthen Chicago's trade-show economy. These projects manifest as large-footprint buildings, expanded service yards, and adjacent hotel and transit improvements that together extend the South Loop's event-oriented urbanism.



Fulton Market / West Loop growth

What it is: Fulton Market converted industrial warehouses into terraced offices, science labs, and campuses as well as new mid and high-rise buildings. The visual character is a layered urban collage brick and glass façades, rooftop terraces, and animated street life where incremental infill and selective towers sustain a lively, mixed-use district.

Holiday and Winter Things to Do in Chicago!

Christkindlmarket Chicago

This is Chicago's classic German-style Christmas market.
2025 dates: roughly Nov. 21 through Dec. 24 for the Daley Plaza location.

Cost: Admission is free.

Great for: handmade gifts, cozy drinks (like hot chocolate or mulled wine), unique ornaments, festive vibes, and holiday snacks

ZooLights @ Lincoln Park Zoo

The zoo gets transformed with millions of holiday lights, festive decorations, and a magical winter stroll. A beautiful evening outing.

2025–2026 season: through early January (e.g. Jan. 4, 2026) for ZooLights. Perfect for a night out with friends or family under lights + a little holiday magic.

WinterWonderFest @ Navy Pier

Winter WonderFest runs Dec. 5, 2025 to Jan. 4, 2026.

This indoor holiday extravaganza includes rides, an ice skating rink, festive décor, and bonus. It's a ride on the iconic Centennial Ferris Wheel.

A good option if you want holiday fun but'd rather stay warm inside. Especially useful if it's freezing outside.

The Art Institute of Chicago

If you want to mix culture with holiday downtime, this museum is ideal.

Free admission for Illinois residents on select days: e.g. weekdays Dec. 1–18, 2025, plus occasional other free days.

A cozy indoor plan for a chilly winter afternoon.

Holiday Exhibit "Christmas Around the World and Holidays of Light @ Museum of Science and Industry

Every holiday season this museum hosts "Christmas Around the World & Holidays of Light". A festive exhibition featuring dozens of decorated trees representing global traditions.

Great if you want something indoors that feels festive and cultural. Especially good if you like learning and exploring (looking at you, scholar-artist).

Chill-at-Home or Indoor Things — Cozy, Low-Effort & Warm

Because sometimes you just want warmth and fuzzy socks

Hot chocolate nights (bonus: winter-themed snacks or treats) and gingerbread houses

Board games, puzzles, or artsy crafts nights (perfect especially if you're artistically inclined)

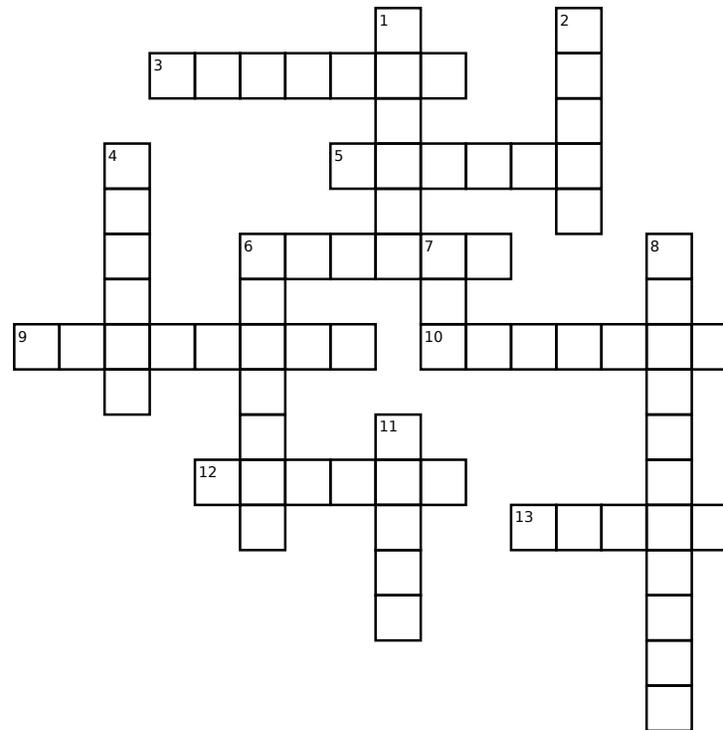
Movie nights: holiday classics, comfort movies, or even winter-themed films

Baking or cooking seasonal treats. Try some cookies or warm drinks winter-themed recipes





East-West Puzzle



Down:

1. Staff Writer
2. the number of fields East-West provides
4. Freshman and Sophomore Advisor
6. The University's Mascot
7. Director of Computer and Information Science
8. The restaurant connected to the University (two words, no spaces)
11. Director of Bio

Across:

3. Phantom Press Newspaper Developer
5. Junior and Senior Advisor
6. Director of English and Communications
9. The name of student housing (two words, no spaces)
10. Director of Electronics Engineering Technology
12. Director of BHS
13. Director of Business



SENIOR SPOTLIGHT



Interviewer: What would you like to share? We would love to know everything. What makes you YOU?!

Interviewee: I'm a dual major—EET and CIS. This is my final quarter; I graduate this Winter. Honestly, I just want to reclaim my life. I have a ton of hobbies, interests, and skills I want to hone. While finishing school is a huge accomplishment, I'm excited that my schedule will open back up for my side-quests—like buying a motorcycle and traveling cross-country as a personal journey.

Interviewer: Major(s)

Interviewee: EET and CIS.

Interviewer: Expected Graduation Date

Interviewee: Winter Quarter.

Interviewer: Plans After Graduation

Interviewee: To reclaim my time, dive into my hobbies, travel, and continue writing.

Interviewer: What do you consider your successes and challenges?

Interviewee: My path has been nonlinear. That brought a lot of internal questions like "Is this my life now?" and "There must be more out there for me." Finding

my direction took time, but now that I'm close to my goals, I can look back and see the journey becoming a success story. The challenges truly made the victories sweeter.

Interviewer: Are you happy overall?

Interviewee: Yes. I'm in a good place mentally, with a strong support system in my peers and family.

Interviewer: What do you do for a living?

Interviewee: I'm an Acoustic Transducer Engineer. My title is Mechanical Engineer, but my work focuses on research and development of ultrasound transducers—devices that convert electronic input into sound output for imaging.

Interviewer: Is there anything you would do differently?

Interviewee: I don't think so. If I had to choose something, I would start writing sooner.

Interviewer: Do you have a family?

Interviewee: I have a wife and two doodles—Mochi and Bluey. No kids yet, but definitely one day.

Interviewer: Hobbies, current goals, and dreams? (Share your work!)

Interviewee: I have a long list of hobbies—my best friend calls me "Mr. Side-Quest." I cook and bake (I cater sometimes), I'm a gamer, a musician, and I love building furniture and other hands-on projects. I'm also a professionally trained electrician. Creatively, I'm working on my third novel while editing one and beta-reading another. One of them, *A Ladder to the Stars*, is available to read for free on Inkitt. It follows a young girl named Astrid who meets a porcelain doll named Bruno, who shares stories of a 1940s NYC window washer.

Read it here: https://inkitt.com/M_S_Miller

I post new chapters weekly. It has some heavy themes, but it's a beautiful story. My dream is to share stories with the world and take readers on adventures through the written word.

Interviewer: What will you remember about East-West and the professors?

Interviewee: The instructors and TAs—Dr. Polski, Dr. Hillmann, Dr. Injoo, Dr. Zhang, and Rick Antunez. They supported me through frustrating and stressful moments and helped me succeed. I learned a lot about myself here.

Interviewer: Do you have a favorite quote or words of wisdom for the student body?

Interviewee: "You'll grow to learn what you deserve to believe." — Steven Miller (my father)

Interviewer: Social Media Handles

Interviewee: X: @m_s_miller01

Stories: https://inkitt.com/M_S_Miller

Newspaper Developer - Elian Davalos/Shellcia Rogers
Faculty Advisor - Dr. Maria Polski
Staff Writer - Shellcia Rogers/Elian Davalos



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Chicago, IL 60609 (312) 939-0111

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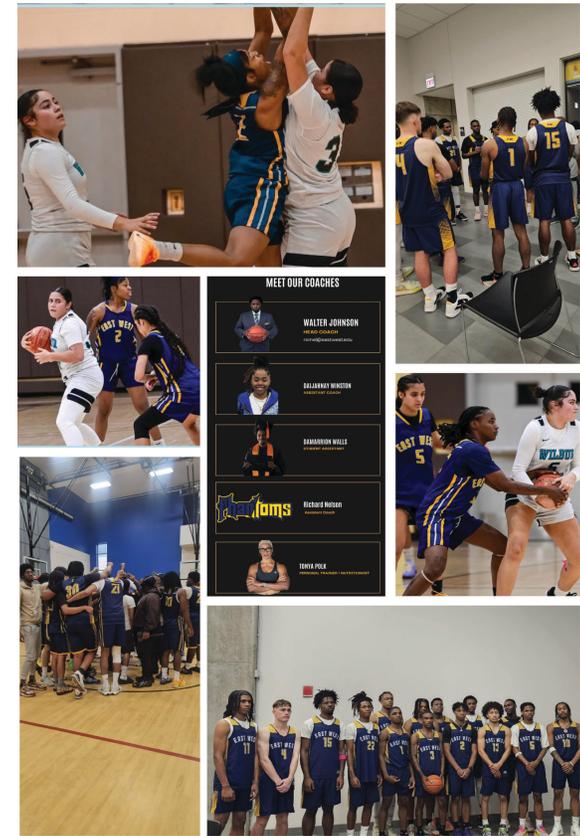
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Matt Miller's Site!



https://www.inkitt.com/M_S_Miller



At East-West University, the heartbeat of the basketball program pulses with something deeper than a win-loss record. It is a culture built on academics first and athletics second, a philosophy shaping young men and women into well-rounded scholars, competitors, and future leaders. This season marks a turning point. With a roster stacked with freshmen, transfers, and international talent, the program is rebuilding, rediscovering itself, and redefining what it means to represent East-West. Their youth is not a weakness; it is the foundation of a new legacy. And what's emerging is a team hungry to grow, hungry to win, and hungry to uplift one another academically, emotionally, and athletically.

Across every interview, one message echoed clearly: this team wants to succeed not just in basketball but in life. Players spoke about patience, discipline, and the determination to build a better culture for themselves and each other. They learn from one another, hold one another accountable, and celebrate the small wins whether during drills, bonding nights, or simple conversations.

Team bonding is a real force here. From TikToks to game nights to doing each other's hair, the players are building trust in ways that extend beyond the court. They understand that success comes from unity, and unity requires vulnerability. They push each other academically just as much as athletically, reflecting East-West's commitment to producing complete, grounded student-athletes.

The coaching staff shares a common mission: elevate the program while nurturing the person behind the athlete. Coach Bryant, coming from Chicago and knowing the uphill challenges the team would face, brings a motivation to bring home a National Championship and make history. Coach Winston, in her first year, emphasizes transparency, growth, and giving every player an opportunity to develop. Coach Posley, patient and grounded, reminds players that their downtime and mindset matter just as much. He describes his players as motivated to win. Each coach speaks life into their players. They nurture discipline, accountability, and self-respect. Most importantly, they reinforce East-West's identity: academics first, development always, and basketball as the arena where character reveals itself. The coaches energize the teams with their spirit and fundamentals ensuring their paths to greatness. We could all use this kind of encouragement in our lives.

Phantom Basketball



FULL INFORMATION