



Ashland artist’s diversity mural painted over by city

LEWIS MARKHAM & CHANTE RUTHERFORD
Reporters

The day after the Ashland City Council meeting, on Sept. 16, several murals representing diversity and culture were painted over by the city.

Rafael Serrano, an Ashland Army Veteran, is known for painting murals around town. Starting his craft around two years ago, he has been head-to-head with the local government ever since.

“I do it to spite them,” Serrano said.

Many of his works include the wings on the side of Fig & Oak, which was painted in memory of his daughter, the mural for the musical “West Side Story” painted during its run at Ashland High School and a portrait of Civil Rights icon Gloria Richardson painted inside of a tunnel on Township Road 1536.

“When the city covered [the mural] up, I decided to paint it again, but gay,” Serrano said.

LGBTQ+ icons such as Marsha P. Johnson, Sylvia Rivera and more surrounded Richardson.

“None of my artwork includes white people. They never started these revolutions,” Serrano added.

Serrano contributes his talents by painting on protest signs for residents who stand on the corner

of the Main Street, Claremont Avenue intersection, many of the signs depict images from his late mural. He often joins the group of protestors on the corner in Ashland.

In the small town of Ashland, Ohio, many residents are coming together in support of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement

— fighting against the racial inequalities that plague the streets of many cities across the nation.

Celebrating over 100 straight days of protesting, several community members have come together, trying to bring awareness to racial issues and stand with African Americans in their fight for justice.

From students to local residents,



CHANTE RUTHERFORD
Rafael Serrano holds up one of his painted signs, allowing Deedra McDonnell to add finishing touches.

and even professors, those protesting stand through the support and through the crude comments, several of them coming from their own neighbors.

Each day, protestors hold up their hand-crafted signs that say, “justice not just us,” “love not hate” and “black lives matter,” to convey the message of the national movement, which began seven years ago.

As vehicles pass the corner protest, many people honk their car’s horn, either in solidarity, or against the daily protestors. Some support the movement in silence by holding their fist out the window, while others use obscene gestures.

The split reactions are happening within a city that proclaims itself to be the “headquarters of nice people”. The conflict within the community can also be found throughout public discussion.

Members of the protest group have taken to voicing their opinions regarding Ashland’s response to diversity and inclusion at city council meetings.

After several public participation moments were utilized, Councilman Steve Workman spoke up about the repeated comments during the Sept. 15 meeting.

“This will be the last time we entertain remarks from any special interest group, including

yourself,” Workman said in the meeting. “We’ve mentioned it three times now and we would ask at this point that we just leave it where it is.”

Ashland Mayor Matt Miller and Councilman Steve Workman did not respond for comment by the time of publication.

This response was met with outrage.

Heather Sample, Ashland resident, has been protesting since the very beginning of the 100 days.

“No one should be discriminated against by the color of their skin,” Sample said.

Sample spent time away from the small-town and moved down to Orlando, where her daughter lives.

“I have a gay and biracial daughter, who I left in Florida, where there is much more diversity, and many more ethnicities,” Sample said.

Many African American students, who look at Ashland University to continue their education, find the lack of diversity a top problem.

“My nephew lives in Mansfield and they wanted him for the basketball team here a few years ago, [so] they threw all kinds of money his way... they wanted him bad,” Deedra McDonnell, Ashland native, said.

READ MORE ON BACK PAGE

Riggle appointed Coronavirus Response Coordinator

KATIE HARRIGAN
Reporter

As the latest news and developments are announced regarding the coronavirus, Ashland University recognizes the importance of communication with state and national health organizations to maintain a safe campus.

To help guide the school through this pandemic, AU has selected Elise Riggle as the new COVID response coordinator (CRC).

As CRC, Riggle will make sure students are updated on new information, policies and protocols concerning the virus.

“My job is to be the person who liaisons with the external regulatory bodies like the Ashland County Health Department, Ohio Department of Health and the CDC if necessary,” Riggle said. “I want to make sure our practices match policies and that I keep data accu-

rate to the best of my abilities.”

Riggle also leads the university Care Team, a group of faculty who helps any student that may be assigned to isolation if showing symptoms.

“It is our responsibility to be with the students on their journey and make sure their hospitality needs are met,” Riggle said.

She added that this includes taking care of their meals, laundry and providing them with essential supplies.

“We want to ensure that when we do have someone who has been exposed or tested positive, we are meeting their needs in a way that reflects the spirit of Ashland University,” Riggle said.

Riggle said the mission of the COVID response team is to help those who identify as ill get the attention they need and keep those who are healthy from going down the same route.

“Our students have been wonderful wearing masks... I think it shows the commitment people have to keeping our university safe,” Riggle said.

The Ashland faculty and staff will keep doing what they can and take the measures required for keeping cases low, Riggle added.

AU has confirmed a total of 18 positive cases so far.

Dr. Carlos Campo, AU president, said the CRC position is important because there is a rapidly changing dynamic with COVID, where it is vital that decisions be made quickly and with correct information be transmitted to the student body.

“Elise Riggle is someone who has worked at the campus and is very closely tied to the re-opening task force,” Campo said. “We really felt we had two things: a qualified person to take this on and a clearly articulated need for it.”

Together, the COVID response team is working to minimize the spread of the virus and maintain a healthy campus environment.

“The task force is able to mitigate against the spread, give us the best information possible as it comes in and keep us abreast of the latest developments within the state and region,” Campo said. He added that they ensure a smooth flow of communication between all constituents including students, parents, faculty and staff.

In this time of uncertainty, AU is proving that it will continue to persevere and uphold their motto, “accent on the individual.”

Campo said everyone has been impacted by the virus in some way; the faculty, counseling services, and other departments are willing to go “the extra mile” to reach out and connect with students.

“We appreciate how seriously



SUBMITTED PHOTO
Elise Riggle, the new COVID Response Coordinator

students have taken this virus and are very impressed by how students are complying with the guidelines...our student affairs group is doing a great job looking for inventive ways to stay connected and we want to continue encouraging one another to use safe practices,” Campo said.

For updates and further information, visit the ‘Safer Together, Stronger Together’ website.

INDEX	
Opinion	2
News	3
Features	4-5
Sports	6-7
The Scoop	8

