

THE COLOR BLIND SALUTE PROPOSAL

“The Color Blind Salute”

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“In the Summer of 1968, history was made with the raising of a fist. John Carlos and Tommie Smith described their silent statement on the medal stand during the Mexico City Olympics “a cry for freedom and for human rights. We had to be seen because we couldn’t be heard” (Davis, D., 2008, August 01). Peter Norman, an Australian, was motivated to participate in the protest due to the rampant level of racism in Australia. The ‘White Australia’ policy had alienated the Aborigines, who “were not allowed to vote until 1962 and were not counted in the national census until 1967” (Wise, M., 2000, September 17). When Carlos, Norman, and Smith stood on that podium in 1968, it was one of the first instances of sport being used as a platform to protest racial inequalities on a global stage. The price that they paid? Their careers. Smith and Carlos²s returned to America to a mixed crowd of support and hate. They received death threats for years and were never able to hold consistent work due to their names. Norman suffered from similar circumstances and died without being formally acknowledged by Australia for his contributions to the running community. This notable example provides the backdrop for an examination of the use of sport to address racial inequalities from a global perspective. The examination culminates with the recent demonstrations by Colin Kaepernick and other professional athletes. These efforts beg the question: Are we any different? Sports are the “the most progressive force in America” (Egan, T., 2014, May 01) and yet the NFL and NBA are the only professional sports showing any activism through #TakeAKnee. If we are not any better than the generations before us, how can these protests be expected to cause change?”

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Resources

Egan, T. (2014, May 01). Sports, the most progressive force in america. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/02/opinion/egan-sports-the-most-progressive-force-in-america.html>

Olympic Athletes Who Took a Stand. (2008, August 01). Retrieved March 4, 2019, from <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/articles/olympic-athletes-who-took-a-stand-593920/#y5HSFO8gwwgwGu8L.99>

Wise, M. (2000, September 17). Sydney 2000; the third Man in mexico city. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2000/09/17/sports/sydney-2000-the-third-man-in-mexico-city.html>