

# “We need to listen and do our utmost to understand”

The Bethlehem Gadfly [Jacob Blake](#), Police August 29, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts responding to the Jacob Blake shooting* 

*Dana Grubb is a lifelong resident of the City of Bethlehem who worked 27 years for the City of Bethlehem in the department of community and economic development, as sealer of weights and measures, housing rehabilitation finance specialist, grants administrator, acting director of community and economic development, and deputy director of community development.*

ref: [“The traffic stop as death trap”](#)

Gadfly,

There are some who think that multi millionaire athletes and entertainers should keep their mouths shut, but they enjoy the same freedom and constitutional rights that the rest of us do. And contrary to Charles Barkley’s claim that professional athletes are not role models, many of them are. I look at my own life and the influence that Bill Russell, Willie Mays, and Bart Starr had on me beyond my parents and grandparents.

Doc Rivers is that kind of professional athlete, a one-time star player and now a successful head coach. He once coached the Boston Celtics, so I admit an affinity for him because of that.

However, all of that success and notoriety cannot protect his or any other black athletes’ or entertainers’ sons when they’re out in the world minding their own business. My one black neighbor works at a well known downtown Bethlehem business in a management position. He is ordinarily fun loving, and we joke around a lot when we see each other. His one son is 11 years old, and when we discussed “the talk” his face grew serious. He realizes, because he has been there as well, what his 11-

year-old boy is approaching and that eventually his 4-year-old son will as well. Imagine having that hanging over your head. I can't.

Whether it's Doc or my neighbor Robert, we need to listen and do our utmost to understand that in our society there are different strokes for different folks, and it's usually unfairly so. When they speak, it is imperative that we take their words very seriously, just as their sons must.

They are mentoring each of us, just as Russell, Mays, and Starr did this young white kid from afar as he was growing up.

Dana

*And Gadfly would add one important element to Dana's good words: we must listen . . . understand . . . and then act. Act. Do. Gadfly is expecting significant action from City Council and the City Administration. If not now, when?*