

**September 9, 2021**

### **Road Map for Action Bulletin 3: Learning About the Racist History of New York's Parkways**

Happy Thursday, Mount Sinai Community,

So far, in the first two Road Map for Action Bulletins, we've brought you some important updates on Mount Sinai's work to become an anti-racist institution, including details on many of our mentorship programs and a deep dive into how data will be used and tracked through Strategy One. This week, we'd like to try something different. We want to look at some seemingly benign, everyday structures to provide some context and a better understanding for how structural racism is embedded throughout our world in subtle, but pervasive, ways.

For example, the roads to, from, and through our city and region.



Many New Yorkers, if not all, have traveled on our state's parkways, like the Cross Island and Ocean Parkways on Long Island. In school, children are taught that these roads were the brainchild of master builder Robert Moses, who oversaw much of New York City and State bureaucracy from the 1920s to 1960s.

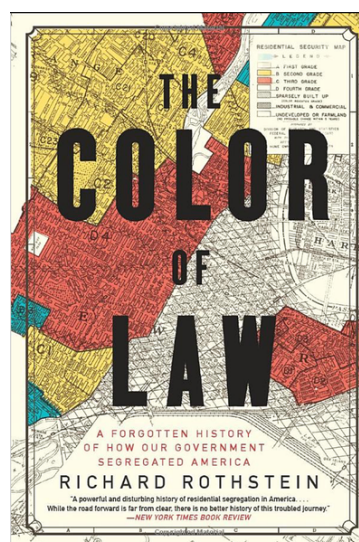
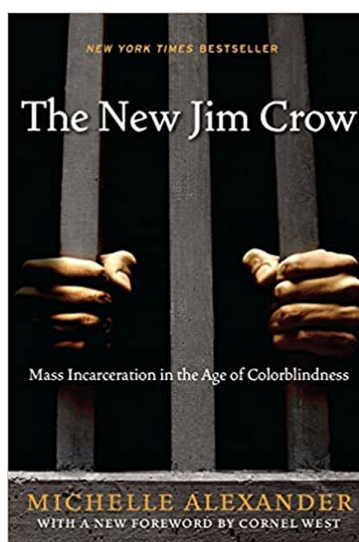
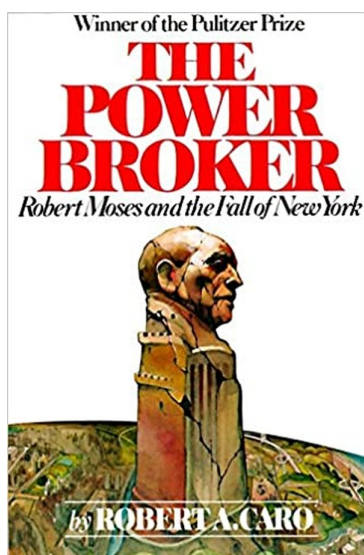
Kids aren't taught, however, that Moses explicitly designed these parkways with overpasses that were too low to accommodate buses. Why? Because lower-income residents of New York City—predominantly people of color—had to take the bus since they generally did not own cars. And Moses and his colleagues did not want them to have access to the parks and beaches these parkways led to.



Those scenic, stone bridges over many parkways are too low for buses on purpose. These are literal physical structures designed to keep Black people and other racial and ethnic minorities from accessing public parks and beaches; not to mention the violence and discrimination people of color would encounter during that time if they found a means of travel to one of these areas. But it's not just bridges and beaches. Structural racism manifests in all sectors of

social and civic life—from access to decent and affordable housing to quality education to criminal justice outcomes. Even to the health care people receive.

Taken together, these individual elements of structural racism combine into massive inequities. These truths are well-documented in works such as *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander, *The Power Broker* by Robert Caro, *The Color of Law* by Richard Rothstein, and other literature listed in our [United in Solidarity resource guide](#). And, they are a critical reminder of why Mount Sinai is working to become an anti-racist institution: because to reach true equity, we have to dismantle the “low parkway bridges” in all aspects of our lives.



If you want to learn more about the often-hidden, structural racism that pervades society—and how to dismantle it—join us at an upcoming event:

**Chats for Change: Racism x Medical Treatment Plans**—Racism is prevalent in every industry and profession, with medicine being no exception. Join us on **Tuesday, September 14, from noon to 1 pm** as we discuss how racism impacts medical treatment plans and health outcomes and brainstorm how we can advance health equity. For more information and to register, click [here](#).

**Black Women Leaders Connect: Mentorship vs Sponsorship Panel**—join five leaders from across the Mount Sinai Health System and Icahn Mount Sinai to discuss the difference between mentoring and sponsoring emerging leaders. This event is sponsored by [Black Women Leaders Connect](#), a collective of executive and senior-level Black women administrative leaders from Mount Sinai with an established track record of management success, who [joined together in March 2021](#) to support each other and nurture and guide future women leaders of color. **Wednesday, September 15, from noon to 1 pm**. For more information and to register, click [here](#).

### **Road Map In the News**

Finally, from time to time, we'll share how our efforts are extending beyond Mount Sinai's walls and being recognized outside of our Health System. To that end, we are proud to be the official hospital for the US Open and that our very own Alexis Colvin, MD, is the tournament's Chief Medical Officer. Dr. Colvin has served in this role for several years and is both the first Asian American and the first female to do so. Hear about her experience in an interview with WABC [here](#).

All the best,  
Angela and Shawn

[Road Map for Action Website](#)

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