

LIMITLESS: The Dr. Chester Pierce Story Premieres at Roxbury International Film Festival on Juneteenth

New documentary uncovers the untold story of the Harvard psychiatrist who coined the term "microaggression" & shaped conversations still impacting society today

BOSTON, MA, UNITED STATES, May 28, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On June 19, 2026, [LIMITLESS](#):

“

Dr. Pierce's journey shows us the power of perseverance and the impact one person can have.”

Gloria Respress-Churchwell

The Dr. Chester [Pierce](#) Story will make its world premiere at the Roxbury International Film Festival (ROXFILM), the largest film festival in New England dedicated to celebrating filmmakers and stories by people of color.

The documentary has also been officially accepted into the 2026 Martha's Vineyard African American Film Festival, further building momentum around the film and its timely

exploration of one of the most influential yet under-recognized figures in modern social discourse.

Directed and produced by award-winning storyteller Gloria Respress-Churchwell, the documentary uncovers the remarkable life and legacy of Dr. Chester Pierce, the Harvard psychiatrist, educator, athlete, researcher, and pioneer who coined the term “[microaggression](#),” a concept that continues to shape global conversations around race, leadership, education, workplace culture, and human behavior every day.

Yet while the word became widely known, the man behind it remained largely invisible. Until now.

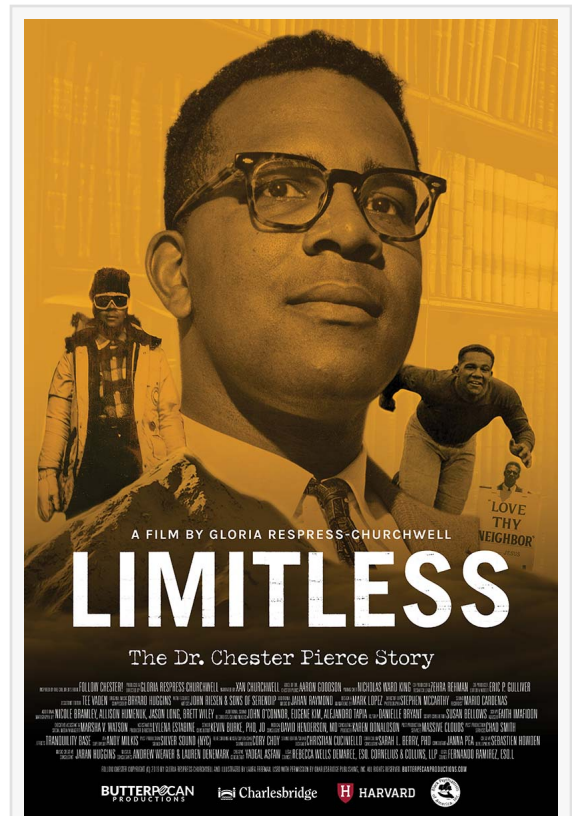
LIMITLESS: The Dr. Chester Pierce Story reveals the untold story of a ground-breaking figure whose influence stretched far beyond a single term. Through archival footage, powerful interviews, historical storytelling, and personal reflections, the film explores how Dr. Pierce's work transformed the way society understands human interaction, bias, resilience, and identity.

“This film is about finally giving visibility to a man whose ideas changed the world,” said

Respress-Churchwell. "People use the word 'microaggression' every day, but very few know the extraordinary story of the man who introduced the concept and the incredible life he lived beyond it."

Dr. Pierce was far more than the originator of a widely discussed term. A Harvard psychiatrist and professor, he spent decades advancing conversations around mental health, race, education, and human development. His work extended from studying behavior in Antarctica to advising NASA on astronaut selection and serving as a senior consultant for Sesame Street, where he helped shape inclusive children's programming that reached generations worldwide.

The documentary also highlights Dr. Pierce's role as a barrier-breaking athlete. In 1947, he became one of the first African American players to participate in intercollegiate football in the segregated southern United States, demonstrating a level of courage and perseverance that would define his life's work.



LIMITLESS: The Dr. Chester Pierce Story

"I think the legacy that Dr. Pierce left at Harvard was one of bravery," said Harvard Athletic Director, Erin McDermott. "He didn't shy away from difficult situations. He showed what was possible."

The documentary's selection by the 2026 Martha's Vineyard African American Film Festival underscores growing interest in stories that revisit foundational ideas shaping contemporary dialogue. By examining the origins of the term "microaggression" and the individual behind it, the film provides context to discussions that are often referenced without a full understanding of their history.

"When we acquired Gloria Respress-Churchwell's Follow Chester!, we knew it was a special book about an important man who quietly made a difference", said President of Charlesbridge Publishing, Brent Farmer Jr.. "Now audiences will have the opportunity to experience Dr. Chester Pierce's legacy in an entirely new and powerful way through this documentary."

LIMITLESS: The Dr. Chester Pierce Story is produced in partnership with Harvard Athletics, Black Psychiatrists of America, and Charlesbridge Publishing.

Respress-Churchwell is known for spotlighting overlooked historical figures whose contributions helped shape culture and society. Her previous works are included in the permanent collection honoring Robert Churchwell Sr. at the Smithsonian National Museum of African American

History and Culture.

“Dr. Pierce’s story reminds us that one person’s courage, intellect, and perseverance can influence generations,” said Respress-Churchwell. “His life was limitless, and his impact still is.”

The world premiere screening of LIMITLESS: The Dr. Chester Pierce Story will take place June 19, 2026, at the Roxbury International Film Festival in Boston, Massachusetts.

For screening, media, or distribution inquiries, please contact

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