



JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE

WOMEN

THIS MONTH

Paula Bass: a woman running with a God-given vision-turned-mission

‘From Widow to Winner’ – the Jackson, Miss. efforts

By Gail H. M. Brown
Contributing Writer

The scripture teaches in Habakkuk 2:2-3 (ESV) –

“... Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it. For still the vision awaits its ap-

pointed time; it hastens to the end – it will not lie. If

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Dorothy Stewart, founder of Women for Progress, Inc.

By Janice K. Neal-Vincent
Contributing Writer

All her life Dorothy Stewart has heard the voices of her ancestors and has carried the torch of excellence. She learned from her parents to pay attention to the signs of the time and to take away their subliminal and blatant messages. She learned to be comfortable in her own skin and to encourage others to do the same. So when she founded Women for Progress in 1978, she was determined to let that overall message of self-worthiness stand.



Stewart

Stewart stated in the comfort of her home, “I’ve been doing what I’ve been doing since I was ten years old. Others guided me in life and created a path for me. I and my parents cared for a handicapped brother. I was born colored in a racist Miss. I learned that here people only saw color.”

During her childhood, the giant among many learned the stench of oppression. “Dealing with a lack of opportunity for blacks, through no fault of their own, was a handicap. When my mother needed something and was refused it, the answer was always the same: ‘She’s colored.’ The fight my mother fought to get help for a crippled child took a lot of courage, and passion for her to go through the powers that be, and she did it, not knowing what the results would be,” she reminisced.

The driving force instilled in Stewart was to make things different. It is no wonder then that the purpose of Women for Progress is to help people understand their roles as citizens. “Technically you already have the power and must see yourself having the power. I hate to hear leaders say, ‘We just don’t have the power.’ When we started Women for Progress, we worked with former Senator Henry Kirksey because we were involved in an election. The only people who can’t see

the rationale for an election at JSU don’t look like us (blacks) because they are focusing on dollar signs.” Stewart reckoned that since JSU has over 7,000 students, there is power in that particular number to make things happen.

Looking back, the outspoken leader recollected that unity prevailed within the community. “JPS was the most powerful, largest school district and best ranked in the state. Then the court ruled that JPS had to be desegregated. We all, like sacrificial lambs, had to transfer. When I transferred to Provine, many of the teachers lived in the neighborhood. Then gradually, that changed.”

The change, Stewart reflected, produced a divided community. Despite great students and great teachers, the high-esteem factor began to decline. People who went to church in their community now attend other churches. The sense of pride the community once felt no longer exists.

“We need more people who are concerned about our community. We need to know our lives matter because as Lance Fuller said in one of his poems, ‘You do not know the power of your black hands,’” the motivator quipped.

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Black women publishers drive the Black Press

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA News Wire Contributor

In 1827, with the publication of the *Freedom’s Journal*, John Russwurm and Reverend Samuel Cornish established the Black Press and boldly declared their mission: to be the voice of the African-American community, standing up for victims of injustice and championing the unsung.

Dedicated, resilient and strong black women, who account for a significant number of the 211 African-American owned newspapers and media companies that are members of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), stand at the forefront of that mission, today.

As Women’s History Month concludes, NNPA President and CEO Benjamin F. Chavis Jr., said that it’s important to recognize publishers like Rosetta Miller-Perry of *The Tennessee Tribune*, Elinor Tatum of the *New York Amsterdam News*, Janis Ware of *The Atlanta Voice*, Joy Bramble of *The Baltimore Times*, Brenda Andrews of the *The New Journal and Guide* and the many black women that own and operate media companies in the United States and around the world.

Chavis said that it’s also important to acknowledge the role that women play as leaders of the NNPA.

“Four of the five members of the NNPA executive committee are women and, in 2017, that shows that the NNPA, as a national trade organization, is out front of all other organizations when it comes to putting women in the top positions,” said Chavis.

Denise Rolark-Barnes, publisher of *The Washington Informer*, is chair of the NNPA; Karen Carter-Richards, publisher of the *Houston Forward Times* is first vice chair; *Atlanta Voice* publisher Janis Ware is treasurer; and Shannon Williams, president and general manager of the *Indianapolis Recorder*, is the organiza-



Rolark-Barnes

tion’s secretary.

“For the Black Press, Women’s History Month becomes more noteworthy, because of the women of the NNPA and their very important roles,” Chavis said.

Jackie Hampton, publisher of *The Mississippi Link* in Jackson, Mississippi serves on both the NNPA and NNPA Foundation Board of Directors. “Black newspapers are more important today than ever before, as mainstream papers have reduced coverage of community stories, she said. “The Black Press is the vanguard for black Americans, their source of positive and hard hitting news... stories that are overlooked by corporate controlled papers.”

Rosetta Miller-Perry, publisher of *The Tennessee Tribune* and treasurer of the NNPA Foundation, said *Freedom’s Journal* showed in 1827 that there was a need and audience for black owned publications, with blacks telling their own stories and covering events and personalities that mainstream media overlooked and undervalued.”

Still, the pressure of operating a newspaper isn’t lost on publishers like Carter-Richards of the 57-year-old *Houston Forward Times*.

Carter-Richards took over the *Forward Times* after the death of her mother, Lenora “Doll” Carter, whom she shadowed for more than 30 years.

and television stations owned and operated by African Americans have provided an important counterweight to mainstream media, simultaneously celebrating and shaping black culture – from politics and government to fashion and music.

It all starts with the Black Press and many of its talented and savvy female publishers.

“The Black Press has been the heartbeat of black America since its inception,” said Tatum, publisher and editor-in-chief of the *New York Amsterdam News*, one of the most influential black-owned and operated media businesses in the world, which ran its first edition in 1909. “From the abolition movement to the Civil Rights Movement to the Women’s Rights Movement, the Black Press has been our voice, a voice not heralded anywhere else.”

Tatum continued: “It’s a voice so true to itself, that our community still heeds the call today. A voice in many cases owned by women, run by women and nurtured by women.”

About 190 miles south of New York, Bramble founded *The Baltimore Times* on the premise that they’d publish only positive stories about black people. After more than 30 years, Bramble said that *The Baltimore Times* paper, and its companion, *The Annapolis Times*, haven’t wavered.

“I am extremely proud to be a part of the long tradition of respected women publishers. My challenges as a publisher have not come from my gender, but rather my race,” Bramble said. “Black newspapers must jump through ridiculous hoops to receive or even be considered for advertising and promotional dollars.”

Women are changing the world and represent an important audience that should not be taken for granted, said Natalie Cole, pub-

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NNPA publishers convene in D.C.

By Jackie Hampton
Publisher

It was at the Dupont Circle Hotel in Washington D.C. where members of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) celebrated 190 years of publishing. These newspaper owners, along with their sponsors and partners traveled from near and far to celebrate Black Press Week, March 22-24.

Week long activities included a joint welcome reception, host-

ed by NNPA and the National Association of Hispanic Publications (NAHP). Activities included the Black Press Archives and Gallery Enshrinement ceremony, Capitol Hill Congressional luncheon and the NNPA 2017 Torch Awards.

Each year, the Enshrinement ceremony and the Torch Awards are major highlights.

In 1973 Howard University President James E. Cheek accepted a proposal from NNPA’s

president Carlton B. Goodlet, M.D., to establish an “Archives of the Black Press in America” and a gallery honoring black newspaper publishers. This gallery has been a unit of the Moorland-Springarn Research Center at Howard since its establishment.

Lenora “Doll” Carter was enshrined March 23. She became CEO and Publisher of the *Forward Times* newspaper in 1971 after the death of her husband,

Julius P. Carter, who founded the newspaper in 1960. She was only 29 years old when she took over the daily operations of the business, and was very successful despite the many naysayers and doubters that predicted “Doll” would be out of business within six months. To their surprise the business celebrated over 50 years in existence under her leadership.

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Barnes, Chavis, Congressman Jackson-Lee, Carter, Hampton and McFarlane

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