

Remembering Lonnie



A Mississippi Link Christmas celebration with Lonnie Ross front and center.

By Jackie Hampton
Publisher

It was Saturday evening, May 10, that I received the unexpected news that our online editor had passed away. I was extremely saddened and shocked as I realized why Lonnie Ross had not returned my telephone calls or responded to numerous text messages. I checked our web site and realized our stories had not been updated for several days. This was not typical of Lonnie Ross, the employee.

As I remember Lonnie, I'm reminded of a quote from the American inventor, Thomas A. Edison, "Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always try just one more time."

One can never say that Lonnie ever gave up the fight. If he had known that there was one more thing that The Mississippi Link needed him to complete before his transition, he probably would have asked God



Ross

to give him just a little more time to complete that last task. That's the kind of employee he was.

Ayesha Mustafaa, a former editor at The Link said, "When I began work at The Mississippi Link, I became acquainted with Lonnie Ross,

the online editor and webmaster. He had great ideas and great plans to draw on the resources of the broader community and bring those ideas and plans to a realistic fruition. He was a "people's person" – striking up friendships nearly instantly. Then he could sing and play piano. Wow, Lonnie's talent knew no boundaries. He was impressive and left a deep impression with his multifaceted experiences and abilities."

It seemed that everyone at The Mississippi Link thought Lonnie was smart and extremely capable, always happy to assist wherever and whenever needed. Shandera Posey, another former editor, was no exception.

"During my time as editor, I knew Lonnie to be a trusted colleague dedicated to his work. He shared tips with me on how to manage the paper's website and he promptly addressed concerns I had whenever they arose. My heart goes out to his loved ones for their sudden and tragic loss,"

Posey said.

He could be counted on to go above and beyond expectations. Gail Brown was the first Mississippi Link editor to work with him.

"I enjoyed working with Lonnie because of his dedication toward his work. When I discovered a blooper or an error in one of my on-line articles, all I had to do was call, text or email Lonnie any time, day or night, and he would immediately correct it for me. Another thing I admired about Lonnie was his devotion to family. He did not hesitate to tell us when something we wanted him to do conflicted with his family's plan. Yet he often found a way to get what we wanted done. I will remember him as a soldier of his profession and ministry."

Orhor Cain, current editor, echoes other's sentiments of Lonnie's gifts. "I'm reminded of Proverbs 18: 16

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City Council members address hold-up at budget meeting for the upcoming fiscal year



State Auditor Scott Hodges of Tann, Brown, and Russ Co. speaks to council members about prior budget reports at budget hearing.

By Cianna Hope Reeves
JSU Student Intern

The city's budget report (audit) currently stands as incomplete after two deadline extensions, and the City Council wants answers.

Jackson's City Council members held a finance committee meeting with Charles Hatcher, finance director, who has since resigned, and state auditor Scott Hodges of Tann, Brown and Russ Co. Thursday, May 31, to understand why the audit is unfinished leading into the new fiscal year.

The auditors and the city's finance department are currently scrambling to produce the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) and submit it to the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) by the end of June.

Hodges stated the CAFR could have been issued earlier this year, but the lack of information given to the accountants from the finance division slowed the process down.

"We started this process in November and planned to have it done by the end of January, and we are not done yet...If all the information had been ready when we started, we would have been done at the end of January," Hodges said.

As a new auditor for the city, Hodges stated it is taking the company a lengthier amount of time due to its new presence and the numerous mistakes founded.

"It is much easier to produce an accurate CAFR when you have previous CAFRs that are accurate."

Hodges said there are major discrepancies from the previous administration that has prevented the budget from being established such as the Water Sewer System and pension liabilities of \$29 million.

"The Water Sewer System accounts receivable has not been merged into the financial accounting system. For years, it has been differences and the reasons of those differences are unknown," claimed Hodges.

He added, "there are other owed balances that are on the financial records, and there's no history as to where those balances came from or what they relate to, and the same for liability accounts – they grow forward year to year and no one knows who they relate to."

Ward 6 Councilman Aaron Banks does not believe the inconsistencies should have prohibited the audit from moving forward.

"I refuse to believe that just because I have a discrepancy in the past that I can't get work done now. I don't want a discrepancy from one year, two years or five years to become an excuse for getting work done in a timely manner," declared Banks.

Hodges admitted the City would receive an "ad-

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The A-TEAAM Mentoring Group commemorates the 55th Anniversary of the death of Medgar Evers

By Othor Cain
Editor

Tuesday, June 12, marks the 55th anniversary of the death of one of Mississippi's most celebrated and visible civil rights activist. Medgar Wiley Evers, whose murder drew national attention, served in World War II before going to work for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

After attempting to segregate the University of Mississippi Law School in 1954, he became the NAACP field secretary in Mississippi.

The Ambassadors of the Evers Academy for African American Males (A-TEAAM) is a mentorship, character and leadership development program, under the Juanita Sims Doty Foundation (JSD). The A-TEAAM inspires young males of color in middle school and beyond to honor the life and live the legacy of Medgar Wiley Evers as they interact with a "village" of role models and men-



The Canton and Jackson A-TEAAM Ambassadors with Reena and Myrlie Evers Center (center). PHOTO BY JAY JOHNSON

tors.

The JSD Foundation, in partnership with The Medgar & Myrlie Evers Institute, have created a movement with The A-TEAAM to improve the quality of life for young men by equipping them with the necessary skills, knowledge and support provided by caring mentors. The objective is to assist

the young males [Ambassadors] in making internal changes with an outcome of increased positive self-esteem and overall improvement in the way they view the world.

June 8-10, Ambassadors, mentors and parents from all 18 A-TEAAM sites around the country will converge on and in the City of Jackson at the Westin Hotel. Dur-

ing this 'historic summit,' Ambassadors, mentors and parents will visit the home/museum of Medgar Evers and the newly opened Mississippi Civil Rights Museum that has an exhibit of Medgar and Myrlie Evers. The weekend will be a

A-TEAAM
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A-TEAAM

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learning experience where many of the sessions will be led by these Ambassadors.

Additionally, 130 of these middle school Ambassadors have also written essays that will be featured in a book to be released at the “Awards Luncheon” during the Summit. They will become Young Authors.

To close out the weekend Summit, the Ambassadors will be inducted into the National A-TEAAM Alumni Association and will be presented NAACP Youth membership. “Because of Medgar Evers dedication to the NAACP as field secretary, we wanted to commemorate the 55th anniversary of Medgar Evers by providing NAACP memberships to the Ambassadors,” said Doty.

This will be the first time that the young men will interact with their peers from all 18 sites.

“We are looking forward to this weekend of celebration and history making,” Doty added.

See photos page 19.



A-TEAAM (Meridian)



A-TEAAM TLOD Humble (Houston)



A-TEAAM TLOD Ebony (Chicago) PHOTOS BY JAY JOHNSON

Lonnie

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where it reads ‘a man’s gift opens doors for him and brings him before great men.’ His gifts did just that; it gave him an extremely high profile in several professional circles. He will be missed.”

Lonnie was very friendly and always greeted everyone with a smile. He was quite knowledgeable on many subjects and was happy to share that knowledge, solicited or unsolicited. If we asked him a question regarding almost anything, we could always count on an answer. Never would he say ‘I don’t know.’

“Lonnie’s presence at The Mississippi Link was welcomed and assuring because he had the answers. He could have easily become overwhelmed by our repeated questions but his smile was ever present during his exhaustive tutorials. There were times when challenges and frustrations of life surfaced but he had a way of talking it out, moving on and leaving it in the hands of the Lord. He loved his family and was proudest when he talked about his children,” said Minnie Garrett, copy editor.

Lonnie brought stories about his children into the office. With twelve children, he had plenty of stories to tell. If they were happy, he was happy; and if they had problems, he went into a problem-solving mode, especially as it related to the three youngest children. The staff got to know Isaiah, Ramya and Aaron when

City Council

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verse opinion,” if the audit was currently completed; this means the financial statements in the audit would have been identified as misstated and pervasive.

“I can’t put my name on something that is not materialistically correct, and that’s a problem,” he said.

Safiya Omari, chief of staff, suggested that the council provide the auditor with appropriate timing to complete a truthful and proper report since he has discovered several failures in the audits.

“You want accurate information, so I would strongly suggest that we give the auditor time to complete the opportunity to do his job properly,” emphasized Omari.

The incomplete CAFR is becoming a hectic battle against time as council members eagerly await to adopt a balanced budget.

In 62 days, a proposed financial plan has to be discussed with the citizens; after that phase, the planning process to obtain a balanced budget for the new financial year begins.

Ward 4 Councilman De’Keither Stamps said the process of producing the CAFR has placed the entire council on a compressed timeline.

“If we are going to present the city audit by August 1, and we don’t have an audit by June 30, we can’t adopt a budget by September 15 because a series of documents have to be viewed

their mom, Youlander, on occasion, would visit the office.

Another quote that reminded me of Lonnie was written by an anonymous writer: “If a task is once begun, never leave it ‘till it’s done. Be the labor great or small, do it well or not at all.”

Marcus Johnson, our layout designer said, “I grew to learn that Lonnie was a very optimistic and ambitious person. I don’t think I ever saw him consider a task too small or too large for his attention. Like all of us, I know his family will miss his determination and versatility.”

Lonnie touched many individuals that worked with The Mississippi Link, past and present.

Pat Neal, who worked several years with Lonnie in her capacity as director of New South Development and Training, said, “I knew Lonnie as a co-worker and a musician at our church, Sweet Water Missionary Baptist Church in Flowood, MS. Lonnie would often offer advice and share his life experiences with us. Lonnie’s smile and happy go lucky spirit will be missed.”

We will miss Lonnie. He juggled many jobs at ‘The Link.’ He was a marketing representative, event planner, online editor, web designer, writer and a Mississippi Link team player for the volunteer work we provide to the community.

See Remembering Lonnie page 5.

and signed before then... we have a lot to do and time is winding down.”

Stamps also recommended that major spending cutbacks occur until the next financial plan to eliminate more problems.

“We need to stop a lot of things until we can get clearer answers and stop major purchases until we can get a clearer picture of our financial position,” he said.

In a weekly press briefing, Mayor Chokwe Antar Lumumba addressed the audit claims and assured actions are in works to repair the prior miscalculated fiscal periods and to obtain a balanced budget by deadline day.

“What we found when we took office were significant discrepancies within the CAFR, and we then went into immediate action to check. We probably could make those deadlines if we had benefits from just punching in numbers, but we are choosing to do it correctly. We are going to make sure we deliver an accurate CAFR to the citizens of Jackson, so we make certain we have a proper assessment of what our financial standing is.”

Though differences and lack of communication acted as an obstacle in completing the audit, Hodges said he is working toward a report that will benefit the city and is confident that with heavy efforts the CAFR will be finished by June 30, so the City can complete its budget plan.

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Remembering Bernell Lonnie Ross

March 28, 1959 - May 4, 2018

Bernell Lonnie Ross, 59, of Jackson, MS and a native of Milwaukee, WI, peacefully passed away at his residence in Jackson May 4, 2018. He accepted Christ at a very young age.

"Father Abraham," as he was affectionately known by his family, was born March 28, 1959 in Milwaukee to the late Austin C. and Dora Glasper-Ross. He was the proud father of twelve children. He was a member of College Hill Baptist Church in Jackson where he served as church organist. He had previously served as a musician and choir director at various local churches prior to joining College Hill.

Lonnie received his early education in Milwaukee where he was the student senate staffer at Parkman Jr. High and the student senate president at Rufus King High. He was the president of the Black Student Union at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee (UWM) where he earned a political science degree. He also earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Theology from Family Bible College in Baltimore, MD and became a licensed minister.

He was the founder and CEO of the first African-American local and long-distance telephone company in the USA, ICC-Intra Community Communications. He was the online editor of The Mississippi Link Newspaper and



assisted in building web sites for community newspapers associated with The National Newspaper Publishers Association.

He was the co-founder of a weekly

newspaper, The Mississippi Tribune in McComb, MS, where prior to joining the staff of The Mississippi Link, he provided marketing, editorial, website and layout services.

His background and experience included management and consulting, sales, customer service, accounting and social services. He had extensive experience in establishing and work-

ing with telecom companies, ISPs and broadband initiatives.

Lonnie was a true competitor in every sense of the word; he was a great man. Risk management was not a part of his vocabulary. He had the mind of a genius, civil rights activist, orator, musician and entrepreneur. He believed he could do anything. He would pick up a book or observe people in power; he would then start something fresh and new. Lonnie, believed all things, hoped all things; he truly believed nothing was impossible. He believed in his family and cherished the relationships of those who gave a listening ear. His heart's desire was to be a good father to all of his children (from the oldest to the youngest) and to live a life pleasing to God.

He leaves to cherish his memories, twelve children: Twanna, Robert and Marcus of Phoenix, AR; Tiffany of Milwaukee, WI; Kimberly (Kelvin) of Atlanta, GA; Nakita of Memphis, TN; Staci, Shareta and Bernell Jr. of Baltimore, MD; Isaiah, Ramya and Aaron of Starkville, MS; four living siblings: Steven (Olivia) of Milwaukee; twin brother Vernell (Beverly) of Dallas, TX; Roosevelt (Deborah) and Austin Jr. of Milwaukee; and a host of beloved nieces, nephews, loved ones and friends. Lonnie was preceded in death by his parents and his older brother Melvin.



Murrah graduating senior named Gates Scholar

Mississippi Link Newswire

Alton Chambers of Murrah High School has been named a Gates Scholar and a member of the Gates Scholarship inaugural class of 2018. His selection was based on academic performance, leadership ability and exceptional character qualities. Only 300 scholars were selected from a pool of over 28,700 applicants.

In his senior year, Chambers was named an Academic All-American by the National Speech and Debate Association. Like the Gates Scholarship, the award is based on character, leadership and academics.

Recently, he received two awards in science with his research partner and Base Pair classmate, Matthew Araujo. They earned an Outstanding Basic Science award at the University of Mississippi Medical Center's 23rd Annual Research Day. They also won second place at the Mississippi Academy of Sciences Annual Meeting in the High School Division for Health Sciences.

Chambers is a top ten graduating senior at Murrah. He plans



Chambers

to attend Howard University in the fall and pursue a career in psychology.

The Gates Scholarship is an all-expense paid scholarship. It covers tuition, fees, room, board, books and even transportation. It may include some personal costs. The scholarship includes online supports that will help scholars excel in their degree programs. These services include mentoring, academic support, and career counseling. Gates Scholars will also benefit from networking opportunities. The scholarship program connects them with accomplished peers they can reach out to for advice.

Michael D. Johnson scholarship winners

Mississippi Link Newswire

The Michael D. Johnson Memorial Foundation has announced its 2018 scholarship recipients. The winner of the \$1,500 grand scholarship is Tristan Jones, a senior at Murrah High School. The three winners of the \$250 book scholarship are Murrah seniors Kiya Riley and Kyleigh Johnson and Donnell Kinnard II of Forest Hill.

Awards were presented to the recipients at the Michael D. Johnson 5K Walk/Run June 2. The annual event is also a fundraiser for the foundation.

The awards go to JPS senior athletes who follow Johnson's example of excellence on the field, in school and in the community. To date, the foundation has given more than \$15,000 in scholarships.

About Michael D. Johnson
Michael D. Johnson was a star student-athlete at Murrah High School. He led the Mustangs to a state championship in basketball in 2005. He was



Jones

also a standout shortstop and had accepted a scholarship to play baseball at Copiah-Lincoln Junior College his senior year. His promising life was cut short before ever enrolling at the school. That summer, at the age of 18, he was killed by a drunk driver at the intersection of State Street and Capitol Street. In 2008, the Jackson City Council named the Lakeland Drive Baseball Field, located in front of Smith-Wills Stadium, in his memory.

Celebrating The Class Of 2018

Mississippi Link Newswire

Jackson Public Schools celebrated its 2018 graduates at ceremonies held May 23 and 24, 2018. This year, Jackson State University graciously hosted each of the ceremonies for the district's seven high schools. Altogether these scholars received more than \$27 million in scholarships, an increase of more than \$7 million from last year. There were nearly 1,400 graduates making up the JPS class of 2018.

Below are the valedictorians and salutatorians of each high school class.

Callaway High School



Ahmber Bailes, valedictorian



Darik Cody, salutatorian

Forest Hill High School



Aniya Esters, valedictorian



Sondon Brown Jr., salutatorian

Jim Hill High School



Faith Gilmore, valedictorian



Jessica Leggett, salutatorian

Lanier High School



Tiffany Bryant, valedictorian



Jacolbi Osborne, salutatorian

Murrah High School



Sophia Bowley, valedictorian



Justin Bell, salutatorian

Provine High School



Ken'Janae McGowan, valedictorian



Jerelyn McIntyre, salutatorian

Wingfield High School



Devan Williams, valedictorian






Serenidy Jones, salutatorian

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Publisher.....Jackie Hampton
Editor.....Othor Cain
Copy Editor.....Minnie Garrett
Graphics.....Marcus Johnson
Photographers.....Kevin Robinson & Jay Johnson
Contributing Writers.....Janice K. Neal-Vincent
Ayesha K. Mustafaa

Member:



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MVSU student awarded teaching scholarship

The Mississippi Link Newswire

Mississippi Valley State University education major Kalik May was recently awarded the Linda Anglin Teacher Presentation Scholarship by the Mississippi Professional Educators organization.

As part of the honor, May received a \$500 scholarship as well as a complimentary membership to the MPE for his first year of teaching.

The Greenwood native is a former professional baseball player and currently volunteers as an assistant coach for the MVSU baseball team.

Founded in 1979, the Mississippi Professional Educators is Mississippi's largest and premier organization for professional educators, serving approximately 14,000 teachers, administrators and support personnel.

MPE serves members in pre-K through graduate education in both public and private institutions with the purpose of promoting better education for the children of Mississippi.

MPE offers an annual scholarship to an MPE student member from each School of Education at Mississippi's fifteen public and private



May

institutions of higher learning.

For more information about MPE, visit www.mpe.org.

For more information about MVSU's Teacher Education program, call (662) 254-3613.

MVSU senior selected for rigorous paid internship

The Mississippi Link Newswire

A Mississippi Valley State University student will spend his summer break preparing for his future with a rigorous paid internship through the Mississippi Idea Network for Biomedical Research Excellence (MS-INBRE).

Senior biology major Stephon Simpson of Indianola, Miss., has accepted an internship at the University of Southern Mississippi in the area of microbiology, under the direction of Dr. Mohamed Elasari through the MS-INBRE program.

The 11-week training kicked off May 11 and will include training in basic laboratory techniques, ethics, biosafety, bioinformatics and professional career development.

An aspiring medical doctor, Simpson said he's grateful for the opportunity.

"Attending MS-INBRE will sharpen my scientific research skills, increase my network capacity, and it's also something that could be added to my resume' for job placements after graduation," he said. I'm truly thankful for this awesome opportunity be-



Simpson

cause I get a chance to represent my HBCU."

MS-INBRE is a network of colleges and universities designed to reach out to Mississippians and other talented researchers that will increase the state's competitiveness as well as the impact on citizen's health.

For more information about MS-INBRE, visit www.msinbre.org

To learn more about MVSU's Chemistry degree program, call (662) 254-3377 or visit www.mvsu.edu.

Continental Tire selects three Hinds Community College students for internship program



HCC students selected for Continental Tire summer internship are Dontrae'on J. Gales, Ty Treubel and Zachary Spell.

The Mississippi Link Newswire

Continental Tire, the leading technology company and premier tire manufacturer, is proud to announce the students chosen for its 2018 Maintenance Technician Internship Program.

Three Hinds Community College students chosen for nine-week, paid summer program will report to Mt. Vernon plant in early June. On-the-job training and a scholarship are two benefits of the program.

Students selected to participate in the program are:

- Dontrae'on J. Gales (Fayette, Mississippi)
- Zachary Spell (Madison, Mississippi)
- Ty Treubel (Vicksburg, Mississippi)

Eligible applicants for the program were required to have a 3.0 GPA, consistent attendance record, and three letters of recommendation. Ten finalists were selected from the pool of applicants and interviewed at the plant in

Mt. Vernon. The top three were chosen.

In early June, the selected interns will be placed with Continental Tire maintenance and engineering experts for on-the-job training in electrical, electronic, mechanical and hydraulic systems. Some of the students' responsibilities will include:

- Installing and maintaining piping
- Troubleshooting and repairing various control devices, motors, and electronic devices
- Establishing, maintaining, and following up on the plant's lubrication schedule
- Performing machinist tasks
- Assisting in start-up of equipment for production

The Maintenance Technician Program is a partnership between Continental Tire and Hinds Community College. The program was launched in 2017 to foster the development of students who could possibly fill the maintenance technician roles at the future

plant in Clinton, Miss.

The program targets students enrolled in industrial maintenance technology, electrical technology and electronics technology. Earlier this year, the 2017 interns returned to Mt. Vernon as employees for further training until the Clinton tire plant is complete.

Maintenance technicians will be the first positions filled at the Clinton-based commercial vehicle tire plant in late 2018. As one of the key roles in Continental's daily operations, maintenance technicians are responsible for both reactive and preventative maintenance of equipment throughout the facility.

For more information on Continental Tire's job opportunities in Clinton, Mississippi, visit www.continental-jobs.com.

For a view of which departments Continental Tire Clinton will staff through the end of 2019, visit www.mississippi.org/continentalcareers.

Communications and Marketing team brings home five CPRAM awards

The Mississippi Link Newswire

Mississippi Valley State University's Office of Communications and Marketing staff recently won five awards during the College Public Relations Association of Mississippi's annual conference, hosted May 22 in Ridgeland.

MVSU's "Valley in Motion" commercial won first place in the Senior Division-Television Spots category. The winning team included Brittany Davis-Green, director; John McCall, senior graphic designer; Joseph Cotton, associate graphic designer; Shanae Curry, project coordinator; and Donell Maxie, communications specialist.

The university's Communiqué won second place in the Senior Division-Newsletter category. On the winning team were Davis-Green, Cotton and Maxie.

McCall and Cotton won



MVSU's Office of Communications and Marketing staff Donell Maxie, Shanae Curry, John McCall, Brittany Davis-Green and Joseph Cotton

first place in the Single Piece Artwork (Sports) category

for their "ONE GOAL. ONE TEAM. ONE VALLEY." athletic stadium banners.

Cotton also won first place

in the Single Piece Artwork (Non-Sports) category for his

piece "Past, Present, Future."

Maxie won second place in the Feature Story- Senior Division for his 2017 Graduation series.

Davis-Green received the first place and second place awards in the Junior Division-Feature Story category for pieces she wrote while previously serving as the chief communications officer for Coahoma Community College in Clarksdale.

CPRAM promotes excellence in public relations at public and private four and two-year educational institutions in the state. Mississippi's four-year institutions compete in the senior division and community colleges in the junior division.

More than 100 entries from 12 senior public and private institutions in the state of Mississippi participated in this year's awards competition.



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The disturbing flip side of the ‘Black Panther’ movie

By A. Peter Bailey
TriceEdneyWire.com

In the late 1960s several young brothers, including myself, had the mind-expanding experience of studying propaganda analysis under the tutelage of the brilliant Professor Mamoud Boutiba. During those sessions we met once a week for nearly a year. His main point was for us to remember that there is no such thing as a movie, television or radio program, newspaper or magazine article, school textbook, or play without a message. It was up to us, he noted, to discover what that message was.

I had those lessons in mind when I went to see “The Black Panther.” By the time I saw it, it had already been in movie theaters for nearly a month and was receiving overwhelmingly positive reactions, including from people whom I knew and whose opinions about such things, I respected. They raved about its unprecedented showing of the beauty and strength of black people, especially dark-skinned ones. They were much impressed with its use of ancient African cultural and spiritual symbols. They marveled at the talent of the black folks who put the film together.

I also read articles with head-



lines such as “The Black Panther Revolution,” “The Afrofuturism of Black Panther,” “A Hero of Diversity,” “The Panther: A Superhero for Black Youth,”

“#BlackPantherChallenge Seeks to Send Thousands to Theaters Nationwide,” “Black Churches Across the Nation Host Screenings of ‘Black Panther,’” “Up-

COMMENTARY

coming ‘Black Panther’ Comic Garners New Fans,” “Black Panther Paves Way for Investment in South Africa,” “The ‘Black Panther’ Happening,” “Finally, A Chance Just to Enjoy a Black Film,” and “Searching for Wakanda.”

What I didn’t read in all of those articles and didn’t see or hear in television or radio commentaries about the film were three things that, in my opinion, reinforced ongoing negative stereotypes about people of African descent. The first and most disturbing of those was that in a film about an African superhero, it is a white man in the CIA who shoots down the machine that is a threat to the entire world. In other words, when it comes to crunch time, one has to rely on the white man to take care of business. And when the white man is saving the world, the African people are busy fighting each other.

Which brings me to the second point. The film basically has a message that African people on the continent and people of African descent from the continent of North America (aka USA) can’t get along with each other. After the climatic battle led by King T’Challa of Wakan-

da and Erik Killmonger, who represents the African-American position, the king makes a conciliatory proposal that they should seek ways to work together. Killmonger rejects his proposal and instead kills himself. This must have been very pleasing to those white forces and even some black ones who don’t want any kind of mutually beneficial spiritual, cultural, economic and political connection between people of African descent throughout the world. Killmonger’s rejection of overtures from King T’Challa reinforces that position.

My third problem with “The Black Panther” is the name “Killmonger,” given to the character played by Michael B. Jordan. After seeing the film I looked up the word “warmonger” in a dictionary. A warmonger was described as “a person who is strongly in favor of war or as one who wants to bring about war.” One can only conclude that someone named Killmonger is strongly in favor of killing. It is not surprising, all things considered, that the name is given to the film character who represents African-Americans.

I saw the MSNBC television special on “The Black Panther,” during which key contributors to

it were interviewed. Every single one of them came off as being talented, intelligent, committed and thoughtful. That’s why it’s so puzzling to me that neither of them comprehended that it is not positive or productive to have a white man destroy the threat to the world instead of the African superhero, to have a main character with the name Killmonger and to deliver a message that Africans and African Americans can’t connect together against the forces who regard all black people as inferior beings.

One article I read, “The Panther: A Superhero for Black Youth,” quotes a youngster as saying “I love black people and this is about black power.” Another said “Black Panther never stopped fighting for his culture, his people and his country.”

A “Rolling Stone” cover story notes that “Black Panther is about many things: family, responsibilities, fathers and sons, the power of badass women, borders, refugees, what it means to be black, what it means to be African. What it means to be a citizen of the world.”

The above are all positive messages which are unfortunately undermined by the three damaging messages of the type of which Professor Boutiba taught us to be aware.

Harvard Study: Black men sentenced to longer prison terms than whites convicted of the same crimes

By Frederick H. Lowe
TriceEdneyWire.com

Republican-appointed judges to the federal bench sentence black men to longer prison terms compared with white men convicted of the same crime, according to a study by the Harvard Law School.

The report also found that black judges impose shorter sentences on average than non-black judges. However, in Chicago there hasn’t been a black

man on the federal bench since 2012, Crain’s Chicago Business reported in January 2016.

The study “Judicial Politics and Sentencing Decisions,” reported that the racial disparity in sentencing decisions contributes to the fact that black defendants comprise a disproportionate fraction of the prison population relative to their percentage of the overall population,” the study found. The Federal Bureau of Prisons

reported May 26, that blacks comprised 37.8 percent of the prison population or 69,324 inmates.

Over 95 percent of criminal convictions are the result of guilty pleas. Once a plea deal is reached and accepted by the judge, the judge schedules sentencing.

Black offenders were sentenced to 4.8 months more in prison compared to similar non-black offenders, the study

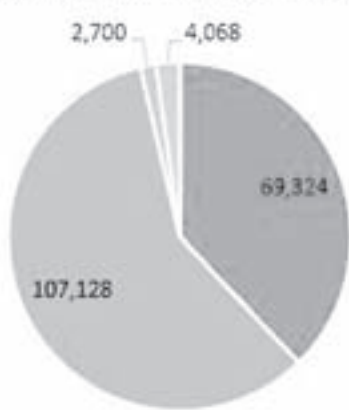
reported.

Prison sentences have grown for federal inmates from 17.9 months in 1988 to 37.5 months in 2012 for violent, property, drug, public order, weapon and immigration crimes, according to Pew Research Center.

In comparison, women offenders receive 12.1 fewer months in prison compared to male offenders. Defendants with children are sentenced to longer terms in prison than defendants with fewer dependents.

To arrive at its findings, researchers at Harvard Law School studied the sentencing data of more than 546,916 federal defendants linked to federal judges. Harvard studied defendants sentenced between 1999 and 2015 and they observed the sentencing practices

Inmates by race in federal prisons



■ Black ■ White ■ Asian ■ Native

of approximately 1,400 unique judges.

“Male defendants are sentenced to substantially longer time in prison than female defendants even after accounting for arrest offense and criminal

history,” the report said.

There are 677 authorized federal judgeships in 94 district courts as of 2017, Harvard reported. Most of the districts have between two and seven authorized judgeships.

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Black women are changing the tide of American politics

By Jeffrey L. Boney
NNPA Newswire Contributor

Last week, the world witnessed something that had never been done before in the history of politics in the United States.

Not only did Democratic voters in Georgia elect a 44-year-old African-American candidate as the first-ever black gubernatorial nominee in the state, they also made history by electing the first black woman to be a major party nominee for governor in the United States.

That's right – former Georgia House Minority Leader and attorney Stacey Abrams soundly defeated her opponent, former State Rep. Stacey Evans, with an overwhelming 53 percent landslide victory; Abrams won 76.5 percent of the vote compared to Evans' 23.5 percent. Abrams will face off against the winner of the Republican primary runoff election that will be held in July between Georgia's Lieutenant Governor Casey Cagle and Secretary of State Brian Kemp.

While much of the political conversation around the country has been focused on the success of women candidates as a whole, one of the primary reasons for Abrams' dominant showing in the Democratic primary was the high turnout of black voters, particularly black women voters.

The convincing victory by Abrams, a rising star in the Democratic Party, has created a significant amount of chatter in political circles about the growing success black women candidates are having across the country, particularly in a deeply southern state like Georgia that hasn't



Jeffrey L. Boney says that Georgia Democratic gubernatorial nominee Stacey Abrams will need increased black voter turnout to add her name to the list of black women, who are changing the landscape of politics across the country.

had a Democratic governor since 2003.

"I am a proud daughter of the Deep South," Abrams stated during her victory speech after winning the Georgia Democratic gubernatorial nomination. "To claim our victory, to write that next chapter and live those best lives, we have a lot of work to do. We have to reach out to those who do not believe their voices matter...who have been disappointed again and again by promises made and never kept. With your help, we will register every last person we know."

Abrams continued: "And we're going to search out those we don't know yet and prove they matter to us, too...In the Book of Esther, there's a verse

that reminds us that we were born for such a time as this. And now is a time to defend our values and protect the vulnerable – to stand in the gap and to lead the way... that is what we will continue to do – all the way to victory in November."

A victory by Abrams in November would truly be a game changer relative to politics, as we know it, in the Deep South and across the country.

Prior to 2003, no Republican had ever served as governor in Georgia since Reconstruction. Republican George "Sonny" Perdue III changed that after he was elected and then sworn in January 13, 2003. Perdue served until 2011, and the governorship in Georgia has remained in Republican control ever since.

Then, if you take a look at the rest of the Deep South, which consists of states like Texas, Alabama, South Carolina, Mississippi, Arkansas and Louisiana, each of those states currently has a Republican governor at the helm, with the exception of Louisiana, where former Democratic state legislator John Bel Edwards was sworn in as governor in 2016.

Abrams has a chance to change the overall landscape of politics as we know it, but it will take more than having her name on the ballot as the Democratic nominee in Georgia to make that a reality – it will require engaging existing black voters and focusing on getting newly registered black voters to the polls in November.

Abrams has adopted a strategy focused on registering new black voters and engaging more blacks

to come out to the polls and vote in November 2018 than came out in 2014, when only 40 percent of African Americans went to the polls in Georgia, compared to roughly 48 percent of whites.

If recent history is any indication, the only way the tides will turn in the favorable direction Democrats hope for relative to the key gubernatorial seats that are up for grabs in battleground states this November, is if there is a heavy black voter turnout – something the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) has been focused on in 2018.

The NNPA, a trade group that represents over 200 black-owned media companies across the U.S., recently launched an initiative to encourage 5 million new, black voters to register to vote before the midterm elections, with the hopes of ensuring candidates like Abrams cross the finish line victoriously.

"The NNPA views the electoral victory of Stacey Abrams as the Democratic candidate for governor of Georgia as one of the most important political advances for the interests of black America, since President Barack H. Obama was elected," said Benjamin Chavis Jr., president and CEO of the NNPA. "In particular, black women are now the effective vanguard in statewide and local elections across the U.S. The win by Abrams in Georgia is also timely as the NNPA has called upon 5 million more black Americans to register to vote before the November 2018 midterm elections."

Abrams will need that increase

in black voter turnout to add her name to the list of black women, who are changing the landscape of politics across the country.

According to a recent report by the Higher Heights Leadership Fund and the Center for American Women and Politics titled "The Chisholm Effect: Black Women in American Politics 2018," black women only make up 3.6 percent of the U.S. Congress and less than one percent of statewide elected executive officials. Only 38 other black women have served in Congress since Shirley Chisholm's groundbreaking victory in 1968, when she became the first black woman elected to the U.S. Congress.

Relative to statewide elected executive offices, only three (3) black women currently serve in a statewide office – Jenean Hampton (R-Ky.), the lieutenant governor of Kentucky; Sheila Oliver (D-N.J.), the lieutenant governor of New Jersey; and Denise Napier (D-Conn.), the state treasurer of Connecticut. Together, these women represent 4.2 percent (3 of 71) of all women statewide elected executive officials and 0.96 percent (3 of 312) of all statewide elected executive officials in the entire country.

Going even further, only 12 black women have ever held statewide elected executive office in just 11 out of the 50 states, and prior to Abrams' historic quest to become the next governor of Georgia, no black woman has ever been elected governor, let alone become the gubernatorial nominee of a major political party. Abrams may be just the

person to change things.

Abrams has become a major catalyst behind this exciting new trend of black women running for office nationally, and a lot of her momentum should trickle down to other seats on a local level.

The nation will see how powerful this momentum has become since Abrams' historic victory June 5, when London Breed, the current president of San Francisco's Board of Supervisors, will face off against seven other challengers in her quest to become the city's first black female mayor.

Still, many of these black women who decide to run for office need the support of the Democratic Party, who historically has a pretty dismal track record of providing support for African-American candidates nationwide and at the local level.

Maybe this time will be different. Time will tell. November to be exact. Stay tuned.

This article was originally published at BlackPressUSA.com.

Jeffrey L. Boney serves as associate editor and is an award-winning journalist for the Houston Forward Times newspaper. Jeffrey has been a frequent contributor on "The Nancy Grace Show" and "Crime & Justice with Ashleigh Banfield." Jeffrey is a radio personality and a dynamic, international speaker, experienced entrepreneur, business development strategist and founder/CEO of the Texas Business Alliance. If you would like to request Jeffrey as a speaker, you can reach him at jboneyl@forwardtimes.com. Follow Jeffrey on Twitter @realtalkjunkies.

Black women make history nationwide with runs for political office

By Lauren Poteat
NNPA Newswire Contributor

This year, an unprecedented number of black women have made history running for political offices across the country.

According to blackwomeninpolitics.com, a comprehensive database that lists women of color running for political offices in 2018, currently, over 600 black female candidates are running for offices nationwide.

London Breed, the current president of San Francisco's Board of Supervisors, could become the city's first black female mayor.

Raised by her grandmother in the poverty-stricken Plaza East Public Housing in the Western Addition of San Francisco, Breed, who was endorsed by U.S. Senator Kamala Harris (D-Calif.), said that this current platform serves as an excellent opportunity to show the youth that anything is possible.

"Every time someone stands up for what they believe in and they are willing to work hard for something, it gives others permission to do the same," Breed said. "I never thought I could become mayor. Seeing my name on the ballot the other day when I voted was something I never imagined...I am proof that no dream is too big. There will be obstacles and setbacks, but each voice is powerful. We need more voices



Some political analysts say that London Breed has a good chance of winning June 5 to become San Francisco's first black female mayor. WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

es in politics from people who come from different experiences."

Breed continued: "I hope that young people, no matter where they come from, what they look like, or how much money they make, are inspired to rise up and make sure their voices are heard, because each and every one of us counts."

Focused on affordable housing, education, homelessness, transportation, public safety and a low unemployment rate – which is currently below three percent in San Francisco – Breed hopes to transform San Francisco into a city

that is inclusive and equitable for everyone.

"I want to create a San Francisco where no one is forced or allowed to sleep on the street," Breed said. "Where we help prevent people from falling into homelessness in the first place, by preserving affordable housing and helping tenants stay in their homes; where we expand our navigation center shelter system and build modular homes to house people, as quickly as possible, and where we make the tough investments in mental health and substance abuse treatment to get people the support they need."

Breed added that she would challenge leaders in the technology, financial and healthcare industries, and even the University of California at San Francisco, to do a better job of hiring and promoting women, members of the LGBTQ community and people of color.

"We need to build bridges for our students with employers, unions and industries early on; help them secure internships, apprenticeships, mentorships and ensure they have access to the classes they need to excel in their chosen field," Breed said.

On June 5, California will hold elections in their "top-two primary election system," for all candidates and party affiliations, where the two people with

the highest votes, will then advance to the general election.

In addition to California, in the state of Alabama, a record number of black women are running for Democratic offices in the deep-red state, following Republican Roy Moore's defeat.

In globalcitizen.org, it was reported that over 35 women of color were running for various political offices in Alabama, including Suzanne Coleman, who, if she wins, will become one of the first black females to serve District 5 in Alabama's House of Representatives.

"Races such as these are never an easy task to complete, but I hope the precedent that black women have set this year will be used as a framework by the youth for their own futures," Coleman said. "With my platform I plan to focus on education equality, academic reform and public safety... children should know their history and laws should be made to fit everyone, not just a few."

Michigan State Rep. Erika Geiss, who is running to represent District 6 in the state senate, is focused on a number of issues including economics, education and criminal justice. Geiss believes that races such as these will prove to be a vital tool in placing more women of color in higher areas of office.

"This phenomenon of women of

color running for political offices all across the country is showing little girls, women and young men that this is a space that is possible," Geiss said. "Community work is good, but we also need to get out there and represent on a legislative level, as well. One of the things that people need to know about Michigan is that this state is way more diverse than what has been [historically] represented legislatively."

Celebrating the great achievement of black women in America, with even bigger possibilities to come, Kamau Marshall, the director of African-American media and the deputy national press secretary of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, said that black women in general, are recognizing their power and will play major roles in all elections, including the 2020 presidential race.

"A lot is happening in the world of women," Marshall said. "Black women, all over, are capitalizing on their strengths, including London Breed, who will make an excellent mayor."

Marshall continued: "This kind of power will inspire and wake others up, especially black millennials, who will play a large role in the 2020 presidential elections."

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Be a living witness

By Pastor Simeon R. Green III
Special to The Mississippi Link



Friend, do not put off turning to God. If you do, you will regret it. You may lose the only opportunity you will ever get to have your needs met, and you will regret that you did not get those needs met.

In Luke, Chapter 16, you can read about the rich man who died and went to hell. He cried and regretted that he had turned God down. He could have gotten his needs met. He did not have to go to that awful place of torments. Friend, in hell it will be too late to cry. The rich man asked Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his five brothers. He knew that they were living the same way he had, and he did not want them to come to

that awful place of torments.

Christian friend, you ought to live a Holy life so that others will want to live as you do. You ought to be an example to others.

You need to ask yourself these questions: If every member of the congregation were just as I am, what kind of church would it be? Are you leaving things to get done by just a few others or are you helping?

If you want to go to Heaven, you must live Christlike. It is holiness or hell. In Heaven there is not going to be one church on this corner and another church on that corner. The only church there will be is the Church of the Living God.

When Jesus healed blind Bartimaeus, can you imagine the thrill he felt? It was a wondrous miracle to behold. Church, you are not experi-

encing all that God wants you to have – the beauty that you could have and the bodies that could be healed. You need to seek the old paths and walk therein.

Is the Word finding that you have a hard heart? My friend, I hope I am stirring you within. What are you aspiring to do for God? If you will determine in your heart to please God, it would be the greatest thing you have ever done in your life. Blind Bartimaeus could witness, “I was blind, but now I can see!” Others could say of you, “There is the one who was once blind and used to beg on the roadside. Look what happened!”

Christian friend, you need to be a living witness, living a holy life every day. This is evidence of something that is beyond human nature and beyond science. This is evidence of a divine work of

God. Nothing is impossible with God.

Dear one, have you tasted that the Lord is gracious? You can taste and see that the Lord is good. Thank God, you can have this experience. You do not have to just read about it or listen to someone tell it, but you can have it for yourself. You can have a taste of the pie, so to speak. You can have a foretaste of Heaven when you get saved.

Are you living in sin? Are you dying of starvation when there is plenty of food at the Father’s table? If you will cry out to the Lord as Bartimaeus did, God will supply your need.

Rev. Simeon R. Green III is pastor of Joynes Road Church of God, 31 Joynes Road, Hampton VA 23669. He is a member of the National Association of Evangelism Church of God, Anderson, Ind.

P R E S E R V E D

Spiritual PTSD - Feelings remain ...and the healing begins

By Shewanda Riley
Columnist



Last week, I shared how one of the after-effects of spiritual warfare is what I call Spiritual PTSD - Purpose,

Strength, Trust and Discernment. Even as I began writing this week’s column, I hit a huge wall of writer’s block. My words just didn’t seem to flow and my thoughts were muddled and confused. This has happened before so I took a 24-hour break from writing and came back...but still got stuck.

Why was this happening? I thought that maybe I was having a hard time because I wasn’t supposed to be writing about this issue. Then I thought that maybe I needed to find another way of looking at the issue.

This week, I wanted to explore more about how each spiritual warfare battle that we survive is specifically designed to teach us things. But since I kept getting stuck when it came to the feelings that the warfare raised, I thought that maybe that was the issue I needed to write about. For those who have experienced or were threatened with a physical trauma like war or physical abuse, surviving the battle is often just the first step. The next step is how to deal with the sometimes hard to manage feelings that remain.

After thinking about it some more, I realized that part of the reason why I was getting stuck was because I was trying to write about an experience that is quite simply difficult to describe.

Words like guilty, fearful, confused, relieved, hopeful and angry do not adequately describe the surviving physical or spiritual warfare. Quite simply, no one wants to admit that they’ve experienced something so life changing and that they can’t adjust to how it’s now making them feel.


I’ve never been in a physical war but know people like my father and brother-in-law who have. I do know what it is like to experience spiritual warfare, though. The experiences compare only in how challenging it is to deal with the feelings that remain.

Ephesians 6:11-13 tells us how to prepare for and then fight the spiritual battle but doesn’t really go into how to deal with the feelings that might remain after the battle is over.

In my recent experiences with spiritual warfare, I found myself trying to process extreme feelings. I was glad that I had survived, even if I felt that I’d lost the battle. I was fearful of any additional battles, but mostly I was hopeful that the worst was over.

Psalms 30:2 explains, “LORD my God, I called to you for help, and you healed me.” Calling to God means you have to be honest about how you are feeling. Before you can get to spiritual PTSD you have to wade through uncomfortable feelings to get to the truth of how you really feel...which is the first step to healing.

Shewanda Riley is a Dallas, Texas based author of “Love Hangover: Moving From Pain to Purpose After a Relationship Ends.” Email her at preserved-bypurpose@gmail.com or follow her on Twitter @shewanda.



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Good or bad for girls

By E. Faye Williams
Trice Edney Newswire



We’ve gone through, and are still living with, racially segregated schools, rich versus poor schools, religious schools that tend to segregate and schools that segregate by gender.

Sex segregated public education is increasing according to a report from the Feminist Majority Foundation (FMF) in a report entitled “Tracking Deliberate Sex Segregation in K-12 Public Schools.” The report was based on data from the Civil Rights Data Collection which found and named 794 public co-ed schools that reported having single-sex academic classes and all-girl and all-boy public schools.

I know and work with many women in the FMF. They do great work on behalf of women and girls. I must admit I haven’t always been much involved in the question of whether boys and girls are better off when they attend separate schools. However, this report got my attention when I learned that sex segregated schools are increasing.

Having been a proponent of Title IX that was signed into law over 40 years ago, I was curious about whether girls are still discriminated against. The law prohibits sex discrimination and often sex segregation in education programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance. Instead of decreasing, there are now more deliberate sex segregated public K-12 education programs and they are increasing.

The FMF study found that public schools reported having single sex classes with especially large increases in Nevada and Tennessee. There are also additional single sex schools. Most of these schools are found in low income black and Latino communities. At the same time, it was found that 64 years after the Supreme Court decision in Brown v. Board of Education, our public schools are more racially segregated than ever. That raises the question whether schools have improved for black and Latino students or do practices under Title IX or Brown v. Board help? If they’ve not helped, is it because the intent of these laws is ignored?

The FMF report documents how deliberate K-12 single-sex instruction is educationally unsound, economically wasteful and often unlawful.

The report further tells us, “Under the Bush administration, the ED released 2006 regulations weakening Title IX prohibitions on single-sex education. In December 2014, the ED Office for Civil Rights provided clarifying Q&A guidance on justifications that schools need to show that their single-sex education is not discriminatory.

These 2014 Questions and Answers on Title IX and Single-Sex Elementary and Secondary Classes and Extracurricular Activities are meant to be used to adequately justify that any allowable single-sex public education does not increase sex stereotyping and sex discrimination. This guidance also reminds schools they should publish information on their single-sex activities as well as their evaluations and justifications on their websites and that any of this deliberate single-sex education should be approved by Title IX coordinators and other officials.

Maybe some sex segregated schools are necessary, but they shouldn’t exist if they’re discriminating. The discrimination is generally against the girls. In order to reduce the numbers of sex discriminatory sex segregated programs in K-12 public schools, the FMF recommends that Title IX coordinators and other gender equity advocates check the current status, policies and for any plans of schools that indicate allowing single-sex classes.

In many cases these district and school-based Title IX coordinators need help from other gender equity activists including reminding them that intentional sex segregated public education is rarely legally, educationally or economically justifiable.

For more information on this subject, contact Sue Klein, FMF Education Equity director, sklein@feminist.org. She’s the expert, but you may also contact the National Congress of Black women at 202 678-6788.

As parents and those interested in what is happening with girls in school, all of us need to be more vigilant.

E. Faye Williams, president of the National Congress of Black Women and host of Wake Up and Stay Woke on WPFW-FM 89.3. 202 678-6788. www.nationalcongressbw.org.

Black Entertainment Trailblazer: The Legacy of Debra Lee

By Marc H. Morial
*President and CEO
National Urban League*



“If they don’t give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair.” – Shirley Chisholm, African-American politician and activist, November 30, 1924 – January 1, 2005

Debra L. Lee is a dues-paid member of an exclusive club: African-American CEOs. While the Oscars struggles to be less white and dashes of color are increasingly becoming a mainstay on our movie and television screens, black representation in leadership and executive office suites remains abysmally few and far between at media companies – or otherwise.

Despite the long odds and doubly fortified barriers to entry for African-American woman in corporate America, Lee sat at the helm of Black Entertainment Television for two decades, and for 17 of those years, BET Networks remained the #1 cable network among African-American viewers, broadening the media landscape for creatives of color and audiences in search of their experiences and stories on screen.

Lee’s story begins in the American South. She was born in 1954, the year of the Supreme Court’s Brown vs. Board of Education decision that outlawed public school segregation. In 1972, Lee graduated from North Carolina’s Greensboro-Dudley High School in a county school system still divided by racial segregation. As she re-



Lee

calls, what was lacking in resources was compensated for by “teachers who really cared.” From there she attended Brown University, graduating with a bachelor’s degree in political science with an emphasis in Asian politics. Lee went on to receive a law degree from Harvard and a master’s degree in public policy in 1980.

After serving as both a law clerk and an attorney at a corporate law firm, in 1986, Lee joined BET as its first vice president and general counsel. Ten years later, Lee was elevated to network president and COO. By 2005, Lee had successfully worked her way up the ranks to become BET’s chairman and CEO. Her commitment to reinvigorating a brand once synonymous with the excesses of 90s Hip-Hop came with a new direction for BET and a series of cable television network successes.

Under Lee’s leadership, the series premier of The Game debuted

as the most-watched series premiere in cable television history. In 2017, The New Edition Story mini-series became the highest-rated television biopic of all times. After doubling BET’s production budget, Lee introduced new talent and original programming to the channel, including fan-favorites Being Mary Jane and The Real Husbands of Hollywood. The push for original, authentic programming brought with it high ratings, growing popularity, soaring profit and a determination to assert BET’s reach beyond the edges of our television screens.

BET’s evolution also included the launch of its website, BET.com, and the launch of the network’s sister channel, BET Her, the first network designed to target African-American women. Lee acquired the television rights to the annual award show Black Girls Rock! and continued to elevate the prominence and prestige of the BET Awards. Lee recently launched Leading Women Defined, an annual gathering of thought leaders that convenes notable African-American woman, including former First Lady Michelle Obama, Venus Williams and Issa Rae, to discuss issues that have a direct impact on the black community.

Her decades long commitment and dedication to the success of BET has not gone unnoticed either in or outside of the entertainment industry. Lee’s litany of honors include being named Hollywood Reporter’s 100 Most Powerful Women in Entertainment, she also

earned a well-deserved spot on Forbes World’s 100 Most Powerful Women list and Black Enterprise’s 50 Most Powerful Women in Corporate America.

She has also been honored with the Distinguished Leadership Vanguard Award by the National Cable & Telecommunications Association (a first for an African-American female executive) and she was inducted into the Broadcasting & Cable Hall of Fame.

In 2017, the Grammy organization recognized her with the Salute to Industry Icons Award – making her the first and only woman to receive the honor. Being no stranger to the recognition and celebration of black excellence, the National Urban League presented Lee with an award for Lifetime Achievement at our annual Whitney M. Young Awards.

In the beginning, Lee’s journey to BET may have appeared far from promising. In her early school career, she suffered from some of the very same inequities too many students of color continue to face today in our public schools. Despite the obstacles and the odds, Lee went on to successfully run a multi-billion dollar enterprise. This year, Lee steps down as the chairman and CEO of BET, but her story, her era and her legacy does not end here. Her lasting influence will be felt every time another man or woman of color advances through the unwieldy doors she pried opened, takes the helm of a corporation and increases the membership roll of the exclusive African-American CEO club.

Ain’t I a Woman: The historic attack on African-American women

By Julianne Malveaux
NNPA News Wire Columnist



The stupidly foul and racist comedienne Roseanne Barr is as insignificant as a single drop of rain in a thunderstorm and so, on one hand, she deserves to be upbraided, to have lost her television show, and to be written down in the halls of ignominy. At the same time her description of former White House Senior Advisor Valerie Jarrett as the spawn of “Muslim Brotherhood & planet of the apes,” is unfortunately consistent with our nation’s history of dehumanizing and defeminizing African-American women.

When a people are systematically dehumanized, they can be treated as lesser, inferior beings. When people are compared to monkeys, apes and gorillas, they are being described as less evolved than other human beings, as people who deserve less. When this extends to women, we are both dehumanized and defeminized. In other words, black women do not have to be treated with the same respect as other women. We can be violated, treated as people (things) to be toyed with. This is why so many black women could be violated by white men who, for sport, would “go get a n---r gal,” pull her from the side of the road, and gang rape her. That’s what happened to the young mother, Recy Taylor, in 1944. The men who violated her paid no price. That’s what happened to Betty Jean Owens, the

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) undergraduate who was abducted from a car (at gunpoint) and repeatedly raped by four white men. Atypically, these men were convicted and sentenced to life in prison. One of the men was paroled and tracked down and killed a woman named Betty Jean Robinson Houston, mistaking her for Betty Jean Owens.

How could white “men” so brutally violate a woman, authorize their defense to argue that “she wanted it,” and expect to get away with it? They were granted permission by a history that made black women seem something less than human.

It’s the same history that allowed Clay County, West Virginia public official Pamela Taylor, to describe First Lady Michelle Obama as “an ape in heels.” It was the same history that allowed the same Roseanne to compare Susan Rice, national security advisor and former ambassador to the UN to “a big man with swinging ape balls” in a 2013 tweet. It was the same history that empowered a New York Post cartoonist to depict President Obama as a monkey; the same history that had a spate of elected officials refer to the President of the United States as a monkey. These folks include Mayor Patrick Rushing of Airway Heights, Washington, and Dan Johnson, a 2016 controversial state candidate in Louisville, Kentucky, and others. And when people in the United States feel free to demonize black folks, then this dehumanizing goes global.

During the Obama presidency, there were several instances of Putin allies referring to our president as a monkey, and a North Korean defense commission described Obama as a “monkey in a tropical habitat.”

Of course, when these people are called on their nonsense, they claim they aren’t racist. Or they say they were joking. I want someone to explain what is even mildly chuckle-inducing about calling a black woman an ape? Or explain why these monkey comparisons aren’t racist. Ambien does not count. So the decency-challenged Clay County official says she wasn’t talking about Michelle Obama’s race when she called her “an ape in heels.” She was just talking about her looks. What, pray tell, is the difference?

The monkey comparisons are especially hurtful to black women and to our girls, particularly because we are the antithesis of the so-called “feminine ideal” of svelte, blonde and blue-eyed. Serena Williams, the far more accomplished tennis player than the Russian Maria Sharapova, has never garnered the fawning tribute to her looks, and indeed has sometimes been demeaned with animalistic comparisons. Sharapova has just five Grand Slam titles; Serena has a near-record breaking 23. But at the time of Sharapova’s suspension from professional tennis in 2015, she had garnered more endorsement dollars than Serena. And I’ll never forget the cringe-worthy Nike “I Feel Pretty” Sharapova

campaign in 2010, when Sharapova look-alikes infested the US Open, trumpeting their “blonde beauty.”

Imagine the impact such a campaign might have had on the self-esteem of black girls if “pretty and strong” were the mantra for Serena. Perhaps it flies in the face of American history to describe a black woman as pretty, the feminine ideal. That’s why so many feel they can liken black women to monkeys.

Where are the women of #MeToo when these attacks come at black women? Although ABC is to be commended for kicking Roseanne to the curb so swiftly after her offensive tweets were publicized, I am disappointed that the women of #MeToo couldn’t lift their voices to object to the defeminization of black women.

The disdain that made Roseanne feel free to attempt to dehumanize Valerie Jarrett, is the same disdain that allows black women to be so easily violated in the workplace and the worldspace. If white women want black women as allies, more of them must speak up when we are disgracefully, but historically, demeaned. This is really not about Roseanne. It’s about the ways history has shaped the way many view African-American women.

Julianne Malveaux is an author and economist. Her latest book “Are We Better Off? Race, Obama and Public Policy” is available via www.amazon.com for booking, wholesale inquiries or for more info visit www.juliannemalveaux.com

MSU, Mississippi Department of Human Services continue to improve outcomes for those with disabilities

The Mississippi Link Newswire

Mississippi State students and Northeast Mississippi children who need assistance because of an autism spectrum disorder or another type of disability now have more support than ever from the university.

MSU has expanded its services through several programs in recent years, helping those with a wide range of disabilities gain life, academic and social skills that will help them thrive and increase independence.

After receiving a \$1 million grant from the Mississippi Department of Human Services last year, the university was able to significantly increase the number of people served by MSU’s ACCESS program, Autism and Developmental Disabilities Clinic, autism liaisons program, Disability Support Services and Student Support Services. As these programs have grown, so has their quality, turning them into models across the state and country, said Julie Capella, MSU director of Student Support Services.

ACCESS is Mississippi’s only



MSU ACCESS program students gathered with guests for a reception at the end of the spring semester to celebrate their accomplishments. ACCESS student Rebecca Abney, left, shows her portfolio from the year to kinesiology doctoral student Yonjoong Ryuh, who helped instruct an adapted physical activity class. PHOTO BY MEGAN BEAN

post-secondary program for students with intellectual disabilities and provides a complete college experience, along with a curriculum that encompasses independent living skills and internship opportunities. After completing the curriculum and meeting grade requirements, ACCESS students graduate from MSU with a certification of completion.

In three years, the number of enrolled students in the program has nearly tripled from eight to an anticipated 23 students this fall, said Capella. Support from DHS has allowed ACCESS to expand its staff and provide more of the one-on-one support students need, Capella added.

“We have ACCESS students involved in sororities, they’re honorary fraternity members and

more,” Capella said. “They’re at all the sporting events. They all attend classes. They now have a Student Association senate seat. The inclusion and acceptance across campus is beautiful. What we do for each of our students is very person-centered. We’re trying to find out about you and what it takes to get you where you want to be.”

Dan Gadke, an MSU assistant professor of school psychology, started the university’s Autism and Developmental Disabilities Clinic in 2014 with the goal of providing high quality clinical services to the community, training future professionals and engaging in research to enhance understanding of autism spectrum and developmental disorders.

When the clinic first started, it was serving five children. Now, clinic personnel meet with approximately 100 children every week, helping to fill the growing need for clinical services in North Mississippi.

“We serve any kids experiencing development in an atypical

way,” Gadke said. “We have kids with autism, rare genetic disorders, learning disabilities, cerebral palsy – kind of the whole gamut. We provide individualized treatment that is rooted in behavior analysis for improving behavior and building life, academic and social skills.”

A few years ago, MSU’s School Psychology Program and Disability Support Services partnered to create an autism liaisons program that supports degree-seeking MSU students with autism. The program pairs students who have self-identified as having an autism disorder with other students for support, in addition to the assistance they receive from Disability Support Services. The autism liaisons program also provides faculty training every semester. The program has increased from assisting eight students to now helping more than 40.

“With our autism liaisons program, our services are free,” Capella said. “Other places charge thousands of dollars a semester, but we felt that if these students

are eligible to be here at MSU and they have a disability, this is an accommodation we should make.”

With funding from DHS, MSU also has been able to increase its support services for low income and first-generation students, which includes enhancing academic skills, increasing retention and graduation rates, and facilitating entrance into professional and graduate programs.

In addition to DHS, these student and outreach programs have received support from the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services and the State’s Department of Mental Health Services. Private donations for the programs also have been received through the MSU Foundation.

For more on MSU’s Student Support Services, visit www.sss.msstate.edu. For more on the Autism and Developmental Disabilities Clinic, visit www.addc.msstate.edu.

MSU is Mississippi’s leading university, available online at www.msstate.edu.

MJI warns Tupelo of litigation if food truck regulations pass

Food truck regulations like the ones Tupelo has proposed have been challenged and rescinded around the country

The Mississippi Link Newswire

Yesterday the Mississippi Justice Institute (MJi) sent letters to Tupelo city leaders warning that, if Tupelo passes the regulations on food trucks it is currently discussing, Tupelo could be sued.

“The very regulation Tupelo is discussing – a regulation about how close a food truck should be to a restaurant – was found to be unenforceable just this past December in Baltimore. Food truck regulations around the country have been challenged over and over in court, from Louisville, to San Antonio, to Chicago and many places in between. Cities ultimately realize that these kinds of cases are very hard to defend,” said Shadrack White, director of the MJi.

The Northeast Mississippi Daily

Journal reported earlier this week that Tupelo’s city council was considering regulating food trucks in the city, particularly as it relates to their distance from existing brick-and-mortar restaurants.

“Regulations about how far a food truck can be from a restaurant have nothing to do with consumer safety. Regulating that distance does nothing to protect the public. It’s simply an attempt to protect existing businesses from newer businesses. It’s not the government’s job to protect a business from competition,” said White.

In the Daily Journal’s article, Ward 7 Councilman Willie Jennings was reported to say, “I just want to make sure the established businesses are protected.”

White added, “Tupelo should not

have these kinds of arbitrary regulations that take away a person’s right to earn a living. It is unfair to favor some businesses over others. Food trucks pay taxes and employ people, too. I don’t care what party you belong to, government favoritism for politically connected businesses is wrong.”

White also pointed out that Tupelo could do damage to its long-term prospects for success by overregulating its economy. “Take a look at any number of dynamic cities. There’s a booming food truck market. They attract tourists, diversify the economy and make places more interesting. Tupelo can have a bright future ahead of it. The city should not stunt its growth with regulations that unfairly favor some businesses over others.”



May 31, 2018

City Attorney Ben Logan, City of Tupelo
71 E. Troy St.
Tupelo, MS 38804

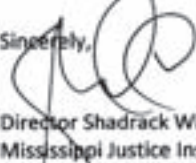
Mr. Logan,

I write to caution the City of Tupelo against regulating food trucks. I read, with concern, a recent article in *The Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal* entitled “Tupelo City Council pushes food truck regulations.” If Tupelo chooses to regulate food trucks, Tupelo will likely open itself to legal liability, as many food truck regulations around the country have triggered lawsuits against municipalities.

The reason food truck regulations trigger litigation is their tendency to arbitrarily deny hardworking citizens the right to earn a living, unfairly privilege some businesses over others, and lead to inconsistent enforcement. For example, the very regulation Tupelo is discussing—a regulation about how close a food truck should be to a restaurant—was found to be unenforceable just this past December in Maryland. See *Pizza di Joey v. Mayor and City Council of Baltimore*, Case No. 24-C-16-002852, 2016 WL 2761337, at 1 (Md. Cir. Ct.). Other food truck regulations around the country, from Louisville, to San Antonio, to Chicago, and many other places have also been challenged in court. Many cities realize, ultimately, that tighter food truck regulations are difficult to defend. As a city attorney from San Antonio said just before that city rescinded its challenged food truck regulation, “This case [defending the regulations] is not defensible. I don’t know how else I can say it.”

I am also concerned that the public comments of members of the city council are the exact sort of evidence that would be used to identify the intentions of council and to strike down any food truck ordinances. For example, Ward 7 Councilman Willie Jennings was reported to say, “I just want to make sure the established businesses are protected.” A regulation motivated by a desire to protect existing businesses flies in the face of rights under the Mississippi and federal constitutions.

Ultimately, Tupelo should not overregulate food trucks, because they are an important part of a dynamic economy. A look around the country at growing cities shows they often have vibrant food markets. Tupelo can have a bright future ahead of it. Do not stunt its growth with unfair regulations.

Sincerely,

Director Shadrack White
Mississippi Justice Institute

cc: City Council President Markel Whittington
Mayor Jason Shelton

Raytheon increases radar manufacturing capacity in Forest, Miss.

The Mississippi Link Newswire

Industry-leading defense contractor Raytheon is expanding its radar manufacturing capabilities in Forest, Miss. The project is a \$100 million corporate investment and will create dozens of direct jobs at the company’s Forest campus over the next five years.

“Raytheon recognizes the value of continued investment in the state of Mississippi,” Gov. Phil Bryant said. “Together, along with Raytheon’s outstanding employees, we will continue supporting the U.S. military and strengthening our national defense through the innovative, high-tech radar systems developed in East Mississippi.”

Raytheon will construct a new facility to serve as a hub for test, integration and production of s-band radars, which includes the U.S. Navy’s next-generation SPY-6, Air and Missile Defense Radar program. The new 50,000-square-foot facility will allow for future personnel growth and also will create dozens of indirect jobs from the local community in support of design, supply and construction.

“Construction of a new radar production facility is the next step in our decades-long partnership with the state of Mississippi and its highly skilled workforce,” said Wes Kramer, president of Raytheon’s Integrated Defense Systems business. “Together we will integrate, test and deliver the most technologically

advanced military radar systems to our U.S. and international customers.”

The Mississippi Development Authority is providing assistance for site preparation and infrastructure improvements. Mississippi Works funds are also being made available to assist with workforce training. Scott County is providing assistance in the form of a fee-in-lieu of taxes agreement.

“Raytheon and the people of Mississippi have enjoyed a productive, profitable, mutually beneficial partnership for many years. This exciting new investment which expands Raytheon’s presence in our state is evidence that Mississippi is the place where innovative global leaders can achieve their goals,” said MDA Executive director Glenn McCullough Jr. “MDA salutes the teamwork of Governor Bryant, the Mississippi Legislature, Scott County and the Mid-Mississippi Dev District, which is instrumental in Raytheon’s growth making Mississippi a leading state for the defense industry.”

The facility will become the newest addition to Raytheon’s existing Consolidated Manufacturing Center campus in Forest, which will continue uninterrupted deliver on critical commitments across the airborne radar and electronic warfare markets. Construction of the new facility will begin in August, with its completion expected by the first quarter of 2020.

Hinds County Board of Supervisors provides summer jobs for the youth

The Mississippi Link Newswire

The Hinds County Board of Supervisors continues its initiative to provide a limited number of area youth with summer employment opportunities. These opportunities include jobs, internships, and public service engagements through the Hinds County Youth Public Service Employment Initiative (HCYPSEI).

The program began May 29 and concludes August 3. The youth will work a minimum of 20 hours each week, at an hourly rate of \$7.50. Youth participants will be assigned to various Hinds County departments as well as various public community service programs.

About Hinds County

Hinds County’s Board of Supervisors is extremely proud of the improvements that are occurring in our great County, “A Very Special Place.” Hinds County has so much to offer approximately 250,000 residents and the hundreds of thousands of visitors we greet each year. From the fast-paced, emerging, revitalized downtown district of the State’s capital city, to the charming, peaceful, fields of the countryside, our county has many things to offer for everyone. The County has a rich southern history with a bright, diverse future and is an outstanding place to live, work, play and raise your family. Experience Hinds County and find out why we welcome you to the County!

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ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS: Sealed bids will be received by the City Clerk of Jackson, Mississippi, at 219 S. President Street, Jackson, Mississippi 39201 or at Post Office Box 17, Jackson, Mississippi 39205 until 3:30 PM, local time, June 26, 2018, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud for: Flowers Park Playground Improvement Project The City of Jackson, Mississippi ("City of Jackson") is committed to cultivating and ensuring the quality of life of its citizens, through various programs, employment, initiatives, and assistance. The City encourages all persons, corporations, and/or entities doing business within the City, as well as those who seek to contract with the City on various projects and or conduct business in the City, to assist the City in achieving its goal by strongly considering City residents for employment opportunities. The City of Jackson is committed to the principle of non-discrimination in public contracting. It is the policy of the City of Jackson to promote full and equal business opportunity for all persons doing business with the City. As a pre-condition to selection, each contractor, bidder or offeror shall submit a completed and signed Equal Business Opportunity (EBO) Plan, with the bid submission, in accordance with the provisions of the City of Jackson's Equal Business Opportunity (EBO) Ordinance. Failure to comply with the City's Ordinance shall disqualify a contractor, bidder or offeror from being awarded an eligible contract. For more information on the City of Jackson's Equal Business Opportunity Program, please contact the Office of Economic Development at 601-960-1055. Copies of the ordinance, EBO Plan Applications and a copy of the program are available at 200 South President Street, Room 223, Hood Building, Jackson, Mississippi. The City of Jackson hereby notifies all bidders that in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 2000d to 2000d-4 that all bidders will be afforded full opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, or disability in consideration for an award. Official bid documents can be downloaded from Central Bidding at www.centralbidding.com . Electronic bids and/or reverse auction bids can be submitted at www.centralbidding.com . For any questions relating to the electronic bidding process, please call Central Bidding at 225-810-4814. Contract Documents may be obtained from and/or examined at the offices of the City of Jackson's Public Works Department Engineering Division located at 200 S. President Street, Suite 424, Jackson, Mississippi 39201. Telephone 601.960.1823. Prospective bidders may obtain copies of all materials required for bidding purposes. There is NO charge for electronic or e-mail copies. Bid preparation will be in accordance with the Instructions to Bidders bound in the project manual. The City reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to waive any and all irregularities in respect to any bid submitted or to accept any proposal which is deemed most favorable to the City of Jackson. by: Robert K. Miller, Director Department of Public Works Vanessa Henderson Deputy Director Office of Housing and Community Development 5/31/2018, 6/7/2018		Advertisement for Bid Bid 3078 Food Service Furniture & Equipment Sealed, written formal bid proposals for the above bid will be received by the Board of Trustees of the Jackson Public School District, in the Business Office, 662 South President Street, Jackson, Mississippi, until 10:00 A.M. (Local Prevailing Time) June 15, 2018, at which time and place they will be publicly opened and read aloud. The Board of Trustees reserves the right to reject any and all bids, to waive informalities, and to withhold the acceptance of any bid if approved for forty-five calendar days from the date bids are opened. A complete bid package which contains bid instructions, specification response sheets, and bid training may be obtained by registering as a supplier at HYPERLINK "http://tools.southernprocurement.com" http://tools.southernprocurement.com (select 'Register/Login') and then emailing vaughn@southernprocurement.com to request a complete bid package. Please use the term "FOOD SERVICE FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT" in the subject line. Vendors must include full contact information, including company name, email address, telephone numbers and contact person in your email request. Email requests will be filled within 24 hours of submission or registration. Registration with Southern Procurement Services and acceptance of the Southern Procurement Services Platform Agreement is not optional and is required in order to participate in this bidding event. No exceptions will be made. Specification responses must be submitted for this bid event, and are due no later than Thursday, June 14, 2018 at 5:00 PM local time in order to be considered for this bidding opportunity. Bid responses should be delivered to: Vaughn Blaylock Vaughn@southernprocurement.com 5/31/2018, 6/7/2018	

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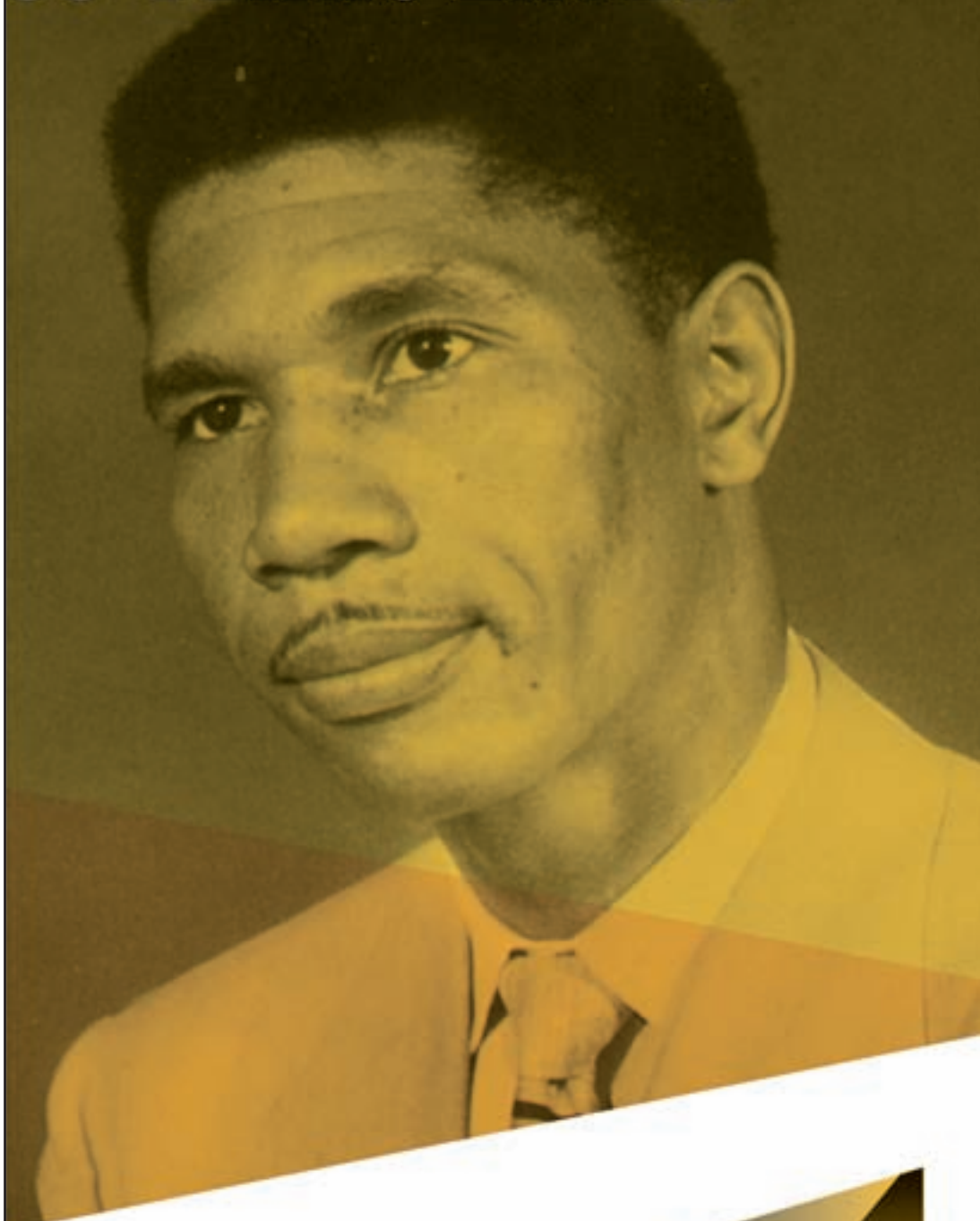
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High School swimmer stand-out receives Courage Award after paralyzing accident

By Cianna Hope Reeves
JSU Student Intern

‘Just keep swimming’ is a word of advice that lingered in the mind of Hernando High School senior Lawton O’Brien, when hospitalized after a life-threatening injury.

Getting ready to plunge into a swimming pool, O’Brien slipped off the diving board and fell to the bottom, hitting his head and fracturing his neck.

The student who started swimming at age 4 and competitive swimming in eighth grade was no longer capable of pursuing his dream; instead of stroking butterfly in pool waters, he was stuck in a hospital forced to learn how to walk again, talk again and move again.

After two years of rehabilitation, the athlete was set to race again in his last year of high school.

As a result of the swimmer’s compelling comeback, O’Brien received the Courage Award at The Clarion Ledger Sports Award, May 22, a ceremony that acknowledges and honors the top athletic accomplishments in Mississippi High School Sports.

When his name was announced from the stage by Nissan’s Senior Director of Operation Phillip Calhoun, the audience cheered.

O’Brien labeled his journey of coming back to the competitive sports as a long battle, but he was determined to recover.



Lawton O’Brien accepts Courage Award and gives thank-you speech at the Clarion Ledger Sports Award.

“It was a whole entire week that went by and I was lying in bed – I couldn’t move or sit up, and that’s when I looked at my mom and said, ‘it’s time to go home, no more crying,’” he expressed.

Not only was it his courage that lead him to his reappearance in the water but also his attitude, according to his mother Jody Woody.

“Although he had tough days, he never complained,” said Woody.

Head swim coach McKayla Whitten, of Hernando High School, was also excited about the athlete’s debut to the pool and became inspired by his willpower to climb back to the top.

“O’Brien is a perfect example of how a kid should face adversity going through something...

not many people can say that they went through something like that and overcome it,” proclaimed Whitten.

The swimmer said when he completed his first competition as a returning diver, it was an emotional moment.

“I wanted to cry because that part of me that was gone for two years was back, and I was so happy,” said O’Brien.

Woody refers to her son as her very own hero.

“Lawton is my hero. He showed everyone how a positive attitude, hard work and a lot of faith can move mountains,” said Woody.

Though O’Brien continues to struggle with physical movements, inspiring others not to quit their daydream is something he will always be best at.

Hinds County School District Weekly Update

Hinds County School District Graduates Say Goodbye!!!



Raymond High School Class of 2018



Terry High School Class of 2018

Gary Road Elementary School Registration



GRE is registering students for Kindergarten now and throughout the entire summer. You will be able to register your kindergartener at Gary Road Elementary from the hours of 8:00 – 12:30 every day in June and from 8:00 to 3:00 P.M. in July. Returning 1st and 2nd grade students can be registered online with a SNAP CODE. If you do not have this code, please call the office to speak with a GRE counselor, Jia Johns or Faydrian Gilmer to get the code. We encourage you to go ahead and register as soon as possible!

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By Kam Williams
Columnist

Baby Driver was this critic’s pick for the #1 movie of 2017. It never takes very long for idea-bereft Hollywood to imitate a big hit. Exhibit A: Carter & June, a bank robbery flick which fails to measure up to Baby Driver, whether or not that cinematic masterpiece served as the source of director/co-writer Nicholas Kalikow’s inspiration.

A la Baby Driver, Carter & June revolves around a waitress and mobster under the thumb of a Machiavellian villain. But where the former film featured an A-list cast with Jamie Foxx, Jon Hamm, Kevin Spacey and Ansel Elgort, the latter’s ensemble doesn’t have any matinee idols. Michael Raymond-James and Samaire Armstrong co-star as the title characters Carter & June, respectively, an action-driven

dramedy set in New Orleans. Like the protagonist of Baby Driver, Carter is a small-time crook looking to go legit. Trouble is, he’s indebted to Spencer Rabbit (Timothy Omundson), a vicious crime boss operating with impunity in the city because so many crooked cops, including the police commissioner (Paul Rae), are on the take. At the point of departure, we find Carter losing a load of Rab-

bit’s cash during a drug deal gone bad. That means the only way to get back in the kingpin’s good graces and out of his unsavory line of work once and for all is to participate in an elaborate heist of a cool half-million dollars from the New Orleans Bank & Trust. Of course, that will prove easier said than done. Unfortunately, for the audience’s purposes, the screen is littered with more sidebars and

support characters than you might care to keep track of. For instance, there’s a compromised cop (James Landry Hebert) with a greedy wife (Lindsay Musil) who’s secretly sleeping with a local preacher (Will Beinbrink). And June just happens to be in the midst of a bitter custody battle with her vindictive ex over their young daughter. An overplotted mess that throws everything but the kitchen

sink up on the screen. Fair (1 star) Unrated Running time: 87 minutes Production Studios: Sacred Bull Media / Octane Entertainment Distributor: Freestyle Digital Media To see a trailer for Carter & June, visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lziv1wl3fvk>

Interview: Ranjit Arapurakal

Jersey-raised rocker on world tour takes a pause for the cause

By Kam Williams
Columnist

Born in his mother’s hometown of Trivandrum, India, the terra cotta-colored capital of Kerala, Ranjit Arapurakal spent his infancy in Vienna and Frankfurt before being raised in New Jersey from the age of 4. Today, the versatile vocalist, composer, multi-instrumentalist and music educator is based in Goa, India, and is currently on an extended tour across Russia. The Jersey boy started playing rock music in high school and never stopped, except for slowing down a bit to earn a bachelor’s degree in literature with honors at Rutgers University. After graduating, he migrated to NYC where he honed his stagecraft, while working as a jazz singer, session musician,

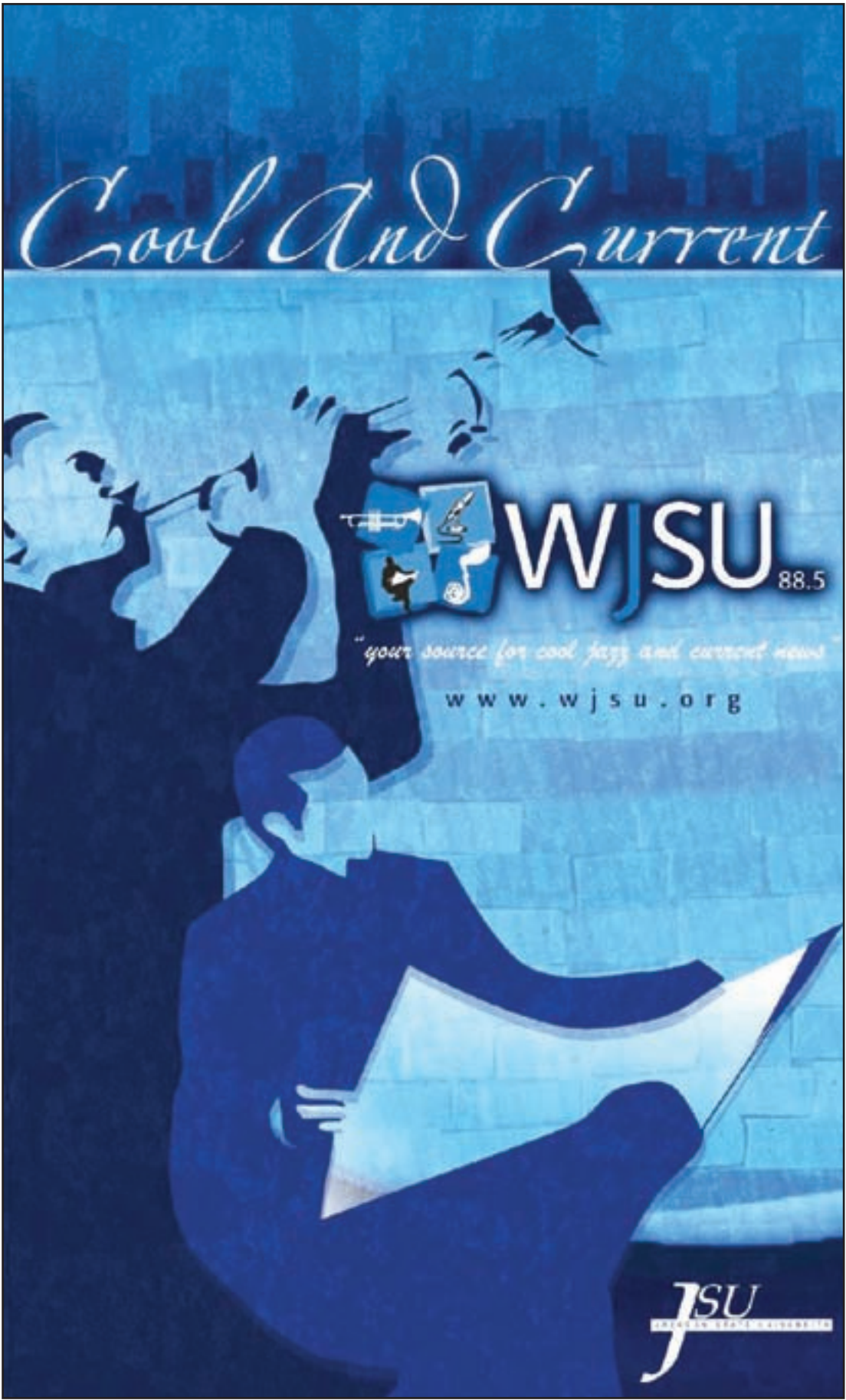
bartender, open mic host, dance accompanist for Alvin Ailey, Juilliard and several other leading dance academies and as a music teacher for infants and their parents. **Kam Williams:** Hi Ranjit, thanks for the interview. **Ranjit Arapurakal:** It’s my pleasure. Kam. Thanks for reaching out. **KW:** When did you develop an interest in music? **RA:** I started singing in the church choir when I was 7 years-old, and I enjoyed it from the start. But I was drawn to the mysteries of sound even before that. There was a lot of music in the house. **KW:** How would you describe yourself, musically? **RA:** As a psychedelic singer/songwriter. But it changes all the

time. As a multi-instrumentalist, I get to play with many different musicians in many settings. My comfort zones include funk, groove, soul, reggae and rock & roll. And I’m delving into psychedelic rock and live techno at the moment. **KW:** Do you prefer playing solo or with a group? **RA:** I don’t have a preference. Both have their own unique charms as well as limitations. When you can communicate with other musicians the same way you can communicate with yourself, you get the best of both worlds. **KW:** I enjoyed listening to a lot of your songs, especially “Lonavala,” “That’s My Name” and “Since the Start.” What is the source of your inspiration when creating a tune?

RA: The songs usually just bubble up from my subconscious or inner voice or paramatma. Some songs are about love and some are about the environment, from fracking to the Dakota Access Pipeline. I also have a penchant for post-apocalyptic love songs, as a genre. **KW:** You hail from New Jersey, but perform in India and elsewhere around the world. Where do you like playing the most? **RA:** I have been based in Goa, on India’s west coast, for the last three years. The music scene there, as well as the audiences and the beautiful nature, are what made me stretch out what was originally meant to be a two-week holiday. **KW:** You play both guitar and piano. What is your favorite instrument? **RA:** My favorite instrument is the human voice. It’s easy to transport and can touch, directly, the soul of any listener. **KW:** Who are some of your musical influences? **RA:** Lenny Kravitz, The Doors, Blues Traveler, Caetano Veloso, Michael Jackson, James Brown, Fela Kuti, Ella Fitzgerald, Stevie Wonder, Chopin, Fauré, Monteverdi, Frank



Sinatra, The Band, The Beatles, Antonio Carlos Jobim, Santana, Terrence Trent D’Arby, Bob Marley and the Wailers, Gil Scott Heron, Motorhead, The Cure, Tom Petty, Jeff Lynne, Phish and Dave Mathews Band, to name a few. [Read more online at www.themississippilink.com](http://www.themississippilink.com)





BOOK REVIEW: “HOW TO TRICK THE TOOTH FAIRY”

BY ERIN DANIELLE RUSSELL,
ILLUSTRATED BY JENNIFER HANSEN ROLLI
C.2018, ALADDIN / SIMON & SCHUSTER KIDS
\$17.99 / \$23.99 CANADA • 40 PAGES

By Terri Schlichenmeyer
Columnist

The joke’s from you!
That’s because you’re a pretty funny kid. You’re always being silly, pranking friends, goofing around and joking to make people laugh – although sometimes, you have to admit that things get out of hand. In “How to Trick the Tooth Fairy” by Erin Danielle Russell, illustrated by Jennifer Hansen Rolli, they also get out of, um, mouth.
Kaylee was the Princess of Pranking.
“Mischief” was practically

her middle name because there wasn’t one single day in a year when she didn’t play a prank. She was known to prank her sister awake. Kaylee even pranked on Christmas. All her friends knew the score and they were careful around her. No sense in being her next “unsuspecting victim.”
But, believe it or not, Kaylee wasn’t the biggest prankster in the world.
No, that would be The Tooth Fairy.
Seriously, have you ever actually seen The Tooth Fairy?

Yeah, what can you say about pixie dust and swift fairy wings? Not much, except: can you spot trouble here?
Anyhow, one night, right after Kaylee lost a tooth, The Tooth Fairy came to visit. She was expecting to find a small, hard, white object beneath Kaylee’s pillow but we are talking about Kaylee here and instead, The Tooth Fairy got a frog.
When you pillow-prank a professional with a rubber frog, you get dozens of real frogs in your bedroom in answer.
From there, it was “Game On!”

Kaylee pranked The Tooth Fairy with a slice of chocolate pie and hot-sauce topping. Ugh. The Tooth Fairy retaliated with a roomful of sticky ice cream with whipped cream and cherries that landed absolutely everywhere. What a mess! Of course, Kaylee couldn’t leave things well enough alone so she retaliated and The Tooth Fairy retaliated again and before long, payback was no fun. Nobody meant to hurt anybody.
What happens when two big pranksters have to call off their epic prank-off? Is it possible for

them to keep a long-term truce?
So you say you’ve got a mischief-maker in the house. The sillier, the better for her and the more laughs, the more fun. That’s why you need “How to Trick the Tooth Fairy” around; this book is a perfect giggle-generator.
Part of the reason is that author Erin Danielle Russell’s Kaylee is pure playfulness, which makes her easy for fun-loving kids to understand and identify with. Kaylee’s pranking isn’t malicious misbehavior or worthy of scolding; it’s messy in a colossal way, but it’s really just kid stuff.

The Tooth Fairy, on the other hand, lends a bit of magic pixie influence to the tale. Her pranks really go over-the-top; with artwork by Jennifer Hansen Rolli, mayhem adds to the free-wheeling free-for-all feel of the book.
For four-to-eight-year-olds who know how to get a little wild, this book will become a favorite pretty quickly. It’s also for kids who love a good prank, and for children who haven’t met The Tooth Fairy yet. The fun they’ll find inside “How to Trick the Tooth Fairy” ain’t no joke.

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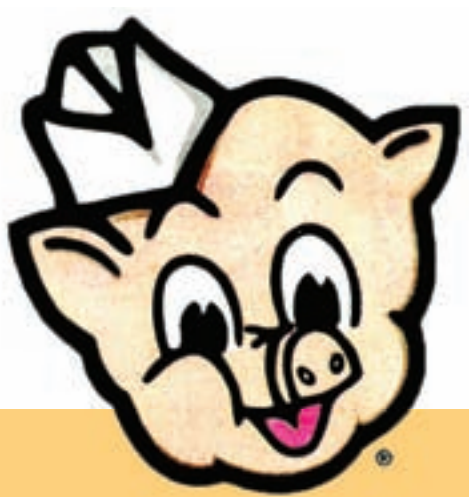
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PHOTOS BY JAY JOHNSON



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