

Newsrooms still lack women and individuals of color



By **Stacy M. Brown**
NNPA Newswire Correspondent

With observances planned throughout March to commemorate Women’s History Month, a new report revealed that women are still mostly absent from newsrooms.

The Women’s Media Center’s 2019 report on the status of women in U.S. media shows that despite some gains, men still dominate in every part of news, entertainment and digital media.

“The media is in a state of great disruption, but despite all of the change, one thing remains the same: the role of women is significantly smaller than that of men in every part of news, entertainment and digital media,” Julie

Burton, president of the Women’s Media Center(WMC), said in a news release.

Burton said the data in the report paints a stark picture.

“It is clear that a cultural, systemic shift is necessary if all parts of the U.S media are to achieve gender and racial parity and move toward a world where stories fully represent the voices and perspectives of diverse women,” she said.

“Research spotlighted in this report shows that diversity boosts corporate profits. When boardrooms, newsrooms, studios and tech companies fully reflect the faces, genders and myriad talents

*Newsrooms
Continued on page 3*

WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH SPOTLIGHT

Ryshonda Harper Beechem

First African-American mayor of a town in Rankin County



By **Othor Cain**
Editor

Pelahatchie, is a small Mississippi town, with a population of 1,461, according to the 2000 census. It is 60 percent white and since 2017 has had its first African-American mayor.

Ryshonda Harper Beechem, 39, was elected mayor in June 2017. She made additional history during this election as she became the first African-American mayor in Rankin County.

Defeating two other candidates in the June 6 general election, Beechem acknowledges her faith. “It was nothing but the grace of God that bestowed this blessing,” Beechem said. “I’m a woman of faith.”



Ryshonda Harper Beechem

Beechem identifies as an independent and campaigned on people working together to move Pelahatchie forward.

Beechem has a degree in accounting from Jackson State

University. She and her husband, Rod Beechem, are the parents of a 2-year-old daughter. They own the accounting firm HBG & Associate Inc.; HBG Academy Inc., a Jackson childcare center;

and StaTuned Multimedia, which creates commercials.

Beechem also coaches a girls dance team and is the dance instructor for her church’s youth inspiration dance team.

Yet another march in Selma - the birthplace of modern democracy in America

By **Jesse Jackson**
TriceEdneyWire.com

This past weekend, political leaders from across the country gathered in Selma, Alabama, to commemorate “Bloody Sunday,” the 1965 march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge where peaceful demonstrators, attempting to cross the bridge, were violently driven back by Alabama State Troopers, Dallas County Sheriff’s deputies and a horse-mounted posse wielding billy clubs and water hoses to savage the crowd.

The horrors played on TV sets across the country generated a national outrage that provided the final impetus for passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. In many ways, Selma is the birthplace of modern democracy in America, helping to secure the right to vote for African Americans and the young, and for providing the foundation for future battles for equality, including the equal rights of women.

When former Alabama Gov. George Wallace was ill late in his life, I joined him for prayer. I asked him why he unleashed the troopers on the demonstrators in 1965. He said, “I did them a favor.”

Wallace argued that the mob would have been much worse on the peaceful marchers. He never



Rev. Jesse Jackson Sr. leads 2019 Selma to Montgomery marchers in prayer for the nation.

even considered that he might have used the troopers to protect them from the mob. That was a mentality that, as Dr. Martin Luther King taught, could only be challenged by nonviolent protest that demonstrated our humanity while demanding our rights.

In the commemorative ceremonies this year, presidential candidates Sens. Bernie Sanders and Cory Booker, as well as Sen. Sherrod Brown and former

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton were joined by many legislators and political leaders. They sensibly called on participants to rise up again to challenge the revival of systematic efforts to suppress the vote and to push back against the outrageous Supreme Court decision in Shelby v. Holder.

This decision gutted enforcement provisions of the Voting Rights Act, and opened the floodgates to a wave of discriminatory

state laws meant to keep people of color from exercising their right to vote. There are laws that now require new forms of ID, voting districts have been gerrymandered and voter rolls purged. Laws now limit early voting and polling places have been closed or move without notice, and much, much more.

The brave marchers in 1965 did their part for democracy, now it is up to us to defend it and extend it.

At the same time, while Selma is the birthplace of modern democracy, it is in danger of becoming a prop. Selma is the ninth poorest small town in America and 40 percent of its residents live in poverty. It exemplifies the rural and small-town America that has been left out of the recovery. Democrats tend to see rural America as Trump country.

Trump appealed to rural voters by stoking their fears and turning

them against each other, but he has come up with no plan to help them. Trump offers only hate, not hope. The new Democratic majority in the House is in many ways the fruit of the sacrifices made at Selma and elsewhere. Democrats should see Selma and rural America as both an obligation and an opportunity. What’s needed is a comprehensive rural reconstruction plan, a modern version of what Franklin D. Roosevelt did when he built the Tennessee Valley Authority and modernized the Department of Agriculture, which literally electrified rural America.

Today, the Department of Agriculture has the authority and the capacity to invest in water and sewage systems, modernize utilities, provide broadband to underserved communities, offer zero interest loans to community centers and subsidize affordable housing. What we need is a plan and a budget to get this done. House Democrats should make this a priority.

Let’s honor those who sacrificed so much by repealing voter suppression laws. But let us also make Selma the birthplace of a new economic justice in rural America. Selma should be more than a symbol of past struggles; it must also become a beacon for a new hope.



Entergy Mississippi announces new customer service leaders

The Mississippi Link Newswire

Several experienced Entergy Mississippi leaders will fill key roles as the company sharpens its focus on customer service and builds the utility of the future.

Jeanine Brooks, senior manager of distribution operations, southern region. A native of Brandon, Brooks began her career with Entergy Mississippi in 1989 and has served as construction manager since 2016. She has held roles in several departments, including the customer contact center and distribution operations. In her tenure with the company, Brooks' work has included customer issues resolution, design, reliability, distribution line supervision, safety and project management. She earned



Brooks

a bachelor's degree in business administration from Mississippi College in 2015.

Martin McGee, manager, customer service support. McGee has more than 31 years of experience with Entergy. He has been an effective supervisor in sev-



Kemp

eral roles in the company, from engineering to the customer service center. McGee also brings extensive knowledge in engineering design, customer service account management, rate schedules, contractor oversight, reliability, project management



McGee

and customer service policy application to the position. He has a Bachelor of Science in electrical engineering from Mississippi State University.

Robbie Kemp, customer service representative, Madison County. Kemp joined Entergy

in 1986 as a marketing representative, served in the design and credit and collections departments, and has held many different roles within the customer service organization. She holds a Bachelor of Science in business administration from the University of Southern Mississippi and a master's degree in organization and management from Capella University.

Tammy Rankin, customer service representative, Clinton. Rankin joined Entergy in 1995 and has served in numerous roles in customer service, distribution, and credit and collections. She holds an undergraduate degree in psychology and a master's degree in management in business from Belhaven University. Rankin is pursuing

a doctoral degree in business management with an emphasis in human resource.

Entergy Mississippi, LLC provides electricity to approximately 450,000 customers in 45 counties. Entergy Corporation is an integrated energy company engaged primarily in electric power production and retail distribution operations. Entergy owns and operates power plants with approximately 30,000 megawatts of electric generating capacity, including nearly 9,000 megawatts of nuclear power. Entergy delivers electricity to 2.9 million utility customers in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. Entergy has annual revenues of approximately \$11 billion and more than 13,000 employees.

Mississippi nonprofit receives \$16K grant from banks to provide financial education

The Mississippi Link Newswire

BancorpSouth Bank, Trustmark National Bank (Trustmark), BankPlus and the Federal Home Loan Bank of Dallas (FHLB Dallas) awarded \$16,000 in Partnership Grant Program (PGP) funds to Housing Education and Economic Development, Inc. (HEED), whose mission is to educate the public on housing, banking and related fair housing issues. The funds will be used to offset operational and administrative expenses, including providing funding for the organization's housing counseling program.

The funds were awarded at a ceremonial check presentation in Jackson, Mississippi. This is

the organization's second PGP award. Representatives from the banks, organization and the office of Jackson Mayor Chokwe Antar Lumumba attended the event.

"Partnership is the foundation of growth," said Lumumba. "I commend the financial institutions for their partnership in support of the betterment of our historic city."

Founded 30 years ago by Charles Harris, HEED's educational outreach program includes coordinating workshops to educate residents who seek to make sound financial choices.

"Most of our work deals with foreclosure counseling," said Harris. "Many people overspend

in November and December preparing for Christmas. Those are the same people who come see us in February or March, so we provide them with some guidance. Others overspend at Easter, then 4th of July, so any funding that can help us be available to residents year-round is very helpful."

BancorpSouth Mid-Mississippi Division President Joseph Moss said financial education services are critical community investment staples, and it's great that programs such as PGP make them possible.

"A large part of the business we conduct is focused on community investments," said Moss. "Programs such as the PGP not

only help businesses succeed; they also make it easier for a community to access valuable resources."

The structure of the PGP enables FHLB Dallas member institutions, like BancorpSouth Bank, Trustmark and BankPlus, to contribute \$500 to \$4,000 to a community-based organization (CBO), which FHLB Dallas will match at a 3:1 ratio.

"Trustmark is committed to the communities in which we serve and we are proud to work with FHLB Dallas to increase the accessibility of financial education resources in Jackson," said Sherry Rainey, community development director and CRA officer at Trustmark.

In 2018, FHLB Dallas awarded \$300,000 in PGP funds through 31 member institutions to assist 32 CBOs. Combined with the \$114,010 contributed by FHLB Dallas members, a total of \$414,010 has been awarded to the organizations.

"BankPlus has utilized FHLB Dallas community investment products for a long time," said Mark Ouellette, first vice president and director of Affordable Housing at BankPlus. "It's important to us to employ all the tools we can to positively impact the communities we serve and the PGP has been very effective."

Greg Hettrick, first vice president and director of Community

Investment at FHLB Dallas, said the PGP is most impactful when various entities come together to contribute.

"Through the PGP's 3to1 feature, our members are able to maximize their contributions and create positive, lasting change in the Jackson community," said Hettrick.

Harris said without the funds, the organization's outreach would be limited.

"The grant is very important because it allows us to go statewide in our outreach efforts," he said. "We're very appreciative of all the banks who came together to support us through the PGP."

To learn more about the PGP, visit fhlb.com/pgp.

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Newsrooms

Continued from page 1

of our society, we're all exceedingly better served," Burton said.

The report titled, "The Status of Women in the U.S. Media 2019," is comprised of 94 studies, including original research by WMC and aggregated research from academia, industry and professional groups, labor unions, media watchdogs, newsrooms and other sources.

It includes several original WMC studies, including "Divided 2019: The Media Gender Gap," an assessment of where women stand as media writers, reporters, correspondents and anchors in the major news media platforms, including the prime-time broadcast news programs, print publications, wire services and on-line news sites.

The report noted that across all media platforms, men receive 63 percent of by-lines and credits; women receive only 37 percent.

"Women have been fighting for greater parity and equality in the news media for decades," said one of WMC's co-chairs Maya Harris.

"This report shows that more work needs to be done to level the playing

print newsroom staff, 12.6 percent of local TV news staff, and 6.2 percent of local radio staff.

"Missing women of color in the newsrooms of this country is an injustice in itself, and an injustice to every American reader and viewer who is deprived of great stories and a full range of facts," said WMC co-founder Gloria Steinem.

"Inclusiveness in the newsroom means inclusiveness in the news. Racism and sexism put blinders on everyone," Steinem said.

In an expanded section on tech, social media, gaming and engineering, "Status 2019" also spotlighted the growing threat online to women in media and the perils of failing to protect free and safe speech.

"As part of their day-to-day work, women journalists often face a torrent of harassment, denigration and threats ... and the point of this hostility is to silence women, most frequently women of color," said Soraya Chemaly, director of WMC's Speech Project.

"The onus continues to fall on women's shoulders as individuals. Media companies have to develop institutional

responses to these threats if they are serious about building inclusive organizations," Chemaly said.

Some of the findings in the report include:

The American Society of News Editors' latest tally found that women comprised 41.7 percent and people of color 22.6 percent of the overall workforce in those responding newsrooms.

Sports desks at 75 of the nation's newspapers and online news sites earned a "B+" for racial diversity, a "D+" for gender and racial diversity, combined, and a sixth consecutive "F" for lack of gender equity.

Editors of the nation's 135 most widely distributed newspapers are overwhelmingly male and white.

69 percent of news wire bylines are snagged by men, 31 percent by women; 63 percent of TV prime-time news broadcasts feature male anchors and correspondents; 37 percent feature women; 60 percent of online news is written by men, 40 percent by women; 59 percent of print news is written by men, 41 percent by women. (Women's Media Center)



The 2018 Empowering women in Media, a networking and panel event that presented women of color in media sharing their stories with other women who are looking to break into the world of media/En la Escena/Kizzy Cox.

field. Women and our male allies will not rest until we see wholesale change," Harris said.

Further, "when we watch the evening news, we're not seeing an America that truly reflects all voices," said Pat Mitchell, also a WMC co-chair.

"Too often, the voices we hear and the images we see are men's. Men largely are reporting and telling the story even

though women represent more than half the U.S. population," Mitchell said.

The report is inclusive and also features WMC's "The Status of Women of Color in the U.S. News Media 2019," which offers a rare look at where women journalists of color are – and aren't – in legacy print, radio, TV and digital news.

That report revealed that women of color represent just 7.95 percent of U.S.

IN MEMORIAM

Charles Fernard Dillon

April 30, 1951 - March 1, 2019



Dillon

Charles Fernard Dillon, son of Lennie Mae Dillon, left his earthly home March 1, 2019. He was born April 30, 1951, in Jackson, MS. Growing up in the Washington Addition Community, Charles was well admired by all who came in contact with him. He transitioned March 1, 2019.

Charles took great pride in repairing, restoring and detailing automobiles, trucks and lawnmowers. He deemed himself as a "master mechanic." He would often say, "If it's broke I can fix it." "If it won't start I can crank it."

Charles accepted Christ early on in life and united with the St. James Missionary Baptist Church under the leadership of the late Rev. D.D. Brown.

Charles was educated in Jackson Public Schools. He was a 1969 graduate of his beloved Jim Hill High School where he stood out on the baseball diamond, roaming the outfield and on the pitcher mound striking out opposing batters with his blazing fastball. He was a member of the Jim Hill Letter "H" Club.

His love for baseball continued while moving into softball as 'Father Time' was approaching. He continued to play softball well into his 30's. Charles still had energy to spare.

His legacy will continue through his loving mother Lennie M. Dillon, two caring sisters Jacqueline D. Grant (Larry) and Evelyn L. Barlow; two brothers Jacob P. Dillon (Pam) and Donnie Ray Dillon; four children, Charles Carlos Gray, Tawana D. Carr (Christoper), Robbie Norwood and Issac Norword; eleven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren; three aunts, Minnie Lee Youngblood, Chicago, Illinois; Juanita Johnson, San Bernardino, California and Catherine Black, Jackson, MS. His grandmother, Robbie L. Caston and uncle Dave Johnson predeceased Charles in death.

Funeral services will be held Thursday, March 7, 2019, 11 a.m., at Westhaven Chapel, 3580 Robinson St., Jackson, MS.

Robert Leon Robinson

February 21, 1951 - March 2, 2019



Robinson

"I lift up my eyes to the mountains; where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip, he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel and will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord watches over you, and the Lord is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all harm, and he will watch over your life; the

Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.

Robert Leon Robinson Sr. lovingly known as Big Rob and Bae-Bae was born the youngest of four children February 21, 1951 to the late John Clay and Mabel Robinson in Jackson, Mississippi. He proudly constructed a foundation with the Lord at Pleasant Green Baptist Church in Clinton, Mississippi. He later strengthened his faith and commitment as a member of College Hill Baptist Church to sustain God's guidance and obedience.

Robert received his elementary education from Jackson State College Elementary School. Robert attended Jim Hill High School where he participated in the band and in other activities. After receiving his diploma, he attended Jackson State University and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in biology. He minored in chemistry and math.

Later, Robert attended Tennessee State University to earn a Masters in biology with an emphasis in chemistry and math. During his studies, he was one of the first research students at the university to study sickle cell anemia relating to African Americans.

Robert Robinson became a

teacher and instructed youth for thirteen years at Mississippi School for the Deaf. He also taught at Nichols Middle School in Canton, Canton High School and Hinds Community College in Raymond, Mississippi.

The journey and legendary markers that Robert bestowed upon everyone was happiness, comfort, humbleness, protection and honesty. He secured personal relationships that were deeply rooted with integrity and a kindred spirit of light and love. Robert was a man that prayed daily, was devoted to Daily Devotional Studies, believed in the commitment of family and bonds and believed in the power of prayer. He was simple yet intriguing.

He loved his children more than anything in the world and became their biggest fan. He gave them his all, and it was well reciprocated.

The theme "Don't Worry, Be Happy" became his motto as he journeyed through life's obstacles while carrying his loved ones along the way.

Robert was united to Alpha Louise Perry-Robinson, and raised two beautiful children, Robert Jr. (Sharifa) Robinson and Charcy (Willis) Robinson-Rogers. His memory will carry on further in the hearts of his sister, Evelyn (Roosevelt) Davis and Carol Todd Robinson. Left to cherish his memories are nephews Joel, Jeffrey, Carl, Maurice, John, Cliff, Lemuel, Marcus, Fabian, Farrell, Farron, Verogas, Nicholas, Jarred and nieces Crystal, Lauren, Sonya, Constance, Cerece, Courtney and Corey.

Robert adored his two grand children; Cassidy and Cenae, along with a host of step children, great nieces and nephews, cousins, in-laws and friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents, John Clay and Mabel Robinson; his sister, Carolyn Robinson; his brother, John Clay Robinson Jr. and great nephew, Kentric Robinson.

Funeral services will be held Friday, Mar. 8, 11 a.m., at College Hill Baptist Church, 1600 Florence Ave., Jackson, MS.

PHOTO OF THE WEEK



Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. 105th Anniversary Mississippi State Conference March 1-3, 2019 Hilton Garden Inn Jackson, Mississippi



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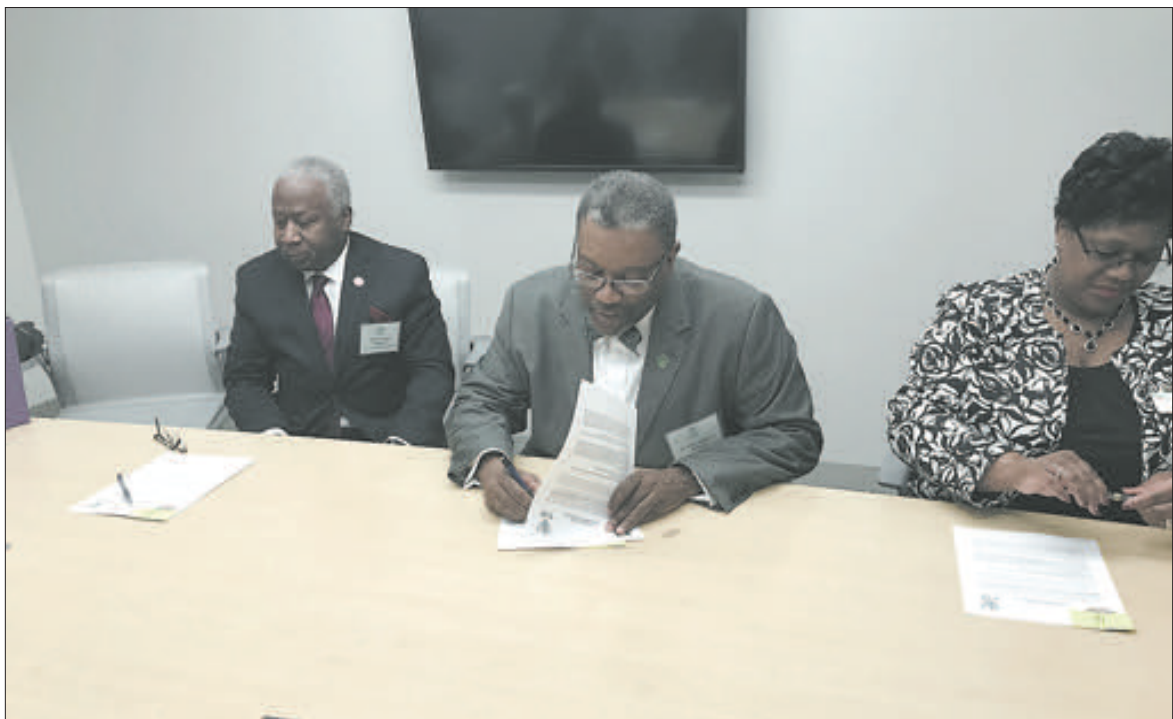
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Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.® presents MVSU with first installment of \$100,000 endowment



From left, MVSU President Jerryl Briggs is presented with the first \$50,000 installment of the \$100,000 endowment by Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority’s South Eastern Regional Director Mitzi Dease Paige and International President Glenda Glover.



MVSU President Jerryl Briggs officially signs the agreement for the establishment of \$100k endowment at MVSU, courtesy of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and the Alpha Kappa Alpha Educational Advancement Foundation, Inc. The endowment will be used to assist MVSU scholars in need of financial support to stay in school.

Mississippi Link Newswire

The first Greek-lettered sorority for African-American women is illustrating its commitment to historically black colleges and universities with the establishment of an endowment at 32 of those institutions, including Mississippi Valley State University.

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated (AKA), in partnership with the Educational Advancement Foundation (EAF), has pledged an endowment for \$100,000 to MVSU as

part of the organization’s AKA-HBCU Endowment Fund.

MVSU President Jerryl Briggs traveled to Chicago Feb. 28 to the Alpha Kappa Alpha International Headquarters in Chicago to accept the first \$50,000 installment of the award. The historic event gathered presidents from HBCUs across the nation and featured remarks from Glenda Glover as well as a tour of the iconic and recently renovated Ivy Center International Headquarters in the Hyde Park neighborhood on

the South Side of Chicago.

“Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. has implemented the AKA-HBCU Endowment Fund with the goal of investing in the future of our young people and the sustainability of our treasured HBCUs,” said Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. International President Glenda Glover. “Our organization has pledged to donate a total of \$10 million towards the endowment, and we are honored to provide MVSU the first \$50,000 during our Febru-

ary event as we celebrate Black History Month and the legacies of all HBCUs.”

“We are grateful to Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and their International President Dr. Glenda Glover for their generosity and commitment to HBCUs,” said Briggs. “This endowment will help in assisting MVSU students who have financial constraints to remain in school. I enjoyed attending the HBCU President’s Reception, and again, we are so thankful.”

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority,

Incorporated (AKA) is an international service organization that was founded on the campus of Howard University in Washington, D.C. in 1908. It is the oldest Greek-letter organization established by African-American college-educated women.

Alpha Kappa Alpha is comprised of nearly 300,000 members in more than 1000 graduate and undergraduate chapters in the United States, Liberia, the Bahamas, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Germany, South Korea, Bermuda, Japan, Canada, South

Africa and the Middle East.

Led by International President Glenda Glover, Ph.D., JD, CPA, Alpha Kappa Alpha is often hailed as “America’s premier Greek-letter organization for African-American women.”

For more information on Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and its programs, visit www.AKA1908.com.

For more information on the Educational Advancement Foundation, visit www.AKAEAF.org.

MRC names latest Employees of the Quarter



Shelly Bilbro of Morton



Felishia Davis of Brandon



Eloise Jones of Flora



Kathy Kendrick of Madison



George Patteson of Jackson



Bridgett Pelts of Jackson



Lori Verhage of Cleveland



Pamela Wison of Jackson

Mississippi Link Newswire

Methodist Rehabilitation Center has announced Clinical and Support Service Employees of the Quarter for its Jackson hospital and external campuses.

For the fourth quarter of 2018, the honorees include Bridgett Pelts of Jackson, prospective payment system coordinator; Kathy Kendrick of Madison, senior program analyst; Felishia Davis of Brandon, respiratory therapist for Methodist Specialty Care Cen-

ter; and Eloise Jones of Flora, inpatient billing representative.

For the first quarter of 2019, the honorees include Shelly Bilbro of Morton, registered nurse for MRC’s Stroke Program; George Patterson of Jackson, hospital PBX operator; Lori Verhage of Cleveland, orthotist/prosthetist for Methodist Orthotics & Prosthetics; and Pamela Wilson of Jackson, a certified nursing assistant for MSCC.

Methodist Rehabilitation Center provides comprehen-

sive inpatient medical rehabilitation programs for people with spinal cord and brain injuries, stroke and other neurological and orthopedic disorders.

MRC’s external campuses include Methodist Outpatient Therapy clinics in Flowood and Ridgeland, Methodist Specialty Care Center in Flowood, Methodist Physical Medicine in Flowood, and Methodist Orthotics & Prosthetics clinics in Flowood, Meridian, Hattiesburg, Cleveland, Oxford, Starkville and Monroe, La.

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Board owes over \$500,000 to property owners in North Mississippi

Obscure board in charge of preventing flooding voted to overpay themselves for years

Mississippi Link Newswire

At a recent press conference State Auditor Shad White announced he has issued demand letters to each current member of the Town Creek Master Water Management District Board of Commissioners for approving unlawful per diem payments to themselves. The total of all demands is \$523,388.76 and includes interest and cost of recovery. The names of the commissioners including one deceased individual and the corresponding demand amounts are:

James Robinson – \$85,877.68
Jim Bucy – \$88,100.56
Jim Long – \$11,797.71
The late John Morgan – \$103,122.60
Kenneth Oswalt – \$95,748.05
Luther Oswalt – \$23,565.43
Michael Pannell – \$90,853.43
Teresa Winters – \$24,323.30

The Town Creek Master Water Management District was created by court order in 1961 to provide flood management and improve water drainage in Lee, Pontotoc, Prentiss and Union Counties. Water management districts were once popular in the United States, but Town Creek District is now one of four master water management districts remaining in the nation and the

only one in Mississippi.

The Town Creek board collects revenue by assessing a tax on property located within the special district. The tax is collected as part of property owners’ property taxes paid to their county tax collector. Nearly 4,700 parcels of land – which includes homes and commercial property like Barnes Crossing Mall – are located in the district. Over 4,400 of those parcels are in Lee County.

Using their taxing authority, the board paid for retention ponds and drainage ditches over the past half-century. In addition, the board accumulated a bank account balance of approximately \$1.3 million.

As that balance increased, the board increased their own pay from the district’s bank accounts. The board has legal authority to receive maximum per diem payments of \$12.50 for time spent conducting the district’s business. They are also reimbursed for actual expenses incurred for their work. Seventeen years ago, the board began steadily increasing the per diem payments over the legal limit. By 2014, board members were paying themselves \$600 per meeting.

Auditor White said, “This is

an example of a small, tucked-away board that very few people know about, using its power to overpay itself. This is the danger of hidden boards and small government offices. A lack of transparency opens the door to big losses for taxpayers.”

The illegal overpayments caused a loss of over \$350,000 to local landowners. Board members will be personally responsible for paying back these losses plus interest and investigative costs.

“I am committed to recovering this money for property owners in Lee, Pontotoc, Prentiss and Union Counties,” said White. “They took a loss – and many of them may not have even known they were paying a tax to this board – and deserve to be made whole.”

Each board member is covered by a surety bond. A bond is a type of insurance policy for taxpayers which helps ensure misspent public funds are recovered.

Public corruption can be reported to the Office of the State Auditor online any time by clicking the red “Report Fraud” button at www.osa.ms.gov or via telephone during normal business hours at 1-800-321-1275.

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Lanier Girls win Junior Varsity Basketball Championship

Mississippi Link Newswire

The Lady Bulldogs of Lanier High School defeated the Lady Mustangs of Murrah by a score of 40-24 to capture the JPS 2018-2019 JV Girls Basketball Championship. The game was played January 16 at Northwest Jackson Middle School. The Lanier coaches are Kiarra Jordan and Mikel Houston.



The JV Basketball Champion Lanier Lady Bulldogs with (adults from left) coach Mikel Houston; Clint Johnson, executive director, Athletics; and coach Kiarra Jordan

Forest Hill wins 9Th Grade Basketball Championship

Mississippi Link Newswire

The Forest Hill Patriots 9th grade boys basketball team won the JPS 2018-2019 9th Grade Boys Championship. The Patriots defeated the Chargers of Callaway by a score of 52-51. The game was played January 16 at Northwest Jackson Middle School. The Forest Hill coaches are Charles Robinson, George Marshall, and Allen Baugh.



Forest Hill Patriots 9th grade boys basketball team with (adults from left) coaches Allen Baugh and George Marshall, JPS Athletics Director Clinton Johnson and coach Charles Robinson

Preventing the spread of flu

Mississippi Link Newswire

In light of a flu outbreak at a nearby school district, Jackson Public Schools wants to be proactive in preventing its spread in our schools and among our students and staff.

The flu is a highly contagious infection of the respiratory tract that can cause very serious illness. It can lead to hospitalization and may even be life threatening for some children and adults. With that in mind, we urge JPS families to take precautions against the flu and to be mindful of not spreading it to others. While we understand that school attendance is important this time of year, we encourage parents to keep children at home if they have flu symptoms until they are no longer contagious.

Symptoms

How can I tell if my child has the flu? Flu symptoms can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body



aches, headache, chills, feeling tired and sometimes vomiting and diarrhea. The flu comes on abruptly, not gradually like a cold. If you or your child is experiencing these symptoms, you should seek medical treatment.

Prevention

You can take everyday steps to keep from getting the flu or spreading it. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends the following:

- Get a yearly flu vaccine.

- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- While you are sick, limit contact with others as much as possible.
- Stay at home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care. (Fever should be gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine.)
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- After using a tissue, throw it in the trash and wash your hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs like flu.
- For vaccination or treatment, if you already have the flu, you may contact a Hinds County Health Department Clinic or your physician.

G.N. Smith Elementary welcomes new principal Stephanie Wilson



Wilson

Mississippi Link Newswire

Stephanie Wilson has been appointed the interim principal of G.N. Smith Elementary School. Wilson previously served as the assistant principal of McLeod Elementary School, also in the Jackson Public School District. She has been working with district administration and school staff on her transition to Smith.

Wilson brings 20 years of educational experience to G. N. Smith Elementary. In 2000, she started her career in JPS as the coordinator of the 21st Century Community Learning Center at Lanier High School. She became a guidance counselor and served in that capacity for more than 10 years.

As her leadership skills became more apparent, she was appointed chairperson of the Teacher Support Team. In that role, she helped scholars to achieve academic suc-

cess, modify behavior and improve social relations.

Over the last three years, as an assistant principal, Wilson has dedicated herself to working with teachers and staff members to create a positive working environment. She believes in teamwork and collaborating with all stakeholders to give scholars the best education possible.

Her top priority is to ensure all scholars enter a safe and productive learning environment.

"I am confident that Mrs. Wilson will continue to build a strong instructional foundation at G.N. Smith Elementary," said Assistant Superintendent Otha Belcher. "With the support of the faculty, staff, and community behind her, G.N. Smith will continue to be a place where the emphasis is on a well-rounded education for all children."

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Graphics.....Marcus Johnson

Photographers.....Kevin Robinson & Jay Johnson

Contributing Writers.....Janice K. Neal-Vincent
Ayesha K. Mustataa

Member:



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Mississippi Children's Museum names local high school students to inaugural President's Leadership Circle



Sitting Left to Right: Felicia Sheriff (Murrah), Tamyria Levy (Richland), Anu Thind (Clinton), Priya Ray (Jackson Academy), and Lorelai Hayden (Hartfield); **Standing Left to Right:** Gail Hammond -MCM Education Advisory Board member, Sharon Griffin – MCM volunteer coordinator, Kevin Zhang (Clinton), Wake Monroe (St. Andrew's), Susan Garrard – MCM president/CEO, Jack Maloney (Clinton), JaQuay Collins (St. Andrew's), Alicen Blanchard – MCM Partner's president/board member, and Monique Ealey – MCM director of Education and Programs

The Mississippi Link Newswire

After an impressive application process, nine high school students from across the Jackson Metro-Area have been selected for the Mississippi Children's Museum's inaugural President's Leadership Circle class.

The President's Leadership Circle is a community-wide effort centered on youth leadership. It offers opportunities for MCM youth volunteers to acquire new leadership skills, be part of an incredible team, and give back

to the communities where they live. In addition to inspiring a lifelong love of learning and positively impacting other volunteers, President's Circle members will gain valuable experience in customer service, cultural diversity, career readiness/college prep and community service.

"The President's Leadership Circle program serves the unique need of supporting Jackson-area youths and focusing their energy on meaningful activities that promote increased self-

efficacy and skill sets relevant to success in adulthood," said Sharon Griffin, MCM volunteer coordinator. "We view this program as being an essential component to fostering positive and long-lasting civic engagement, because these are the young leaders we'll pass the community torch to someday."

For more information on MCM's President's Leadership Circle, visit our website: www.mschildrensmuseum.org.

Delta State University Music Professor Jamie Dahman's interest in Bulgarian Art Song earns Mississippi Humanities Teacher Award, leads to lecture-recital on campus March 5

The Mississippi Link Newswire

Assistant Professor of Music Jamie Dahman's interest in the Bulgarian art song enriches not only himself but also his Delta State University colleagues. Case in point: Dahman earned Delta State's 2019 Humanities Teacher Award from the Mississippi Humanities Council for his work in the field.

Dahman will give a related lecture-recital, "Bulgarian Art Song: History, Development and Performance," for which he won the award, at Delta State March 5, 2019.

Dahman also will travel to the Old Capitol Museum in Jackson April 5 to be recognized at the Mississippi Humanities Council's Public Humanities Awards.

"I was fortunate to have been a Fulbright Fellow from January 2012 to May 2012, and while studying at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Art in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, I was



Dahman

able to compile several collections of Bulgarian classical song," said

Dahman, who joined Delta State in 2016 and teaches applied voice, lyric diction and vocal pedagogy. "From those, I curated a volume of Bulgarian art songs called Bulgarian Art Song in the original Bulgarian with English translations. I'm happy anytime I can share this music with an audience. It deserves a place alongside the standard vocal repertoire for a singer."

Karen Fosheim, professor and chair of the Department of Music, agreed. She's one of those who nominated Dahman for the annual awards that are presented to humanities faculty members at Mississippi colleges and universities. "He has made an important contribution to the vocal music canon through his scholarship," she said, because "this literature is not widely known or available outside of Bulgaria. The music is "beautiful, intricate and artistically interesting."

HCCSD board unanimously gives green light to seek a bond referendum

The Mississippi Link Newswire

It's been more than 40 years since Holmes County citizens invested in their children's educational future via a bond referendum.

In a unanimous vote, Feb. 28, the Holmes County Consolidated School District's Board of Education (BOE) approved an historic recommendation to seek the maximum allowable bond referendum to include a \$5,000 pay raise for teachers and a new state-of-the-art high school. The pay raise will make the district's teacher pay the highest in the state.

During last week's BOE's work session, district leaders presented the board a comprehensive and exceptionally convincing proposal. After careful consideration, the BOE gave Superintendent James L. Henderson's recommendation the go-ahead to seek a bond.

"Our children are striving to be high achievers but to inspire them to greatness, they need more highly qualified and certified teachers and first-class, technologically-equipped facilities," said Henderson. "For less than a \$100 increase in annual taxes for most homeowners, both of these can happen."

He pointed out that 55 straight-A high school students were recently inducted into the school's first chapter of the National Honor Society. HCCSD students are successful at state Science and Reading fairs, enrolling in Ad-

vanced Placement Physics and more. "Just this week, our Doretha Draine Wiley Fine Arts Academy's Holmes County Central High School Marching Band gave a stellar performance of the national anthem at the Pelicans vs. 76ers basketball game in the Crescent City," he added.

Henderson said he believes that the citizens of Holmes County are ready to pass a bond referendum for the future educational success of their children. "Parents and grandparents want to see better opportunities for these talented, bright and goal-oriented scholars. Most importantly, the students want it for themselves. They tell me this every week," he said.

Henderson stressed that the district wants the citizens to view this minimal increase in taxes as an investment in positively transforming the district's report card and improving their children's future.

Board President Anthony Anderson concurred. "Passage of this bond is very important. Authorizing this is one of the greatest things we've approved this year. When the bond referendum passes, we will be able to pay teachers a better salary – increasing their motivation, performance and student achievement.

For more information email Chief of Staff Deborah Antoine at dantoine@holmesccsd.org or call 662 633-2454.

MSU search committee in place for MSU provost, executive vice president

The Mississippi Link Newswire

Mississippi State President Mark E. Keenum, Feb. 28, provided the campus community with an update on the search for the university's next provost and executive vice president.

A 19-member search committee now in place includes 10 elected faculty and nine faculty, staff, student and administrative members appointed by Keenum. The committee, chaired by MSU Vice President for Finance and CFO Don Zant, held its initial meeting March 4, where Keenum presented the group with its charge at that time.

"This search committee represents a broad base of our faculty, students and staff and is in keeping with established search protocols for this vital position," said Keenum. "I have every confidence that MSU will attract a strong pool of candidates from across the nation who are interested in being a part of our university's momentum and growth. From that pool, I have equal confidence that our search committee will choose an experienced and visionary leader who can help us build on that momentum."

Members of the committee are:

Don Zant, Chair, vice president for Finance and CFO

Brian Baldwin, professor, Department of Plant and Soil Sciences, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Angi Bourgeois, dean and professor, College of Architecture, Art and Design

Brian Davis, James C. Kennedy associate professor, Forest and Wildlife Research Center – Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture, College of Forest Resources

Lara Dodds, professor, Department of English, College of Arts and Sciences

Randy Follett, president, Faculty Senate, and associate professor, Electrical and Computer Engineering

Rasheda Forbes, assistant vice president for Multicultural Affairs and Director, Holmes Cultural Diversity Center

Tamara Gibson, member, staff council and senior IT consultant, Information Technology Services

Alexis Gregory, associate professor, School of Architecture, College of Architecture, Art and Design

Susan Hall, associate professor, General Library, University Libraries

Mike Highfield, professor and Robert W. Warren chair of Real Estate Finance,

Department of Finance and Economics, College of Business

Carla Huston, associate professor, Department of Pathobiology and Population Medicine, College of Veterinary Medicine

Joan Lucas, general counsel

Jake Manning, president-elect, Student Association and senior, Biomedical Engineering

Raj K. Prabhu, associate director, Computational Engineering Mechanics at the Center for Advanced Vehicular Systems and assistant professor of Biomedical Engineering in the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering

Rebecca Robichaux-Davis, professor, Department of Curriculum, Instruction and Special Education, College of Education

John Rush, vice president for Development and Alumni

Dennis Truax, professor, head and endowed chair, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Bagley College of Engineering

Rodney Wilson, assistant professor, Division of Arts and Sciences, MSU-Meridian

The R. William Funk & Associates consulting firm is assisting the university in its nationwide search. A website is available at: <https://www.provostsearch.msstate.edu/>.

While applications and nominations will be accepted until a new provost is selected, interested parties are encouraged to send their materials to our consultant through the following means by March 30 to assure optimal consideration: R. William Funk & Associates, 2911 Turtle Creek Boulevard, Suite 300, Dallas, Texas 75219 or email: krisha.creal@rwilliamfunk.com or fax: 214/523-9067.

In January, Provost and Executive Vice President Judy Bonner announced her intention to retire at the end of the current fiscal year June 30. Bonner has held this MSU position for more than two years after having a distinguished career as a longtime senior administrator and president at the University of Alabama.

Keenum expects to have a new provost and executive vice president named by the beginning of the new fiscal year on July 1.

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Jackson State alumnus Burnette named CFO

Jackson State University

President William B. Bynum Jr., Ph.D. has named Daarel Burnette as the next chief financial officer at Jackson State University. His effective date of employment was March 1.

Burnette has previously served at Central State University (CSU) as vice president for administration and CFO, where he was able to increase CSU's cash reserves from \$500,000 in 2012 to over \$7 million by 2016. Through this accomplishment, he helped to remove CSU from Ohio's Fiscal Watch List.

At JSU, he will be charged with managing all financial services at the institution.

"Dr. Burnette has a well-established 20-year career in managing finances in the private sector and higher education," said Bynum. "Throughout his career, he has made innovations using best practices in fiscal affairs through utility cost savings measures, tuition and fees, construction, and auxiliary services."

Burnette replaces Howard Merlin, who served as CFO for the past year.

"We would like to thank Howard for his service to Jackson State University," said Bynum. "We wish him well as he returns to his consulting business assisting tech startups."

Previously, Burnette has held the following positions: finance director, National Underground Railroad and Freedom Center; vice president of finance and administration, Grambling State University; interim vice chancellor of business and finance, Win-



Burnette

ston-Salem State University and acting vice president/CFO at Stillman College.

In 2001, he retired from the United States Air Force as a lieutenant colonel.

Some of his accomplishments include initiatives to keep undergraduate tuition and fees flat which propelled CSU as Ohio's first and most affordable university for both in-state and out-of-state students; debt mediation programs for current and former students at Central State University and Stillman College; and year-

end dollar savings and revenue surpluses, which were used to help strengthen faculty and staff research capacity, modernize campus infrastructures and improve academic quality, including excellence in first-year student retention, course completion and graduation rates, among numerous other accomplishments.

He also led CSU's negotiations with the U.S. Department of Education Capital Financing Program to acquire residential halls from a private developer. These acquisitions

helped Central State generate an additional \$500,000 in auxiliary programs revenue streams. During his time at CSU, campus utility dollar spending was reduced by over \$1.5 million annually, and he secured a \$16.2 million energy performance bond. The funds were used to replace an antiquated centralized steam plant structure.

His professional affiliations include American Association of State Colleges and Universities – Millennium Leadership Protégé program, Hampton University Executive Leadership Summit graduate, American Association of State Colleges and Universities Protégé, National Association of African-American Studies, Miami Valley Research Park – member and treasurer, American Educational Research Association, Association for the Study of Higher Education, National Association of College and University Business Officers, and a life member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated.

He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration and finance from Morehouse College, a Master of Business Administration degree from Georgia College and State University, and a Doctorate of Philosophy in urban higher education leadership from Jackson State University.

A native of Fort Walton Beach, Fla., he is married to Colette Pierce Burnette, president of Houston Tillotson University. They have three children – Marcus, Daarel II and Daana.

IHL honors Wilcox with Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion Award



Heather Wilcox, director for Center for University Based Development is the 2019 recipient of IHL Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion Award.

By L.aToya Hentz-Moore
jsumsnews.com

Jackson State director for the Center for University-Based Development, Heather Wilcox is the recipient of the Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion Award.

"I feel honored to have been selected for this award, says Wilcox. Working in the areas of community engagement and development are my passion and I would do it without any recognition but being recognized for my work is very rewarding."

The award recognizes a faculty or staff member who has displayed positive advancement of diversity on campus and within the university community. Each IHL university including the University of Mississippi Medical Center and the Mississippi State University Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine are expected to submit one nomination every year for the award.

Wilcox was nominated by President Bynum for her unmatched efforts of giving back and bringing diversity, equality and inclusion matters to the forefront in the community.

"I am so grateful that Dr. Bynum and my Vice President Veronica Cohen thought enough of my efforts to nominate me for this award," says Wilcox. "Both leaders play a vital role in being a strong foundation for our dear old college home."

Additionally, Wilcox has acquired several grants to enhance the West Jackson community, including the start of "The Little Free Libraries of West Jackson," and the "Blackburn Middle School Learning Garden" to promote healthy living among the students and their families.

She is also known for her love of research and historic preservation, geographic information system (GIS), economic and community development in the U.S. and other developing countries.

For years, Wilcox diligently worked on the Mount Olive Cemetery project to ensure its preservation. In 2017, she assisted with the efforts to get Mt. Olive added to the National Register of Historic Places. Wilcox has worked to complete Phase 1 of the Mt. Olive project, which included publishing a research book and restoring the Jim Hill and Ida Revels Redmond statues.

As a result of her work on this project, Wilcox has won three awards, 2018 Mississippi Heritage Trust Award for African-American Preservation for Mt. Olive Cemetery; 2018 National Trust for Historic Preservation Diversity Scholar for the Past Forward Conference and 2019 Mississippi Historical Society Award of Merit for Mt. Olive Cemetery Project.

Wilcox was recognized for the Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion Award during the IHL Board meeting last week.

Backed by Gates Foundation, two students earn inaugural fellowship for future entrepreneurs

Jackson State University

The Center for Minority Serving Institutions (CMSI) says two Jackson State University students are part of the inaugural cohorts of fellows in the Mary Ellen Pleasant Entrepreneur (MEPE) Fellowship program supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

The program aims to increase future entrepreneurs from HBCUs and is part of the foundation's \$775,000 Innovations in Career Advising grant. Jasmine B. King is a junior majoring in political science with a concentration in pre-law in the College of Liberal Arts. The Vicksburg native aspires to obtain a juris doctorate and start a career in the corporate sector.

Biruk Abate is a junior computer engineering major in the College of Science, Engineering and Technology. He has worked with the Google



King

igniteCS team to introduce STEM programs to high schools in Jackson. He also led the JSU NASA Swarmathon – a team that participates in a NASA-hosted robotics competition. Ultimately, the native of Addis, Ethiopia, wants to build a technology ecosystem on campus in support of student entrepreneurship.

All participating HBCU students will have the opportunity to build a peer-advising startup



Abate

through a 10-week virtual fellowship during this spring semester with help from a minority-owned recruitment marketing platform, The Whether, and its virtual business. Also, The Whether will use information from its scientifically validated Clarity Assessment to sharpen the critical-thinking skills of students about their post-secondary life.

Reciprocally, the fellows will introduce the assessment

to professors, student organizations and individuals on campus. Their main goal is to gather feedback and help their peers while also experimenting with various business principles to maximize their reach.

While MEPE will provide fellows an opportunity to build their own startups, the cohort will gain other valuable experiences, too:

- Learn key startup principles and the components for successful and sustainable entrepreneurship
- Participate in a virtual curriculum on marketing, the customer funnel and the business model canvas
- Collaborate with each other across partner institutions through periodic virtual meetings
- Experiment with innovative techniques to assist students on campus in identifying career paths and interests early.

Congressman Thompson announces \$40,000 awarded to Coahoma Opportunities Inc.

Mississippi Link Newswire

United States Representative Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) announced The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) has awarded \$40,000 in Senior Corp RSVP funds to Coahoma Opportunities Inc. located in Clarksdale, Mississippi.

The Senior Corps is a national service program geared to those 55 and older for volunteering and service.

For additional information contact Coahoma Opportunities Inc. at (662) 624-4887.

AG Hood announces relief program in Wells Fargo settlement

The Mississippi Link Newswire

Mississippians who have not yet been made whole through existing remediation programs from the December 2018 Wells Fargo settlement can now seek to have their inquiry or complaint reviewed by a Wells Fargo escalation team for possible relief.

Attorney General Jim Hood announced that Wells Fargo has begun a consumer redress review program, which was a key component of the settlement to resolve claims that the bank violated state consumer protection laws by (1) opening millions of unauthorized accounts and enrolling customers into online banking services without their knowledge or consent, (2) improperly referring customers for enrollment in third-party renters and life insurance policies, (3) improperly charging auto loan customers for force-placed and unnecessary collateral protection insurance, (4) failing to ensure that customers received refunds of unearned premiums on certain optional auto finance guaranteed asset/auto protection (“GAP”) products and (5) incorrectly charging customers for mortgage rate lock extension fees.

“When we announced this \$2.5 million settlement for Mississippi, we said that we would follow up with this information so consumers are able to make sure they receive any relief they are entitled to under this settlement,” Hood said. “Our office is following through on its promise to protect Mississippians’ rights to financial well-being over corporate interests.”

As part of the program, Wells Fargo will maintain a website that contains information regarding consumers’ eligibility for redress. Wells Fargo’s website describes the issues covered by the settlement agreement and provides escalation phone numbers consumers may use to request review. In addition, Wells Fargo will provide periodic reports to the states about ongoing remediation efforts.

Consumers with questions or concerns may call the following Wells Fargo escalation phone numbers:

- Unauthorized Accounts / Improper Retail Sales Practices: 1-844-931-2273
- Improper Renters and Life Insurance Referrals: 1-855-853-9638
- Force-Placed Collateral Protection Auto Insurance (“CPI”): 1-888-228-9735
- Guaranteed Asset/Auto Protection (“GAP”) Refunds: 1-844-860-6962
- Mortgage Interest Rate Lock Extension Fees: 1-866-385-5008.



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When:
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Sign-In — 8-9:00 a.m.
Event Timeframe — 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Where:
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Registration Link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/drive-8a-summit-mississippi-tickets-53265588310>

For More Information contact:
Joyce Conner - 601-965-4299
joyce.conner@sba.gov
Jeremy Sanford - 601-965-4378
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Coalition praises Mississippi lawmakers who fought for cigarette tax increase

Mississippi Link Newswire

The Invest in a Healthier Future Coalition, a group of nearly 50 diverse organizations calling for a \$1.50 per pack increase in the state cigarette tax, shared the following statement after the Mississippi Legislature failed to pass a tobacco tax bill out of a committee in time for success this year.

“While we are disappointed this won’t be the year Mississippi starts on a path toward saving lives and protecting more of our state’s youth from tobacco addiction, we’re grateful for the discussion and attention this critical issue received. Thank you to those who joined us in support of a strong, \$1.50 increase.

“The good news is that more and more Mississippi state lawmakers and businesses are now tuned in to the tobacco industry’s continued misinformation campaigns. Large numbers of tobacco lobbyists are hard at work at the Mississippi state capitol fighting against evidence-based policies that are proven to reduce smoking, save lives and save state taxpayers money.

“We are up against an industry spending an estimated \$127 million annually on tobacco marketing in Mississippi, targeting citizens most vulnerable to addiction with a cheap and dangerous product. But the support for change is there, throughout Mississippi. Our voices are louder and stronger together. We’ve come very far and giving up on the health of our state is not an option.”

Mississippi’s cigarette tax is 68 cents per pack, ranking it 40th in the nation, contributing to the state’s very high adult smoking rate and low life expectancy. The average state cigarette tax is \$1.79 per pack.

Every state that has increased its cigarette tax by a significant amount has enjoyed a substantial increase in revenue, despite ongoing and tax-specific smoking declines



and any ongoing or increased tax evasion. And the 2014 Surgeon General’s report stated, “The evidence is sufficient to conclude that increases in the prices of tobacco products, including those resulting from excise tax increases, prevent initiation of tobacco use, promote cessation and reduce the prevalence and intensity of tobacco use among youth and adults.”

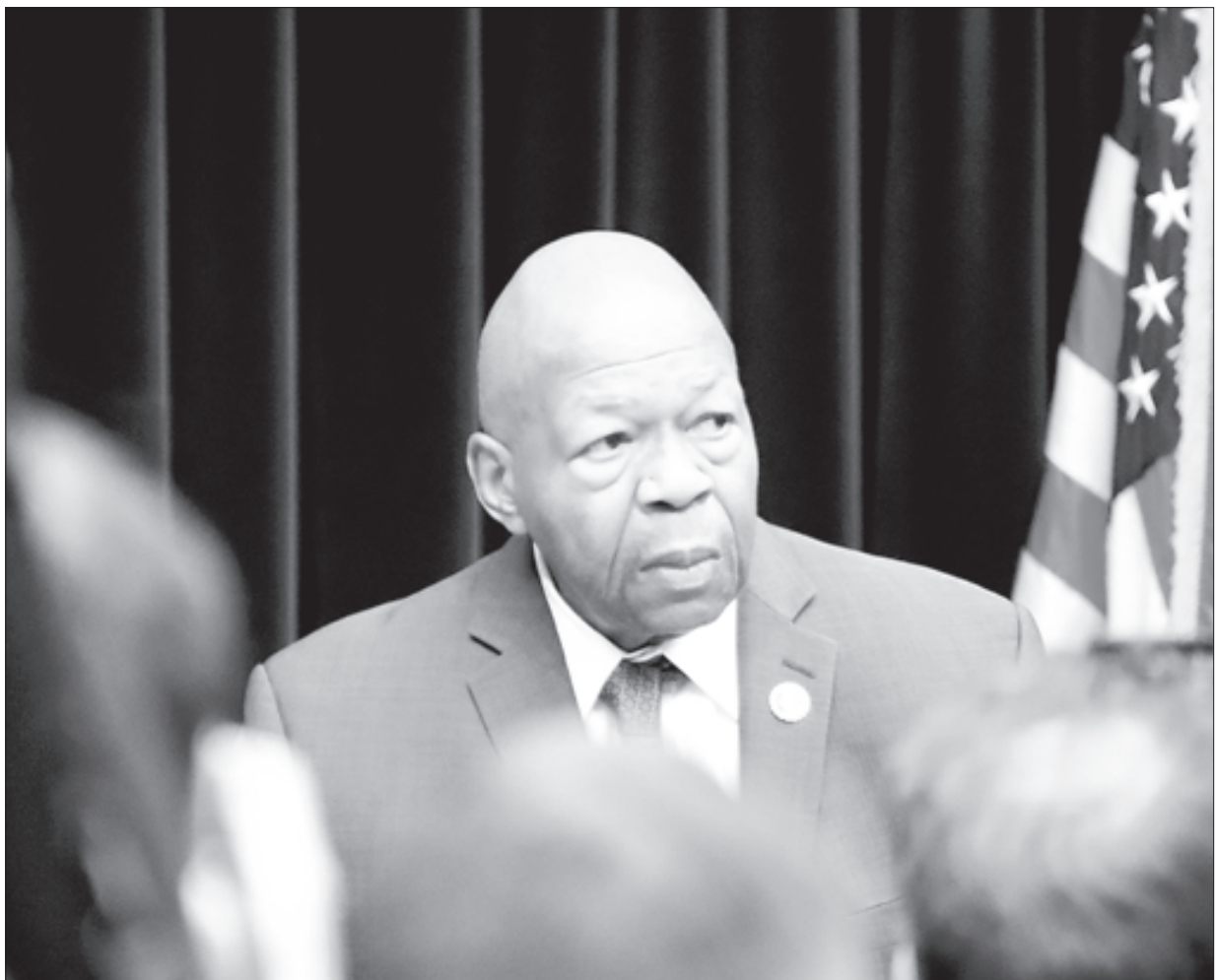
Results from the latest poll showed solid support throughout Mississippi for a tobacco tax increase, with every region showing support ranging between 67-78 percent, and overall state support at 73 percent in favor. The poll also found that a majority of smokers in Mississippi support the \$1.50 per pack increase.

Smoking kills an estimated 5,400 in Mississippians annually, and 1,400 children under 18 become new daily smokers each year, according to the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids. Smoking costs the state \$1.23 billion in direct health care costs, including \$319.7 million in Medicaid costs every year.

Additionally, Mississippi annually experiences \$1.8 billion in productivity losses because of tobacco use. Meanwhile, the state spends just \$8.4 million on tobacco prevention and cessation annually, far below funding levels recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

To learn more, share your story or support this initiative, visit investMS.org.

Standing By Her Man: Black woman used as willing prop to support white congressman, birther



U. S. Rep. Elijah Cummings, (D-Md.) presiding over contentious Oversight and Reform Committee hearing. PHOTO: PAULLETTE SINGLETON/TRICE EDNEY NEWS WIRE



Lynne Patton standing behind Congressman Mark Meadows during a congressional hearing Feb. 27.

By Frederick H. Lowe
TriceEdneyWire.com

North Carolina Congressman Mark Meadows trotted out Lynne Patton, a black woman, to say President Donald Trump wasn't a racist after Michael Cohen, Trump's former fixer, testified before a Congressional Committee that Trump was a racist.

Meadows played a key role in the birther movement that damaged President Barack Obama's presidency by casting doubt that he was born in the United States, a requirement to be president, while paving the way for Trump to enter the White House.

In 2012, at the Blue Ridge Tea Party Candidate Forum, Meadows, a Republican, said, "We'll send Obama back home to Kenya or where ever it is," to loud applause. A video of Meadows making the comment has been posted on Twitter.

Cohen, who testified before the House Oversight and Reform Committee Feb. 27, listed several ex-

amples supporting his assertion that Trump was a racist. Congressman Elijah Cummings, (D-Md.) is the committee's chair.

Cohen testified that Trump called black countries "shit holes" and said blacks were too stupid to vote for him. Trump also said only blacks run "shit hole countries." He made that statement when Barack Obama was president of the United States, Cohen said. He also pointed out that there aren't any blacks in top positions in the Trump administration.

Meadows, chairman of the ultra conservative Freedom Caucus, ordered Patton to stand behind him during the committee hearing to refute Cohen's allegations that Trump was a racist. Patton, a regional executive for the Department of Housing Urban Development, and a Trump appointee, didn't speak. After a few minutes, she sat down.

U.S. Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D, Michigan) called Patton a prop, and Meadows almost burst into angry tears, believing Tlaib, who is Pales-

tinian was calling him a racist.

"Just because someone has a person of color, a black person, working for them does not mean that they aren't racist," Tlaib said. "And it is insensitive ... the fact that someone would actually use a prop, a black woman in this chamber, in this committee, is alone racist in itself."

The heated exchange was among the most intense parts of the highly anticipated Cohen hearing.

On Fox News, a disgusted Patton denied she was a prop. She said committee members put more faith in a white man going to prison than a highly educated black woman.

A judge sentenced Cohen to three years in prison for lying to Congress.

Cummings came to Meadows' rescue, claiming he was one of his best friends. Cummings' intervention angered some observers.

Later, Meadows said he made the comment about Obama to win an election. He and Tlaib later made up.

Congresswoman Maxine Waters pens open letter to CFPB employees



Waters

The Mississippi Link Newswire

Congresswoman Maxine Waters (D-CA), chairwoman of the House Financial Services Committee, sent a letter to the dedicated public servants of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (Consumer Bureau), to address the challenges they have faced in the last two years and assure them that she will use the full range of the committee's oversight authorities to prevent any efforts to weaken the Consumer Bureau.

"Let me assure you that actions to weaken the Consumer Bureau from within as Director Mulvaney attempted to do will not go unchecked or unnoticed," wrote Waters. "As chairwoman of the House Financial Services Committee, I will fight against any and all efforts to weaken the Consumer Bureau and make sure that your important work to protect consumers, as Congress intended, can continue. As part of my duties as chairwoman, I will also be conducting careful oversight of the agencies under the committee's jurisdiction, including the Consumer Bureau. If, in the course of your work, you are a witness to waste, fraud, abuse or gross mismanagement, please do not hesitate to alert me and my staff."

In the letter, the chairwoman also commended the Consumer Bureau's employees on their hard work to protect consumers from unfair, deceptive or abusive acts and practices of bad actors.

"Your work is a vital public service," said Waters. "Take heart in the knowledge that millions of Americans have benefitted from your efforts, and that the Consumer Bureau has many friends and allies in Congress who believe in your efforts and will stand up for you and the Consumer Bureau."

Whistleblowers may alert the Financial Services Committee to unlawful activity, mismanagement, waste of funds or abuse of authority in federal agencies or other organizations via a whistleblower form at financialservices.house.gov/whistleblower. See the full text of the letter below.

To the Dedicated Public Servants of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau:

I am aware of the challenges you have faced in the last two years. And I understand the pride you have in your work of protecting America's consumers. When that work is challenged or undermined, morale can suffer. The reports regarding a significant drop over the past year in the state of morale at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (Consumer Bureau) are troubling to me as a policymaker because the Consumer Bureau should be a place where you are not only proud of your work, but you are also confident of the value you provide in protecting the consumers of our country from unfair, deceptive or abusive acts or practices of bad actors. I am writing to reassure you of the importance and value of your work, and to let you know, in no uncertain terms, that the anti-consumer actions mandated by Trump appointees will not be tolerated. I will work hard to ensure that you will once again be fully empowered to perform your duties on behalf of America's consumers.

The Consumer Bureau is a key part of financial reform. After the financial crisis and the subprime meltdown a decade ago, Congress recognized that Americans needed a new watchdog that could swiftly

and effectively crack down on unscrupulous financial practices and products, and created the Consumer Bureau as a key part of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act.

Since the creation of the Consumer Bureau, you have helped people around the country with their mortgages, credit cards, student loans and other financial products and services; punished financial institutions that have harmed consumers; put money back in the pockets of consumers; and implemented consumer protections to help individuals and families take control of their economic lives.

Your work is a vital public service. Take heart in the knowledge that millions of Americans have benefitted from your efforts, and that the Consumer Bureau has many friends and allies in Congress who believe in your efforts and will stand up for you and the Consumer Bureau.

I have been concerned that actions taken, and changes made by Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney were contrary to both the spirit and plain letter of the law and appear to be designed to frustrate the Consumer Bureau's mission.

Let me assure you that actions to weaken the Consumer Bureau from within as Director Mulvaney attempted to do will not go unchecked or unnoticed. As chairwoman of the House Financial Services Committee, I will fight against any and all efforts to weaken the Consumer Bureau and make sure that your important work to protect consumers, as Congress intended, can continue.

As part of my duties as chairwoman, I will also be conducting careful oversight of the agencies under the Committee's jurisdiction, including the Consumer Bureau. If, in the course of your work, you are a witness to waste, fraud, abuse or gross mismanagement, please do not hesitate to alert me and my staff.

The Whistleblower Protection Act ("WPA") provides broad protections to federal employees disclosing to Congress a violation of law, rule or regulation; gross mismanagement; fraud; or an abuse of authority. The Committee expects that the Consumer Bureau will comply with the WPA and any other applicable whistleblower laws in response to any Consumer Bureau employee that elects to exercise their right to report instances of waste, fraud, abuse or mismanagement to Congress. In addition to the whistleblower protections granted in the WPA, Congress has passed criminal prohibitions against threatening or tampering with witnesses testifying before congressional proceedings. The committee will not tolerate any intimidation of or retaliation against potential witnesses by anyone at any federal agency.

Again, the Consumer Bureau is of critical importance for American families across the country. Your work is of critical importance. I am committed to working every day to make sure that the Consumer Bureau and you, its hardworking staff, can work toward its mission of protecting consumers.

Sincerely,
MAXINE WATERS
Chairwoman
cc: The Honorable Patrick McHenry

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Be strong in the Lord

PART 2

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



Division weakens people and brings confusion and God is against it. God is not the author of confusion. If you are honest with God, He will show you what is right and what is wrong. Isaiah 5:20 speaks of people who were so confused that they called good evil and evil good. They lost their discernment of what was right and what was wrong. Friend, you do not have to be deceived, if you will be honest with God.

To get the strength to be the Church of the Living God, you must be willing to accept the truth, regardless of where it is and what it is. You have to be ready to stand against that which is wrong.

There are a few characteristics that identify that which is not the church. The Bible says that the church is a city set on a hill, which cannot be hid. If you are a Church of God minister,

you must have a strong ministry and lay line upon line, precept upon precept, and rightly divide the Word of God. Isaiah 13:10 says, "For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine." If the ministry fails to proclaim the glorious truth, people will not find the strength to live for God.

The ministry, through the preaching of the Word, strengthens the church. If you read Ezekiel, chapter 34, you will find that the people spoken of there had false shepherds ruling them. Through the Prophet Ezekiel, God told those false shepherds that they had destroyed and scattered His flock. God had something against those shepherds because they fed themselves and did not bind up the wounds.

Division is sin. Woe to the man who causes division. Romans 16:17 says to "mark them which cause divisions." When we read books or listen to sermons, we should check the con-

tent of what is written or said and not be fooled by smooth style. Christians who study God's Word will not be fooled, even though superficial listeners may easily be taken in.

One who causes division is not saved. You cannot live on inspirational singing. You must have the Word of God. If you build again the things you once destroyed, you make yourself a transgressor.

Do you know how you can win this battle? You have to hold up the man of God's hands, back him up and support him 100 percent. If you are attending a true Church of God congregation, are you backing your pastor?

The strength of the church is in unity and brotherly love. The Bible lets you know that he who says he is in the light and hateth his brothers is a liar, and the truth is not in him. You are not one of God's children if you hate your brother or your sister.

Jesus said in Mark 13:13, "And ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end,

the same shall be saved."

He said in Matthew 5:11-12: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

Jesus said to rejoice when we're persecuted. Persecution can be good because it takes our eyes off earthly rewards, it strips away superficial belief, it strengthens the faith of those who endure and our attitude through it serves as an example to others who follow. In the future God will reward the faithful by receiving them into His eternal Kingdom where there is no more persecution.

Next week – Part III, "Be strong in the Lord"

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.

PRESERVED

Fasting does your spirit (and body) good

By Shewanda Riley
Columnist



This week, Christians around the world begin the Lenten fast, a 47-day period of sacrificing a "fleshly" desire in hopes of earning a reward of a stronger spiritual relationship with God. Even as I look forward (strangely) to the challenge of the fact, I dread it. The question is what would be my sacrifice this year: chocolate, cake, potatoes or fried foods...or all four?

I think about my fasting from previous years where I realized that fasting had become something I did because I knew I was supposed to...but I was no longer spiritually enlightened by fasting.

In fact, I've noticed over the last few years, fasting had become something that I did out of habit but I didn't really feel like I was getting anything out of it. I think if we are honest, at one point or another in our spiritual lives, we get to a "brick wall" where it seems like you do spiritual things (prayer, fasting, church attendance) out of tradition more than anything else.

In the past, I've made the effort to pray more during my fasts, listen to spiritual music and worked hard to put myself in a position where I could hear God better. I'd even talked to a friend who found herself dealing with the same issue and we encouraged each other as we struggled to fast. But we both wondered why it was so hard to fast when fasting was normally an easy thing to do.

A few years ago, in preparation for Lent, my former church began a bible study series on fast-

ing. For the first time in years, I was excited to hear about fasting....and I soon realized why it had been so hard to fast.

The pastor introduced the idea from Elmer Towns' book, "Fasting for Spiritual Breakthrough" of the nine fast patterns:

The Disciple's Fast: Fasting for freedom from addiction

The Ezra Fast: Fasting to solve problems

The Samuel Fast: Fasting to win people to Christ

The Elijah Fast: Fasting to break crippling fears

The Widow's Fast: Fasting to provide for the needy

The Saint Paul Fast: Fasting for insight and decision making

The Daniel Fast: Fasting for health and physical healing

The John the Baptist Fast: Fasting for an influential testimony

The Esther Fast: Fasting for protection from the evil one.

I'd made the mistake of doing the same fast for nearly 20 years. The teachings helped me realize that as our spiritual situation changed, so should our fasts. Isaiah 58:6 says, "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?" Maybe part of the reason I wasn't getting the results I wanted was because I was using the wrong strategy.

Instead of focusing on the food I would change eating or habits I'd change, I now realize that fasting is about the change that God would make in my life.

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



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The smoking guns

By E. Faye Williams
Trice Edney Newswire



Michael Cohen gave us several smoking guns in his testimony this past week before Congress. He came to the hearing confessing his sins, asking for forgiveness and armed with provable facts. Showed a copy of the check that Trump reimbursed him for paying women to keep quiet about #45’s lies about sleeping with women other than his wife and lying about it. Looks like #45’s hush-money didn’t hush a lot.

Many of us were glued to our televisions as Cohen came before the House Oversight Committee of the U. S. Congress. He was remorseful and admitted his own faults before telling the committee that #45 engaged in multiple criminal acts. He told us about the bank fraud, insurance fraud, tax evasion and suborning perjury.

He laid out evidence of a cheat, a racist, a con-man. Nobody I know was surprised. In 2016 Dick Gregory told us how the election was going to come out. He said we were going to experience chaos – and we all know that prediction came true.

No matter what you’ve thought of Cohen in the past, at the hearing he was on it, and I believed him. After he sat before that committee for several hours with Republicans hurling every insult possible at him and never mentioning the real culprit, #45, Cohen just kept on giving up information the public needed to hear. The Republicans just kept on trying to pretend the president wasn’t the lead bad guy.

Democrats who were doing the questioning, were well prepared. They brought out the facts and left no doubt that #45 committed criminal acts.

#45 thought the campaign was a great marketing opportunity, and never believed he was going to win. At the end of Cohen’s testimony, I think #45 is wishing he had not won, and I say won cautiously because it’s obvious somebody messed with the votes.

We heard that executives at the Trump organization knew #45 inflated assets when he wanted to look important. On the other hand, he pretended he had fewer assets to avoid higher taxes.

That hearing must have been the worst day of #45’s days living in public housing. This was pretty clear as he strutted around in Hanoi with his new friend. In fact, he said he’d fallen in love with the North Korean leader.

Cohen was in a room with #45 when Don Jr. came into the room, walked behind #45’s desk and said, “The meeting has been set.” He testified that it is most likely they were talking about the infamous Trump Tower meeting. We heard strong evidence that #45 committed crimes.

While the Republicans behaved badly with no intention of seeking the truth from Cohen, it was painful to watch the show intended to suppress the truth. The show reached the pit several times, but one of the most insulting acts was Rep. Mark Meadows bringing in a black woman prop and told her to stand up so we could inspect her as though she was a slave on the block to prove #45 was not racist because he’d hired her.

Rep. Elijah Cummings made us proud in running that hearing. He directed his closing remarks to Cohen when he thanked him for his testimony and reviewed the scenario of Cohen leaving the courthouse with his daughter. Cummings told us it hurt him as he thought about his own daughters.

He concluded by hoping this part of Cohen’s destiny will lead to a better Cohen, a better Trump, a better country, a better world. He said “When we’re dancing with the angels the question will be asked, ‘What did we do to keep our democracy intact?’”

E. Faye Williams is president of the National Congress of Black Women. www.nationalcongress-bw.org. She’s also host of *Wake Up and Stay Woke* on WPFW 89.3 FM.

#OscarsSoWhite beginning to yield much-needed change

By Marc H. Morial
President and CEO
National Urban League



“When film and television privilege white stories over other stories, they reinforce a racial hierarchy that devalues people of color. Not only do dramatic racial disparities indicate employment discrimination in Hollywood, the underrepresentation of people of color in film and television can also have wider societal consequences ... When Audiences never see actors of color in major roles, they are less likely to perceive them as on equal footing with whites. Inversely, when whites and their stories are celebrated more than their fair share, audiences begin to associate significance, admiration and power with that group over others.”
– Nancy Wang Yuen, *Reel Inequality: Hollywood Actors and Racism*

The Academy Awards ceremony marked a paradigm shift for an industry that has struggled with diversity. Of the four acting awards, three were won by people of color: Mahershala Ali, Regina King and Rami Malek; Black Panther’s Ruth Carter was the

first African American to win an Oscar for Costume Design and Hanna Beachler the first to win for Production Design; and the writing team behind BlackKKKlansman included two black artists, Spike Lee and Kevin Willmot.

The industry made significant steps in the last few years.

Following two years of Academy Awards voting that produced no acting nominees of color, the National Urban League responded with blistering criticism. In a 2016 letter to then-president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, I pointed out that the overwhelmingly white, male and older membership of the Academy dismally failed to reflect the vibrant creative filmmaking community.

At the time, the academy was 94 percent white, 77 percent male, 86 percent age 50 or older and had a median age of 62.

Activist April Reign created the hashtag #OscarsSoWhite in 2015, but the industry resisted change and when the following year produced no acting nominees of color, pressure – including our demand for a clear and specific blueprint for change – intensified.

Fortunately, our efforts produced

results, and the academy changed its membership rules. The class of members admitted in June 2016 comprised 46 percent women, and 41 percent people of color. The June 2017 class comprised 39 percent women and 30 percent were people of color. In 2018 49 percent of new members were women and 38 percent were people of color.

The percentage of voting members of the academy who are people of color has doubled since 2015, from 8 percent to 16 percent.

That’s still far below the 27 percent of the U.S. population that identify as non-white, but it is a welcome development.

Asked if lack of racial diversity is still an issue in Hollywood, Reign answered, “Absolutely yes.”

“Until we are no longer having these conversations about firsts in 2019, until we see everyone having the opportunity, whether it’s race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, indigenous people in this country. Until we all have an opportunity to see ourselves represented on screen, not just during awards season but all year long, I’ll still continue to talk about #OscarsSoWhite.

“The work continues, but I am

thrilled to be able to celebrate the incremental progress that has been made, even if only for a night,” she added.

It’s worth noting that change began only after the academy instituted specific rules designed to increase diversity. A vague push for diversity after the #OscarsSoWhite campaign began appeared to produce no significant results.

“It seems that the academy’s board of trustees believes diversity is a problem that will resolve itself,” we wrote in our 2016 letter to the Academy. “The nominations show otherwise.”

As we noted at the time, a lack of diversity in the entertainment industry is a complex issue without a simple solution, and we are well-aware the problem neither begins nor ends with awards nominations. But award nominations translate into box-office success, and the potential for box-office success determines which projects are greenlighted.

Black Panther, with a nearly all-black cast and a black director, broke box-office records for 2018.

We hope its success, both critically and financially, bodes well for the future of diversity in American cinema.

The Congressional Black Caucus: Not always in headlines, but never on the sidelines

By Julianne Malveaux
NNPA News Wire Columnist



What does the Congressional Black Caucus do? It takes Majority Whip James Clyburn to make it understandable. “It’s not only what we make happen, but what we stop from happening,” Clyburn told a standing room only crowd at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation’s Black History Month Celebration February 26.

His words are instructive for folks who get their news from sound bites and tweets. The legislative process is rarely fully televised, and those who put brakes on nonsense proposals never make the headlines. The February 26 event made it clear, in celebration, that the Congressional Black Caucus is often effective on the front lines and the sidelines.

The 116th Congress includes fifty-five members of the Congressional Black Caucus, an incredibly diverse group of African Americans who approach black liberation (although some might not use the term) differently. Among the fifty-five, there are five who now chair House committees, including Congressional representatives Maxine Waters (D-CA), who chairs the Financial Services Committee, Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) who chairs the Science, Space and Technology Com-

mittee, Robert “Bobby” Scott (D-VA) who chairs the Education and Labor Committee, Bennie Thompson (D-MS) who chairs the Homeland Security Committee, and Elijah Cummings (D-MD) who chairs the Government Oversight Committee. Cummings was the only one of the five who was not present, understandably so when one reflected on his leadership in the hearing that examined Michael Cohen, the jail-bound attorney who formerly represented the nation’s Prevaricator-in-Chief.

Each of them talked about the challenges they face in their roles, especially the fact that progressive legislation that leaves the House of Representatives is often unlikely to pass the Republican-dominated United States Senate and the obstreperous Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (my words, not theirs). But each also talked about issues they will address in their leadership.

Waters can subpoena tax returns and bank records. She spoke of the many ways banking boards lack diversity and plans to establish a diversity and inclusion subcommittee as part of the Financial Services Committee. Thompson and Johnson talked about directing money to HB-CUs and about the ways that some universities are able to get the majority of federal dollars. Scott intrigued me when he talked about the way

the media is interested in drama, not substance. On a day when he dealt with both the minimum wage and higher education legislation, most of the questions he got from the media were about blackface and other scandals in Virginia.

The search for the salacious has been the theme of the 45 administration. One does not have to search far to find payments to prostitutes, pandering to potentates and other chicanery. The real trickery, however, is happening when our regulatory structure is being decimated, when payday lending rules are hanged by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to make predatory lending easier and more exploitative; when education regulations are being changed to make access for black and other students of color even harder than it is now; when labor regulations are being changed to exploit unions.

The federal minimum wage, at \$7.25, has not increased in a decade. As such, the Raise The Wage Act should be making headlines. Instead, all cameras, all eyes are on the scandals that dominate this administration.

In celebrating the Congressional Black Caucus, I’m not touting their perfection, because the collective caucus is flawed as any other organization. My biggest bone to pick with caucus members is all of them won’t sign or align themselves with HR

40, the reparations legislation that Congressman John Conyers (D-MI) introduced thirty years ago. Many say the reparations conversation is impractical.

From my perspective, if you are interested in economic justice, you must be interested in restorative and reparatory justice for the descendants of the enslaved people who built this country. That means developing public policy to close the wealth gap. That means developing public policy to increase access to education. That means educating a nation with leaders and teachers who seem to think it is okay to run around in blackface, hand children cotton bolls or more alarmingly, have children (in South Carolina) actually pick cotton and sing slave songs. That means examining the ways that racist (yes, racist) legislation has exacerbated, not closed the wealth gap.

Our Congressional Black Caucus and, indeed, the Democratic Party that all of them belong to, is flawed, but there are accomplishments, as well. The challenge for us is to lift up the accomplishments amidst a culture that values scandal instead of achievement.

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

Doctors, lawyers with monetary motives cause painful decisions in women's healthcare

By Glenn Ellis
TriceEdney Newswire



Women, especially women of color and poor women, tend to suffer disproportionately in our healthcare system. The problem is growing worse now that there’s a group of trial lawyers eager to exploit female victims, under the guise of offering help.

Take for instance that roughly one-quarter of U.S. women suffer from pelvic floor disorders, and according to the *Washington Post*, about 3-4 million of them

have been treated with transvaginal mesh. The vast majority of these women receive repairs using transvaginal mesh without complications, but a significant minority experienced serious problems.

After the publicity surrounding this issue hit the fan, the lawyers pounced. It has come to light that a collaboration involving some law firms, doctors and finance companies are pressuring women into unnecessary surgeries to remove the mesh. Giving new meaning to the term “insult to injury,” this phenomenon, according to the *New York Times*, is leading unsuspecting women

to the operating table – even in cases when the removal could worsen the symptoms.

The *New York Times* highlighted a growing problem that tends to target women: the industry grown out of medical device settlements. For example, a court-ordered, charitable fund, the Common Benefit Trust, established out of the Dow Corning breast implant settlement fund, which also resulted from a faulty medical device. The Common Benefit Trust appears to have used some of this money to fund policy centers, advocacy groups and a conference on litigation.

Pelvic organ prolapse, a medi-

cal issue sought to be treated by the transvaginal mesh, is one of the most common reasons for women to have surgery. It is ranked among the top three reasons that women have hysterectomies.

Then there are racial disparities. Compared with African-American women, Latina and white women had four to five times higher risk of symptomatic prolapse, thought to be in large part due to the lower rates of African-American women reporting the condition as a problem to doctors. Researchers see this pattern as part of a culture where African-American and/or poor

women will not typically see the condition as a problem requiring them to consider surgery.

Issues like the transvaginal mesh that has revealed disparate treatment of women are not new. All patients – but especially women patients and minority patients that have traditionally been marginalized – deserve better than to be exploited in some of their most vulnerable times.

Those vulnerable times include childbirth and other areas of maternal health. Dr. Niva Lubin-Johnson, president of the National Medical Association, which represents more than 50,000 African-American physicians on

issues of health disparities and justice, says, “There is a crisis for African-American women that is related to maternal mortality – and that’s across any economic level and educational level for African-American women. We are losing in that area,” she says.

So, if you’re considering medical treatment, be an informed consumer. Be sure to have your health care provider explain all of your options, as well as their possible risks and benefits. Though if these risks are not avoided, by all means, beware of financial lures to have surgeries that you do not need and that could leave you in a condition far worse than before.

School of Nursing students, VA nurses form unique partnership

The Mississippi Link Newswire

The University of Mississippi School of Nursing will embark on a one-of-a-kind partnership with the G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery VA Medical Center in March.

The VA will host a dedicated education unit, or DEU, in its Intensive Care Unit for students in the Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing program at the University of Mississippi Medical Center.

Seven accelerated students will begin their training at the VA in March, making the University of Mississippi School of Nursing the only school in the state to have this partnership with the VA.

Each student will be paired with a VA registered nurse and will work alongside them during their shifts, gaining 72 hours of experience in total. The RN will act as a clinical instructor to the student, working with faculty at the School of Nursing.

The clinical instructors “will be just like preceptors, but they have a little bit more responsibility because they’re actually in collaboration with the faculty,” Dr. Ladonna Northington, assistant dean for undergraduate programs in the School of Nursing, explained.

The partnership will add to the variety of clinical experiences students receive during their time in the accelerated program. Currently students are completing faculty-led clinical



Northington



McElwain



experience at Select Specialty Hospital in Jackson, where they are working on medical-surgi-

cal floors in the hospital. They will later work with preceptors across UMMC’s campus.

Dr. Sharon McElwain, assistant professor of nursing, said the partnership with the VA

will add to the variety of clinical experiences students receive over their time in the accelerated program, and it is her hope every accelerated student will be able to participate over the course of this year.

“It is a great opportunity for nursing students to experience the work culture of a variety of facilities. Caring for our veterans and learning about issues that may be unique to this population is a definite benefit for the students,” said McElwain.

Students will work alongside select nurses in the ICU, caring for patients who generally have recently had surgery.

“So with that, they get to practice dressing changes, monitoring the heart system, any patient who may be on a ventilator and trach(eostomy) care, all the way down to personal hygiene ... We don’t have nursing assistants in the ICU, so the nurses are providing total care,” said Kristi Kirkwood, clinical nurse leader at the VA, said. “Definitely those skills they learn in the sim(ulation) lab they will get to bring to the bedside.”

The DEU will also benefit the VA, serving as a recruitment tool and giving the nurses who participate the opportunity to learn what students are learning in the classroom.

“Nursing is always changing. We have nurses who have volunteered to be clinical instructors who have been nurses for 30-plus years,” Kirkwood said.

“We’re hoping they benefit, too.”

Kirkwood said their research into creating a DEU showed that often students wanted to stay on at the facility where they did their training. Kirkwood herself participated in a DEU as a student at a university hospital in Tennessee and went to work there after graduating.

“It’s an opportunity to give back in the field of nursing and aid with the (nursing) faculty shortage,” said Kirkwood.

Nursing students Sarah Jamison of Bay Springs and Jennifer Morris of Brandon are two of the seven accelerated students chosen to participate in the VA partnership. Both said they wanted the chance to work with veterans who had served the country.

“I feel ... we will gain exceptional firsthand experience in the various intensive care units while being able to help serve those who serve our country,” said Jamison.

Morris said she is looking forward to learning new skills and networking with other nurses.

The goal is to expand the DEU to involve more accelerated students and, one day, beyond the ICU into other parts of the hospital.

“I am looking forward to continuing our partnership with the VA and hope that we can expand beyond the ICU in the future,” said McElwain.

March is National Kidney Month: Two sisters are able to attend college thanks to their life-saving kidney transplants

The Mississippi Link Newswire

March is National Kidney Month, which is a month-long, awareness-raising grassroots effort to spread the word nationwide about the importance of kidney health. A Pacific Northwest transplant family knows all too well the life-saving difference healthy kidneys can make.

The Blankenship family of Puyallup, Washington, assumed the role of transplant family with very little warning. Theirs is the type of story that strikes fear in parents’ hearts. Jennifer and Robert were thrilled to meet their first daughter, Sydney, and were excited to continue to expand their family when daughter Allison (Allie) arrived next – quickly followed by Katherine (Katie) the next year.

But their lives literally turned upside down in the spring of 2005 when then six-year-old Allie was diagnosed with moderate to severe kidney failure. The news struck fear in both Jennifer and Robert and the family’s ‘new’ normal became something unexpected.

Jennifer recently looked back and wrote a first-person narrative of the family’s transplant journey to date and some of her thoughts are shared here:

When our middle daughter, Allison, was in Kindergarten she was diagnosed with Chronic Kidney Disease. We always thought she was just quiet and preferred sedentary activity. But we were blown away that in reality she was experiencing organ failure. Allison was so young at the time. She really did not understand much of what was going on except that she was going to have to get regular shots and blood draws.



Blankenship sisters Katherine and Allison

Her sweet response to that news was, ‘I guess, I’m going to need a lot of Band-Aids.’ Her sisters, Katie (then age 4) and Sydney (then age 8) did not understand what was happening. They were scared but were always trying to help.

The threat of losing a child to a disease is gut-wrenchingly painful. It is as if you come unthawed from the rest of your life. Somehow doctor appointments, lab visits, medical testing and providing comfort to all three of our daughters completely took over our lives. We also started experiencing the financial difficulties that are connected to organ failure. We were terrified.

As Allie’s kidney disease progressed, Jennifer and Robert started meeting with the transplant team at Seattle Children’s Hospital. In late October 2007, upon a transplant social worker’s urging, Jennifer called the Children’s Organ Transplant Association (COTA) to learn more about fundraising for transplant-

related expenses. COTA uniquely understands that parents who care for a child or young adult before, during and after a life-saving transplant have enough to deal with, so COTA’s model shifts the responsibility for fundraising to a community team of trained volunteers. COTA is a 501(c)3 charity so all contributions to COTA are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law, and funds are available for a lifetime of transplant-related expenses. On November 1 the Blankenship’s became part of the COTA Family.

Our friends and family rallied around us, working with COTA to plan fundraisers that would help alleviate our financial fears so we could focus on caring for our daughters. Allison became frail and weak and her physical growth slowed. It was quite noticeable. She barely complained as her daily medication intake increased to 42 pills. By the time she turned eight years old, we could wait no longer and her

kidney transplant was scheduled with me as her living donor.

In December 2007, Katie and Sydney stayed with our best friends, while I was taken to one hospital and Allison to another. Robert stayed with Allison at Seattle Children’s Hospital waiting for my kidney to be harvested and delivered to her operating room. After the transplant Robert and Allison remained at Children’s for almost two weeks. Upon Allie’s discharge, Robert returned to work and I stayed home from my job for several weeks to heal and to manage Allison’s extensive post-transplant care.

As Allison recovered and grew stronger, she had to drink a lot of water for her little body. We would encourage her by reminding her that she never had to go on dialysis because she got a transplant and water (lots of water) would keep her new kidney healthy.

After some time, the Blankenship family returned to their busy routines and the three sisters all experienced full childhoods. Jennifer was simply happy to embrace ‘busy’ and to live a somewhat normal life with one daughter who was post kidney transplant. However almost a decade after Allie’s transplant, a completely unexpected telephone call disrupted the Blankenship family’s ‘new’ normal once again.

When we got the call that our youngest daughter, Katherine, needed an appointment to discuss bad renal lab results, we immediately thought they had the wrong daughter. Allison was the one with kidney disease – not Katherine. But after our confusion cleared we took Katie in for

further testing. On May 5, 2016, we were told Katie was in End Stage Renal Failure and would likely need to be put on dialysis within a matter of weeks. It was a mixed blessing that we knew what that meant in the long term. Katie’s first questions were: Can I still go to college someday and can I still volunteer at Girl Scout Camp this summer?

Katie’s diet was immediately restricted and we started discussing dialysis. Because dialysis had always been what we worked to avoid with Allison, Katie had some serious concerns about what would happen next. Within a week of her diagnosis of kidney failure, Katie was diagnosed with Celiac Disease. The two diets conflicted making her nutrition management a major challenge. There were no arguments from Katie as she adjusted to the diets and medications. She was an expert already having seen her sister go through it all ... but the knowledge of what was to come was a mixed blessing.

One bright spot during these difficult days was the reassurance that given COTA’s lifetime commitment, we were able to focus on caring for Katie rather than the fear of how to pay for the mountain of financial challenges ahead.

In March 2017 a COTA representative travelled to Puyallup, Washington, to work with new volunteers and to offer a ‘refresher course’ for those volunteers who had raised funds for COTA in honor of Allison B nearly a decade earlier.

For almost two years, we tried to find Katie a living donor who was able to donate a kidney. While we waited, as happens to

most kidney patients, her health further declined rapidly. Before we knew it, Katie was having surgery to prepare for peritoneal dialysis. All through the journey, COTA was there to help us manage the financial end of this hurdle.

Then one day, on the way to Seattle Children’s for our dialysis training, we got the call. There was a kidney available. On September 29, 2017, Katie received her new kidney ... and her second chance at life. The gift of life is a miracle our family cherishes every day. We are grateful beyond words to the donor and his/her family.

Our gratitude also extends to COTA for providing a lifeline through our daughters’ transplant journeys, which has allowed us to focus on the priority of family. Reality continues to throw roadblocks _ like job loss and broken down cars. But with COTA we know, whatever comes our way, we will make it through to the other side.

Today, Allison attends Central Washington University where she is pursuing a degree in music education. She just recently sent her parents a message saying she had made the honor roll. Her hope for the future is to complete college, become a music teacher and be surrounded by good people while living a healthy life. Katie is finishing her senior year and has just applied to the University of Washington with a goal of helping others with her interest in psychology.

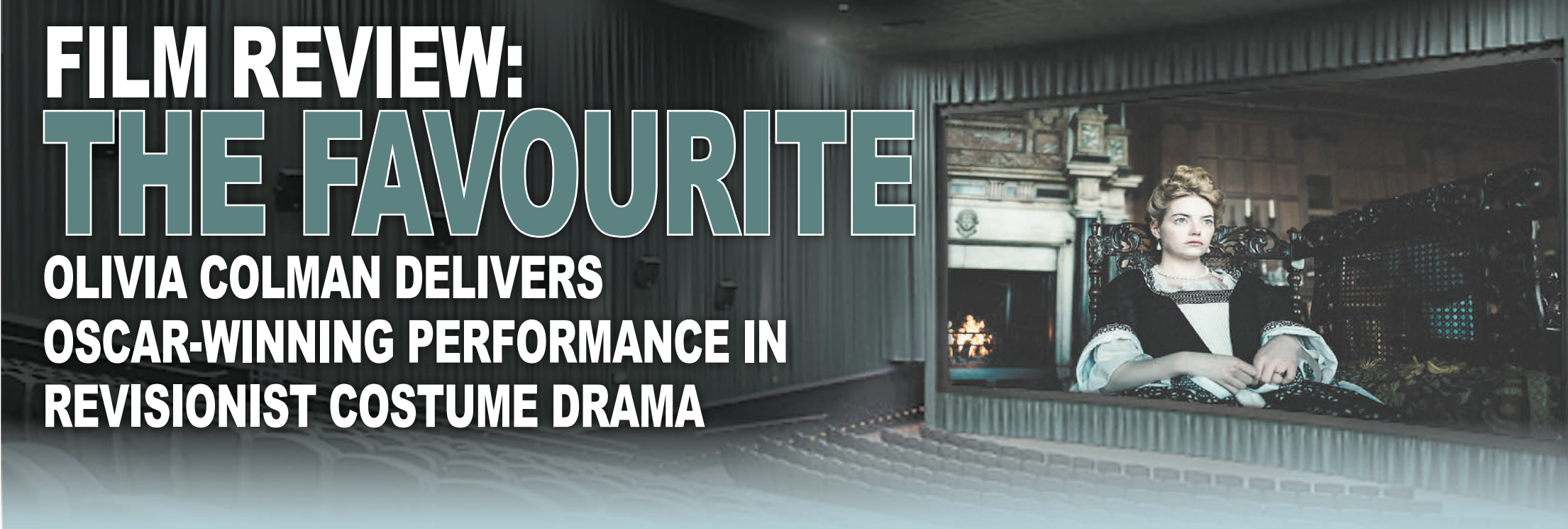
For more information about the Children’s Organ Transplant Association (COTA) or to find a COTA family in your area, please email kim@cota.org.

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PHOTOS BY JAY JOHNSON





FILM REVIEW: THE FAVOURITE

OLIVIA COLMAN DELIVERS OSCAR-WINNING PERFORMANCE IN REVISIONIST COSTUME DRAMA

By **Kam Williams**
Columnist

Queen Anne (1665-1714) was a sickly monarch whose dozen-year reign ran from 1702 to 1714. She was also married to Prince George of Denmark from 1683 until he passed away at Kensington Palace in 1708. Although Anne was unable to produce an heir, it wasn't from a lack of trying. She was pregnant 17 times, but most of her babies either miscarried or were stillborn, and the handful carried to term died during infancy. The Queen coped with the loss by raising 17 pet rabbits, one for each offspring, a curious way to grieve, indeed. Until now, Anne and George have been generally remembered as having been faithful and devoted partners. But you can add The Favourite to the long list of revisionist sagas which deign to impose present-day values while ignoring

long-standing, conventional wisdom.

So, a British history buff is more likely to be frustrated by The Favourite than your average fan of the costume drama genre. The carefully-constructed crowd-pleaser was nominated for ten Academy Awards, including Best Picture, Best Director (Yorgos Lanthimos) and Best Original Screenplay.

The three female leads in this lesbian love triangle were nominated, too, although Olivia Colman landed the movie's sole Oscar for her memorable performance as domineering Queen Anne. Rachel Weisz and Emma Stone co-star opposite Colman, as a duchess and a servant vying for the manipulative monarch's affections.

At the point of departure, we find Lady Sarah (Weisz) already attending to every need of an obese queen crippled by gout. The two are also secretly

conducting a passionate, forbidden affair.

But when Abigail (Stone) arrives on the scene, Anne's head is turned by the attractive young maid. A subtle power struggle ensues, as each of the subjects does her best to become the queen's constant companion. Meanwhile, Anne's real-life hubby, George, is conveniently absent entirely from the tale.

A fabricated romantic romp for folks more concerned about a historical drama's entertainment value than its commitment to the facts.

Excellent (4 stars)
Rated R for profanity, nudity and graphic sexuality
Running time: 119 minutes
Production Companies: Element Pictures / Scarlet Films / Film4 Productions / Waypoint Entertainment
Distributor: Fox Searchlight Pictures

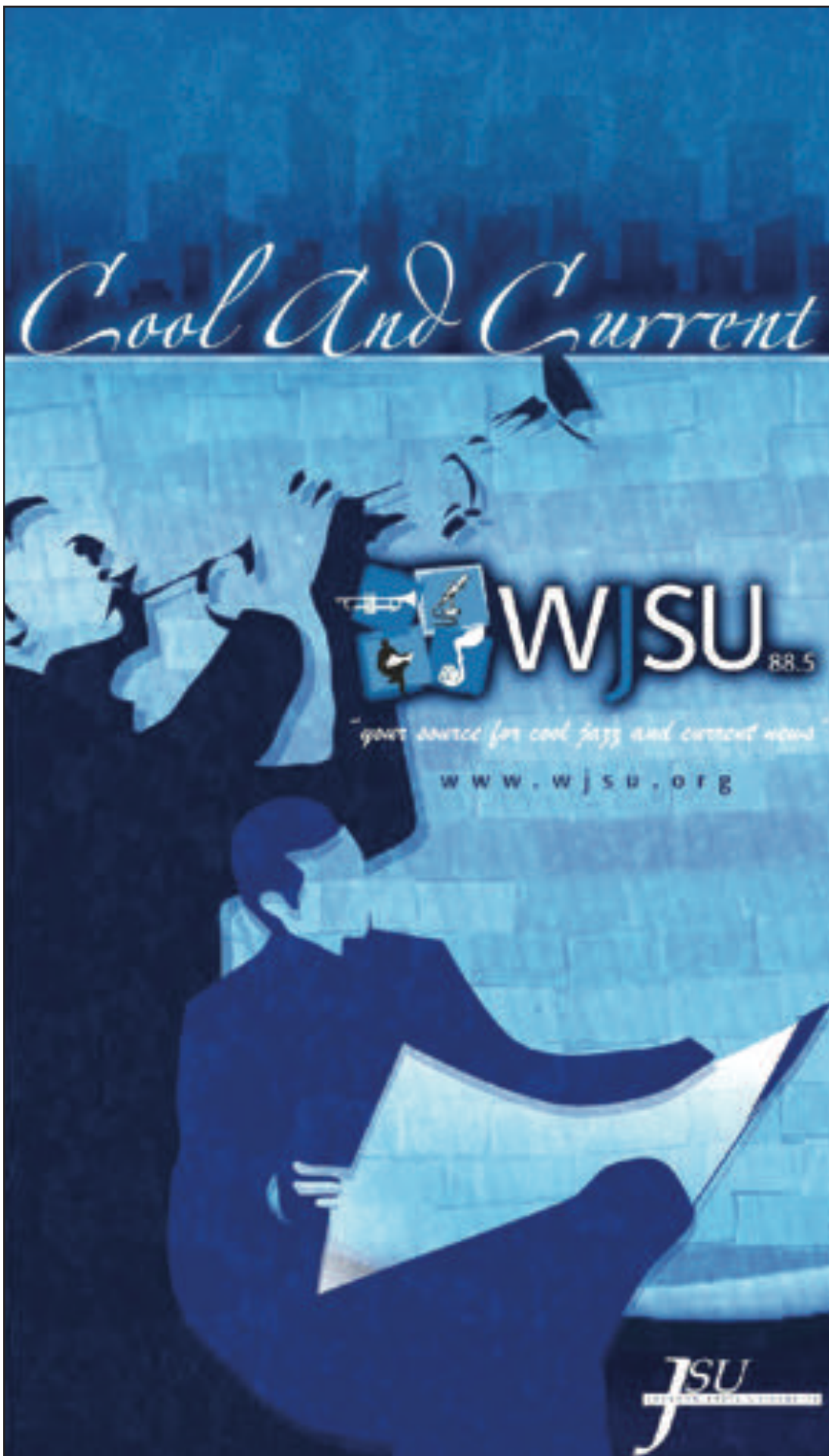


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By **Kam Williams**
Columnist

Captain Marvel (PG-13 for action, violence and brief suggestive language) 21st installment in the Marvel Cinematic Universe stars Brie Larson in the title role as a former fighter pilot turned superhero who finds herself at the center of the maelstrom when a galactic conflict erupts on Earth between two alien races. Cast includes Samuel L. Jackson, Gemma Chan, Annette Bening and Djimon Hounsou.

Independent & foreign films
An Elephant Sitting Still (Unrated) The late Hu Bo wrote and directed this adaptation of his short story chronicling the serendipitous series of events inspiring four strangers (Yu Zhang, Yuchang Peng, Uvin Wang and Congxi Li) to board a bus for a long-distance trip to the city of Manzhouli's zoo to see a mythical, motionless elephant ostensibly oblivious to the outside world. With Jing Guo, Wei Kong and Xiang Rong Dong. (In Mandarin with subtitles)

Boy Band (Unrated) Musical comedy chronicling the reunion of the members of the Heartthrob Boyz a celebrated singing group trying to mount a comeback a couple of decades after their last hit. Co-starring Jerry O'Connell, Gilbert Gottfried, Steve Agee, Seth Herzog and Jordan Carlos.

Ferrante Fever (Unrated) Reverential biopic about Italian author Elena Ferrante, whose "Neapolitan Novels" sold 10 million copies across 50+ countries, leading her to be named one of the 100 Most Influential People in the World by *Time Magazine*. Featuring commentary by Hillary Clinton, Jonathan Franzen and Roberto Saviano. (In French, English and Italian with subtitles)

Gloria Bell (R for sexuality, nudity, profanity and drug use) Julianne Moore star as the title character in this romance drama as a free-spirited divorcee who unexpectedly finds a new love (John Turturro) at an L.A. nightclub. Ensemble cast includes Michael Cera, Rita Wilson, Sean

Astin, Brad Garrett and Jeanne Tripplehorn.

I'm Not Here (Unrated) Suspense thriller about a man (J.K. Simmons) haunted by his past who reflects about a specific event in his life to try to understand how he ended up alone. Support cast includes Sebastian Stan, Maika Monroe and Mandy Moore.

The Kid (R for profanity and violence) Fact-based Western about a young boy (Jake Schur) who witnessed the historic showdown between Sheriff Pat Garrett (Ethan Hawke) and the infamous outlaw, Billy the Kid (Dane DeHaan). With Vincent D'Onofrio, Leila George and Adam Baldwin.

The Sex Trip (Unrated) Supernatural comedy about a shallow womanizer (Marc Crumpton) who finds himself magically transformed into a woman (Jade Ramsey) after rejecting a witch's (Eve Sigall) request for a kiss. With Louis Mandylor, Jim Hanks (Tom's brother) and Rebecca Grant.

Cryptogram

A cryptogram is a puzzle where a sentence is encoded by substituting the actual letters of the sentence with different letters. The challenge of the puzzle is to 'decode' the sentence to reveal the original English sentence. We have provided a few of the decoded letters to help get you started.

Hint: Quote by Paul Newman

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
J																									

_____R_____A_____R_____

Z E R P Y D T F H J R Z A N J F P V I D

A N J T T A Q R P Y H P P V J D P Y A Q X W I

A J A Q J A Q C J A X X I H H L W P

X W I O Y C V I D Z O Z X O R P Y

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Sudoku

The challenge is to fill every row across, every column down, and every 3x3 box with the digits 1 through 9. Each 1 through 9 digit must appear only once in each row across, each column down, and each 3x3 box.

7	4			9	1			
	8							
6				4				3
			6					
	9			3				
				1		7		2
1				6			2	
		2			8	9	7	
		6			2		1	

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(For puzzle answer keys, see page 15)

Crossword Puzzle

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8
9				10		11		
12						13		
14				15	16		17	
			18			19		
	20	21						
22				23			24	25
26								
27			28		29	30		
31					32			
33						34		

ACROSS

- Underdone
- Young Men's Christian Association
- Buy things
- Royalty
- Tape
- Brake
- Old-fashioned Dads
- United Kingdom
- Couple
- Humble
- Cavity
- Scarf
- _____evated railroad
- Married woman
- Enjoy
- Dolt
- Drug doer
- Girl detective Drew
- Volcano
- Walk

DOWN

- Invitation abbreviation
- Capital of Western Samoa
- Cincinnati baseball team
- Compass point
- Affirmation
- Not glossy
- Mob
- Dog food brand
- Repeat
- China stone
- Aluminum (abbr.)
- Compass point
- Raise
- Made of oak
- Sad
- Brief
- Stone
- Eye infection
- Time period
- Telegraphic signal

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CSLC 9th Annual Scholarship Essay Writing winners announced

‘Stay away from dream killers!’ scholarship banquet keynote warns

The Mississippi Link Newswire

When Elder Willie A. Hodges gave his rousing “Stay away from dream killers” keynote speech Feb. 23, more than the intended students were listening. Many adults took his advice as well.

Hodges addressed the Community Students Learning Center’s 9th Annual Scholarship Awards Banquet in which the first, second and third place CSLC 2019 Essay Writing Contest winners were announced. The winners are First Place: Kayla Redmond; Second Place: Nickolas Horton; and Third Place: Shakenya Hester. Horton will be a graduating junior entering college this fall.

“We are proud of all of our essay participants,” said Beulah Greer, CSLC executive director. “And, Elder Hodges’ message to them and all of us was right on the mark because we all can benefit from staying away from dream killers.”

Janet Anderson Clarke said she thoroughly enjoyed the banquet and that when she heard Elder Hodges’ advice, her first reaction in her spirit was: “Listen to him children!” “I took everything in to be true and I encourage my grandsons to do the same. Not to worry about what others do. You put God first and do what you know is right.” Clarke is the grandmother of last year’s first-place winner, Kordel Carter.

CSLC Board, the CSLC Advisory Board, staff and students are extremely grateful to the sponsors and patrons as well as those who purchased tickets for their kind and generous support of scholarships and educational services.

“We could not have done it without their assistance,” said Board President/Founder Leslie Greer. He also announced that all the students will receive monetary awards for participating in the essay writing contest. “As I have been told, those books are very expensive in college,” he emphasized.

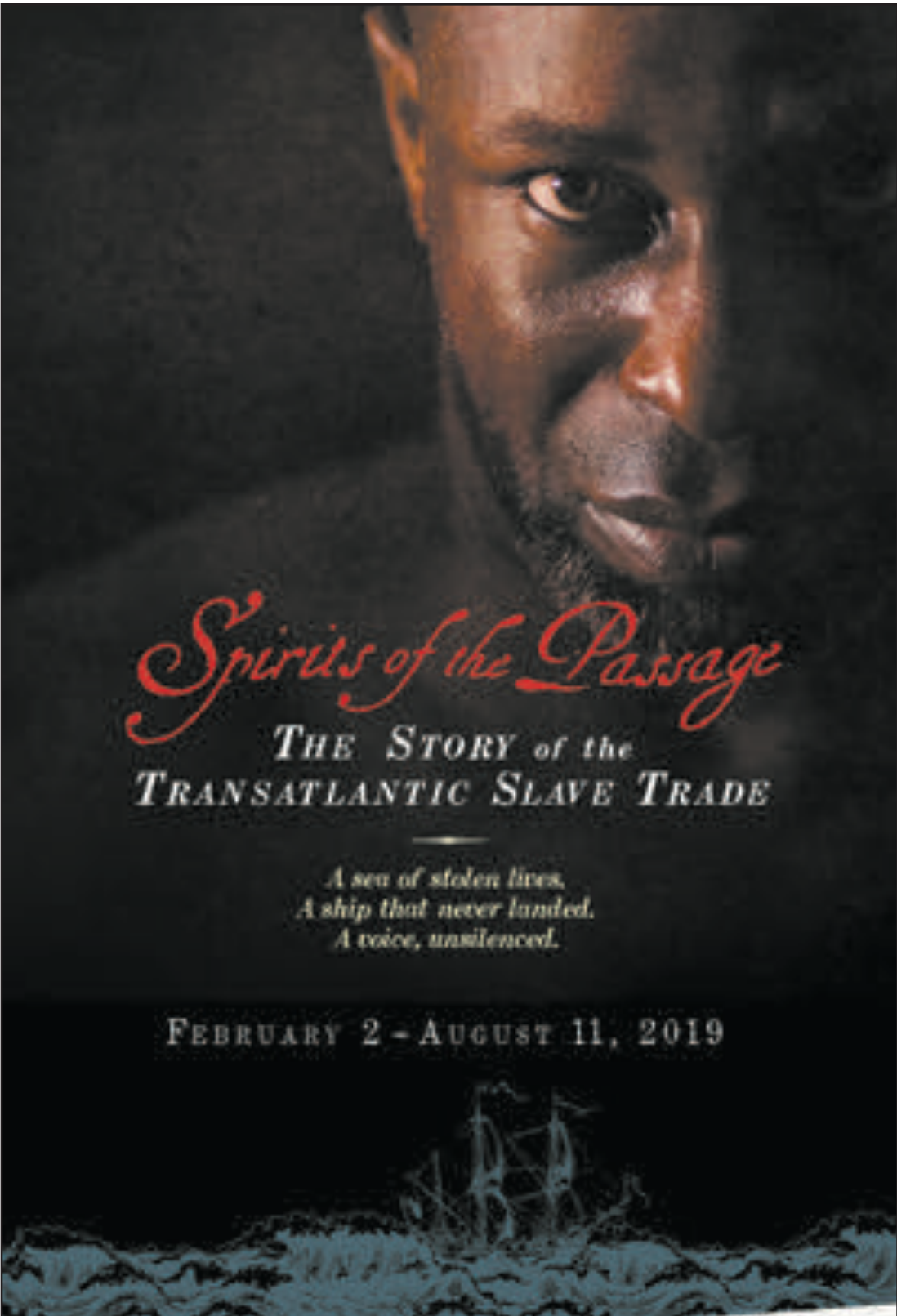


Kayden Collier and Aaliyah Greer reciting CSLC motto and creed.



Keynote speaker Elder Willie A. Hodges

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CSLC





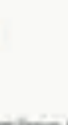
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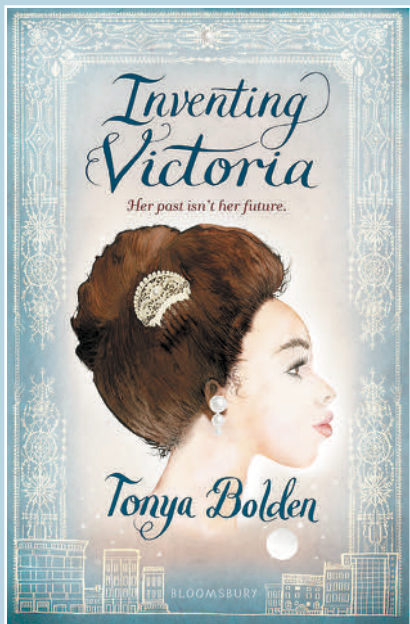


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BOOK REVIEW:

“INVENTING VICTORIA”

BY TONYA BOLDEN

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By Terri Schlichenmeyer
Columnist

You can be anything you want to be!

That’s what you were told, growing up: you could do anything, try everything, and be anybody you wanted to be, if you tried. Set your sights on something, and it was yours – so in the new novel “Inventing Victoria” by Tonya Bolden, a young girl wants a better life.

Five-year-old Essie was embarrassed half to death.

High in her attic room, she could still hear the noises of the

“uncles” that her Mamma was entertaining but the “uncles” were all white men, which made no sense and Essie hated it. It should’ve come as no surprise to anybody that she wanted to go live at Ma Clara’s house, where she never had to worry about food or “uncles.”

At thirteen, Essie had enough.

Ma Clara had helped nourish her mind and her soul, and Essie knew the time was right for her to leave Mamma by taking a job at Abby Bowfield’s boardinghouse. There, she made her first friend and she dared to

dream of a happy future – as if, for a girl whose Mamma escaped from slavery, that wasn’t impossible.

And then the impossible happened.

Miss Dorcas Vashon, who had Room 4 at Miss Abby’s on permanent hold, took a liking to Essie and made her an offer she couldn’t refuse: She’d take Essie away from Savannah and make her into a lady, teach her, form her, correct her speech, and fix her slouch. In exchange, Essie would have to give up everything she’d ever known.

And so, a girl named Essie stepped away from Miss Abby’s boardinghouse one day, and became Victoria.

At eighteen, Victoria tried not to look back at her life. Doing so was “excessively ill-bred” but she couldn’t help it. With the guidance of Dorcas Vashon, she’d reinvented herself, but there were so many things she didn’t know: how, for example, could a new lady keep an old woman in her heart? How can a lady remember where she came from, without ruining where she was going?

How could Victoria keep living the lie she’d been given?

Absolutely, “Inventing Victoria” is a familiar story with a different twist: more than a century ago, it was a play. Half that, it was a movie. Now, this Pygmalion-like tale is set in the years after the Civil War, and your teen is going to love it.

Not only is it a great story, author Tonya Bolden also creates settings that invite historical figures to pass through her characters’ lives. Frederick Douglass is here. James Wormley is mentioned, as is

O.S.B. Wall and John Mercer Langston, and Elizabeth Keckley makes dresses for Victoria. These people flow through the tale like it’s an everyday thing to nineteenth-century folks but for modern readers, Bolden makes their presence feel like visits from royalty.

Relevant, timely, and quietly informative, for a 12-to-17-year-old who enjoys gentle adventure plus romance wrapped in a fairy tale, this book is perfect. For her, “Inventing Victoria” is a book she’ll want to be near.

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Hinds County School District Weekly Update

ENGAGING-EMPOWERING-ENSURING-EXCELLENCE

GRI recognized as Distinguished School by National STEM nonprofit organization



Gary Road Intermediate Recognized as Distinguished School by National STEM Nonprofit Organization
Hinds County School Only One of Two in the State to Receive National Recognition from Project Lead The Way

Raymond, Miss. — Hinds County School District (HCSD) is proud to announce that Gary Road Intermediate (GRI) has been recognized as a Project Lead The Way (PLTW) Distinguished School for the 2018-2019 academic year. GRI is one of only 241 elementary schools in the country—and only one two schools in the state—to receive this distinction, which is designed to honor districts and schools committed to increasing student access, engagement, and achievement in their PLTW programs.

“This recognition is evidence of the hard work and commitment that the faculty and administration at GRI show every day,” said Dr. Delesicia Martin, HCSD superintendent. “As a district, we have integrated science, technology, engineering, and mathematics into programs at all of our schools through initiatives like Project Lead The Way, career academies, and our 1-to-1 Technology Initiative. This distinction is proof those efforts are paying off for our students.”

GRI’s has “achieved exemplary results” from its PLTW Launch™ Program, which is designed to “empower students to thrive in an evolving world.” To be eligible for the designation, GRI had to offer at least two PLTW Launch modules at each grade level and have more than 75 percent of the student body participating during the 2017-18 school year.

“We are extremely excited about being recognized as a PLTW Distinguished School, which is a testament to our teachers’ commitment to preparing students for long-term academic success,” said Ashley Green, principal at GRI. Studies show that students decide as early as elementary school whether they like, and think they are good at, math and science. Whether designing a car safety belt or building digital animations based on their own short stories, PLTW Launch students engage in critical and creative thinking, build teamwork skills, and develop a passion for and confidence in STEM subjects.

“It is a great honor to recognize Gary Road Intermediate for their commitment to students,” said Vince Berman, president and CEO of PLTW. “They are a model for what school should look like, and they should be very proud of ensuring students have the knowledge and skills to be career ready and successful on any career path they choose.”

PLTW is a nonprofit organization that provides a transformative learning experience for PreK-12 students and teachers across the U.S., empowering students to develop and apply in-demand, transportable skills by exploring real-world challenges. Through PLTW’s pathways in computer science, engineering, and biomedical science, students not only learn technical skills, but also learn to solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate, and collaborate. The organization also provide teachers with the training, resources, and support they need to engage students in real-world learning.

“GRI is a shining example of the academic rigor and experiential learning in our district,” said Martin. “We encourage parents and our partner to visit all of our schools to better understand the ways we are investing in technology and interactive learning environments that will prepare our students for the future.”

For more information on Hinds County School District, including enrollment for the 2019-2020 academic year, contact John Neal at jneal@hinds.k12.ms.us or 601.857.7008.

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About Hinds County School District
Hinds County School District is a collaborative environment where we explore the world, experience authentic learning, enhance our character, envision our dreams, pursue excellence and celebrate success. HCSD serves more than 5,000 students from the communities of Bolton, Byram, Edwards, Raymond, Terry, Leamed and Utica.

HCSD board members recognized by District schools



BEEMS: Robbie Anderson, board member and LaShurn William, principal



RES: Robbie Anderson, board member and Bobby Taylor, principal



BMS & MSRC: Ben Lundy, principal; Yvette Scott, assistant principal; Kimberly Davenport, principal



RHS & CMS: Lorenzo Grimes, principal; Tim Barnett, board member; Peggy Seaton-Cain, teacher



GRE & THS: Charlie Bruce, assistant principal; Matt Scott, assistant principal; Carolyn Samuel, board member; Cliff Newell, principal



GRI: Ashley White, assistant principal; Linda Laws, board member; Ashley Green, principal



UEMS: LaTasha Roby, Assistant Principal; Dr. Linda Laws, Board Member; and Dr. Will Smith, Principal

HCSD names Bus Driver of the Month (January 2019)

Cleophus White, Bus Driver of Bus 86 (BEEMS) has been driving a school bus for three years for Durham Services and the Hinds County School District.



Pictured L-R: Curtis Washington, Transportation director; Cleophus White, bus driver –BEEMS; and Robbie Anderson, board member