

Dedicated to Breast Cancer Awareness Month


Celebrating our 27<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Recognizing Domestic Violence Month


‘Cares,’ a virtual breast cancer/domestic violence forum hosted by Judge Westbrook

Numbers on the rise  
Men get breast cancer too

HOSTED BY:  
JUDGE LATRICE WESTBROOKS




TUESDAY OCTOBER 27, 2020 - 6:00 P.M.



Cares FOR THE Community

A VIRTUAL FORUM :  
BREAST CANCER & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS



By Gail M. Brown  
Contributing Writer

The world has been gripped by the horrendous coronavirus pandemic. Yet, it is still important not to lose sight of other serious issues such as breast cancer and domestic violence.

The Honorable Mississippi Court of Appeals Judge Latrice Westbrook recently helped to keep those issues in focus by hosting an informative virtual community forum via Facebook Live titled, “Cares for the Community.” The forum invited experts and witnesses from around the state to help increase awareness in observance of October as both National Breast Cancer Awareness Month and Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

“This week’s Breast Cancer and Domestic Violence Virtual Forum was an opportunity to provide our community with resources and information of the ills of breast cancer and the impact of domestic violence in our community,” Westbrook told *The Mississippi Link* in a statement before press time Wednesday evening, Oct. 28.

“Our world has been rocked by the unexpected and unprecedented 270,000 lives-and-counting that have been taken from us by the assault of COVID-19. Then, according to the National Breast Cancer Foundation it is projected that ‘in 2020, an estimated 276,480 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed in women in the U.S.’ Coupled that with the sad commentary of the [rising] domestic violence statistics including assault, bullying, date rape, gun violence, sexual abuse, sex trafficking and stalking, the quality of life is dismal and life expectancy is cut short for far too many in our

African-America communities and for people of color.”

According to the CDC, about 1 in 4 women and nearly 1 in 10 men have experienced contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner during their lifetime.

Westbrook’s virtual community awareness forum consisted of several outstanding panelists who were advocates, practitioners and survivors with firsthand knowledge and experiences. They included the following individuals and their topics: Pamela Lee, Ph.D. (Health Awareness Overview), a clinical nurse educator and RN for 19 years; Shonda Deloach (breast cancer experience) a native of Starkville, MS and a member of law enforcement; and Velma Warren-Givens (Domestic Violence Experience) a native of Crawford, Mississippi.

It was also pointed out during the forum that men are at risk for breast cancer too, even though it is rare. According to the National Breast Cancer Foundation, Inc., “In 2020, an estimated 2,620 men will be diagnosed with breast cancer this year in the U.S.”

A local pastor appreciated the informative forum.

“Even in the midst of this pandemic, women and men should remain proactive and concerned about the risks of breast cancer,” said Pastor Audrey Lynne Hall, who is praising God for her 10th-year as a breast cancer overcomer. “I urge everyone to not allow this pandemic to keep you from getting your annual examination. We need more awareness regarding this dreadful disease,” Hall stressed.

Westbrooks

Continued on page 5

An anniversary message from the publisher:

27-year milestone

By Jackie Hampton  
Publisher

Celebrating 27 years of publishing is a great milestone and we are not taking this accomplishment for granted. God has blessed us with a wonderful audience of supporters and advertisers that continue to put their trust in us as we publish each week in our print edition and daily online and we take this opportunity to thank you for allowing us serve you.

For the past twelve years, we have dedicated our anniversary issue to National Breast Cancer Awareness which is celebrated the same month as our anniversary. 2020 has been a powerful reminder that we are all vulnerable.

Cancer can be devastating no matter where it attacks the body, but next to skin cancer, breast cancer is the second most diagnosed cancer among women in the United States.

Over the years, we have published stories about those that have survived and those that have succumbed. We look forward to the year where we can dedicate our anniversary issue to a world where there is no breast



Hampton

cancer.

The COVID-19 pandemic is also a powerful reminder that pandemics, like other catastrophes make us all vulnerable. Even though we cannot predict or prevent dangerous viruses from occurring, we must do our part to lessen the effect.

We must listen to experts

they tell us to not only do all we can to protect ourselves, but to protect others as well.

Like so many businesses, COVID-19 has had its’ effect on *The Mississippi Link* but the effects we have encountered are inconsequential when we think about lives that have been lost and those that have suffered because of severe illnesses due to this disease.

2020 has been a year like no other. I want to remind our readers the importance of voting in this election. Like so many have said, we must vote like our lives depend on it because our lives do depend on it; especially when we talk about health issues like breast and other cancers, COVID-19 and illnesses that today may be new but tomorrow will be pre-existing.


We must make sure we know the platforms on which our candidates are running, not only for president but for every state, local and county race. Let’s all so our part to protect our future. Take someone to the polls who may not otherwise bother to vote this year.

Milestone

Continued on page 5

Linda Letson’s journey to breast cancer survival

By Kenya Vardaman-Ramirev  
Mississippi Link Intern – JSU Journalism Student



Patrick Swayze endeared us to him in the classic movie, *Dirty Dancing* – melting every family’s heart with every swing of his hips. We were all awash in empathy for him when he again appeared before us, slight and frail, ravaged in illness, yet still fighting. Cancer destroys those in its path – from close family to dear friends, even beloved celebrities. Chadwick Boseman, another of our favorites, was recently taken and we are still left with a wealth of award winning work, yet moving and reminding us.

Cancer is hated. Cancer is an



Letson

ineradicable evil that menaces masses. The hashtag, #cancer-Sucks, returns a collection of social media content that spins round a painful panorama of the affected. It is estimated that,

each year, more than a million people are diagnosed with cancer in the United States.

Cancer is cruel. But, breast cancer is most cruel for its ability to leave children motherless.

Compared to the national average, Mississippi’s breast cancer mortality rate is the second highest in America, with 429 women succumbing to the disease, annually. But, according to the Mississippi Comprehensive Cancer Control State Plan 2018 – 2022: “As a result of risk reduction, education, early detection advances and cutting-edge treatments from research, cancer rates are declining for the first time in history.”

There are more than 3.8 million breast cancer survivors in the United States. And, the inspiring stories of survival abound.

Linda Letson, a BellSouth Telecommunications retiree, with three children, is also a 12-year breast cancer survivor.

Letson  
Continued on page 5



# Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated, Alpha Delta Zeta Chapter, Charter Day Celebration

Mississippi Link Newswire

The Premier ladies of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated, Alpha Delta Zeta Chapter are pleased to announce 82 years of service to the Jackson Metropolitan area since its chartering October 14, 1938. The chapter will host a virtual celebration Saturday, November 7, 2020, to commemorate this epic time.

“As we look back on our legacy, we should forge ahead in our unwavering commitment to the sorority’s founding principles of Scholarship, Service, Sisterhood, and Finer Womanhood. We know we could not have made it this far without the support of the sisterhood, partners and members of the Jackson community,” says Latisha M. Skinner, chapter president.

The membership of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated includes 125,000+ college-educated, dynamic, community service driven, diverse and professional women. The benefits of membership include opportunities for professional development, personal development and sisterhood. Members are active in their respective communities and hold dear the ideals of Service, Scholarship, Sisterhood and Finer Womanhood.

*Valerie Hollingsworth Baker, Centennial International president, Washington, DC., Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated.*



Left to Right: Julia Stutts Polk, Estelle G. Young, Lulellia W. Harrison, Southern Region director, Jennie O. Johnson, Mollye Young, Mable Roseman Sims, Birdie Graves, Helen Allen Cooper and Frances Alexander (inset)



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® Register Marks of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, an Association of Independent Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans.







# EVERY TIME WE REINVENT TAHOE, WE REINVENT THE CATEGORY.

## THE MOST VERSATILE AND ADVANCED TAHOE THE WORLD HAS EVER SEEN.

We started with the best-selling full-size SUV. Then we reinvented it to make it better. The All-New 2021 Tahoe. With more passenger space and class-leading cargo volume. The available first-in-class Four-Corner Air Ride Adaptive Suspension for exceptional on- and off-road proficiency. Plus a list of never-before-seen technology, advanced safety features and infotainment options to help you stay safe, informed and entertained on the longest journeys. The totally reinvented All-New 2021 Tahoe. Still the best. Except now, it's even better.

**FIND NEW ROADS™**

**CHEVROLET** 



U. S. Congressman Bennie Thompson . . .

Sample Ballot and Motor  
to Meet the Voter Event

OCT  
31



MOTOR  
TO MEET  
THE VOTER

★ HINDS COUNTY MOTORCADE ★

WITH LEGENDARY  
BLUES MAN  
BOBBY RUSH



MEET AT 3234 MEDGAR EVERS BLVD JACKSON, MS  
LINE-UP 9:30 AM | DEPART 10 AM

MEET THE CANDIDATES

Bennie Thompson - US Congress, Second District

Judge Latrice Westbrook - MS Supreme Court Central District, Post 1


Mike Espy - US Senate

RALLY | 11:30 AM  
GROVE PARK  
JACKSON, MS

FREE FOOD | MASKS | SOCIAL DISTANCING REQUIRED

PAID FOR BY FRIENDS OF BENNIE THOMPSON


Sample General Election Ballot  
STATE OF MISSISSIPPI  
HINDS COUNTY  
Tuesday, November 3, 2020



For United States President and Vice President

DEMOCRAT


☒ Joseph R. Biden Jr. for President  
And Kamala D. Harris for Vice President



For United States Senate

DEMOCRAT


☒ Mike Espy



For United States House Of Representatives  
2nd Congressional District

DEMOCRAT

☒ Bennie G.Thompson



Nonpartisan Judicial Election  
For Supreme Court Justice  
Supreme Court District 1 (Central)  
Position 1

☒ Latrice Westbrook

STATEWIDE

Statewide Ballot Measure 1  
Initiated by Petition and Alternative by  
Legislature

Initiative Measure No. 65. Should Mississippi allow qualified patients with debilitating medical conditions, as certified by Mississippi licensed physicians, to use medical marijuana?

Legislative Budget Office Fiscal Analysis for Initiative 65:

The overall cost to Mississippi for the first year is estimated to be \$11,068,150. The anticipated expenses for the first year to implement a medical marijuana program is \$24,068,150 (Plants – seeds to Sale: \$5,000,000; Licensing, Monitoring, Inspection: \$16,220,150; and Cost to Collect Revenue: \$2,848,000). The anticipated revenue is \$13,000,000 (User ID Cards: \$2,500,000; Commercial Licenses: \$500,000 and sales fee at 7 percent: \$10,000,000).

The anticipated expenses for years following the first for a medical marijuana program is \$15,338,000 (Plants – seeds to Sale: \$5,000,000; Licensing, Monitoring, Inspection: \$8,756,000; and Cost to Collect Revenue: \$1,582,000). The anticipated revenue is \$26,000,000 (User ID Cards: \$5,000,000; Commercial Licenses: \$1,000,000 and sales fee at 7 percent: \$20,000,000). The overall annual revenue is anticipated to be \$10,662,000, all of which must be used to support the state marijuana program.

Alternative Measure No. 65 A, Shall Mississippi establish a program to allow the medical use of marijuana products by qualified persons with debilitating medical conditions?

Legislative Budget Office Fiscal Analysis for Initiative 65A:

The cost or revenue impact associated with this initiative is undeterminable.

VOTE FOR APPROVAL OF EITHER, OR AGAINST BOTH

☐ FOR APPROVAL OF EITHER Initiative No. 65 OR Alternative Measure No. 65 A

☐ AGAINST BOTH Initiative No. 65 AND Alternative Measure No. 65 A

AND VOTE FOR ONE

☐ FOR Initiative Measure No. 65

☐ FOR Alternative Measure 65 A

PAID FOR BY FRIENDS OF BENNIE THOMPSON

STATEWIDE

Statewide Ballot Measure 2  
House Concurrent Resolution No. 47

This amendment provides that to be elected Governor, or to any other statewide office, a candidate must receive a majority of the votes in the general election. If no candidate receives a majority of the votes, then a runoff election shall be held as provided by general law. The requirement of receiving the most votes in a majority of Mississippi House of Representatives districts is removed.


VOTE FOR ONE

☒ YES

☐ NO

Statewide Ballot Measure 3  
House Bill 1796 - Flag Referendum

Please vote 'Yes' or 'No' on whether the following design shall be the official Mississippi State Flag



☒ YES

☐ NO

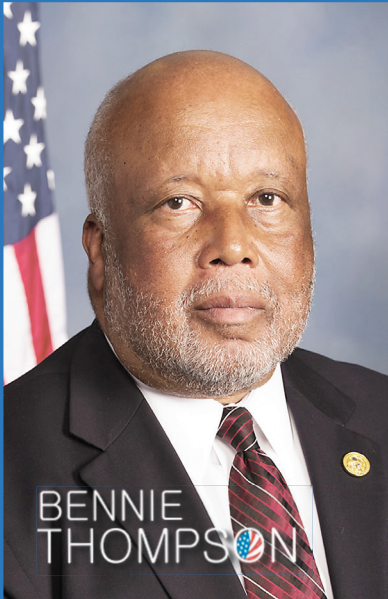
FOR A RIDE TO  
THE COURTHOUSE TO VOTE ABSENTEE:

OR

FOR A RIDE TO THE POLL  
ON ELECTION DAY:

1-866-4BENNIE (423-6643)

END OF BALLOT



BENNIE  
THOMPSON

November 3, 2020

RE-ELECT Bennie Thompson  
Don't forget to Vote!!!

bennie\_thompson@bellsouth.net  
(601)866-9100 or 1(866)423-6643  
benniethompson.com  
Paid for by Friends of Bennie Thompson



## Westbrooks

Continued from page 1

Westbrooks later stated, “We hoped the viewers gained a perspective that they do not have to suffer in isolation.” She emphasized that there are different support networks available for individuals battling breast cancer regardless of the station of life they find themselves in.

In her closing remarks at the end of the forum, Westbrooks said, “My thoughts and prayers go to all of you who are burdened with this disease. I believe we must remain vigilant in our support of those impacted by this disease. As a society, we must remain relentless in our pursuit of a cure, and I fundamentally believed that there is a cure for this disease and my faith won’t let me believe otherwise.” She also believe that while the disease process of breast

## Milestone

Continued from page 1

This week, we celebrate our 27th year anniversary but next week, let’s hope to celebrate how much our voting mattered in selecting leaders that care about our well-being and the well-being of the entire country.

We are humbled and thankful to have served you with effective coverage of news and information, as well as with advertisements

## Letson

Continued from page 1

Before her finding, Letson, a blonde beauty with long and curly locks, sat in a call center of sales people, building rapport and being of excellent service on each customer call. Then, one day, she gingerly fingered a suspicious mass in the fatty tissue of her breast and her routine would forever be changed. Letson is rooted in her memory of that day and reminisces: “I found a lump in my right breast in January, 2008. On February 4, 2008, I was diagnosed with Triple Negative breast cancer. Triple Negative is an aggressive subtype of breast cancer that isn’t hormone driven and doesn’t respond to hormone therapies. The words, ‘It is cancer,’ shocked me. The next two weeks were a blur to me – while I had a CAT scan, bone scan and a port put in for chemo. I was very fortunate that my cancer hadn’t spread outside my breast. I had four chemo treatments, two weeks apart. After the second treatment, my hair started falling out. So, I shaved my head. It seems vain now, but I had very long hair. And, I was upset about losing it. At the time, my hair felt like the only thing that I had any control over. I got a wig, but I didn’t wear it much. Not having any hair saved me a lot of money on shampoo and styling products. It definitely saved me a lot of time when I had to get ready to go somewhere. I had a mastectomy with immediate reconstruction April 29, 2008. In June, 2008, I started chemo again and had four more treatments with a different chemo. Throughout my cancer journey, I have been determined that cancer wouldn’t stop me from doing what I wanted to do. In March 2008, I chaperoned a school band trip to Disney World that I had already planned to do. I don’t recommend going on a school trip with a bunch of kids, but it was fun and I managed to do it. I also continued to work with a young horse that I was training. I was riding him, one evening, when he got spooked. When he turned around suddenly, I hit a tree and fell off. I was knocked unconscious and had a concussion. I also broke my shoulder, collarbone, tailbone, and 11 ribs. That was painful. After I healed from that accident, I had my final reconstruction surgery in September, 2008. At first, I saw my oncologist every three months, then every six months. And, now, I have graduated to once a year follow-up visits. So far, I am still cancer-free. Starting in 2009, I have attended the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure every year. And, I also attend my

cancer and domestic violence differ and carry their unique characteristics, the commonality of two is that they are a disease, both treatable through a process.

Westbrooks has served as a member of the Mississippi Court of Appeals District 2, Position 2 since Jan. 3, 2017. She earned her law degree from the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law in 1997. She was admitted to the Mississippi Bar that same year. A member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Westbrooks was named Outstanding Woman Lawyer of 2017 by the Mississippi Women Lawyers’ Association.

Westbrooks, a veteran in the field of law, is currently vying for election to the Mississippi Supreme Court, Central District, Post 1.

of products, businesses and services that have helped our readers to become more informed people.

With your continued trust and commitment, we look forward to many more years of serving out our motto, “Keepers of the Knowledge for People Who Speak the Truth Since 1993.”

I leave you with this, “Please Vote.”

local Relay for Life events, as a cancer survivor. I look at life differently now and I am thankful, every morning, when I wake up. God has truly blessed me. I had an outstanding team of doctors. It has been a hard journey, sometimes, but my faith in God and my ability to laugh has gotten me through everything.”

The implementation of The Mississippi Comprehensive Cancer Control State Plan 2018-2022 will continue the telling of breast cancer survival stories like Letson’s. This plan emphasizes risk reduction, education, early detection and new and innovative treatment to further force down the breast cancer rate in Mississippi. Women of greater risk for breast cancer include: women over the age of 50; women with a family history of breast cancer; women without children or those who start families after age 30; women who have had cancer in one breast; and overweight women. According to the American Cancer Society, women – in the aforementioned categories – can reduce breast cancer risk by staying active and at a healthy weight, as well as avoiding or limiting alcohol. Pregnant mothers can breastfeed to reduce risk. There are even medicines that can keep the odds of staying “breast cancer free” in one’s favor. Education and early detection is also possible with research and regularly scheduled mammograms.

The American Cancer Society provide reports that present the latest breast cancer research and detail the allocation of funds earmarked in eradicating breast cancer worldwide. Furthermore, technological advancement is aggressively pushing forward a cure for breast cancer. A new treatment, Intraoperative Radiation Therapy, which exposes the breast cancer tumor to radiation during surgery, is a premier radiation therapy offered by Vision RT. And, the drug, T-DM1, has just been approved, by the USDA, for use in combating breast cancer.

The year 2020 has been a solar oscillation of political insurrection and pandemic infection, but it has also been one of great progress. Cancer levels are at an all-time low and we are closer to a cure. With the faith of breast cancer survivors, like Letson, and the new and innovative measures and treatments set forth by national agencies and organizations, we have more hope for a cancer-free future.

# Congratulations Jackie Hampton and The Mississippi Link

by H Ralph Samuels Jr.

For twenty-seven years you’ve been in print  
Championing the voice of the people  
And though some thought you wouldn’t last this long  
What you’ve accomplished is quite unbelievable

The information shared and articles that are read  
continue to provoke minds to think  
The opinions and news  
and solid book reviews  
are trademarks of The Mississippi Link

You introduce us to important people  
and bring them right into our homes  
And as we read their stories, we give God the glory  
Look where He has brought you from

A west Jackson girl who has always been proud  
to be a product of Jackson’s Jim Hill  
Then Spelman and Lincoln were matriculating stops  
to help shape the dreams you would fulfill

Your parents equipped you just for this task  
by providing you with a great education  
And now you share knowledge and skills to others  
That is the “pay it forward” kind of equation

You’re a strong black woman whose made her mark  
In a world where inequality has shown  
You can’t just be good as but must be better than the rest  
or in journalism you’ll never be known

You’ve made sure the mission is first and foremost  
and your readers can all plainly see  
“Keepers of the knowledge  
for people who speak the truth”  
The Mississippi Link since 1993

So here is to you and the publication you love  
May God continue to bless all the pages  
Every paragraph, picture, advertisement and line  
And provide subscribers of all colors and ages

©2020 H Ralph Samuels, Jr.  
“The Name Inspires The Pen”

# Despite COVID-19 and suppression tactics – Jackson absentee voting at record pace

By Leon Williams  
Contributing Writer

With less than a week remaining before election day, an already exhausted U.S. electorate continues to aggressively participate in the election process, showing no indication of abatement. The same is true of local Jackson voters who seem to have internalized the right to vote and theoretically weaponized it as a means of empowerment.

Technically there is no early voting in the State of Mississippi. However, the state does allow absentee voting for citizens age 65 or older, or who have a permanent disability, or who cannot be present to vote on election day. The guidelines are a little confusing because absentee voters have the option to mail in their ballot or vote in person at the circuit clerk’s office. Those who meet the required conditions can cast their ballots up until three days before election day, November 3.

This year in particular, voters are facing an onslaught of converging negative forces. The world in general, and Mississippi in particular, is confronted with a highly infectious and elusive



Absentee voters at Circuit Clerk’s Office in Jackson, MS Oct. 27 PHOTOS BY LEON WILLIAMS

disease known as COVID-19 which has already infected over 120,000 Mississippi residents and sadly taken the lives of almost 3,300 souls. Additionally,

escalating racial strife, economic blight and political tribalism have gripped the nation, sparking national protests and the rise of white supremacist organiza-

tions.

Even though these conditions blanket the entire nation, black Americans in particular, have borne the brunt of the collective

negative forces. However, their response has been to organize socially and politically with the formation of the Black Lives Matter movement and political



action organizations.

Unfortunately, Mississippi is considered the state that has made the least amount of progress relative to African Americans. Voter ID laws, disenfranchisement of former felons and negative redistricting have been reasonably effective in diminishing African-American political and economic power.

Although Mississippi has the most restrictive voting guidelines in the nation, all indicators point to a significantly positive change for African-American voters on the horizon. In 2016 there were 103,000 total absentee ballots cast. So far this year 170,000 ballots have been requested and nearly 143,000 have already been returned. Though these are not exclusively African-American voters, historically, African Americans have voted absentee at consistently higher rates than others.

It is predicted the increase in African-American participation in the voting process will continue to be manifested on election day, November 3. The impact may permanently change the future trajectory of Mississippi politics.





## Education's future is at stake in the 2020 election

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Newswire Senior Correspondent



Dr. Naomi Johnson Booker, the founder of the Philadelphia-based charter school management corporation, Global Academies, is adamant about the importance of getting out the vote. Booker, whose academy scholars program establishes 8th graders as passport-holding citizens, who have travel the globe on learning excursions as they prepare for leadership roles, said the future of education is among the more significant concerns going into the 2020 election.

"Although African Americans have a 'seat at the table,' we do not have enough of a voice in government to make a difference. But our power rests within our vote like a seed waiting to germinate," Booker declared.

"We have got to exercise that power at the local, state and national levels for real change to happen. Every black and brown person has the right to be part of the decisions that impact our country. And so, to do that, we have to show our power at the voting booth."

Booker points out that regardless of how high the stakes are in this year's presidential election, local races are just as important for families with school-age children.

"Systemic racism in public education relative to funding and fairness can only be overcome by electing candidates who stand for justice and equity and removing those whose records show they don't," Booker demanded.

Karen Gross, a former college president who once served as a senior policy advisor to the U.S. Department of Education, told BlackPressUSA that the election's impact on education would be profound across the entire early childhood through adult education pipeline.



She pointed out significant differences between President Donald Trump and Democratic Nominee Joe Biden and the impact that they would have on children.

"The high-profile engagement of the Secretary of Education in policy-making across government is critically important. Under the current administration, the Secretary of Education has been missing in action, especially related to the pandemic and school reopening and closing," Gross remarked.

"Under a Biden/Harris term, education and its secretary will have a high profile and will be deeply engaged in a range of issues including student success, student mental health and educational needs across other disciplines."

Gross added that there's currently a push for privatizing education, focusing on charter schools and religious schools and not enough attention to public education, especially for young children.

She believes a Biden/Harris term would recognize the critical values of public education, including the need to pay attention to all students' equity.

Mental health, addressing student progression to post-secondary education, and appreciation of students' lives outside of school, are also vital educational

components voters should consider.

"The debates were a sharp example of what is terrible for children – not understanding how fighting and yelling and name-calling affect students and trigger trauma in some instances," Gross said.

"If we are to help all children, we need to role model for all children – positive role models."

Jason Llorenz, the vice president of Communications at Leadership for Educational Equity, said building a diverse pipeline of leaders "that reflect our communities and values is critically important to the continued progress of our country and central to the work of Leadership for Educational Equity."

"Supporting values-based, equity-driven leaders to assume political power at the highest level in this is a long-overdue step," said Llorenz.

"Women, Latinos and black Americans have been civically leading our communities for generations but are completely underrepresented in elected office."

"While the civic and political landscape in the United States hasn't kept pace with our demographics, it has been changing. Instead of serving as faithful electors for others, minority communities are stepping up and winning elections to address

the broken systems that perpetuate inequity in our country."

Michael Miller, the CEO of VPN Online, offered that whoever wins the election will dictate how to spend the budget and what to prioritize.

"In education, Trump will create a more privatized charter school, thereby lessening the need for an education budget," Miller stated.

"The idea is to promote private charters so they can fund their school. Of course, this will leave most of the decision-making in the private owners' hands, and whatever they decide will dictate what will happen to the country's education system."

He continued:

"On the other hand, Biden has proposed an educational plan that will remove private charter and promote free K12 education and free two years of community college. The program also reduces student loan payment, cutting it down from 10 percent to 5 percent.

"Furthermore, the plan also lowers student loans for anyone who works for the public schools. This will encourage more people to look for a career in that field. Whoever wins the election will promote their respective stance in education. So, think profoundly and vote wisely because elections have consequences."

## Alcorn announces commencement ceremonies



Alcorn

*The Mississippi Link Newswire*

Alcorn is proud to announce that it will hold in-person commencement ceremonies for the Fall Class of 2020 and Spring Class of 2020 Saturday, Nov. 21, in the Jack Spinks Stadium-Marino Casem Field. The Golden Class of 1970 will also be honored on Nov. 21.

Tickets will be required. Masks are mandatory.

"Commencement is a joyous time for the University to celebrate our students' accomplishments and bid them farewell," said Dr. Felecia M. Nave, president of Alcorn State University. "This year's ceremony holds special meaning. As we continue to navigate the global pandemic, COVID-19, we are excited to honor our fall 2020 graduates and also celebrate our spring 2020 and Golden Class of 1970, whose opportunity to walk across the commencement stage was delayed."

The university will continue to enforce safety protocols to protect the health and safety of the campus community. Hence, tickets will be required for each ceremony. Temperatures will be taken of every person entering the campus at each gate.

Graduates' temperatures will be checked at the assembly area. Masks will be required for all attendees and participants. No one will be

allowed to enter without their mask. The university will provide specific details on safety protocols in subsequent messages regarding the ceremonies.

Commencement ceremonies for the Spring Class of 2020 and Golden Class of 1970 will be held at 10 a.m. Commencement ceremonies for the Fall Class of 2020 will be held at 2 p.m.

"We are excited to celebrate this milestone in the lives of our graduates," said Dr. Ontario S. Wooden, provost and senior vice president for Academic Affairs. "I am elated that we are also welcoming back the Spring 2020 graduates in order to celebrate them appropriately."

Wooden noted that the university will hold two commencement ceremonies in the football stadium to promote social distancing and meet arena guidelines. Additional details related to the commencements will be forthcoming by separate communications, and updates will also be posted on a "Commencement" page on the university's website as they are available.

"Alcorn State University is looking forward to celebrating the many accomplishments of the Fall Class of 2020 and Spring Class of 2020 with their invited, ticketed guests," Wooden stated.

## Dr. Nonya Thrasher: superintendent, administrator and manager

### *Claiborne's educator-in-chief's vision and mission*

By Dr. Jerry Komia Domatob  
Contributing Writer

The success or failure of educational institutions partially depend on its leaders and top administrators. These executives do not only set policies, but also help in implementing goals and objectives. In many ways, they shine as leaders who show the light so that people may find the way.

One of these educational lamps, who champions enlightenment in Claiborne County, Mississippi is the determined and devoted superintendent, Dr. Nonya Thrasher.

As the current superintendent, she is the overall senior leader of the school district. Thrasher develops and maintains a substantial district budget. She also identifies and influences the formulation and/or revision of administra-



Thrasher

tive goals, policies, rules and regulations.

Her current vision is to ensure that all students receive a state of the art education and achieve at their full potential. Thrasher's mission is to educate and equip all students with the skills needed to compete in an ever-changing society.

She says her philosophy of education is, "to empower learners to grow, develop and study in the best student-centered educational environments."

The superintendent's challenges include ensuring that sound educational decisions are made for students despite the ever-changing COVID-19 pandemic, and also ensuring the safety of all stakeholders."

Thrasher earned an ED.D. in Educational Leadership from Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA. Earlier on, she obtained Masters of Arts in Curricu-

lum and Instruction from Jackson State University. She also earned a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Southern University at New Orleans.

A community leader, she belongs to professional associations and clubs. She is a member of Phi Delta Kappa, Beta Kappa Chi and Alpha Epsilon Lambda.

A champion of family values, she is married to Bishop Kenneth M. Thrasher, pastor of the Apostolic Worship Center Church in Jackson, MS. They are parents of Little Miss Kyla Marie.

The daughter of Joseph and Mary Cage, her parents taught her to be diligent in her studies and always put God first.

Her advice to youth is: "Your life is a gift from God, but what you make of it is your gift to him."

She works with an insightful team,

which consists of board members Belinda Walker, president; Tomeka Banks, vice president; Jackie Jones, secretary; Eddie Wells, member and Donald Reeves, member.

*Dr. Jerry Komia Domatob, a graduate of E.W. Scripps School of Journalism, Ohio University-Athens, is a professor of Mass Communication, Alcorn State University, Lorman-Mississippi, a journalist, photographer, poet and researcher. He earned his Master's degrees in International Affairs and Journalism from Carleton University, Ottawa Canada.*

*His latest publications are: Communication, Culture & Human Rights and Positive Vibration. He has travelled extensively in different parts of the world. Contact him at domatobj@gmail.com.*



# Make your world a little safer

By Vince Faust  
*Special to The Mississippi Link*

No one is doing much traveling or going to work in person now, but this will change sometime next year I hope. COVID will be behind us for the most part sometime next year but traveling and going back to work in person will have it's own dangers.

Some of you may be a little paranoid about germs after going through the COVID pandemic but never fear I will give you some tips to help you avoid getting sick at work or during your traveling. I'm not talking about another corona virus. The risks are from mundane microbes lurking in places you might not think about. About 80% of all infections start when you touch something that is contaminated. When you are in the public almost every surface is contaminated.

In a study researchers at the University of Arizona applied a noninfectious virus to an office door. The virus was not native to the office. Within 4 hours the virus was detected on more than half of the office surfaces and on the hands of office workers.

In another study researchers found that out of 4,000 people that went to the bathroom 10% didn't wash their hands, about two thirds didn't use soap and only 5% wash their hands long enough to kill germs. This was before COVID-19.

Bacteria and viruses can survive on hard surfaces for a few hours to a few days. Germs can survive even longer if they are



protected by hand lotion or any type of greasy residue.

If you get coffee before you get to the office beware of the coffee cup lid at the coffee shop. A University of Arizona found that about 17% of the disposable coffee cup lids placed on the cups by the coffee shop worker were contaminated with fecal bacteria. If you buy coffee skip the lid. Even better bring your own coffee mug for your coffee. Your office coffee pot handle is almost never washed. The pot may be rinsed a lot. If you drink from the office coffee pot wipe down the handle or bring your own coffee.

If you use the ATM be careful. A British study found that the ATM machines were contaminated with bacteria. If you use an ATM bring a disposable wipe to wipe the keypad or the

touch screen or wash your hands immediately after using.

We all go to the supermarket and at the checkout we put our things on the conveyor belt. Only a few supermarkets wipe the belt between customers. I've only seen one do it in my area. Juices from raw meats, which can contaminate the belt with dangerous bacteria that can include salmonella and E. coli. The Michigan State University tested 100 supermarket conveyor belts. They found that all 100-conveyor belts had mold, yeast, Staphylococcus bacteria and other bacteria.

When you get home with your food wash your hands before you start putting things away. Then wash them again after you finish putting things away. You should put any raw meat in plastic bags before you refrigerate or freeze

them. Always wash the tops of your cans before you open them.

We don't see a lot of public telephones but we can still find them in hotel and office lobbies and conference rooms. These phones are rarely cleaned. If you must use a public phone wipe it off. You can also just not use them.

Staying at a hotel? Some of the most common infections can be spread in a hotel. This can include cold viruses, flu, rotavirus, norovirus, staph infection and E. coli. Don't take a bath. When Michigan State University tested hotels they found 60% of the tubs were contaminated with staph. Take a shower and wear shower shoes. Always bring a protective pillow case to cover your pillow. Toss the bed spread because they rarely wash them. To stay warm turn up the heat or ask for

more blankets. They wash the blankets more often. Don't go barefoot on the carpeted floors. That floor can have over 200,000 bacteria per square inch. That is more bacteria found on a toilet seat. You should wear shoes all the time during your hotel stay. Don't put your personal items on the bathroom counter top. They sometimes use the same cleaning cloth for everything in the bathroom.

Keep your personal items in your travel case. Don't use the drinking glasses in your room. Most cleaners just rinse the glasses. Drink bottled water during your trip. Don't use the room phone. I hope you have a cell. Don't use the ice bucket it can contain a host of germs. You should clean your room key as soon as you can. They never disinfect them.

Restaurants are opening now. They are wiping everything down but are they using clean wipes each time? One study showed that 70% of the wiped tables were contaminated with E. coli and other bacteria. Make sure your table is cleaned with a clean cloth by wiping it yourself.

No matter where you go be cautious of your surroundings. Pack disinfectant wipes for all of your trips to the store, hotels, airplanes and restaurants. Make sure you follow the instructions on the disinfectant packaging to clean properly. Most disinfectant wipe require that the surface stay wet for at least four minutes to completely disinfect the surface.

Masks are a necessity at this time in our life. Wear them for everyone's safety. If you can't wear a mask stay home.

The Mississippi Link™

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# Victory through trials

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



S o m e o n e used a wonderful illustration one time. He said: “Maybe some people wonder how a little boat can float in a vast body of water. I can tell you how. The boat is in the water, but the water is not in the boat.” If someone were to turn it around and get the water in the boat, the boat would go down. That is the way it is with each of us. As long as we keep certain things out of our lives, we can have victory with God. We can sail on the top without any danger. Too often some people come to the conclusion that they have explored it all.

Sometimes when the preacher announces his or her Scripture text, some people close their ears and think: “I’ve heard that a dozen times. I don’t need that anymore.” The truth of the matter is, we can read the Bible over and over and find something clearer every time we read it. We can sit and hear it preached, and it becomes

clearer every time. Every time I hear the message on the church, it becomes clearer and more glorious.

Some people are too quick to take the attitude, “I’ve already heard that.” Let me illustrate it this way; suppose we were to walk on the seashore and look out at the ocean for the first time, perhaps we take a quick look and turn away and say, “I’ve seen it.” Well, that would be an understatement. We would have barely caught a glimpse of the surface of it. In some places, the ocean is many miles deep. There are mountains and vast resources down in the ocean. We may look at the mere surface of it and say, “I’ve seen it,” but we have seen hardly any of it.

If God should let us live to be one hundred years of age and we serve Him all the days of our lives, and if we should leave this world praising God for the things that He has shown us up to our dying day, we will have seen only the surface of His treasures.

People need something today that will pull them closer to God, cause them to be curious about the things of God

and cause them to desire to learn more about Him. Some people go to church only twice a year. They say that is about all they can stand. How can they comprehend the things of God without salvation? Paul said in Ephesians 3:18-19, “May be able to comprehend with all Saints what is the breath, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.”

I am sure that the power company has enough power to run anything that we might want to use. Jesus is the way, and he has all power. He wants to unleash His power in our lives, if we will let Him so that we can be victorious over every circumstance of life. We may think: “Some people never seem to have a burden, a problem, or a discouragement. Every time we see them, they are smiling and their countenance is aglow,” The devil will try to tell us: “God stays right with them, pats then on the back and gives them anything they want. That is the reason they can smile all the time.”

Friend, it is not the load that gets us down, but it is the way we carry it.

God has victory for us in the circumstances that we go through. We are going to go through trials and hard places, but He wants to take us through these hard places with victory. The devil is trying to throw us a curve. God does not show partiality, but the devil will point out things here and there to try to make us think that He does show partiality.

God has enough grace to take us through any circumstance of life. It is not that the other person does not have any problems that he can wear a smile, but he has victory over those things. We must stand for God when the storms come, every time. We do not need to worry that the wind may blow this way and that way. When the storms are over, we will be standing for God.

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

P R E S E R V E D

# Becoming a fruit inspector

By Shewanda Riley  
Columnist



Considering the current chaotic political environment, how do Christians decide who to vote for? It’s not as simple as voting for the candidate who wraps themselves in scriptures and shows up at the most churches. Nor is it as simple as judging an authentic Christian on whether they vote on issues like abortion, same sex marriage or support for Israel.

One way to determine who to vote for is to look at the truth of Matthew 7:17-20 which says, “You will know them by their fruits...Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them.” In other words, we must become fruit inspectors.

Think about the fruit of the seeds planted in the last four years: racial strife, economic uncertainty and an uncontrollable pandemic that has killed nearly 220,000 people in a little over 6 months. Some could argue that the recent chaos is a result of the Republicans’ 8-year strategy of negative rhetoric and obstruction against the Obama presidency.

Republicans are now faced with a very unpopular incumbent president who lies repeatedly, bullies relentlessly and whines about being mistreated all while promoting racial division and violence. The truly sad part is that he maintains record high support among white evangelicals. The bizarre thing is that the worse his behavior becomes, the stronger their support becomes.

It saddens me that Christianity has been hijacked and as a result, is perceived as a religion that rid-

icules and not reconciles. Instead of showing love and compassion, those who need grace the most (children locked in cages after being separated from their parents or victims of police violence) are treated with cruel disdain and bigoted judgement.

It seems the words of 1 Corinthians 5:18-19 have been forgotten: “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation...”

The growing public backlash against the negativity of our current president indicates that the fruit of this behavior is not the anticipated unified country. The most recent reports of violent campaign rallies, bullying behavior and racist language have led to a loss of support of Republicans among likely voters. This makes me wonder if these shocking behaviors being brought up are really “fake news” or merely an example of harvesting bad fruit.

Christians should not vote based on an outward display of religiosity or promises of a renewal of moral values. Instead, we should vote for those who pass the “fruit inspection.” Before we vote, we should ask which candidates best exemplify the words of Galatians 5:22: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” Then we should pray.

*Shewanda Riley is a Fort Worth, Texas based author of “Love Hangover: Moving from Pain to Purpose After a Relationship Ends” and “Writing to the Beat of God’s Heart: A Book of Prayers for Writers.” Email preservedbypurpose@gmail.com or follow her on Twitter @shewanda.*



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# Scott Ford House, Inc. climaxed deliberation on African-American midwifery in selected MS regions: 1619 to 2020

By Janice K. Neal-Vincent  
Contributing Writer

On October 23, 2020, Scott Ford House, Inc. scholars completed their intensive study of African-American “granny midwives” in four of ten Mississippi regions: The Gulf Coast, Loess Hills (Natchez), the Black Belt (Tupelo) and the Jackson Prairie (Jackson).

While social distancing, scholars began sharing their research in August 2019 before virtual audiences engaged in questions, answers via shared experiences, while they were at Smith Robertson Museum and Central United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall.

The social milieu of each region held its own distinction regarding the number of granny midwives, their contributions, their commonalities and stereotypical classifications from 1619 to present day.

Scholars noted that granny midwives brought African traditions to America. They were trained in their communities, a legacy of slavery but also central to healthcare during segregation. They “caught” (delivered) thousands of black and white babies. They used herbal medicine to comfort and heal mothers during the birthing process and



Scott Ford Houses (built 1891-1892), 136 & 138 E. Cohea St. in Farish St. Historic District. Formerly enslaved Mary Green Scott, her daughter and son-in-law, midwife Virginia Scott Ford and John Ford lived here. The long-term goal is a museum and interpretive center for scholarly research and seminars on African-American Mississippi midwives.

thereafter. Thus, granny midwives were well-respected.

Then in 1921 The Shepherd-Towner Act which provided federal funding for maternity and childcare, shattered the careers of granny midwives.

White physicians, educated abroad, learned obstetrics and stigmatized midwifery, especially African-American midwifery, as they channeled births into hospitals and reaped economic gains.

Despite Jim Crow laws (via

racial segregation) that were enacted in the late 19th century and enforced until 1965, African-American granny midwives persisted in their fight to restore their rightful place in society. This perseverance continues today.

The virtual audience included African-American midwives who shared their concerns about midwifery. Dr. Toni Hill of Bloomington Moon Midwifery Services in the Black Belt (Tupelo) explained that she was

called forth at the age of 12 “to continue the legacy.” She sat at the feet of African-American Grand Midwife Umm Salaamah from Georgia who has caught over 4,000 babies in various parts of the world, including Ghana and Honduras. She and her family relocated from the Gulf Coast to Tupelo due to Hurricane Katrina.

Executive director of Northeast Mississippi Birthing Project, Hill having caught thousands of babies, inspires

mothers to embrace “wholeness” in preparing for new life to come. Inspiring the young to be “change agents,” she encouraged a former girl scout to enroll in midwifery school in Oregon. “The young are carrying the legacy. Seeing the next generation move with it is very gratifying,” said Hill.

Dr. Freda McKissic Bush (OB/GYN) credited her parents for the love they displayed for her and her siblings during their youth and inspiring her to become a midwife. “My mother loved having babies and my father “caught” me. Bush has delivered babies in the Jackson Prairie (Jackson), Vicksburg and Hollandale.

Senior Circuit Judge of Hinds County District, Tommie Green mentioned that her grandmother and great grandmother were midwives. “They were honorable women. My grandmother delivered over a thousand babies. Information is in the archives at Tougaloo College.” Green displayed copies of birth certificates completed by midwives, a ledger they used and a record of the newly born.

“The most powerful person within the community was the midwife. Midwives refused pay because they believed they were

doing ‘God’s work.’ In many respects black midwives were effective,” said Alferdteen Harrison, president of Scott Ford House Inc.

In 1892, Mary Green Scott and her daughter and son-in-law, Virginia Scott Ford and John Ford, moved into their new homes at 136 and 138 East Cohea Street, located in the prominent Farish Street District in Jackson, Miss. They were among the first African Americans to own property and build homes on Cohea Street after the Civil War. Virginia was a midwife who caught thousands of baby with no help and the inspiration for everything at Scott Ford House, Inc.

Scott Ford House, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Donations are secure and tax-deductible online at [www.scottfordhouse.org/donate](http://www.scottfordhouse.org/donate). You can also mail a check or money order made payable to Scott Ford House, Inc., to P.O. Box 1173, Jackson, MS 39215.

This project is made possible by a grant from the Mississippi Humanities Council, through support from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Additional funding was provided by the Hinds County Board of Supervisors from the State of Mississippi.

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*Tougaloo College Supports Breast Cancer Awareness Month*

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# Surviving and thriving after domestic violence

By **Kenya Ramirez**  
*Mississippi Link Intern – JSU Journalism Student*

I had expected him to be like them – those pious people from indigenous populations; from crude, little, communities, worlds away and saved from westernization; those evolved to strongly endear family in the absence of money; those not beguiled by the broadcasts of sex, drugs and greed; those who love without any attention to the interferences in life; loyal people, simple people, not worldly.

But, I married a man who was born into a hardening, hand to mouth existence – in a third world country. Like many other immigrants, he had illegally come to America, desperate to escape poverty in Central America. He faced formidable obstacles once he crossed the border, however. The shining haven of opportunity that he had hoped to see was, indeed, a mirage. He arrived a captive of circumstance.

Only after our union, did I realize that he was an aggravated felon with no social security number. Because of crimes he had committed before me, he was not privy to a green card. He could not



Ramirez afflicted with mismatched eyes – one brown, one blue.

work. And, at the young age of 22, I was relegated to the role of sole breadwinner, separated from prosperity by an imaginary line, a rocky sack of immigration political policy on my back. I had become his wife and inherited all his problems.

Under pressure, a genuine love tarnished and we both turned bitter. The old country, gender superiority – and sense of uselessness – in him rose up and raged. The independence that I obtained from employment lashed out. Every

night, I, the worn worker, would return to clash with him, an insolent and idle man.

That is the sum of my memories. My memories are made of those trying times before he was deported, before he finally injured me, leaving me permanently afflicted with mismatched eyes – one brown, one blue.

Today, I am a legally blind, domestic violence survivor. I slowly and deliberately chose survival – a small degree taken by me, with every higher level of resolve that I landed.

ed. After having endured so much pain in the past, I owe myself a better future.

So, since the defining day that my sight was compromised, I have stood up and steadied my footing. With the steely eyed determination of my daddy, as he toiled the blistering fields, I will succeed. Just as the freed men, in Mississippi, crouched down on burnt and barren land to again plant seed, I will hold to hope. Like the freedom riders who remained vocal in advocating the vote, despite the threat of violence, I am master of my objective. I will accomplish my goal of becoming a writer.

In 2018, I graduated with my associates degree in business marketing management from Hinds Community College, where I walked with Magna Cum Laude honors. Currently, I am in full scholarship at Jackson State University, where I plan to graduate with a bachelor's in journalism in August 2021. I will also meet my commitment of receiving my master's degree in journalism. My experiences will be my motivation, as I strive to be an ethical reporter in championing the issue of immigration and family.

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This year, in addition to voting for our preferred candidates, we have a chance to vote on statewide ballot measures. Two of these measures offer voters a chance to make Mississippi fairer and more inclusive for years to come. Voting “yes” to these ballot measures is a vote to end two Jim Crow era structures that have long held Mississippi back. Make sure to **go to the end of the ballot** and make your voice heard.

WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON?

**VOTE YES ON BALLOT MEASURE 2**

In 1890, when the current Mississippi Constitution was drafted, legislators created a two-tiered process that has made it nearly impossible for a Black person to win statewide office. By voting YES on Ballot Measure 2, we can overturn this racist 1890 election law that has no place in 2020 Mississippi.

**Statewide Ballot Measure 2**  
**House Concurrent Resolution No. 47**

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**VOTE FOR ONE**

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**VOTE YES ON BALLOT MEASURE 3**

The former Mississippi flag, adopted in 1894, contained the canton of the Confederate battle flag. From 2003 to 2020, Mississippi was the only state with a flag that showcased this divisive symbol of the Confederacy. On June 28, 2020, the Legislature passed a bill to take down the old flag and establish a new symbol for Mississippi. By voting YES on Ballot Measure 3, we choose a symbol that reflects shared values of dignity and respect for all Mississippians.

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