



# Farewell salute to 2021 African American History Month

## In tribute to Mississippi’s Living Legends

By **Ayesha K. Mustafaa**  
*Contributing Writer*

African-American history is living history, building upon what has been established as well as establishing new blocks to build upon. Mississippi is profoundly rich in African-American history, being “ground zero” for so much of our collective experiences.

As we say farewell to 2021’s African-American History Month, we here at *The Mississippi Link* give a special salute to seven Living Legends among us, those who have been in the trenches for decades and still pushing forward their progressive boundaries.

These Mississippians are reflective of the resilience of our collective heritage. The Hon. Constance Iona Slaughter-Harvey describes it this way:

“Mississippi is an enigma..., embracing the good and the bad, and at this juncture the real nature of our society has boldly reared its ugly head. Even though Jim Crow laws ‘appear’ to have vanished, they still linger, and we are held back by their shadows and ghosts of entitlement for the privileged.”

With these stark realities laid bare, however, not a single one of our Living Legends retreated into dismay; they have managed to build and set records that future generations will have to work really hard to match.

We love Mississippi, and therefore we pray for it. Atty. Slaughter-Harvey offers: “My prayer for Mississippi and her children is that the entitlement issue be negotiated and that we legislate by love and navigate the journey to justice and equality for all – especially our children and our children’s children.”

These chosen Living Legends have fought for us, suffered for us and remain beacons of excellence in aspirations and actual achievements. As Atty. Slaughter-Harvey continues in prayer, “My lingering prayer is that my grandson and other young black children will not have to re-live and re-fight the Civil War for their freedom.”

Former Mayor Harvey Johnson Jr., the first African-American mayor of the capital city, says, “Growing up in Vicksburg under Jim Crow laws served as a foundation for my passion to work to improve the socio-economic conditions of my community. This childhood aspiration led to a 40-plus-year career in public service, which God blessed me to live out in the State of Mississippi.”

His prayer for his state, “Dear Lord, thank you for the moral, social and economic achievements that have been made in our state.... I pray



Harvey



Clarke

now that you continue to be with us on this tedious journey, guiding us and directing us, as we strive to seek true equality for all of her citizens.”

With prayer, “still we rise!”

Here are our seven profiles: Atty. Constance Slaughter-Harvey, Hon. Alyce Clarke, former Mayor Harvey Johnson Jr., Dr. Hollis Watkins, Judge Reuben Anderson, Hon. John Peoples and Congressman Benny G. Thompson.

Their contributions as Mississippians continue to unfold, enriching our lives ethnically as well as advancing the state’s and our country’s rich history.

**Hon. Constance Iona Slaughter-Harvey, Esq.**

First African-American female judge in Mississippi

As founder of the Legacy Education and Community Empowerment Foundation Inc. (LEACEF), Slaughter-Harvey has a special legacy of courage, commitment and service to her community. She believes that access to education creates empowerment through service learning projects.

Born in Jackson, Mississippi, in 1946, her family moved to Forest, Mississippi, where her parents, the late Alderman Willie Lee (W.L.) and Librarian Olivia Kelly (O.K.) Slaughter, were both educators.

The Slaughters instilled in Constance the importance of independence, that race was no barrier, and that a person’s worth is determined by the contributions they make to others and not money or materialistic things. She states, “My parents

**Legends**

*Continued on page A3*

# A thirst for equality: Dying Navy veteran’s story resonates as Black History Month lesson

By **Jeff Jardine**  
*Featured, Minority Veterans, Calvet Connect*

One summer afternoon in the late 1950s, eight-year-old Phillip Willis Jr. took a break from mowing lawns at a home in Jackson, Mississippi. Having worked up a thirst, Willis asked his employer, a white woman, for a glass of water.

That simple and reasonable request required minimal physical effort on the woman’s part. Mainly, it required mere humanity and compassion for a young black kid toiling in the stifling heat and humidity. She begrudgingly gave him the water, Willis said, along with a not-so-subtle reminder that he was a black in America’s Deep South during the Jim Crow era.

“She looked at me and said, ‘Yeah, but don’t you come in the house, you hear me?’” Willis said. “She went to the (kitchen) counter and got a mayonnaise jar and gave me a glass of water in it. No ice – just regular tap water. Then she sat there and watched me drink it, like I was going to steal it while I was drinking it.”

When he finished, she took the jar from him and threw it into the trash.

“She closed the screen door and locked it, and said, ‘If there is nothing else, you can get about your business,’” Willis said. “That was the attitude I got.”

Many years later, Willis got the last word (which we will save for the ending of this story). In the meantime, count that experience among the reasons Willis – now 70, and a U.S. Navy veteran in hospice care resulting from exposure to Agent Orange during the Vietnam War – offered to share it with CalVet during Black History Month.

Willis said doctors in mid-August gave him three to six months to live.

“It’s been six months,” he said. “I’m still here and I’m not going anywhere.”

“Nobody knows the day or the hour, but I know he’s going out as a champion and he’s worked so hard,” wife Darlene Willis said.

That eight-year-old – whose grandfather had been enslaved – grew up and went on to study chemistry at Jackson State (then College, now University). When his draft notice arrived before his senior year, Willis enlisted in the Navy, knowing induction into the Army and the jungles of Southeast Asia, otherwise



Phillip Willis, Jr

beckoned.

During the war, Willis served aboard the destroyer escort USS Hepburn in 1972 and 1973. The ship steamed into the Gulf of Tonkin, well within the 12-mile range, exposing its crew to Agent Orange, a defoliant used to eliminate the dense growth the enemy soldiers used as cover. Agent Orange causes cancer and numerous other ailments including pulmonary fibrosis,

*Navy  
Continued on page A3*

# ‘Jaws of Life’ used to extract Tiger Woods from mangled vehicle in Los Angeles

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

Golfing superstar Tiger Woods was reportedly in serious condition in a Los Angeles area hospital after a single-car accident Tuesday, Feb. 23.

The website TMZ displayed pictures on the scene showing that authorities had to use the jaws of life to free Woods from his mangled vehicle.

“On Feb. 23, 2021, at approximately 7:12 a.m., LASD responded to a single-vehicle roll-over traffic collision on the border of Rolling Hills Estates and Rancho Palos Verdes,” Los Angeles County officials wrote in a statement first provided to the website.

“The vehicle was traveling northbound on Hawthorne Boulevard, at Blackhorse Road, when it crashed. The vehicle sus-

tained major damage. The driver and sole occupant was identified as PGA golfer Eldrick “Tiger” Woods.

“Mr. Woods was extricated from the wreck with the ‘jaws of life’ by Los Angeles County firefighters and paramedics, then transported to a local hospital by ambulance for his injuries.”

Mark Steinberg, Wood’s agent, reported that the golfing legend sustained multiple leg injuries and was taken immediately into surgery.

They said there was no immediate evidence that Woods, age 45 was impaired. Authorities said they checked for any odor of alcohol or other signs he was under the influence of a substance and did not find any. They did not say how fast he was driving. Weather was not a factor in the crash.



# Jackson State gives Deion Sanders shutout in coaching debut

*The Associated Press*

Jalon Jones threw for three touchdowns and ran for another as Jackson State rolled past NAIA Edward Waters 53-0 in Deion Sanders' coaching debut Sunday.

Kymani Clarke scored two rushing touchdowns. Warren Newman showed some dazzling speed as a wideout and kick returner and caught a 6-yard pass from Jones for JSU's first score.

Jones completed 18 of 20 passes for 187 yards and TD passes to Newman, Daylen Baldwin and Christian Allen. JSU racked up 435 yards of total offense to Edward Waters 104.

After a week of rare freezing weather had many residents of Jackson waiting in long lines for bottled drinking water, the atmosphere among 12,000 fans sprinkled within Mississippi Veterans Memorial Stadium (44,215 capacity) was festive.

National Guard soldiers shot a cannon and did pushups after Jackson State scores, and Sanders, an NFL Hall-of-Famer, had a bucket of ice dumped over his head at the end of the game as the people in the stands cheered the win.

Jackson State dominated, scoring on its opening drive and adding two more touchdowns in 67 seconds, wrapped around an Edward Waters fumble on a kickoff, to end the first half 31-0.

Jackson State had elected to receive



**Kymani Clarke (23) fights off a tackle attempt by an Edward Waters defender for a touchdown run during the first half** AP PHOTO/ROGELIO V. SOLIS

to open the second half and scored in just under three minutes after a 50-yard kickoff return set the Tigers up at Edward Waters 47.

It was Jackson State's first shutout since Sept. 6, 2014.

Prior to kickoff, former Dallas Cowboys quarterback Troy Aikman surprised Sanders on the field with a hug and conversation. Aikman and Sanders played together on the Cowboys from 1995-99 and won the 1995 Super Bowl. Aikman received a COVID-19 test before heading down to the field.



**Coach Sanders congratulates team as they come off the field during the first half game against Edward Waters.** AP PHOTO/ROGELIO V. SOLIS



BE HEALTHY  
MISSISSIPPI.

MISSISSIPPI  
www.bcbsms.com

Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi, a Mutual Insurance Company, is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.  
® Register Marks of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, an Association of Independent Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans.



# Navy

Continued from page A1

which afflicts Willis. He also suffers from PTSD.

The Navy left discernible scars in many ways not unlike what he remembered from back home in Mississippi, where his father worked as a janitor for a Jackson Coca-Cola distributorship. Every Fourth of July, his dad would barbecue for the white workers.

“But blacks and whites were not able to sit down with each other in Jackson,” he said. The black workers returned the following day, heated up the leftovers, and celebrated their fourth on the fifth.

Willis himself returned to a nation that treated many Vietnam veterans horribly. Willis’ son, James C. Willis, wrote about his father while contributing to a new book titled, “REVEALED: True Testimonials and Lessons Learned on Covert and Blatant Racial Experience,” and authored by Dr. Darlene V. Willis, a psychologist who is Phillip’s wife and James’ mother.

“... the ‘love for troops’ that we now, rightfully, know as normal, was not extended to soldiers, especially black soldiers, once they returned to the states,” James Willis wrote. “So, after fighting for the country, witnessing sites unimaginable, my fa-

ther and his heroic colleagues returned to insults and disrespect, along with limited to no resources to help heal their wartime traumas.”

Indeed, while in a grocery store one day in San Marcos, Phillip Willis said he waited in the check-out line behind a white woman who unloaded her goods onto the counter.

“She looked up and saw me and stopped,” Willis said. “She went back to her cart and grabbed her purse and put it under her arm. Then she proceeded to take out an EBT (electronic benefits transfer) card. That’s a welfare card. I am paying for her groceries and she thinks I am going to steal her purse. Amazing!”

After leaving active duty in 1973, Willis served in the Naval Reserve for eight more years while building what became a long and successful career in the finance industry and in real estate. His wife, Darlene, is a psychologist, author and nationally recognized speaker. They recently moved from San Diego to Manteca, in the Northern San Joaquin Valley. Their two sons, Phillip and James, both work for the non-profit Concerned Parents Alliance/College Bound Programs, which the Wil-

lis family created.

They feel Black History Month is vital to all Americans. Knowing about the discrimination every day folks like Phillip Willis endured – and still do – is just as valuable and educational as the stories of well-known historical figures.

“We’re forever grateful to the Frederick Douglass’s, Sojourner Truths, Maya Angelous, and Martin Luther King, et cetera,” Darlene Willis said. “But there are real people like my husband and the countless others that experienced things that aren’t necessarily told in the history books.”

In his final days, Phillip Willis Jr.’s stories resonate more than ever; like the one about an eight-year-old wanting a glass of ice-cold water on a steaming hot Mississippi day in the late 1950s. That story now has a most fitting ending, as son James wrote:

“My dad not only still passes that house when we visit Jackson, he stops by to check on the tenants, as he now owns that very house. While I can say with great certainty that my dad will never live in that house, I know he has great pride in owning something that he was once denied access to.”

## (Editors Notes)

A Snapshot in the Journey of Phillip Willis Jr. (Phillip Willis Jr., the focus of this article, is the fourth of nine children born to Phillip and Pernola Willis Sr., now deceased. They were lifelong residents of a place once called Gowdy, MS. The family were members of College Hill Baptist Church in Jackson with many ties to the Jackson, MS community. Willis graduated from Jim Hill High School in 1968 and then enrolled at Jackson State University. While at Jackson State, he became a member of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity and experienced life on Jackson State’s campus during an attack on May 14, 1970 by local and state policemen where two students were killed on campus. Shortly afterwards, Willis received his draft notice and like so many others, decided to enlist as opposed to being drafted. The California Department of Veterans Affairs recognized Willis during their Black History Month Celebration and on February 26, 2021, Phillip Jr. will receive the Vietnam Service Medal and certificate and commemorative coin presented by California Congressman Josh Harder. From cutting grass in West Jackson to a successful real estate investor, Willis’ life journey has shown that something good can develop from the humble beginnings of people from a place once called Gowdy, now known as West Jackson, Washington Addition.)

# Legends

Continued from page A1

taught me that right is always right.”

Slaughter-Harvey has over 60 years of overcoming systematic injustices, which were imposed upon her due to her skin color, gender, and the state in which she was born.

Despite the gross injustices of the American society, including Jim Crow in the South, Slaughter-Harvey knew that she had a role to play in making this world a better place than the way she found it. As founder of LEACEF, she knows that life is not fair but that you can overcome any injustice if you try.

She has received over 3,000 awards and holds the numerous titles of major firsts, including the first female student government president at Tougaloo College, assist. secretary of state for the State of Mississippi for Elections and Public Lands, and president of the National Association of Election Directors.

Additionally, she was the first African-American female to become a judge in Mississippi and to receive a law degree from the University of Mississippi’s Law School. She is a Golden Life Member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Over the years, Attorney Slaughter-Harvey remains faithful to God and remains a viable part of her Scott County community of Forest. She wants to ensure that all children, especially in her rural and low-income community, city, county and state, can strive for the stars and pursue their dreams.

She wants all children to learn all the skills needed to survive in this society and this world. She imagines LEACEF as supporting, encouraging and creating a safe space for children, students and parents to learn to make informed and positive life choices.

The W.L. Slaughter Memorial Foundation and Library and Slaughter-Harvey have provided legal and educational services to the community. And with the assistance of her daughter and LEACEF co-founder Constance Olivia, the family continues to expand community services for student enrichment, mentoring and empowerment programs.

## Hon. Alyce G. Clarke

Longest serving African American in the Mississippi State House of Representatives

Alyce Griffin Clarke has been a dedicated and active member of the Mississippi State House for 35 years, serving Hinds County District 69.

The State representative earned her B.S. Degree from Alcorn State University and also attended Tuskegee Institute. Her professional experience includes working as a nutritionist and professional consultant and also in the insurance business.

Clarke is affiliated with Alpha Kappa Alpha, Alcorn Alumni, Jack & Jill of America, Inc., MS Public Health Association, Regional Association of Drug Free Schools and Communities and the State PTA.

Her service in the House Committees include:

Appropriations  
Banking and Financial Ser-



Watkins

vices

Drug Policy  
Education  
Gaming

Universities and Colleges and  
Youth and Family Affairs.

Summarizing her perception of service leadership, she says, “As Mississippians, we know that prayer without works is dead. We’re doing an amazing job praying, but we have to do a better job at working, if we’re going to save hundreds if not thousands of Mississippians.”

Her profile is coupled with biblical scripture from James 2:14-16 (New King James Version): “What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?”

Clarke admonishes all: “Please practice social distancing, sanitize everything and stay home (unless absolutely necessary). And remember that we can accomplish anything by working together.”

Clarke was born in Yazoo City, Mississippi, and is married to Lee William Clarke Jr. She is of the Baptist faith.

## Hon. Hollis Watkins

Veteran of the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement

Hollis Watkins, veteran of the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement, says Mississippi’s influence on him led to his eternal love for the life of the farmer. And he prays that his beloved state will grow and develop to the extent it becomes a model for others.

Mississippians “drove” the Mississippi Freedom Movement, and in 1961 Hollis Watkins, who grew up on a small farm in Chisholm Mission (a rural Lincoln County hamlet named for an AME Church), became one of the first young Mississippians to commit to full-time work with SNCC – the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

In the late spring of that year, he was on the way to California to join his sister hoping to work and set aside money for his college tuition. But when word of Freedom Rides coming into Mississippi reached him, Watkins turned around and headed back home. He was 19 years old.

SNCC organizer Bob Moses asked him to join the voter registration organizing effort in McComb, and the next day, Watkins began to canvas for voters. Though he had not been



Johnson

politically active in high school, he soon became a mentor and role model for McComb’s high-school-age activists.

These young people had been inspired by SNCC freedom riders now coming to town to help start the Pike County Nonviolent Direct Action Committee. Watkins was elected president of the new organization, and the committee chose Woolworth’s as their first place for protest.

Only Watkins and Curtis Hayes, his long-time friend and vice-president of the newly-formed nonviolent student group, sat-in at the Woolworth Department Store lunch counter that day – the first of this kind of direct action in McComb’s history.

Police immediately confronted them and arrested them. And in what would prove true over and over again in Mississippi and other parts of the South, the actions of young people changed the thinking of adults. That night, Watkin’s father traveled into town to speak at a mass meeting protesting the boys’ arrests.

That fall, they traveled to Hattiesburg to assist NAACP leader and farmer Vernon Dahmer in his voter registration efforts. This was partnering of young people with an older generation eager to use youthful energy for social change came to characterize Mississippi’s Freedom Movement.

Watkins joined the organizing effort in Greenwood in 1962 and then initiated the Holmes County project. As an organizer, he lived as sparsely as possible, always careful not to take advantage of a community’s hospitality and to listen to voices at the grassroots.

As a native Mississippian, he knew that a community’s first question to the Freedom Riders would be: “How long will you be here?” It stemmed from fear that outside leaders – even coming from another part of the state – would leave once violent reprisals began. But Watkins never left.

He dedicated his life to human rights activism through SNCC and later Southern Echo, his grassroots community organization. He was presented an Honorary Doctorate by Tougaloo College. (Profile courtesy of <https://snccdigital.org/people/hollis-watkins>)

## Hon. Harvey Johnson Jr.

First African-American Mayor of Jackson

Harvey Johnson Jr., in 1997, made history when he was elected the capital city of Jackson’s first African-American mayor by more than 70 percent of the voters.



Peoples

In 2001, Jackson voters again chose Johnson for a second four-year term, and in 2009, he was elected to a nonconsecutive third term.

Johnson was born in the River City of Vicksburg and received his early education in the Vicksburg Public School District, where he graduated from Rosa A. Temple High School. He received a bachelor’s degree in political science from Tennessee State University and a master’s degree in political science from the University of Cincinnati.

His additional study was toward a doctoral degree in public administration at the University of Southern California’s Washington Public Affairs Center. He was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Tougaloo College.

Johnson served as the founding executive director of the Center for University-Based Development at Jackson University, facilitating development partnerships aimed at revitalizing neighborhoods adjacent to the university campus, while providing service learning experiences for students and research opportunities for faculty and students – creating the “Urban University.”

Under his mayoral leadership, the city’s Union Station was renovated, transformed into a beautiful new state-of-the-art multi-model transportation center, accommodating trains, buses, taxies, limousines and spaces for retail shops, restaurants and offices.

And he led the effort which resulted in voters approving the construction of the city’s first convention center, located adjacent to a new state-of-the-art, high tech telecommunications training and conference center, successfully campaigning that it be located in downtown Jackson.

As founder and executive director of the Mississippi Institute for Small Towns, a nonprofit agency, Johnson helped a number of towns in the Mississippi Delta in meeting their housing, community development and infrastructure needs.

During his years as mayor, Johnson served on the U.S. Conference of Mayors Advisory Council, as chair of the U.S. Conference of Mayors Urban Economic Policy Committee and as president of the National Conference of Black Mayors.

Johnson is a member of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity and a charter member of 100 Black Men of Jackson, Inc., currently serving as its president. He has also served in local, state and regional positions for Alpha Phi Alpha



Anderson

Fraternity, Inc., of which he is a lifetime member.

He served on the executive committee of the Democratic National Committee and is also a life member of the NAACP. Johnson was a captain in the United States Air Force.

He is married to Kathy Ezell Johnson, and they have two adult children – Harvey III and Sharla. He is a member of Hope Spring Missionary Baptist Church, serving as chair of its Board of Trustees.

## Hon. Dr. John A. Peoples Jr.

Sixth president of Jackson State University; founder of Jackson State’s Army Reserve Officer Training Corp (ROTC)

John A. Peoples, the sixth president of Jackson State University, was the founder of the institution’s Army Reserve Officer Training Corp (ROTC). He is a native of Starkville, Mississippi, where he attended elementary and secondary schools.

After graduating from high school, he was drafted into the United States Marine Corps and was “Honor Man” in his recruit training platoon and sharpshooter rifleman; number one in his noncommissioned officers’ class and attained the rank of sergeant.

In July 2012, Peoples was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, as one of the African-American Marines of World War II who were trained at the racially segregated Montford Point Camp of Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

He entered Jackson State University in September 1947 where he earned a bachelor’s degree in mathematics. He was on the varsity football and track teams and was elected president of the Student Government Association for two consecutive years.

After graduating number one in his class in 1950, he attended the University of Chicago, where he earned a master of arts and doctor of philosophy degrees.

And after serving 13 years in the public school system of Gary, Indiana, as a teacher and school principal, he was employed at Jackson State University as a professor of mathematics and vice president in 1964.

He was elected president of the university in 1967, serving till 1984. During his 17-year tenure as president, the university experienced dramatic growth in enrollment, program and physical plant.

Student enrollment grew from 2,200 to 7,800; the academic program developed from the baccalaureate level in essentially teacher education to a five-school professional program up



Thompson

to the doctoral level.

The university’s athletic program, under Peoples, produced six Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC) championships in football, seven in baseball, 13 in men’s track, five in women’s track and six in men’s basketball.

The administration of Peoples included the dramatic years of the “Black Student Revolution,” experiencing four consecutive years of student upheavals. The most tragic was 1970 when on May 14, city and state law officers fired on students at a women’s dormitory, killing two students and wounding 22.

In 1974, the landmark Ayers vs Waller desegregation suit was filed in Mississippi. Peoples played a strategic role in support of the plaintiff’s efforts against the State College Board to eliminate the dual system of higher education.

He served 25 years on the board of directors of Piney Woods Country Life School and served 20 years on the board of directors of Smith Robertson Museum and Cultural Center.

Peoples is a member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., and Sigma Pi Phi Boule Fraternity. He is a 33rd Degree Mason and a life member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). In 1983, the Mississippi Conference of the NAACP conferred on him the Medgar Evers Award.

## Hon. Reuben V. Anderson

First African American Supreme Court Justice of Mississippi

Reuben V. Anderson, Mississippi attorney and jurist, has a series of “firsts” in his career. On Jan. 16, 1985, he was sworn in as the first African-American Supreme Court justice in the state of Mississippi. Appointed by Gov. William A. Allain, it was a position he held until his retirement from the bench in 1991.

Anderson was the first African-American graduate of the University of Mississippi Law School in 1967 and the first African-American president of the Mississippi Bar Association from 1997 to 1998. His admissions came five years after James Meredith integrated Ole Miss. He graduated from Tougaloo College in 1964.

In 1976, he was appointed as judge in the Municipal Court for the city of Jackson. He later held successive judicial appointments: in 1977 to the County Court in Hinds County, in 1981 to the Circuit Court, and in 1982 to the 7th Circuit.

## Legends

Continued on page A10

# Meet Lafayette County's oldest active black-owned business

By Jake Thompson  
*The Eagle*

In 2016, LaVera Hodges was faced with the challenge of building back up what her family had started over 80 years ago.

After professional differences between Hodges and a former employee, whom she viewed as family, the future of L. Hodges Funeral Services was in serious doubt of being able to continue.

The worry was short-lived. Within two months, the Lafayette County community rallied around Hodges and helped get her, and her family business back on its feet. The response showed Hodges how deeply connected her family was with the rest of the LOU Community and the amount of respect there was for that relationship.

"They encourage me on and they keep me encouraged to stay here, telling me how good a job we do," Hodges said. "It's wonderful."

Starting in 1934, Hodges' father, Nathan Hodges Jr., opened the funeral services business, making it the longest active black-owned business in Lafayette County.

Hodges joined her father in 1973, which was when she realized she wanted to continue



the business and discovered how passionate she was about running a funeral home.

Running a black-owned business offers its challenges, Hodges said, and being a black business owner for nearly 50 years has often added to those challenges. She has seen her share of ups and downs throughout the last five decades.

"I really never thought about the hardships and the struggle of the ups and downs until after my dad died (in 2002)," Hodges said. "Then, that was when I realized there's a lot of battles and stuff you've got to fight and challenges you have to face. Since 2002, I've had some hard drops. I was almost rock-bottom and had to give up. The community support, love from

the community, financial support kept me hanging in there."

When Hodges lost her business' previous location on Highway 30, she was without a place to continue and carry on her family's legacy. That was in September 2016; by October of that year, the LOU Community had rallied together and found Hodges a new location and helped get the funeral home

business back on its feet.

"The community turned the lights on for me," Hodges said.

A funeral home, especially one that has endured as long as Hodges' has, creates a special bond with the community in which it resides. It is there to help a family through one of life's toughest moments when they experience unthinkable loss.

Hodges' main goal is to provide for her family and keep a roof over their head, but she also said she knows and respects the responsibility of being one of the first black businesses in Lafayette County and having endured for nearly 100 years.

"I know how hard my daddy struggled and battled through the Civil Rights to maintain a community status, relationship with the county," Hodges said. "I know what it meant to him and I know how hard he worked and sacrificed for his family, for us, to have the business. That was my driving focus."

In all the years since Hodges has taken over for her father, there are many things that have changed. But the biggest change and adjustment for Hodges has been in the last 19 years with the ever-evolving

world of technology.

Along with the evolution of technology, Hodges has adapted to the new normal the COVID-19 pandemic created in the last year. Funeral services were one of the hardest hit when it came to limitations on gatherings. Last spring, the maximum number of people allowed to attend a funeral service was 10.

Funeral services take on different meanings in different cultures and religions. For the African-American community and culture, Hodges explained, a funeral is a place to come together to celebrate a life of a lost loved one. It also requires holding a traditional ceremony inside of a church.

The coronavirus pandemic changed all that, but Hodges and her staff have adapted to that challenge as they have all the challenges before it.

While Hodges is grateful for the help of the community in providing her business a new place to call home, she said she is constantly working and thinking towards the future of L. Hodges Funeral Services.

"It's not what I had, but I think it's not what I'm going to end up having either," Hodges said. "Better is coming. I've got some plans. Better is coming."

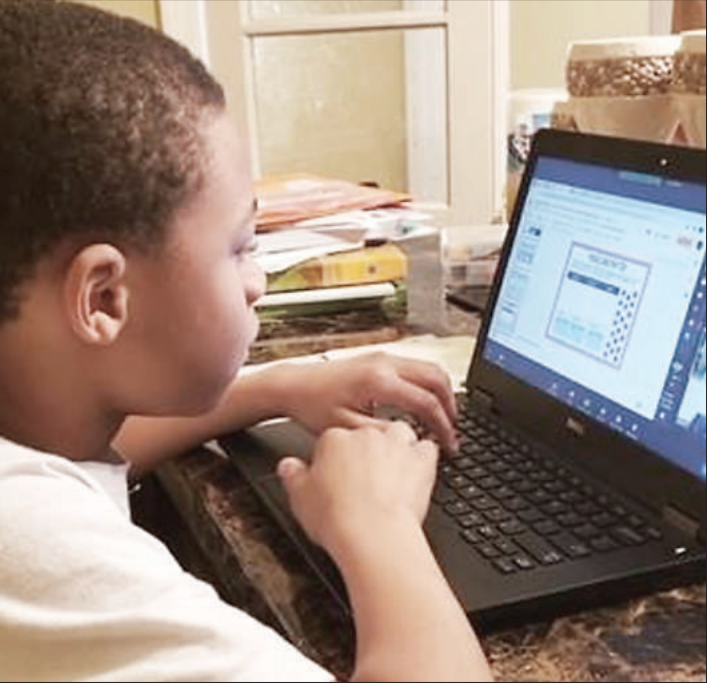
## National PTA awards \$2,500 grant for COVID-19 relief to Obama Magnet with Help from TikTok

Mississippi Link Newswire

National PTA has awarded Obama Magnet PTA with a \$2,500 grant to continue their efforts to meet critical needs of students, families and teachers in their school community due to COVID-19. The funding is made possible by TikTok, a short-form video app and PTA Proud National Sponsor. The funding is in addition to the \$5,000 grant National PTA awarded Obama Magnet PTA in 2020 to empower their COVID-19 relief efforts.

"The COVID-19 pandemic is not over, and National PTA and PTAs nationwide remain committed to making sure students, families, teachers and schools have what they need during this challenging time," said Leslie Boggs, president of National PTA. "Obama Magnet PTA has been working hard every day to provide essential resources, tools and information to support families and educators amid the pandemic. With the grant, the Obama Magnet PTA will be able to continue to provide critical support to their school community."

With the initial \$5,000 grant, the Obama Magnet PTA was able to purchase laptops as well as a storage unit and charging harness to provide support for families experiencing connectivity issues. The additional \$2,500 from the National PTA has been applied to addressing technical and logistical challenges that must be addressed as the school is now attempting a hybrid-reopening. This



funding is being used for student headphones with noise reduction microphones that are needed during hybrid Zoom sessions, classroom laptop surge protectors to be used as charging stations and portable folding tables to reconfigure the school auditorium to serve as an alternative classroom site that allows for increased social distancing.

"We greatly appreciate the generous support of the National PTA and TikTok," said John Johnson Ed.S., principal of Obama Magnet Elementary. "The funding has not only helped support academic achievement, but also provide for the social and emotional well-being and mental health of our students and their families."

Obama Magnet PTA's grants


are part of over \$1.5 million in funding that National PTA has provided to PTAs across the country for COVID-19 relief efforts.

"With the grant funding, PTAs will be able to continue their important and impactful work," added Nathan R. Monell, CAE, National PTA executive director. "We are grateful to our sponsors, including TikTok, for enabling us to provide resources to PTAs to help them care for their school communities."

In addition to these COVID-19 relief grants, TikTok also supports PTAs nationwide with program grants and resources to educate families about online safety. TikTok is a supporting sponsor of National PTA's PTA Connected initiative.

# Committed to community.


DIVERSITY IS A PART OF THAT COMMITMENT.



For over 100 years, BankPlus has remained committed to all of our communities and the diversity that brings. Our bankers live and work in the neighborhoods they serve. We value the individual differences this brings to BankPlus. As a bank, respecting our employees' insights and opinions builds stronger services. As people, embracing our diversity creates an inclusive environment where we can all succeed together. BankPlus. It's more than a name. It's a promise.

Learn more at [bankplus.net](https://bankplus.net).

## BankPlus®



© Copyright 2021 BankPlus.  
Member FDIC.

# CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY: The Wilmington Ten, fifty years later

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Newswire

Wilmington, North Carolina, is known today for its vibrant riverfront with three colorful island beaches and southern hospitality, major contributors to the port city's bustling tourism.

However, Wilmington's past paints a picture of a much different city.

While things may be different in today's Wilmington, it was not that long ago that Wilmington, like too many other southern cities, still condoned the region's ugly racist culture and practices.

More than a century after America's Civil War had ended, on Feb. 1, 1971, a young minister named Benjamin Franklin Chavis Jr., arrived in the city.

Chavis was sent to Wilmington by the United Church of Christ from their Commission on Racial Justice. A local pastor of a black Church, Rev. Eugene Templeton, requested help from the United Church of



Pictured in 1976, The Wilmington Ten were given sentences that ranged from 15 years to 34 years. (Seated) Benjamin Chavis, William 'Joe' Wright, Connie Tindall, Jerry Jacobs (Standing) Wayne Moore, Ann Sheppard, James 'Bun' McKoy, Willie Earl Varen, Marvin 'Chilly' Patrick, Reginald Epps

Christ.

Chavis, a disciple of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., helped students organize a more effective

boycott, targeted against white high school administrators who were resisting the desegregation of their schools

and classrooms and who also refused demands to honor Dr. King, who was assassinated just three years earlier.

One year after King's murder, the city had just three high schools. Two of them, New Hanover and Hoggard were all-white, and the third, Williston Industrial High School, was reserved for the city's black high schoolers. Williston was a source of community pride and was ranked among the best high schools in North Carolina – black or white.

Following federally mandated school desegregation in 1969, local administrators changed the status of Williston Industrial High School from a high school to a junior high school. Williston's black students and teachers would be reassigned to New Hanover and Hoggard.

However, when they arrived at their new schools, African Americans endured name-calling, racially motivated physical attacks and other threats. Incidents of rioting and arson, in protest of the decision to integrate, occurred almost daily.

In response to tensions, members of a Ku Klux Klan chapter and other white supremacist groups began patrolling the streets. They hung an effigy of the white superintendent of the schools and cut his phone lines. Street violence broke out between them and black men who were Viet Nam veterans. Students attempted to boycott the high schools in January of 1971.

Chavis and a group that became known as the Wilmington Ten, argued for black history courses, respect for King and all black people and equality.

Tensions continued to mount, with the Ku Klux Klan and other white supremacists firebombing buildings and shooting at black students.

One incident in particular would become a defining event in this period of Wilmington's history: The firebombing of Mike's Grocery Store, a white-owned business in the heart of Wilmington's black community.

On Feb. 6, during an uncharacteristically frigid night for a southern city like Wilmington, the popular neighborhood grocery was firebombed. As police and firefighters arrived on the scene, gun fire could be heard

above the siren squeals and activity.

Firefighters responding to the fire, alleged that they were shot at from the roof of the nearby Gregory Congregational Church. Chavis and several students had been meeting at the church. Sniper fire, which was intended for the Wilmington Ten members, struck a police officer.

As the gun fire continued, one of the Wilmington Ten, Marvin "Chilly" Patrick, was shot as he placed himself between the source of the sniper's fire and Chavis, successfully preventing Chavis from being shot.

According to the February 1971 edition of "This Month in North Carolina History – The Wilmington Ten," the North Carolina governor called up the North Carolina National Guard, whose forces entered the church February 8 and found it empty.

The violence resulted in two deaths, six injuries, and more than \$500,000 (equivalent to \$3.2 million in 2019) in property damage.

Chavis and nine others, eight young black males, who were high school students, and a white female anti-poverty worker, were arrested on charges of arson related to the grocery fire. Based on testimony of three young black men (who later recanted their testimony), they were tried and convicted in state court of arson and conspiracy in connection with the firebombing of Mike's Grocery.

At trial, all ten defendants were provided defense counsel by the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice. However, it was later established that the prosecutors conspired against the defendants by paying witnesses to falsely identify Chavis and the other Wilmington Ten members – who were the actual targets of the white supremacists' sniper's fire – as arsonists, and for the subsequent assault on law enforcement officers.

Additionally, chief prosecutor Jay Stroud feigned sickness following jury selection when it became apparent that ten African Americans would be seated on the jury, leading to a mistrial. A second trial, whose jury included only two African Americans, resulted in a guilty verdict for all ten defendants.

With sentences that ranged

from 15 years to 34 years, Chavis, Patrick, and the eight others were ordered to serve a combined 282 years in prison.

In 1977, Amnesty International cited the Wilmington Ten case as the first official case of political prisoners in the United States. Within a year, the London-based human-rights group declared that the Wilmington Ten were "prisoners of conscience who were not arrested for the crimes for which they were charged, but because of their political work."

*The New York Times* published an article noting that Amnesty International's declaration about the Wilmington Ten outraged some and embarrassed others – especially after Amnesty International was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1977.

"Soon the charge was repeated and amplified by the American Ambassador to the United Nations, Andrew Young, who contended in an interview with a French newspaper that the United States harbored 'hundreds, perhaps thousands' of political prisoners," *The Times* reported. Young added, "The Wilmington Ten, for example, are innocent."

"Mr. Young later apologized for the remark about hundreds or thousands of political prisoners, but he still says, privately, that the charges against the Ten were 'trumped up,'" noted *The Times*.

The Wilmington Ten spent nearly a decade in prison before federal appellate courts overturned their convictions in December 1980, citing prosecutorial misconduct.

Timothy Tyson, a North Carolina historian and visiting professor at Duke University, told CNN he was given the Wilmington Ten prosecutor's handwritten notes before 2012 when the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), United Church of Christ and NAACP called again for pardons of innocence for the Wilmington Ten.

Prior to this, the publisher of the *Wilmington Journal*, Mary Alice Thatch, had petitioned the NNPA to launch a national campaign for a pardon of innocence for the Wilmington Ten.

"It was pretty shocking stuff," Tyson remarked.

He said the names of at least six potential jurors had "KKK Good!!" written next to them. Next to a woman's name, it said, "NO, she associates with Negroes."

On the back of the legal pad, the chief prosecutor, Jay Stroud, had written the advantages and disadvantages of a mistrial, Tyson said. One of the advantages was a fresh start with a new jury.

In 2012, 40 years after they were unjustly convicted, North Carolina Gov. Beverly Perdue officially pardoned the Wilmington 10.

"These convictions were tainted by naked racism and represent an ugly stain on North Carolina's criminal justice system that cannot be allowed to stand any longer," Gov. Perdue said at the time. "Justice demands that this stain finally be removed."



*We honor our nation's African-American  
heroes and heroines, past and present*

*For non-emergency  
service, call  
601-982-7911*

Contact us to learn about careers as an EMT or paramedic.

*In emergencies,  
dial 9-1-1*

**AMR**

600 Melvin Bender Drive, Jackson

*Now offering money-saving memberships.  
For details on membership, call 601-368-2301.*

# Rust College president has seen multiple firsts over career

By Danny Mcarthur  
The Associated Press

Firsts come naturally to Rust College President Ivy R. Taylor. The Queens, New York, native is not only the first female president of the historically black liberal arts college, during her time in politics she became San Antonio’s first black mayor and second female mayor.

“I just feel blessed to have the opportunity to serve and also to inspire young women that they can be and do whatever they aspire to be and do,” Taylor said.

Taylor’s journey from politician to college president was years in the making. Her parents had roots in the South, moving north in the 1960s for better opportunities. Growing up in New York, Taylor didn’t know any historically black colleges and universities besides the fictional ones she would see on TV. She attended Yale University, working a few dead-end corporate jobs in Queens after graduation.

It was only after returning to school, this time to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, when Taylor discovered her new focus: urban planning, with a particular focus on affordable housing.

**Summer job, husband led Taylor to Texas**

She met her husband Rodney in San Antonio during a summer job, and later moved there to start her career, working as a city employee. She would go on to serve as vice president of Merced Housing Texas, an affordable housing agency; work for the San



Taylor

Antonio Planning Commission and then as a commissioner for the San Antonio Urban Renewal Agency. She also worked six years at the University of Texas at San Antonio as a lecturer in public administration.

**Her time as a city employee prompted her to run for office**

“I was kind of frustrated at the lack of commitment to the inner city and lack of innovation in creating programming or using resources to help those that need it most,” Taylor said.

Some community members suggested she run for city council. While she was first uncertain about fitting “into a political mold,” Taylor said the more

she considered it, the more she thought it was a great opportunity. In 2009, she ran for city council for the first time, eking out a razor thin, 54-vote win in a runoff.

Taylor defines her time as councilwoman as one where she spearheaded revitalization efforts that led to an investment of more than \$50 million in grants to the Eastside and other projects that continue even now.

**From mayor of San Antonio to Rust College**

When Julian Castro resigned as mayor to serve as the United States Secretary of Housing and Urban Development in 2014, the San Antonio City Council ap-

pointed Taylor as interim mayor for a year, making her the first African American to serve as San Antonio’s mayor and San Antonio’s second female mayor since Lila Cockrell.

She won election to a full two-year term in 2015. Taylor listed her mayoral accomplishments as creating a comprehensive plan for the city, successfully negotiating a new contract with the police union and approval of the Vista Ridge water pipeline. For Taylor, being mayor was challenging because of the vast scope of the job.

“From the logistical standpoint of me understanding the processes and how city government ran, that part was easy; the hard part was just suddenly, I had to be everywhere,” Taylor said. “As mayor, you’re responsible to the entire city, and basically you know that you’re never going to make everyone happy, and so it’s a process of coming to that realization.”

As mayor, she also joined the board of trustees of an HBCU in Texas, which sparked a focus and passion on HBCUs. After losing re-election in 2017, she took it as a sign to pursue her newly discovered passion further. At 48, she decided to pursue a doctorate in higher education management at the University of Pennsylvania, making her focus on HBCUs.

After graduating in 2020, she learned of the opportunity to serve as president of Rust College. A self-identified history buff, Taylor was fascinated by

Rust College’s history as one of the early HBCUs in the country, so she applied and was selected for the position.

“As someone who feels blessed and wants to have the opportunity to give back, I really saw working at an HBCU as a platform that would allow me to assist more people,” Taylor said.

**Taylor treasures Rust’s history, importance to Holly Springs**

She’s grateful to her husband and daughter, Morgan, for making the transition possible. While COVID-19 has kept her from the full presidential experience, Taylor is excited for the opportunity to engage with the community and show the place Rust College holds in Holly Springs and the Memphis area.

“Because we’re in a small community and this is kind of an anchor institution, I hope to also make an impact on Holly Springs and how people view this community, that it would be a desirable place to live and to visit. And I think through making improvements at Rust and also partnering with leadership here in Holly Springs, that we can achieve that together,” Taylor said.

Taylor wants to celebrate the legacy of Rust College. While one of their most famous attendees is Ida B. Wells-Barnett, a prominent investigative journalist and early civil rights leader who in 2020 posthumously received a Pulitzer Prize special citation for her reporting on lynchings, Rust College also has created many teachers, preachers

and community leaders, Taylor said.

Training teachers was especially important in the early years post-Civil War, as those teachers could then go into other communities and enlighten others. It’s a history Taylor believes Rust College should return to to support black and brown students in public schools.

**Restoring Carnegie Library among Taylor’s hopes for future**

Her hope is to make improvements that will make Rust College more competitive, such as sharing the unique opportunities Rust College offers, cultivating investments and modernizing their curriculum to ensure students study areas that lead to gainful employment.

The current focus is keeping everyone safe while providing as normal of an experience as they can and starting a strategic planning progress. She is crafting a vision for the next five years, such as looking for opportunities to refurbish the former Mississippi Industrial College campus so that they can expand.

She’d especially love to see the former Carnegie Library building restored to its former glory as a performing arts venue and showcasing Rust’s artifacts and collections to the broader community.

“More than anything, (I’m) just looking forward to continuing to provide the launching platform for the young people that come through here with stars in their eyes thinking about their future,” Taylor said.

## Best of Mississippi Awards recognizes Jim Hill teacher for excellence



Korian Padgett of Jim Hill was named Teacher of the Year by the Best of Mississippi Awards 2020.

Mississippi Link Newswire

Jim Hill teacher Korian Padgett was named Teacher of the Year 2020 by the Best of Mississippi Awards. The Biloxi native and his wife transferred to Jackson about four years ago.

Padgett’s impact at Jim Hill High School was almost immediate. In his first year as the ACT Prep teacher at the school, ACT test scores were higher than they had been in the three years prior to his joining the faculty.

In addition to teaching, he coaches multiple sports, including track and field, cross country and golf.

Padgett started his teaching career in Biloxi Public Schools where he served for four years before moving to the Metro.

“I’m not even ten years into my career, and I’m walking among greats here at Jim Hill,” said Padgett. “To be nominated and then to win the award is truly a blessing.”

Business Empowered Mississippi presents the Best of Mississippi Awards to honor individuals who are making a difference in communities across the state. Awards are presented in the areas of education, health, business, faith, finance, government, media, family and entertainment.

The Best of Mississippi Awards raises funds for the organization’s foundation arm which has a mission of providing resources to black-owned businesses in urban areas around the world.

## Mississippi COVID-19 vaccinations drop during winter blast

The Associated Press

Mississippi saw a steep decline in COVID-19 vaccinations last week as several drive-thru vaccination sites were closed because of freezing temperatures and icy roads.

The state Department of Health said Monday that 32,540 vaccinations were given in the state during the week that ended Saturday. That is down from 106,691 the previous week, which was Mississippi’s busiest week for the

vaccinations so far.

The department said it is automatically rescheduling appointments that had to be canceled at 21 drive-thru sites, and people are being notified by text or email.

More people than usual are

being scheduled for COVID-19 vaccinations in the state this week, and some appointments will be during the weekend. The Health Department is asking people to arrive at least 15 minutes before their scheduled time and to be patient.

## Teachers, first responders to be eligible for vaccine Monday

The Associated Press

Mississippi teachers and first responders will be eligible to receive the coronavirus vaccine starting Monday, Gov. Tate Reeves announced Tuesday.

Vaccinations in Mississippi are currently available for people 65 and older, healthcare

workers and those who are at least 16 and have health conditions that might make them more vulnerable to the virus.

Reeves said teachers and first responders put themselves at risk to support the community during the pandemic and deserve to be next in line.

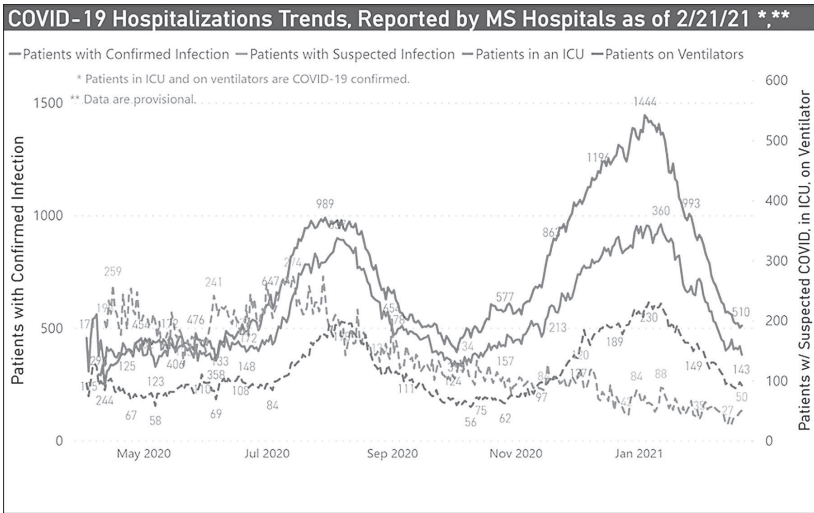
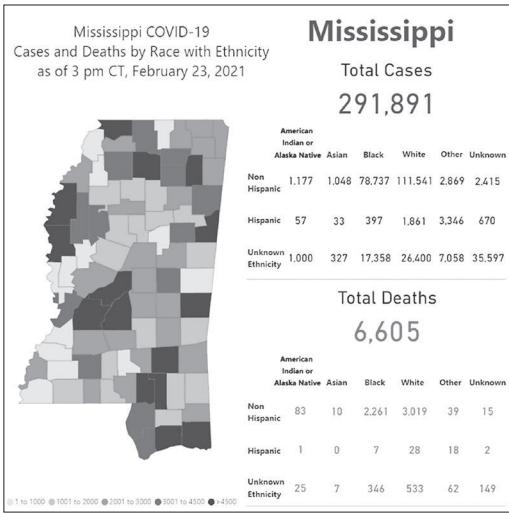
Around 350,000 people in Mississippi have now received at least one dose of the coronavirus vaccine as of Tuesday, according to data from the state Department of Health.

Mississippi, a state with a population of around three million, has reported at least

291,000 cases of the virus and 6,577 related deaths since the start of the pandemic.

People eligible to receive the coronavirus vaccine can make an appointment at COVIDvaccine.umc.edu or by calling the COVID-19 call center at 1-877-978-6453.

### MISSISSIPPI COVID-19 UPDATE



# If you are caring for a love one, who's caring for you?

By Vince Faust  
*Tips to Be Fit*

Almost 16 million Americans care for someone with Alzheimer's disease and many other forms of dementia. This type of care is expected to get more prevalent. People with Alzheimer's disease that are healthy usually live 20 to 25 years after being diagnosed. As they age the level of care will increase. More time and energy will also be needed toward their care. This can be very difficult over time for families.

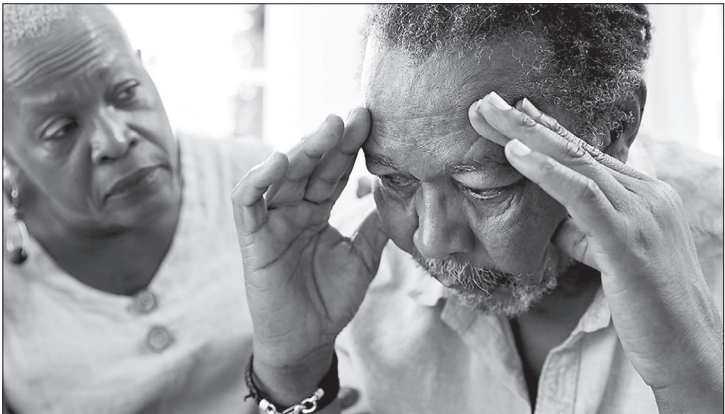
It's estimated that more than 5.5 million Americans, most of them age 65 or older, may have dementia caused by Alzheimer's.

Alzheimer's disease is irreversible. Alzheimer's disease is a progressive brain disorder that slowly destroys your love one's memory and their thinking skills. It will eventually affect your love one's ability to carry out the simplest tasks. Most people start having symptoms for Alzheimer's in their mid-60s.

Those with Alzheimer's disease get care from 15 million caregivers that provide over 18 billion hours of unpaid care that's valued over \$250,000,000,000. This will but an emotional, physical and financially toll on the caregiver.

Most people will wait until they are in a crisis before they look for help. When your love one is diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease you should start a care planning process.

Make sure you are added to your love one's medical team. You should be able to talk to their doctors. If you don't you will be



UMMC physicians and nurses were very appreciative of the donations for the heart patients.

locked out of their treatment.

Treatment has improved over the last 100 years. When it comes to treatment you should make sure the treatment is sound and safe. Second opinions are a good idea.

TV infomercials are not the best places to get information about any disease. Do your research. Know the source of your information. Ask questions about their treatment. You should know what medications they're using and why. Ask for a brief written summary to make sure all points are covered and necessary prescriptions filled out. Ask what kind of follow-up is needed. Be prepared to take notes.

Questions that should ask before you and your love one leave the doctor:

1. In what stage is your love one disease?
2. Are further diagnostic evaluation necessary?
3. What can we expect from the natural course of this disease?
4. Is there treatment available

to modify the course?

5. How long before we should see the effects of the medication?

6. Are there any side effects of the medications?

7. Under what circumstances should we notify the doctor?

8. Are there any age or gender related test needed?

Do your homework. The post visit is just as important as the visit with the doctor. You both came up with a written plan.

- Make a list of all prescriptions received.

- Get a copy of the visit summary

- Review the notes taken during visit

- Put all follow-up appointments on a calendar with alerts

- List all of the tests you got results for.

- Review all patient information given to you for accuracy

- Get a copy of test results.

- Sign up for online patient access.

- Develop predictable routines and schedules

Caring for a love one can

take a lot out of a caregiver. The American Academy of Family Physicians suggest caregivers should:

- Get regular checkups with your own doctor.
- Eat a healthy, nutritious and balanced diet.
- Get enough sleep. You need about 8 hours every night.
- Exercise for at least 30 minutes everyday.
- Manage your stress.
- Take some time for yourself.
- Know your limits.
- Don't argue with your love one.

- Give them independence where possible

- Have fun.
- Live in the now. Your love one is different now.

- Rely on family members and other love ones when needed.

- Remember Alzheimer's disease is not a death sentence.

You should tell your love one they have Alzheimer's disease. Your loved one knows something is wrong. Their knowing may give them a sense of relief. Knowing allows a person with Alzheimer's and his or her family to put a face on what's happening with them.

Most doctors recommend you:

- Don't tell them they are wrong about something

- Don't argue with them

- Don't ask if they remember something

- Don't remind them that their spouse, parent or other loved one is dead

- Don't bring up topics that may upset them

- Don't ask open-ended ques-

tions. Give them choices

- Don't discuss them in front of them

- Don't blame your love one for the changes in their behavior or personality

- Don't label them with negative names

- Don't assume you love one doesn't understand, just because they are silent.

We don't have a handle on what prevents Alzheimer's disease. If we try to live a healthy lifestyle it could help slow down most diseases and in some cases prevent them.

The right diet is important. The body needs carbohydrates, fats, protein, vitamins, minerals, fiber and water to be healthy. Without proper nutrition and exercise, optimal health cannot be attained.

Carbohydrates, fats and protein supply energy (calories) necessary for work and normal body functions. Vitamins, minerals, fiber and water do not have caloric value but are still necessary for normal body functions.

You should consume between 12 to 15 calories per pound of body weight daily. Eating four to six small meals a day stimulates your metabolism to burn calories instead of shutting down to store fat. You should have two servings of protein, three servings of fruit, four servings of grains, four to six servings of vegetables and four servings of dairy products.

Exercise is another key element in preventing disease process. If you've never exercised before, find a beginner exercise group.

A professional can help you get started. If you want to give it a try on your own, start a walking program. Walk every other day. Do callisthenic exercises on the day you don't walk. Do at least one exercise for each body part. Start your program slowly and be consistent. Keep a diary to keep track of your progress. After a few months, you may want to get into weight training.

Lack of sleep is also linked to Alzheimer's disease. The amount of sleep needed each night varies among people. Each person needs a particular amount of sleep in order to be fully alert throughout the day. Research has shown that when healthy adults are allowed to sleep unrestricted, the average time slept is 8 to 8.5 hours. Some people need more than that to avoid problem sleepiness; others need less. If a person does not get enough sleep, even on one night, a "sleep debt" begins to build and increases until enough sleep is obtained. Problem sleepiness occurs as the debt accumulates.

Many people do not get enough sleep during the work-week and then sleep longer on the weekends or days off to reduce their sleep debt. If too much sleep has been lost, sleeping in on the weekend may not completely reverse the effects of not getting enough sleep during the week.

There is currently no cure but we can control Alzheimer's disease.

Your preparation may even save the life of both you and your love one.

**Subscribe TODAY**

2659 Livingston Road • Jackson MS, 39213  
601-896-0084 • [www.mississippilink.com](http://www.mississippilink.com)

# The Mississippi Link

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Phone

e-Mail

CHECK ONE

☐ 1 year

☐ 2 year

☐ 3 year

\$32

1 year

subscription

\$64

2 year

subscription

\$96

3 year

subscription

Thank you for your order. Order a subscription for a friend!

## MOORE & MOORE Cleaning Service



OFFERING \$1000  
REFERAL BONUS TO THE PERSON  
THAT CAN SEND THE MOST REFERRALS IN  
A MONTH. PLEASE CALL  
601-317-2735 FOR DETAILS.

**Craig Moore**  
Owner/Operator

All Types of Cleaning Services  
Over 30 Years of Experience  
Free Estimates  
Licensed & Bonded

### Moore & Moore Cleaning Services

Commercial & Residential Cleaning  
We clean: Office Buildings, Schools, Daycares  
Churches, Restaurants - whatever you need.

Floor Stripping & Waxing, Carpet Cleaning,  
Restrooms & All Other Janitorial Services  
with Professional Results

**601.317.2735**  
Email: [craig.moore78@yahoo.com](mailto:craig.moore78@yahoo.com)  
[www.mooreandmoorecleaningserviceandautosalesllc](http://www.mooreandmoorecleaningserviceandautosalesllc)  
2659 Livingston Road, Jackson, MS 39213

The person that sends us the most referrals will  
receive a \$200.00 referral fee.

MAID SERVICES AVAILABLE

## The Mississippi Link™

Volume 27 • Number 18  
February 25 - March 3, 2021  
© copyright 2021. All rights reserved.

Publisher.....Jackie Hampton

Copy Editor.....Minnie Garrett

Graphics.....Marcus Johnson

Photographers.....Kevin Bradley & Jay Johnson

The Mississippi Link [USPS 017224] is published weekly by The Mississippi Link, Inc. Offices located at 2659 Livingston Road, Jackson, MS 39213. Mailing address is P.O. Box 11307, Jackson, MS 39283-1307 or e-mail us at: [editor@mississippilink.com](mailto:editor@mississippilink.com); Please visit our website at: [www.mississippilink.com](http://www.mississippilink.com). Phone: (601) 896-0084, Fax 896-0091, out of state 1-800-748-9747. Periodical Postage Rate Paid at Jackson, MS.

Deadline: The deadline for submitting items to be considered for publication is Tuesday at 10 a.m.




Subscriptions are \$32 per year; \$64 for two years or \$96 for three years.

Postmaster:  
Send all address changes to The Mississippi Link,  
P.O. Box 11307, Jackson, MS 39283-1307.

Advertising: For all advertising information,  
please call (601) 896-0084.

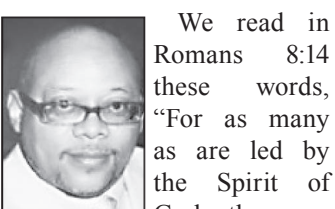
The Mississippi Link accepts no responsibility for unsolicited materials and in general does not return them to sender. Manuscripts and photographs submitted for publication are welcome by The Mississippi Link, but no responsibility can be taken for sources considered to be authoritative, because the publication cannot guarantee their accuracy. Reproduction or use, without permission, of editorial or graphic content, is prohibited.

Member:



# Getting out of the will of God

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



We read in Romans 8:14 these words, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God.” There was a procedure that God had laid out in the past for the Ark of God to be moved. Today God has a way that we can tap into His wisdom and guidance for our lives. The principles in the Bible can guide us through everything we face in this life. We need to let God be our guide. It does not matter if all the leaders and the captains give their okay. What

matters is what God has said about the situation. It is good to have people who support us and the work we are doing. There is nothing wrong with counseling with others. In fact, God gives good pastors to counsel with us and to help us to find the Will of God in situations. He may help us to find scripture that address our need and advise us.

As saints of God, we should be a careful people, carefully evaluating the way we live, the things we embrace, the places we go, and the things we get involved in. We must let God’s Spirit influence and lead us. The Word and the Spirit witness to our hearts, give us understanding, and

gives us directions.

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 14:26, “How is it then, brethren? When ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue. Let all things be done unto edifying.” Singing, testifying, preaching, and laboring for God are good, but there is an order. There is a procedure, and it is beautiful. When God works it out and it is all in order, it is wonderful. There are things that we need to consider and be careful that we do the right way. Many times, we get ideas and notions, but if we are not careful, we will jump into things the wrong way, go too hurriedly, and get out on a limb; then it

will be hard to get back. I am afraid that some have done that very thing. They moved to hastily and pride would not let them come back.

If we see a need in our lives, an area where we need to make some changes or corrections, the best thing to do is to humble ourselves and say, “Lord, You see what has occurred, and I need You to help me to get my life in order.” Thank You God for your grace and mercy.

*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

# Surviving the storm

By Shewanda Riley  
Columnist



It’s been less than a week and like so many of you, I am shocked and saddened when I see pictures or videos of the aftermath of the Texas winter weather storm that occurred the week of Feb. 15. Even though there was quite a bit of snow and ice on the ground, much of the damage didn’t come from the snow or ice but from occurred afterwards.

The frigid temperatures that remained a few days after the snow storm led to frozen pipes, scarce water and extensive power outages. Much like what happened in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina in 2005 when the levees broke and flooded the city, many survived the snow storm but our state was not prepared for what came after it.

Even though we’ve stepped out on faith, we may still allow anxiety, and not faith, to be our navigator through the storm. If we allow God to take us through the process, we develop the spiritual stamina that increases our faith.

Matthew 14:29-33 explains how Jesus responded to Peter after a storm: “Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!” Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?” And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down.”

How do you respond to the storm’s aftermath? Do you adopt the boldness of Peter, start out walking on water, then take your eyes off Jesus and panic when you feel yourself drowning? Some of us may be even bolder and decide to ride the waves of doubt, despair, confusion and fear that often follow a storm because we don’t know what else to do. Like spiritual surfboarders, we try our best to ride on top of those waves and realize that God has given us power through our faith to ride out the storm as long as our focus remains on Jesus.

I’m praying that God would grant special grace and strength to those impacted by the storm.

To apply for assistance online visit [disasterassistance.gov](https://disasterassistance.gov) or call 800-621-3362 (TTY: 800-462-7585). The lines will be in operation seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.

*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 [preserved-bypurpose@gmail.com](mailto:preserved-bypurpose@gmail.com) or follow her on Twitter @shewanda.*



Moving the Masses Toward the Mission of the Master

1600 Florence Avenue  
Jackson, Mississippi 39204  
601-3552670 • 601-355-0760 (Fax)

[www.collegehillchurch.org](http://www.collegehillchurch.org)  
[Chmbo@collegehillchurch.org](mailto:Chmbo@collegehillchurch.org)

**COLLEGE HILL**  
MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

**SUNDAY**  
Worship Services  
10:00 a.m.  
Sunday School 8:45 a.m.

**MONDAY**  
Intercessory Prayer 9:00 a.m.

**WEDNESDAY**  
Prayer Service 6:30 p.m.  
Classes: Children • Youth • Adult • 7:00p.m.



**New Horizon Church**  
INTERNATIONAL  
A place of love and victory.

**Bishop Ronnie C. Crudup, Sr.**  
1750 Ellis Avenue • Jackson, MS 39204  
OFFICE: 601-371-1427 • FAX: 601-371-8282

[www.nhcms.org](http://www.nhcms.org)

**SUNDAY**  
8:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. - Worship Services

**WEDNESDAY**  
7:00 p.m. - Bible Class

**TV BROADCAST**  
8:00 a.m. - Channel 14 (Comcast)

*Prayer Everyday: 6 a.m. and 6 p.m.*

# True Light Baptist Church

224 E. Bell Street | Jackson, MS 39202 | Phone: (601) 398-0915



**Join Us!**  
for our **Light Line Prayer Call**  
each **Wednesday morning at 6:00 a.m.** or join us on  
**Periscope @MarcusCheeks**


## The Light Line PRAYER

**Rev. Marcus E. Cheeks, Pastor**  
Small Group Study | 9:00 a.m.  
Worship Service | Sundays 10:30 a.m.  
Bible Study | Wednesdays 6:30 p.m.

**Phone Number:** (425) 436-6260  
**Access Code:** 627 6205#  
**(712) 832-8330 (Alternate Number)**  
YouTube Channel: True Light Baptist Church

## Crossroads Church of God

Sharing The Love Of Christ With Others



**Sunday Morning**  
Fellowships: 9:30 a.m.  
Sunday Sch: 10 a.m.

**Sunday Worship Service:** 11:15 a.m.  
(Fellowship following worship service 1st Sundays)

**Wednesday Prayer/Bible Study:** 7 p.m.

**Rev. Mark Jackson, Pastor**  
231-A John Day Road • Off Hwy 16 East • Canton, MS 39046  
Church: 601-859-2858

## New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church

Pastor, Dr. F. R. Lenoir



Sunday School - 9:15 a.m.  
Sunday Morning Worship - 10:30 a.m.  
Live Radio Broadcast  
WOAD AM 1300 - 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.



*"A Church Preparing for a Home Not Built by Man"*

**New Bethel M. B. Church • 450 Culberston Ave. • Jackson, MS 39209**  
601-969-3481/969-3482 • Fax # 601-969-1957 • E-Mail: [Serenitynbc@aol.com](mailto:Serenitynbc@aol.com)

# Indiana family's experience with rare Epilepsy may help other African Americans



Hadley

By Shambria Davis  
TriceEdneyWire.com

Well more than a quarter of a million African Americans across the U. S. have been diagnosed with epilepsy. For these families, it means the ability to give wisdom to other families as they give care and extra protection for that diagnosed loved one – even protection from some in the medical field.

“As an African American, there are documented instances of those in the medical field taking advantage of and experimenting on people of color. Racism has created a global health crisis which has permeated all institutions in this country, including the healthcare system,” says Deavin Arnold-Hadley, mother of Mason Hadley, who was diagnosed with Epilepsy in 2012 at the age of 2. “I would encourage the black community to make sure that you have a health care provider that wants to work with you; do not be afraid to speak up and advocate for yourself or a loved one that you care for.”

According to the U.S. Census Bureau and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “about 375,000 African Americans have active epilepsy, which means they have been told they have epilepsy or a seizure disorder and are taking seizure medication or had at least one seizure in the past year. Over 20,000 African Americans are diagnosed with seizures or epilepsy each year,” the Epilepsy Foundation points out.

On February 28, 2021, the Epilepsy Foundation will gather with other patient organizations from around the world to call attention to Epilepsy and other unusual diseases. This day, called Rare Disease Day, is set aside on the last day of Black History Month every year for “awareness among the general public and key decision makers about rare diseases and their impact,” Epilepsy.com describes.

It also notes that more than 300 million people are living with rare diseases around the world and that 72 percent of these rare diseases are genetic and 70 percent of those genetic rare diseases actually start in childhood.

The Hadley Family is being recognized by the Epilepsy Foundation this year in hopes to spread more awareness about epilepsy and other rare disease awareness. In addition to encouraging parents to protect, advocate and ask lots of questions on behalf of their loved one, the

Hadley’s experience has much to offer other families.

Mason Hadley, the son of Chris Hadley and Deavin Arnold-Hadley, was diagnosed in October 2012, right after his 2nd birthday, with Doose Syndrome – a rare form of childhood epilepsy that usually begins between the ages of 1 and 5. The diagnosis came after countless visits to the hospital and Deavin’s relentless pursuit to obtain a second opinion.

“There was no doubt that there was seizure activity going on. He went from one nocturnal grand mal seizure to progressing to hundreds of seizures a day,” Deavin recalls.

As a determined mother, Deavin sought more information and varying treatment options; even though the treatment options seemed to have negative effects on Mason.

With careful consideration, she made a life-changing decision and introduced Mason to the medical ketogenic diet, a special high-fat, low-carbohydrate diet that helps to control seizures in some people with epilepsy and is prescribed by a physician and carefully monitored by a dietitian. Immediate results were noticed.

“If it weren’t for starting the ketogenic diet, I don’t think Mason would be where he is now, on grade level,” Deavin shares.

Due to limited information on Doose Syndrome diagnosis, Deavin states, “an increased awareness and education of rare diseases is needed due to the lack of resources and support that are available in these marginalized communities, especially since African-American communities have been historically discriminated and discredited when it comes to advocating for themselves or their children.”

Advocacy for Mason’s health proved highly important for the Hadley family, specifically focused on the intersectionality of race, culture and rare disease and its impact on Mason’s health journey. The Hadley’s learned to focused on what they felt would enhance Mason’s health journey without relying solely on what doctors says is right.

Deavin states, “Culturally, we are taught to listen to what our doctor has to say, that he/she is always right, always looks out for our best interest.”

However, what she and the family have learned is that’s not always true and because of that; therapeutic methods were implemented more than traditional forms of medicine.

The Hadleys currently reside in Fishers, Indiana where they continue their journey with the ketogenic diet and homeschool.

Since Mason’s diagnosis, the Hadley family are a part of a huge Keto Kid Support Group through social media. They have also partnered with the Black Womens Health Imperative group. In addition, the Epilepsy Foundation Indiana has been a great resource for the family as the foundation provides more outreach and education to those, just like the Hadleys, who are in need for local community resource and support.

One of the outreach efforts is the Indiana Minority Outreach Mini-Grantee Project which targets minority populations like African-American and Latino communities and individuals living in rural Indiana. The project takes careful consideration of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Another valuable resource is the Rare Epilepsy Network, where REN Executive director ILene Penn Miller can be reached at [IlenePennMiller@gmail.com](mailto:IlenePennMiller@gmail.com).

On Saturday, February 20, 2021, the Seizure Recognition and First Aid Training was held for those interested in learning more about seizures associated with epilepsy and for those wanting to participate in a virtual first aid training. This training was instructed by Dr. Lorraine Newborn-Palmer, RN, ACNS-BC, CNRN, CBIS, EF Professional Advisory Board.

“Diversity, inclusion and cultural concerns for the African-American population have been highlighted in a multitude of settings recently,” says Newborn-Palmer. “We, as nurses, recognize the increased importance of education about seizures and epilepsy that cannot be overlooked.”

NaKaisha Tolbert-Banks, LCSW, LCAC, CLYL, CEC, ELI-MP and Mental/Health Equity Consultant of D.U.O Empowerment Services, agrees that programs like the Indiana Minority Outreach Mini-Grantee Project are key to the awareness about rare diseases.

“The grant has allowed various community partners to come together in efforts to disperse resources about epilepsy into the African-American community,” says Tolbert-Banks. “Continued community conversations and outreach to the African-American community through efforts made with Epilepsy Foundation Indiana may allow for continued awareness.”

# Bloody Sunday memorial to honor late civil rights giants

*The Associated Press*

This year’s commemoration of a pivotal moment in the fight for voting rights for African Americans will honor four giants of the civil rights movement who lost their lives in 2020, including the late U.S. Rep. John Lewis.

Organizers recently announced plans for the March 7 celebration that is being conducted differently this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rev. Joseph Lowery, C.T. Vivian, attorney Bruce Boynton and Lewis will be honored during the 56th annual commemoration of Bloody Sunday, the day in 1965 that civil rights marchers were brutally beaten on Selma’s Edmund Pettus Bridge.

The four will be honored during the Martin & Coretta King Unity Breakfast March 7 in Selma. The breakfast will be held as a drive-in, and people will remain in their cars during the breakfast while speakers will address the crowd from a stage.

There will then be a “slow drive” across the Edmund Pettus Bridge and wreaths will be placed honoring the four, former state Sen. Hank Sanders said.

Sanders said the COVID-19 pandemic did not allow the four to have large funerals with the exception of Lewis, who was honored with events in Georgia, Alabama and Washington D.C. The former Georgia congressman was beaten during Bloody Sunday.

“This is lifting the people who were on the battlefield for a long time, starting in the 1950s and continuing all of their lives. ... Those of us who are still living, particularly the young, need to take up the challenge and go forward because there is still so much to be done,” Sanders said.

Footage of the Bloody Sunday beatings helped galvanize support for passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. This year’s commemoration comes as some states seek to roll back expanded early and mail-in voting access and efforts have been unsuccessful to restore a key section of the Voting Rights Act that required states with a history of discrimination to get federal approval for any changes to voting procedures.

Bernard LaFayette, who worked with all four, will speak at the breakfast, Sanders said.

While much of the annual Bridge Crossing celebration will be virtual this year, Sanders said they wanted to have events that people could safely attend.

Lowery, a charismatic and fiery preacher, is often considered the dean of the civil rights veterans and led the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Vivian began organizing sit-ins against segregation in the 1940s and later joined forces with the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. In 1965, Vivian led dozens of marchers to a courthouse in Selma, confronting the local sheriff on the courthouse steps and telling him the marchers should be allowed to register to vote. The sheriff responded by punching Vivian in the head.

Boynton was arrested for entering the white part of a racially segregated bus station in Virginia, launching a chain reaction that ultimately helped to bring about the abolition of Jim Crow laws in the South. Boynton contested his conviction, and his appeal resulted in a U.S. Supreme Court decision that prohibited bus station segregation and helped inspire the Freedom Riders.






Jackson Public Schools


# SALUTES

# BLACK

# HISTORY

# MONTH





**JACKSON**  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Transforming lives through  
excellent education

# Diverse group receives Mississippi Governor’s Arts Awards

*The Associated Press*

An acclaimed author, a prolific songwriter and a group of small-town quilters are among this year’s recipients of the Mississippi Governor’s Arts Awards. This is the 33rd year for the awards, and a ceremony is usually held in Jackson. Gov. Tate Reeves has limited the size of gatherings because of the coronavirus pandemic, so the ceremony was recorded. It is set to be televised at 8 p.m. Friday on Mississippi Public Broadcasting.

The Mississippi Arts Commission said in a news release that the awards are:

**Excellence in Literature:** Jesmyn Ward, an author and professor of creative writing at Tulane University. Ward, who grew up in DeLisle, received the National Book Award for her novels “Salvage the Bones” and “Sing, Unburied, Sing.”

**Lifetime Achievement:** Benjamin Wright, a songwriter, arranger, composer, musical director and performer from Greenville. Wright has worked with artists including Michael Jackson, Justin Timberlake, Outkast, The Temptations, Earth Wind & Fire, Aretha Franklin, Gladys Knight, Mary J. Blige and Janet Jackson.



Jafa

**Arts in Community:** Tutwiler Quilters, a group that helps black women in the Delta use their quilt-making skills to support themselves and their families by earning money from their work.

**Excellence in Media Arts:** Arthur Jafa is a filmmaker and cinematographer who grew up in Tupelo and Clarksdale. His work focuses on black identity. His short film, “The White Album,” which explored white supremacy, received the Golden Lion award at the 2019 Venice Biennale.

**Excellence in Music:** Nellie McNinnis, also known “Nellie Mack,” is a Jackson native and professional bass player. She formed the jazz group Past, Present & Future with Cassandra Wilson, Rhonda Richmond and Yvonne Evers. McNinnis has performed with Henry Mancini, Ellis Marsalis, Dizzy Gillespie and Dorothy Moore.

**Cultural Ambassador:** Raphael Semmes, a musician, songwriter and event organizer based in Jackson. Semmes is a bass player and performed with blues and jazz artists such as John Lee Hooker, Mose Allison and Jewel Bass.



McInnis



Wright

**Excellence in Music:** Nellie McNinnis, also known “Nellie Mack,” is a Jackson native and professional bass player. She formed the jazz group Past, Present & Future with Cassandra Wilson, Rhonda Richmond and Yvonne Evers. McNinnis has performed with Henry Mancini, Ellis Marsalis, Dizzy Gillespie and Dorothy Moore.

**Cultural Ambassador:** Raphael Semmes, a musician, songwriter and event organizer based in Jackson. Semmes is a bass player and performed with blues and jazz artists such as John Lee Hooker, Mose Allison and Jewel Bass.



Semmes



Wright

**Excellence in Music:** Nellie McNinnis, also known “Nellie Mack,” is a Jackson native and professional bass player. She formed the jazz group Past, Present & Future with Cassandra Wilson, Rhonda Richmond and Yvonne Evers. McNinnis has performed with Henry Mancini, Ellis Marsalis, Dizzy Gillespie and Dorothy Moore.

**Cultural Ambassador:** Raphael Semmes, a musician, songwriter and event organizer based in Jackson. Semmes is a bass player and performed with blues and jazz artists such as John Lee Hooker, Mose Allison and Jewel Bass.

# Center receives grant for work preserving Emmett Till legacy



Till

*The Associated Press*

A Mississippi institution is receiving a grant to advance its work in teaching people about the legacy of Emmett Till, a black teenager from Chicago whose lynching by white people in Mississippi in 1955 spurred the civil rights movement.

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation recently announced that it is giving grants to five projects across the United States. One of grants is \$691,750 to the Emmett Till Interpretive Center in Sumner, Mississippi.

The foundation said in a news release that the center will use the money “to support racial healing efforts that include historic preservation, community building activities in the Mississippi Delta and a year-long strategic planning process to

coordinate the preservation of the Mamie and Emmett Till story across the Mississippi Delta and in Chicago.”

Till was visiting relatives in Mississippi when white men abducted him from his uncle’s home on Aug. 28, 1955, accusing the 14-year-old of flirting with a white woman as she worked at a store in the rural community of Money. His mutilated body was pulled from the Tallahatchie River three days later.

His mother, Mamie Till Mobley, insisted on an open casket at his funeral in Chicago so the world could see how racism had led to her son’s death. *Jet magazine* and *The Chicago Defender* newspaper published photos of his corpse, and those photos motivated people to push for civil rights.

## Legends

Continued from page A3

He started his legal career in 1967, practicing with the Mississippi NAACP Legal Defense Fund on significant matters, including desegregation and voter rights cases. After retirement from the bench in 1991, he became a partner with the law firm Phelps Dunbar LLP.

In 1995, Anderson held the Jamie L. Whitten Chair of Law and Government at the University of Mississippi. For his storied career, Anderson has garnered a number of accolades.

In 1995, he was inducted into the Ole Miss Alumni Hall of Fame. In 2007, he was presented the Mississippi Bar Association’s Lifetime Achievement Award. And in 2009, he was inducted into the National Bar Association Hall of Fame. Two years later, he was entered into the University of Mississippi School of Law Hall of Fame. The Reuben V. Anderson Pre-Law Society at Tougaloo College is named in his honor.

He was president of the Mississippi Chamber of Commerce in 2001 and has been a member of the University of Mississippi Foundation Board of Directors and currently serves as chairman of the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum in Jackson, being one of its major development fundraisers.

He is a member of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity and is married to Phyllis Wright Anderson. The couple’s three children are Roslyn, Vincent and Raina; they have two grandchildren.

**U.S. Congressman Bennie Thompson**

Serving 13 Terms representing Mississippi’s 2nd Congressional District; Longest serving African-American elected Mississippian

Born in a state with a unique history of racial inequality, Thompson draws inspiration from the legacies of Medgar Evers, Fannie Lou Hamer, Aaron Henry and Henry Kirksey.

The Bolton, Mississippi, native is serving his 13th term in the United States House of Representatives, representing Mississippi’s Second Congressional District since 1993, where he has spent his entire life fighting to improve the lives of all people.

Thompson is the longest-serving African-American elected official in the state and the lone Democrat in the Mississippi Congressional Delegation.

He began his grassroots political activism as a civil rights champion through the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) while a student at Tougaloo College. He organized voter registration drives for African Americans throughout the Mississippi Delta on behalf of SNCC, before becoming a school teacher.

From 1969 to 1972, he served as alderman of his hometown, Bolton, before serving as the city’s mayor from 1973 to 1980. He is a founding member of the Mississippi Association of Black Mayors.

He was then elected as a Hinds County supervisor, holding the position from 1980 until 1993, when he was elected to the U.S. Congress, representing Mississippi’s largest Congressional District encompassing the capital city and the Mississippi Delta.

In 2000, he authored legislation creating the National Center for Minority Health and Health Care Disparities which subsequently became law.

After Hurricane Katrina ravaged the state, he aggressively advocated for disaster relief improvements within government agencies and provided oversight to ensure that federal funds were properly allocated for Gulf Coast recovery.

The following year, Thompson’s Washington colleagues expressed their overwhelming confidence in his leadership abilities and selected him to serve as the first Democratic chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee.

As chairman, Thompson introduced and engineered passage of the most comprehensive homeland security package since Sept. 11, 2001 – H.R. 1, the “9/11 Commission Recommendations Act of 2007.”

The congressman has also served on the Agriculture, Budget and Small Business Committees while working to level the playing field and while being the unabashed champion for civil rights, equal education and healthcare delivery in Mississippi.

He recently entered into a lawsuit against the administration of former President Donald Trump for the insurrection activities against the Capitol Building in which he was present during the Jan.

6, 2021, assault.

Thompson is a lifelong member of the Asbury United Methodist Church in Bolton. He has been married to his college sweetheart, London Johnson of Mound Bayou, Mississippi, since 1968. The couple has a daughter, BendaLonne.

He is an avid outdoorsman and enjoys gardening, reading, and listening to the Blues that also got its start in Mississippi – Home of the Blues.

When your landlord sexually harasses you,

peace at

**THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME**

Sexual harassment by a landlord, maintenance worker or anyone associated with your property is against the law. The Fair Housing Act protects you from harassment, including someone repeatedly entering your home without permission, making unwelcome sexual advances or refusing to make repairs because you deny sexual favors. If this happens to you, file a housing discrimination complaint.

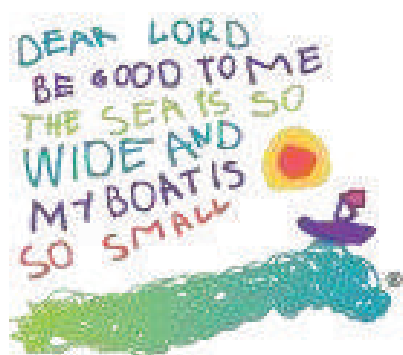
Go to **heedhousing.org** or call **601-981-1960**

If you fear for your safety, call 911.

Housing Education and Economic Development  
3405 Medgar Evers Blvd.  
Jackson, Mississippi 39213

**FAIR HOUSING: THE LAW IS ON YOUR SIDE.**

The federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination because of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, familial status or disability.



# children's defense fund southern regional

“God, we have pushed so many of our children into the tumultuous sea of life in small and leaky boats without survival gear and compass.  
Forgive us and help them to forgive us.  
Help us now to give all our children the anchors of faith and love, the rudders of purpose and hope, the sails of health and education, and the paddles of family and community to keep them safe and strong when life’s sea gets rough.”

Marian Wright Edelman from her book  
*The Sea is So Wide and My Boat is So Small*  
Founder and President Emerita  
Children’s Defense Fund



Marian Wright Edelman was the first African American woman admitted to The Mississippi Bar in 1964. She began practicing law with the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund's Mississippi office, working on racial justice issues connected with the civil rights movement and representing activists during the Mississippi Freedom Summer of 1964. In 1968, she moved to Washington, D.C., as counsel for the Poor People’s Campaign that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. began organizing before his death. Mrs. Edelman also worked with Dr. King to organize the March on Washington in 1963.

## HOLMES COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Saluting all African-American Supervisors in the state of Mississippi

**THERE’S NO PLACE LIKE “HOLMES!”**

**“We Keep it Safe in Holmes County”**



**Holmes County Board of Supervisors**  
(Seated l-r) Alponzo Greer, James Young, Leroy Johnson  
Standing (l-r) Leonard Hampton, vice president; Debra Mabry, president

This shouldn't be  
how we say hello  
...or goodbye.



It's our reality right now. But it won't be if we do what it takes to beat COVID-19. Vaccines are coming, but until enough of us are vaccinated, we all still need to wear our masks, stay at least six feet from others, and avoid indoor social gatherings. The more we slow the spread, the faster we'll return to normal hellos ... and fewer goodbyes.

Learn more about vaccines and slowing the spread at [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus)



Brought to you by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services