



## Mayor Chokwe Lumumba appoints Louis Wright as new CAO

Local businessman says he is just what the city needs



Mayor Lumumba (l) announces his appointment of Louis Wright (r) as CAO

By Jackie Hampton  
Publisher

On Monday, during a media press conference at City Hall, Mayor Chokwe Lumumba announced that Louis P. Wright Sr. will become Jackson’s new chief administrative officer (CAO). Wright who served as customer service manager at Entergy Mississippi, retired July 30 and will be assuming his new position August 16, serving as interim CAO until confirmed by the Jackson City Council. He was employed by Entergy for 47 years.

Lumumba stated, “We look forward to bringing his vast business acumen, ability to build relationships, drive progress and provide

leadership to our team.”

Wright is a native of Jackson. He is a graduate of Jim Hill High School and a Jackson State University alum. He has served on the board of directors for Keep Jackson Beautiful and The United Way. He has also served as president of Jackson Public Schools Board of Trustees. Currently he is a trustee for the Jackson Housing Authority and the Hinds County Economic Development Authority.

Wright told *The Mississippi Link* that he is really excited about the opportunity to serve in this new role and feels that with the leadership from the mayor

**Wright**  
*Continued on page 3*

## Community shocked and saddened over the passing of Sheriff Lee Vance

By Jackie Hampton  
Publisher

According to the Hinds County Sheriff’s Department, an ambulance was sent to the home of Sheriff Lee Vance Wednesday morning where he was found non-responsive. The buzz was out before noon as local television stations and other media announced Vance had succumbed. Sheriff’s department Captain Tyree Jones confirmed his passing to WLBT-TV.

Two weeks ago, it was announced that Vance had tested positive for COVID-19, after an outbreak of the illness at a jail he oversaw, but it has not been stated that this was the cause of his passing.

Vance was elected sheriff in 2019 after a 30-year career with the Jackson Police Department. He served as chief of Police from 2014-2017.

Jay Johnson, a Jackson Police Department employee, was shocked and saddened to hear of his transition. Johnson said, “Lee and I were lifetime friends. We started at Jackson State University together in 1976. We worked together at UPS early on and later followed each other to JPD in 1987.”

Johnson said they were in each other’s weddings. “Recently we took a picture together at the mayor’s inauguration not realizing it would be the last time we would see each other and have a laugh. He was

**Vance**  
*Continued on pages 2 & 3*



Lee Vance celebrates his election as Hinds County Sheriff at Johnny T’s in 2019.

PHOTOS BY JAY JOHNSON



(L-R) Tyree Jones, Johnnie Byrd, Rob Jay, Lee Vance, and Jay Johnson at Mayor Lumumba’s second term inauguration held at the Jackson Convention Center, July 1, 2021

## Mississippi weekend virus cases increase six-fold in 3 weeks

The Associated Press

Mississippi’s department of health reported Monday that the state saw almost 5,000 new confirmed cases of COVID-19 over the weekend as the virus surges statewide.

That’s an increase of more than six times the number of new cases – 796 – reported three weeks ago on July 12.

“Delta surge accelerating quickly – please be safe and protect your family,” State Health Officer Dr. Thomas Dobbbs tweeted.

The state of around 3 million people has seen almost 350,000 COVID-19 cases since the start of the pandem-

ic. The increase in new cases, predominately the highly contagious delta variant, comes as schools across the state prepare to return to the classroom for the start of classes.

Republican Gov. Tate Reeves says he won’t require students or teachers in K-12 schools to wear masks. Many schools have chosen to do so anyway.

Around a week after the board of trustees for the Oxford School District decided to make masks optional for vaccinated and unvaccinated students and staff, Oxford School District superintendent Bradley Roberson announced

in a letter sent out to families Saturday that masks will now be required in school.

*The Oxford Eagle* reports that masks for all students and staff will be required at least between Aug. 2 and Aug. 20. The district will continue to assess the situation as the school year progresses. Teachers returned to their classrooms on Monday. Students start school on Friday.

“As education leaders, we have all seen the negative impact last school year has had on student learning which is why an overwhelming majority of districts across our state have been determined to open

schools with as much normal school operations as possible,” Roberson wrote in his letter. “Unfortunately, in recent days we have learned from some of our district friends from around the state who have already started school that a normal return may not provide us with the best opportunity to keep kids in school.”

Districts like Gulfport School District and Jackson Public School District are requiring masks. The issue is more contentious in other districts, however.

A Lowndes County School District board meeting last week was attended by protes-

tors holding signs that read, “Mask Choice,” “Masks Optional” or “Our Bodies, Our Choice.”

The board voted 4-1 during that meeting to make masks optional. Superintendent Sam Allison said the district will require mask-wearing on buses and will “strongly encourage and have masks available” for unvaccinated students and staff in school buildings.

“We can debate mask wearing, but I don’t want to do that,” said Allison, according to the *Commercial Dispatch*. “We’re going to start the year with no requirement. Hopefully, we’ll continue to be safe

and healthy.”

At the meeting, board members dictated a requirement of a 10-day quarantine at home if unvaccinated members of the school community are exposed to the virus. They also have the option of remaining at school, but they must take a negative rapid test every two days for 10 days.

Vaccinated students who come in close contact with someone who tests positive do not have to quarantine, unless they have symptoms.

The rule angered some parents in the crowd, who said

**Covid**  
*Continued on page 3*





# Healing Circle JXN Weekend Retreat



Healing Circle JXN Weekend Retreat ladies (l-r) Mynya Kaufman, Alana Smith, Quisha Edwards, Genette Holmes, Ulanda Bowens and Edelia “Dr. Jay” Carthan  
PHOTO BY DERRICK HICKS

*Special to The Mississippi Link*

Women traveled to Mississippi July 30-August 1 to attend Healing Circle JXN Weekend Retreat. Ladies traveled from Georgia, Florida, Texas and Louisiana to participate in a weekend of healing, photoshoots and fun.

“Healing Circles are sacred spaces for people to come and dump and learn how to deal with the pain, shame and guilt they have been carrying for years. So many women shared their stories for the first time and felt comfortable around women with similar stories and battles,” Dr. Jay said, the organizer of Healing Circle Weekend Retreat. “Anyone can participate in Healing Circles because we have all been through something and we all have a sto-

ry to tell.”

The event took place at an Airbnb house with a pool in north Jackson. Ladies were treated to massages, make-up by celebrity makeup artist J. Struktuur, and dance class by Shanika Kelly Lee, owner of Diamond Dance Company and the Purple Diamond Dance Team. One of the featured speakers was Funmi Queen Franklin, a spiritual healer from Jackson.

“I have been on cloud 9,000 since I arrived. Thank you sister for a lovely time. Thank you for creating a safe space. Thank you for heeding to the vision God gave you. Girl, this is only just the beginning,” Mynya Kaufman, a participant from Mississippi said.

“Dr. Jay, thank you for putting

together such an amazing event. My daughter and I have started my 40 day challenge,” Quisha Edwards said, one of the attendees who traveled from Georgia. “You’re an amazing woman and I’m so happy that I attended the weekend retreat.”

“My goal is to have Healing Circles all around the world. Each circle will focus on a different group. We will do circles for couples, men, troubled teens, LGBTI community and more,” Dr. Jay said. “We have to invest in ourselves and do the work to break generational curses, bad habits and beliefs. The tools and techniques that we share at Healing Circle Weekend Retreat can be used by anyone.”

Dr. Jay is an author, entrepre-

neur and assistant professor at the historic Tougaloo College. She is the founder and director of Camp Fabulous, a leadership camp for girls ages 7 to 17 which she has been hosting for over 15 years.

This event would not have been possible without the sponsors. Thank you to the Peter Damon Group, Sonnie Design, Hemp World, Village Kitchen, J. Struktuur Beauty, Kelli Nicole Beauty, Sweet Unknown South, Broken Girls JP, Irvin Law Firm, Carthan Enterprises and The Fabulous Life by Dr Jay.

The next Healing Circle is scheduled for October 29-31.

For more info about Healing Circles Weekend Retreat, visit [www.theFabulousDrJay.com](http://www.theFabulousDrJay.com).

# Chancery Court hosts free legal clinic

By Kevin Bradley,  
*Contributing Writer*

On Friday morning, July 30, lives were changed for a host of families who had come to receive free legal aid in assisting them with divorces, name changes, birth certificate corrections, visitation, emancipation and guardianship issues. This charge was led by key individuals and groups such as Jackson Public Schools, Hinds County Human Resource Agency, Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers as well as individual lawyers, and the honorable chancery judges.

“This is a clinic that we try to have at least once a year,” said

Judge Crystal Wise-Martin.

Although Covid prevented the clinic from being held in 2020, they were able to host this year with masks and social distancing in place.

For families that can’t afford an attorney in cases that fall under family law, this is and may be their greatest opportunity to handle these cases with assistance. Unlike criminal cases that will assign you an attorney if you can’t afford one, this does not hold true in family cases.

One area that stood out was guardianship because you have so many relatives taking care of

children that are not biologically theirs, and this can present an issue with such things as enrolling them in school or making decisions for them at a hospital.

Representatives from Jackson Public Schools and the Department Human Services were on site to help answer any related questions.

I spoke with Judge Tiffany Grove, who represents the 5th District of Hinds County, and Judge Crystal Wise-Martin, who represents Sub District 2 of Hinds County. I was impressed not only by their sincerity and intelligence, but by their patience and willing-

ness to work with clients and the general public. After all how many times, after they are elected, do elected officials actually interact with the general public? Usually not until its time to vote again.

One thing that some of the attorneys and judges agreed on was that they felt good about the project because it allows them to do what they went to law school for, which is to help people in need.

For nearly 40 years, members of MVLP have provided free legal assistance to mor

Visit the website of the MVLP (Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers) at [WWW.MVLP.ORG](http://WWW.MVLP.ORG)



(L-R) Carlyn Hicks, Hinds Co. Court Judge; Crystal Wise Martin, Hinds Co. Chancery Court Judge; Denise Owens, Chancery Court Judge; Tiffany Grove, Chancery Court Judge; and Gayla C. Sanders, executive director of MVLP  
PHOTO BY KEVIN BRADLEY



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MISSISSIPPI  
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## Vance

Continued from page 1



Vance being sworn in as Hinds County Sheriff in 2019 surrounded by family.

a professional in his field with the city and the county and will be greatly missed,” Johnson said.

Rob Jay, who serves as assistant athletic director for JSU Media, was a long-time friend of Vance. He said, “I still cannot believe this. I was so upset when I received the news, I had to leave work.”

In describing their friendship Rob said, “We were good friends and followed some of the same tracks. We both attended Lanier High School, we both attended Jackson State University and we both majored in mass comm.”

Rob recalled when he worked at WLBT-TV

he had a broadcast segment every Saturday morning called ‘Chat with the Chief.’ “Vance was a great guest. Each week he would just go with the flow and though he was a professional guy, he also could just cut up,” he said.

Rob said, “When I left WLBT and started running Jackson State’s radio station, I developed a show called ‘Metro Live’ and Vance was the first one on the show. Lee always showed up when I needed him.”

Rob recalled how much fun they had at the mayor’s inauguration and like Jay Johnson, he did not know that would be the last time they would have that kind of fun together.

## Covid

Continued from page 1

unvaccinated and vaccinated children shouldn’t be treated differently. Some also expressed concerns about finding child care if their children was forced to quarantine.

Valerie Riley, who held the “Our Bodies, Our Choice” sign, said her children would not be vaccinated or tested for the virus.

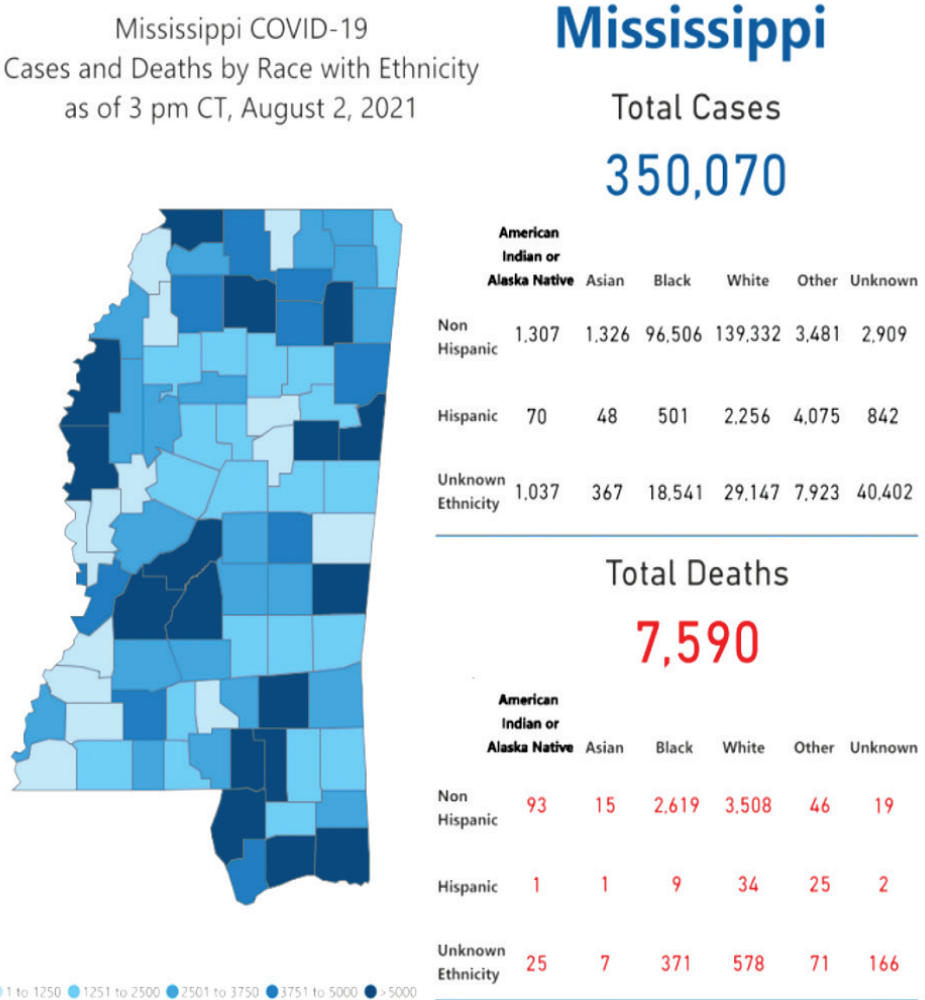
“I refuse to get something stuck up my child’s nose just so they can come back and be educated,” Riley said, according to the *Dispatch*. “My kids should not

pay the price for not being vaccinated.”

Meanwhile, Vicksburg Mayor George Flaggs Jr. released a statement Monday that he would be quarantining for the next five days while sick with the virus.

“After being administered two COVID-19 tests, the first of which was negative, my physician has confirmed that the second test was positive,” he said.

Flaggs said he is “looking forward to a quick recovery” and that he plans to return to work in a week. Vicksburg is a city of around 22,000.



## Wright

Continued from page 1

and other city leaders, a lot of great things can be accomplished. He admitted he will be carrying a lot of weight on his shoulders but with the confidence the mayor and others have in him, he is looking forward to serving in this capacity.

Wright said, “I am not so naïve to think there are not challenges ahead, but I feel the Lord has prepared me for this role.”

The CAO is responsible for coordinating and directing the operations of the various departments and function of the municipal government. The city has approximately 1,700 employees and a budget of more than \$350 million.

Wright is married to C. Denise Wright and they are the parents of two children, Louis Wright Jr. and EuShawn Smith. They have 4 grandchildren with one more on the way.

Wright is a life-long member of College Hill Baptist Church where he serves as a deacon, superintendent of the Sunday School and chairman of the Trustee Board.

College Hill pastor Rev. Chauncey Jordan and other church members congratulated Wright during a ZOOM executive board meeting Monday night.

James Covington, a local Jackson businessman, is a long-time friend of Wright’s. He said, “Sometimes the times find us. What a great appointment by Mayor Lumumba. I’ve known Louis Wright for more than 35 years from our days together at Mississippi Power & Light, now Entergy. He is a seasoned corporate manager with more than 45 year of experience. He has a calming spirit. Louis could have retired and enjoyed his life but instead decided to take those years of experience and help solve problems in our city.”

“He’s just what the city needs.”



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# Espy donates \$25,000 for field trips to Two Mississippi Museums



Pictured left to right are Two Mississippi Museums director Pamela D. C. Junior, MDAH board president emeritus Judge Reuben V. Anderson, Mississippi Urban League president Portia Espy, former US Secretary of Agriculture and congressman Mike Espy, MDAH director Katie Blount, MDAH board president Spence Flatgard and Foundation for Mississippi History chairman Judge Fred Banks.

Mississippi Link Newswire

Mike Espy, former Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture and a former United States Representative from the 1st District of Mississippi, has donated \$25,000 to the William and Elise Winter Education Endowment. The endowment is named in honor of former Governor William Winter and First Lady Elise Winter and was created to underwrite field trips to the Museum of Mississippi History and Mississippi Civil Rights Museum for Mississippi students. “The Winters’s commitment to public education and to bringing Mississippi’s school children

to the Two Mississippi Museums – or as he called them, “Mississippi’s largest classroom – is an inspiration to all,” said Katie Blount. “We are grateful to Secretary Espy for his generous support of this initiative.” The funds from the William and Elise Winter Education Endowment will be used to defray costs such as admission, travel and on-site lunches for students. Espy is a longtime member of the Foundation for Mississippi History board and has been a strong public advocate for the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum from the beginning. He currently works as an attorney, counselor and agricultural advisor through his own law and consulting firms Mike Espy, PLLC, and AE Agritrade, Inc. He was also a candidate for United States Senate in 2018 and 2020 from the state of Mississippi.

To reserve or learn more about field trips at the Two Mississippi Museums, contact Stephanie King, field trips coordinator, at [sking@mdah.ms.gov](mailto:sking@mdah.ms.gov). Two Mississippi Museums hours are Tuesday-Saturday 9 a.m.-5 p.m. The museums are open free of charge on Sundays from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. and are located at 2 North Street in Jackson. For more information e-mail [info@mdah.ms.gov](mailto:info@mdah.ms.gov).

# In Memoriam The Life and Legacy of Clarence Hopkins, Sr.

September 10, 1947 – July 28, 2021



Hopkins

Clarence “Babro” Hopkins Sr. was born September 10, 1947, in Hinds County, MS, to Johnnie Mae Love Hopkins and Henry Terrell. As a child, he was honored with a surrogate mother whom he loved: Willie Davis. As a result, he also gained a surrogate brother, J. W. Davis; they remained friends for a lifetime. Clarence’s son Patrick Rudolph preceded him in death in October 2017. Clarence passed on July 28, 2021. Education and Military Career... He was educated in the Jackson Public School System at Sally Reynolds Elementary School and Jim Hill High School. Upon graduating from Jim Hill in 1965, Clarence joined the United States Air Force, where he received outstanding performance awards throughout his three-year military career: honorably discharged in 1968, with the rank of sergeant. In 1968, Clarence entered Jackson State College to pursue a major in mathematics; he attended for three years. Clarence loved his alma mater, Jim Hill High School. His presence and commitment to the class of 1965 was felt strongly. In 1976, he and a group of classmates organized; they elected him as chairperson, and he served faithfully through several reunions, including the 50th, until 2011, when his health began declining. He continued as co-facilitator with Lillie Lewis from that point. His classmates, as well as his family, constantly sought his knowledge of history and other matters. He had excellent memory of African American history and sports facts! Marriage and Family... On September 17, 1969, Clarence and Shirley Marie Diggs were married. During their marriage, three children were born: Clarence Jr. (January 4, 1970); Terilyn Deche’ (June 28, 1973); Patrick Rudolph (May 18, 1982). His mother Johnnie Mae passed in 1981, and he said Patrick’s birth in 1982, filled the void. His children and grandchildren were the crowning joy of his life. Clarence dedicated his life to the nurturing, upbringing and educational development of his three children. When the grandchildren arrived, Clarence made provisions financially for their growth and future educational development. He celebrated every one of the many achievements of each of his gifted children and grands.

Church/Faith... As a child, Clarence was a member of Evangelist Temple Church of God in Christ, Jackson, MS, where his mother was a faithful member. Later in his adult life, Clarence joined Pearl Street African Methodist Episcopal Church during the early 80s, where his family was. He, Terilyn, and Patrick were baptized on the same day. His message to Pearl Street’s pastor Rev. Dr. Samuel Boyd Sr., since 2000, was: “I want my funeral to be at Pearl Street.” A Laudable Professional Career... In 1970, Clarence began a career with the United States Postal Service. Across the next 26.5 years, he served well in various positions: distribution clerk, mail processing supervisor, computerized forwarding system manager, vehicle operations analyst, station manager – West Jackson, manager of stations and branches, Baton Rouge, LA, and mail processing plant manager – Baton Rouge, LA. The pivotal point of his career was June 1992, when he became the postmaster in Altoona, PA. After two years as postmaster in Altoona, Clarence became postmaster in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and served two and a half years. He retired in 1997. He received numerous awards during his career: Federal Employee of the Year and Postal Employee of the Year in 1986. He received the Exceptional Performance Award (\$3500) as Postmaster of Oklahoma City. A time of trouble... In July 1985, Clarence was diagnosed with a congenital spinal cord illness. Following the surgery (decompressed spinal laminectomy), fluid entered the spine and he was left partially paralyzed (incomplete quadriplegic). Clarence refused to claim the inability to walk again... no crutches, no braces, no prosthetics. At VA Spinal Cord Rehabilitation Center, Memphis, TN, from September–November 1985, he was an inspiration to many who were in rehab. Through determination, much prayer, a positive attitude and rehabilitative therapy, he regained mobility in his legs and moderate strength in the use of small motor skills in his arms/hands. He returned to the Postal Service in a new position in 1986, was promoted to the highest level in the Postal Service by 1992, and continued achieving excellence until he retired in 1997. Lifestyle Changes... Clarence was an avid sports fan, particularly of the Jackson State Tigers. He loved the tailgate parties and all events surrounding the big games. In 2011, Clarence experienced kidney problems and began dialysis. Although he was not as mobile as he had once been, his family and friends surrounded him to ensure that he maintained a lifestyle similar to that of which he was accustomed. His children assisted, but his friends John Chamberlain (Snake) and Ronald Lattimore (Latt), were ever present in his life to accompany him to some of his favorite places and to the hospital whenever needed. Latt was a constant in his life, his rock. He spoke well of Latt as one he could always count on...no matter what. When Clarence became unable to traverse the stadia for the various games and move about in large crowds, son Clarence Jr., nephew Anthony Jones and friend John Shinall made sure that he enjoyed the basketball championship games annually wherever they were held. For special functions of the Jim Hill High School Class of 1965, and other events he desired attending, daughter Terilyn and granddaughter Robin were his assistants (dates) and escorts. Many times granddaughter Brittany made sure he was at dialysis at the VA Medical Center. The Strength of Family... The Hopkins family came together during the last 20 years of Clarence’s life to make sure that he enjoyed himself and to make sure that he and his brother Rudy were honored as the champion fathers and heads of the Hopkins family that each had proven to be. The theme of the event was, “Family Over Everything.” About two years later, the most difficult time of gathering for the family was October 14, 2017, during his 35-year-old son Patrick’s funeral. Oh, the heartache Clarence felt, but he was overjoyed that over 400 attended Patrick’s funeral; it was a time of mourning and deep sense of loss, but once again, it was “Family Over Everything,” indeed, it was a beautiful celebration of Patrick’s short-lived life. Those who will remember... Memories of Clarence will linger with his children and grandchildren: Clarence, Jr. (wife Akiko and son Justice Douglas Taylor-Adrien); Terilyn Deche’ (daughters Robin Nicole Hopkins and Brittany Lashay Howard); brother and sisters: Zelma Rudolph Hopkins (wife Johnnie – daughters and grands Maretta/Dezja-Cynthia/Jayvon); Fay Hopkins Evans (daughter & son Sabrina/Cory, wife Daphne); Judith Ann Hopkins; Elaine Hopkins Grayson (Boyce – daughters Carlisa/Elantra); niece Sabrina, his loving caretaker during the latter years of his life; nephews Anthony and Ronnie Jones; a host of cousins; classmates and friends: Jim Hill Class of 1965; J. W. Davis, Ronald Lattimore, John Chamberlain, Herman “Boochie” Cline and John Shinall.

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# Mississippi COVID-19 vaccinations increase as virus surges



COVID-19 vaccine at an open vaccination site sponsored by the university and the medical center in the Rose E. McCoy Auditorium at Jackson State University in Jackson, Miss., Tuesday, Aug. 3, 2021. Wilson recently lost his father to COVID-19. AP PHOTO/ROGELIO V. SOLIS

By Leah Willingham  
*Associated Press/Report for America*

Albert Wilson Sr. was unsure whether to trust the COVID-19 vaccine when it came out. He told his family he wanted to wait a few months to see how it affected other people before making a decision about himself.

That was before the 58-year-old maintenance technician from Utica was hospitalized with the virus in June. During his two weeks at St. Dominic’s in Jackson – the last weeks of his life – he was begging his wife and four children to get it.

“He told us to come get the vaccine before he died,” said Eric Wilson, Albert’s 20-year-old son. “He said if he ever made it out, he was going to get that vaccine. He said he wished he would have.”

Eric Wilson, a student at Jackson State University, was one of dozens of people lining up to get the COVID-19 vaccine at the historically black university Tuesday. He said he was nervous at first, but he had to do it for his dad.

“I had to – I promised I would,” he said, sitting in the auditorium stands afterward with a Band-Aid on his arm.

The number of people receiving doses of the COVID-19 vaccine in Mississippi, one of the country’s least vaccinated states, is increasing slightly as infections surge in the state.

Around 53,000 people received either a first or second dose of the coronavirus vaccine the week of July 25 to 31, according to numbers released Tuesday by the Mississippi State Department of Health. That’s after the state reported hitting a low of about 20,000 vaccinations for the week of July 4 to July 10.

The last time vaccination rates were so high was between April 25 and May 1, when 55,638 people were inoculated.

Around 1.2 million people in the state of around 3 million have received at least one dose of the vaccine.

“We need 1 million more immune Mississippians to reach population immunity,” State Health Officer Dr. Thomas Dobbs tweeted Tuesday. “Delta is deadly.”

Mississippi still lags far behind other states for COVID-19 vaccinations, with around 35% of the population fully vaccinated. In Vermont, more than 67% of the population is fully vaccinated.

The vaccination lag is happening as all of the state’s major hospitals say they are once again at capacity with COVID-19 patients. Mississippi’s department of health reported Tuesday that there were more than 1,000 patients hospitalized with coronavirus in the state, compared with 228 on July 11. Officials reported more than 1,500 new virus cases.

The surge has created a newfound sense of urgency to get the shot for many who may have been previously hesitant.

Daniel Magee, 53, said his schedule working nights in Jackson making seating for Nissan cars made it difficult for him to make time for an appointment for a shot. But with the delta variant spreading, he said he doesn’t want to take chances.

“It’s spreading like wildfire. If you don’t get vaccinated, it’s like there’s no hope,” he said. “Getting vaccinated, it gives you a better chance.”

Paula Nelson, who works at Jackson State in the Division of Finance and Administration, said she was reluctant for a long time because she worried the shots were developed too quickly.

“When the numbers began to grow, my mindset began to change,” she said.

Nelson said she lost some people close to her to the virus

before the vaccine was available. She said she wants to take the opportunity to do what she can to protect herself and others, especially her eight grandkids and five children.

“My grandma would always say, ‘God gave you five senses, but he gave you common sense,’” she said. “Considering that I have so much to live for, I have a responsibility as a citizen.”

Jackson State spokesperson L.A. Warren said there has been an increase of interest for the school to do weekly inoculations in recent weeks, especially among young people.

Kimberly McQuarter brought her 13-year-old daughter Kayleigh Smith to get her first shot of the vaccine Tuesday. Smith is starting ninth grade in Clinton next week, and she’s worried about the virus being spread at school.

When you see there’s kids actually being hospitalized, it makes you want to do everything you can to prevent that from happening to your family,” she said.

McQuarter got her shot in March. Her 9-year-old son Kayden was with the family at Jackson State Tuesday. She said she’d let him get the shot without question if it’s approved for younger children.

JJ Weeks, a 19-year-old wide receiver on Jackson State’s football team, said he didn’t have time to get the shot over the summer while training and taking care of family in Texas. Now that he’s back at school, unvaccinated players are required to wear masks and take multiple COVID tests a week. Vaccinated players have much less strict guidelines.

He said most players are choosing to get the shot for one major reason: “More freedom,” he said. “That’s what really motivated me.”

# Terminated professor settles with University of Mississippi

By Leah Willingham  
*Associated Press/Report for America*

The University of Mississippi has reached a settlement with an assistant professor who was terminated after publicly criticizing the school as racist while speaking out for criminal justice reform.

Details of the settlement remained confidential, including how much money the university agreed to paid to Garrett Felber. University officials have never said the tenure-track assistant history professor was fired because of any public statements he had made.

In a December 2020 termination letter from History Department Chair Noell Howell Wilson, Wilson told Felber they had experienced a breakdown in communication after she rejected a grant he was awarded to support a project focusing on mass incarceration and immigrant detention. She said he had refused to meet with her by phone or online, only in writing.

Felber has asserted that his termination was a result of his outspoken criticism of the university.

“We believe that Dr. Felber’s termination violated the First Amendment,” attorney Rob McDuff of the Mississippi Center for Justice said in a statement Thursday. “This all went down after his very pointed criticisms of the university. The reasons given for the university’s decision don’t hold up and Dr. Felber had an excellent record as a teacher and a faculty member, including stellar reviews from his department chair.”



Wilson informed Felber that his contract with the university would end in December 2021. He was on leave at the time from the University of Mississippi at a one-year fellowship at the W.E.B. Du Bois Research Institute at Harvard University’s Hutchins Center for African and African American Research.

In October of that year, Felber tweeted that Wilson had rejected a \$42,000 grant he had been awarded to support Study and Struggle, a political education project on mass incarceration and immigrant detention. At the same time, the university had recently publicized a grant from FWD.us, an organization centered on American immigration and prison systems reform.

Felber said Wilson told him the Study and Struggle project would be a “political” not “historical” project, and that it could jeopardize department funding.

“The real issue is that (the University of Mississippi) prioritizes racist donors over all else,” he tweeted. “So it’s not some mythic politics v. history binary, but that this antiracist program threatens racist donor money. And racism is the brand. It’s in the name.”

McDuff said Felber decided to settle rather than spend time and resources litigating the matter in court, saying he’d rather spend his energy focusing on his work.

The Associated Press reached out to a university spokesperson for comment and didn’t hear back. Felber was represented during

the negotiations by McDuff and Attorney Naomi R. Shatz of the Boston law firm of Zalkind Duncan & Bernstein LLP, which specializes in defending the rights of students and teachers.

Shatz said the firm is increasingly concerned about universities ignoring and violating their faculty members’ rights to free speech and academic freedom.

“Professors like Dr. Felber have a constitutional right to speak out about injustices they see in their institutions,” Shatz said.

Felber has accepted a faculty fellowship at Yale University in American Studies at the Center for the Study of Race, Indigeneity and Transnational Migration.

In a statement Thursday, he said the University of Mississippi is a political institution.

“When the University of Mississippi was constructed with enslaved labor to reproduce the wealth and power of a handful of white men, it was political. When it refused to accept black students, it was political,” he said. “When it arrested and expelled the black students it did admit, it was political. And as it continues to support and benefit from policing, prisons, and other life-destroying institutions dedicating to upholding white supremacy, extracting capital and devastating the planet, it is no doubt political.”

Leah Willingham is a corps member for the Associated Press/Report for America Statehouse News Initiative. Report for America is a nonprofit national service program that places journalists in local newsrooms to report on undercover issues.

# State Board takeover Holmes County Schools

By Edelia “Dr. Jay” Carthan  
*Contributing Writer*

The Mississippi Board of Education is recommending a state of emergency in Holmes County Consolidated School District, and is recommending to Governor Tate Reeves that the Holmes County Consolidated School District be abolished.

The state board voted unanimously Tuesday that an “extreme emergency” situation exists in the Holmes County Consolidated School District citing numerous state and federal accreditations violations, a continued pattern of poor academic performance, and failure to comply with standards that sustain a safe school climate.

“A State of Emergency is declared in the Holmes County

Consolidated School District effectively immediately in accordance with Mississippi Code 37-17-13,” Rosemary Aultman said at the hearing.

The Holmes County School Board will be abolished along with the superintendent contingent upon Governor Reeves’ signature. Dr. Jennier Wilson was named interim superintendent in the district.

“State law requires the board to intervene when conditions in a district reach a crisis level that jeopardizes the safety, security and educational interests of students,” said Rosemary Aultman, school board chair. “Every student in the Holmes County Consolidated School District deserves a safe, secure and high-

quality learning environment.”

The district was found in violation of 26 of the 32 accreditation standards. A 400 page audit report conducted by the Mississippi Department of Education found improper spending, unlicensed teachers in the classroom, and inaccurate record keeping and accounting.

The most recent report card showed four of the six schools had a D rating, and two of the schools in the district are rated F schools. The 2,500 student school district is set to start school Thursday.

Holmes County is the poorest county in the United States, and has a population of about 17,000 citizens. According to the Census Bureau, 33.8% of the residents live in poverty.

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# New research finds widening educational inequality in Year of COVID

The Mississippi Link Newswire

NWEA of Portland, Oregon, a not-for-profit research and educational services provider serving K-12 students, recently released new research that highlights a challenging year in education with most students making lower-than-typical learning gains in math and reading. The research examined MAP Growth assessment scores from 5.5 million U.S. public school students in grades 3-8 between fall 2020 and spring 2021 and found:

- On average, students across most grades and subject areas made learning gains in 2020-21, but at a lower rate compared to pre-pandemic trends.

- 2020-21 outcomes were lower relative to historic trends. Gains across 2020-21 were at a lower rate and students ended the year with lower levels of achievement compared to a typical year, with larger declines in math (8 to 12 percentile points) than in reading (3 to 6 percentile points).

- Achievement was lower for all student groups in 2020-21; historically underserved students (e.g., American Indian and Alaskan Native, Black, and Latino and/or students in high poverty schools) were disproportionately impacted, particularly in the elementary grades that NWEA studied.

“As our nation continues to grapple with COVID-19 and its impact on every facet of our lives, this new research from NWEA illuminates just how devastating the academic consequences have been for our



nation’s children. While all students have suffered from interrupted instruction, students of color and students from low-income families – who are more likely to receive virtual instruction but less likely to have access to sufficient broadband and devices necessary to access virtual learning – have borne the brunt of the pandemic’s academic burden. It is vital that policymakers, school leaders and educators act on this crucial research to ensure that students who need the most support receive it,” said Marc H. Morial, president and CEO of the National Urban League, in response to the new research.

NWEA’s research highlights national trends from this past year, but local context matters. Thus, NWEA encourages communities to dive deeper into their own data and insights to understand the ongoing impact of the pandemic on their students. The experiences of individuals will differ from the national average, and communities must look beyond just academic indicators to understand the impacts. Attendance, school engagement,

social-emotional well-being, family environment, community support, unemployment rates, evictions and other factors should all be looked at holistically to inform actionable plans that are specific to the needs of their own communities as we start the long road to recovery.

“It’s important to remember that academic achievement is only one dimension of students’ education and these data alone cannot paint a complete picture of how young people fared this past year. For instance, our results cannot speak to the many ways students, families and teachers have shown incredible resilience and adaptability in the face of immense challenges that completely upended normal life,” said Dr. Karyn Lewis, senior research scientist at NWEA and lead author of the study.

One thing is clear from the national data: students of color and/or those experiencing poverty were impacted at greater levels, exacerbating pre-existing inequities and calling for urgency in focusing resources.

“The data sets from the

NWEA study confirm the profound impact COVID-19 had on families and students. They also highlight the stark inequities that existed before March 13, 2020 – the pandemic grossly exacerbated the disparities we see in the education sector,” said Dr. Michael Conner, superintendent of Middletown Public Schools in Middletown, CT. “However, the data sets also call for the holistic redesign and transformation of an operating model that can finally ground the principles of innovation, creativity and equity in every fabric of our schools. At this juncture, we have permission to be bold, creative, innovative and experimentative for acceleration and recovery. There has not been a time in our industry where we can reimagine the traditional industrial model that historically marginalized students. This is the opportunity where systemic change in the context of policy, investments and organizational practice can shift the trajectory of every student we encounter.”

While these inequities are not new, the level of funding now available to help address the need is providing a critical moment to support those communities most impacted.

Along with the new research, NWEA released a series of policy recommendations to advocate for deploying the unprecedented federal funding to communities and student populations most impacted by the pandemic, including investing in school counselors and nurses to address mental health and social-emotional

well-being of students, tutoring and extending instructional time, professional development geared at meeting the needs of diverse learners and redesigning state accountability systems to better align with recovery plans.

NWEA is not alone in this advocacy. Like minded, equity-focused organizations and voices are speaking up even louder now to support our educational community in the long path ahead.

“These data show in very stark terms just how much the pandemic took a toll on learning for all students, especially for students of color and those living in poverty,” said Deborah Delisle, CEO of the Alliance for Excellent Education. “Congress is making an historic investment in education with COVID relief funding. It’s time for states, districts and schools to use that money to create systemic changes that impact students now – and for generations to come – and make our education system more just for every student who walks through our doors.”

“It comes as no surprise that the shift to distance learning proved challenging for many students, parents and teachers, but the eye-opening numbers from the NWEA study show the true extent of the impact on student learning, particularly on underserved students,” said Janet Murguía, president and CEO of UnidosUS. “While many Latino households continue the struggle to recover from the effects of the pandemic, a particular focus must be on ensuring that students can succeed regardless of

their racial/ethnic and economic background. As we prepare for the upcoming school year, it is critical that our leaders prioritize investments in our schools so that our students are equipped with the support and resources they need to succeed. Only then can we continue to make progress in bridging the achievement gap.”

There is a lot of work for us to do going forward.

“NWEA’s research confirms how deeply students of color and students from low-income communities have been affected by the pandemic. The road ahead is an opportunity to focus on personalized, mastery-based learning – and to give every student everywhere the chance to fill in gaps,” said Sal Khan, founder and CEO of Khan Academy.

“Our purpose in sharing this research was not to tell teachers how challenging this last year was. They understand better than anyone what it was like for students and what they need to do when they enter those classrooms this fall,” said Chris Minnich, CEO of NWEA. “Our call for radical collaboration is directed at those who work in support of educators. We must remove any barriers in the way of effective instruction, apply resources where teachers need them the most (and that means truly listening to what they need) and ensure there is support beyond this next year because that unprecedented federal funding will run out long before we’ve reached that education transformation.”

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# Schools struggle with reopening amid pandemic surge

*Local officials test an array of approaches that offer hope for safe re-openings*

By Hazel Trice Edney  
*TriceEdneyWire.com*

With coronavirus cases rising across the U.S. as a result of the highly contagious Delta variant, school districts nationwide are moving quickly to implement public-health precautions in preparation for fall re-openings.

The scramble to put these precautions in place reflects the intense pressures that school districts around the country are under to reopen amid growing concerns that many students have struggled to keep up academically during months of virtual learning. That pressure only intensified with the recent guidance the federal Centers for Disease Control issued urging schools to fully reopen in the fall, even if they are unable to put in place all the precautions needed to contain the coronavirus.

These measures include an array of new cleaning regimens, social distancing protocols, contact tracing procedures and revamped classroom layouts. The concerns are particularly acute in school districts serving low-income black and Latino communities that were among the hardest hit by the pandemic.

More than that, many school districts, particularly those in low-income communities of color, are facing the arduous task of creating safe environments in buildings that are aging with poor ventilation and in grave need of maintenance.

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights issued a disturbing report in 2018 that found low-income students, including blacks and Latinos, are forced to learn in “low-quality school facilities”



FILE PHOTO/TRICE EDNEY NEWS WIRE

that are poorly maintained. The commission concluded that the situation poses a threat to the health of students.

More than that, schools that serve high-poverty populations – those with at least 75 percent of students receiving subsidized lunches – operate in buildings whose average age is nearly 50 years old, according to the most recent data available. Experts say that these schools have had problems with air quality long before the pandemic struck.

As a result, many school districts are moving aggressively, and creatively, to field-test a variety of safety measures, protocols and equipment. In the process, these schools are providing something of a roadmap for other districts scrambling to safely reopen.

Some school districts are

working to ensure safe in-person learning with local campaigns that encourage community vaccination for all who are eligible. Others are leveraging innovative technology – including robots designed to identify and kill the COVID-19 and other viruses and germs – to clean and disinfect classrooms. And some are even teaming up with design professionals who are exploring ideas on how to revamp classroom layouts and other spaces in the age of Covid.

At Arizona’s Phoenix Union High School District, for example, school leaders organized a pop-up vaccination event at 15 schools in the district, teamed up with ride-hailing service Lyft to provide free transportation to the sites, and successfully vaccinated more than 3,000

people. Philadelphia’s school district, whose student population totals more than 200,000, has taken a similar approach, launching a Philly Teen Vaxx campaign to encourage students to be inoculated.

The Biden administration has also moved aggressively to help schools struggling to put safety measures in place, particularly those in inner cities. The administration is partnering with 75 of the largest urban school districts and local pharmacies to help provide resources to staff pop-up vaccine clinics on school campuses.

Other schools are taking far more unorthodox approaches. In Delaware’s Christina School District, for example, school administrators are making a peculiar bet: that newly designed COVID-19 killing robots will provide an extra layer of security – and ease the concerns of students, parents and teachers. Adibot, a tall cylindrical robot with high-grade cleaners, spends approximately three minutes in each room, emitting UV-C light and spraying disinfectant, which helps to clean surfaces and the air.

In discussing this approach, the Delaware Department of Education’s chief equity officer, James Simmons, said that the Christina School District was an ideal place to test out the robot’s effectiveness given that the district primarily serves a low-income population that has been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

Some school districts are using this moment to go beyond simply addressing the dangers posed by COVID-19. They

are also assessing the overall health and safety of their buildings, many of them in need of an overhaul to create conditions that promote learning and creativity.

“The pandemic has underscored the need to rethink public spaces and other shared spaces,” said Paul Scialla, founder of the International Well Building Institute (IWBI), a company that uses scientific-based approaches to designing buildings that promote the health and well-being of occupants. “This is an opportunity for many schools to address the immediate concerns stemming from the pandemic as well as the long-term health and safety of the school’s shared spaces.”

Indeed, the IWBI is in the process of partnering with schools and communities throughout the country to ensure students, teachers and faculty can safely return to full-time, in-person learning. The IWBI is reviewing the health and safety protocols against the high standards of its WELL Health Safety Rating. Those standards were developed by over 600 health and public space experts to provide the guidance needed for organizations to improve indoor health and safety.

Some of the schools that have achieved the WELL Health-Safety Rating include the Fairfax County, Virginia school district, where administrators collaborated with the IWBI to help safeguard against COVID-19 throughout its 219 school facilities, as well as the Upper St. Clair School District, located in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania.

According to recent reporting of a study conducted by the Well Living Lab in collaboration with the Mayo Clinic and the University of Minnesota, air filtration systems can add an extra safeguard that limits the aerosol spread of viral particles. The researchers built an experimental classroom and observed how adding portable air purifiers to a classroom may result in up to five times lower particle concentrations in the air throughout the entire room. The study also observed that adding portable air purifiers provided a significant reduction in the rate at which infectious particles deposit on surfaces compared to using an HVAC system (with MERV filtration).

The findings from the WELL Living Lab’s study were similar to a recent study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. School districts are responding to this breadth of research on particle transmission by investing in air filtration systems. For example, the New York City Department of Education purchased over 100,000 portable air purification units from the leading wellness technology company, Delos.

IWBI’s Scialla says they are in talks with dozens of other districts and are particularly focused on low-income, minority populations that have been ravaged by the pandemic.

Said Scialla, “Teachers and school administrators have enough on their plate. We hope that the WELL Health-Safety Rating will give students, parents and communities at large the peace of mind they need to fully return to the classroom.”

# A few secrets to a great workout

By Vince Faust  
*Tips to Be Fit*

Much too often, people use workout routines that waste time, energy and money. Exercise should be a part of everyone’s lifestyle male or female.

Fitting an exercise routine into your lifestyle is not the easiest task in the world. There are plenty of excuses to keep you from working out. But there are a few secrets that can get you on track for an efficient and productive workout. Secret #1: **Write it down.**

A fitness journal can be one of the most important things you can do for your fitness program. Writing down your program helps you keep track of your fitness program. You’ll also see if you’re sticking to your program. A journal will keep you honest, inspire you to exercise harder and have a plan to make better goals. A fitness journal will also give you a reminder to work out.

**Secret #2: The right amount of cardio.**

If you don’t do the right amount of cardiovascular exercise you won’t get the maximum benefits from your workout program. An aerobics workout will help you burn fat after 20 minutes or more of continuous movement. It takes the body 20 minutes to



switch from anaerobic exercise to the fat burning stage during a workout. Some examples of aerobic workouts include 20 minutes or more of brisk walking, jogging, bicycling, skating, swimming, walking in a pool, aerobic classes, racquetball and jumping rope. Workouts that include a lot of stop and go movements will burn calories but are not considered aerobic. These include karate, volleyball, weight training, sprinting, tennis, ballet and gymnastics.

**Secret #3: Don’t forget to**

**do some strength training.**

Strengthening muscles, tendons and ligaments with resistance exercise will make you stronger, help support the skeletal system and joints. Stronger muscles, tendons and ligaments can reduce your risk of having joint problems and help existing joint problems.

A complete workout should include exercises for each body part. This will include the chest, shoulders, triceps, back, biceps, forearm, thighs, calves and your abdominals (midsec-

tion). Start with 2 or 3 different exercises for each body part. Gradually work up to 8-12 repetitions for each exercise. Do each exercise 1-3 times to start. If you can do more than 12 repetitions for a set the weight is too light. If you can’t do at least 8 repetitions for a set the weight is too heavy.

**Secret #4: Don’t forget to breathe.**

Always breathe correctly during a resistance-training workout. Inhale during the relaxed phase and exhale during the actual lift. For instance, if you’re doing an arm curl (bicep curl) inhale as the weight is lowered and exhale as you lift the weight. Don’t over exaggerate your breathing because this can cause dizziness.

**Secret #5: It’s ok to get help.**

If you’re a beginner, have someone who knows what they’re doing take you through your first few workouts. Strength training can be dangerous if you don’t do the exercises correctly.

**Secret #6: Drink water.**

Water is the best liquid you can drink before, during and after a workout. You should drink small amounts of water at 10 to 20 minute intervals. The body doesn’t store water very well, so if you drink a lot of it

at one time your body will just get rid of it. Read your body, if it’s running out of energy or it seems affected by the heat, stop. You don’t want to stop working out just because it’s hot, but you should use a little common sense when working out in hot weather.

Drinking water during your workout helps to increase your blood volume, which will increase cardiac output. Cardiac output is the amount of blood being pumped during each heartbeat. The more blood your heart pumps with each heartbeat, the more nutrients are transported throughout the body. These nutrients provide energy for work. Many people run out of steam during an exercise session because they don’t replace water lost through exercise.

**Secret #7: Concentrate.**

Always concentrate on what you’re doing. Being careless and taking your movements for granted can cause injury. Concentrating on each repetition when you workout will also recruit more muscle fibers to do work making each repetition more efficient.

**Secret #8: Know when you’re going to workout.**

Set the time you’re going to workout. If you don’t know when you are going to work

out you won’t work out. Morning and evening exercise have health benefits and potential pitfalls. The right time to exercise is not about how many calories you burn or how much weight you lift, it’s more about when exercising fits into your daily schedule.

There are some health issues you should check with your doctor before starting an exercise program. If you are diabetic or prediabetic, exercise can help lower your blood sugar and your weight. Talk with your doctor if you have diabetes related nerve damage. Your doctor can tell you what type of exercise program is a good choice. You should also pick the right shoes with your doctor’s help.

If you have any form of heart disease, your doctor may suggest starting your exercise program in a clinical setting. Professional staff will monitor your heart and blood pressure as your program gets more intense.

If you have knee, hip or back problems check with your doctor or a physical therapist before starting your program. Other problems that might hinder a fitness program include balance issues, muscle weakness and other physical disabilities. Talk to a professional for help.



P R E S E R V E D

# Learning to soar

By Shewanda Riley  
Columnist



Earlier this summer, I had a chance to spend time with my great nieces and nephews. It was so great spending time with them, and I marveled at how much they'd grown since I'd last saw them. They were so smart, funny and beautiful/handsome.

Seeing my confident 11-year-old great niece Jireh engrossed in her iPhone made me think about a video message her mother shared years ago showing her taking her first steps on her first birthday. Jireh looked so cute in the video. She was wearing a white onesie and her stubby little legs were working hard as she moved unsteadily from side to side. Whatever she was holding in her right hand

(which I couldn't make out in the grainy cell phone video), dropped to the ground as she fell after taking a few steps.

Then she did the most amazing thing. She got right back up. She didn't sit and cry hoping for someone to help her up. As soon as she hit the carpeted floor, she leaned forward and used her arms to lift herself back up and continued walking.

I remember when she was learning how to balance in her walker a few months earlier. It's just so incredible that a few months later she was now walking on her own. It looks like she'd decided that she was not just going to walk, but she was going to do it well.

Watching the video made me think about how we respond when we face challenging circumstances that knock us down. Like my niece was trying to do something new, we may be trying to do some-

thing new and are unsure about taking the first steps. We are excited and a little nervous taking those first steps. We step out on faith but what do we do when we fall? Like her, we seem like we are just getting started and then boom, we fall, get discouraged, or worse, don't get back up.

The video also made me think about some past situations where I tried something new and thought I was doing well. Then I fell by making missteps and in some cases, I was knocked down emotionally and spiritually. Unlike in the past where I wasn't honest about how those kinds of situations affected me, I acknowledged first what happened and how it made me feel.

We know that Romans 8:28 says that all things work together for our good. However, knowing all things working for my good doesn't always necessarily make me feel

good about the situation especially when it hurts.

As I was praying about it, God led me to Isaiah 40:31 to remind me that it's not just about getting back up, it's also about choosing to soar about the situation once you get back up.

Isaiah 40:31 says, "But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint."

Choosing to walk is one thing but choosing to soar takes a new level of faith and trust in God.

Shewanda Riley is a Dallas, Texas based author of "Love Hangover: Moving From Pain to Purpose After a Relationship Ends" and "Writing to the Beat of God's Heart: A Book of Prayers for Writers." Email [preservedbypurpose@gmail.com](mailto:preservedbypurpose@gmail.com) or follow her on Twitter @shewanda.

## Residents fight to preserve historic black church in LA



By Alejandra Molina  
Religion News Service

On a recent Sunday, about 10 people sat outside the steps of the boarded-up First Baptist Church of Venice, a century-old congregation that, to many, remains a symbol of the thriving black population that once existed in the seaside town of Los Angeles.

They discussed potential uses for the church that would benefit the community. It could reopen as a library to highlight the black history of the Oakwood neighborhood, some suggested. Maybe it could host coding classes for kids or serve as a space for interfaith gatherings. They also shared childhood memories of the church and lamented the forces transforming Venice from a working-class and bohemian artist enclave to a wealthy neighborhood. They bemoaned the new geometric boxed houses lining the streets, houses they said feel out of character with the area.

This isn't an official meeting. It's not a church service or a demonstration. It's more like a weekly teach-in they hold to let the public know about the significance of this church — and to make it clear they'll continue gathering until the sacred building, which they fear could be a casualty of Venice's changing landscape, is turned over to the community.

Their nearly four-year effort appears to be making headway as the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission in June voted in favor of designating First Baptist Church of Venice, and the adjacent parking lots, a historic cultural monument.

Now, the city's planning and land use management committee will vote on the issue in September before it goes to the Los Angeles City Council for a final vote.

"It's about time something moves in our favor, because they try to act like we never lived here," said Laddie Williams, a lifelong resident of Oakwood.

Williams was enraged when she learned in 2017 that First Baptist Church of Venice had been sold. She knew she had to do something, so she sat in protest outside the church, on the steps her grandfather and his sons poured concrete on, helping put the finishing touches in the late 1960s. Williams has been sitting outside the church since learning of the sale.

Founded in 1910, First Baptist Church of Venice corresponded with the area's evolution as an early enclave of black residents, and as it outgrew its initial locations, members in the late '60s helped build the church building that still stands in Oakwood — the only area near the beach where black people were allowed to historically buy property in LA.

The church served the area's black and Latino residents until 2017, when then-pastor Horace Allen, citing a shrinking congregation, moved the congregation and sold the church for \$6.3 million to Jay Penske, whose Penske Media Corporation publishes Rolling Stone and Variety magazines. Pen-

ske, who couldn't be reached for comment, planned to convert the church into a home for his family, with a rooftop deck and four-car garage.

Neighbors like Naomi Nightingale were stunned, referring to Penske's plans as "sacrilegious." Activists attribute the gentrification of Venice to gang injunctions that caused Latino and black people to leave the area and cite the tech boom for rising housing prices. The church, residents say, served as a respite to these kinds of issues.

Bishop Elmer Lawrence Holmes, who led the church for more than 40 years, mentored youth and residents impacted by gang violence and injunctions. Residents remember him organizing peace marches around Venice and representing the interest of his neighbors in local planning committees. He'd advocate for traffic safety measures and regular street cleaning. "His leadership, insistence on good character and proper behavior extended beyond the church in the examples of principles repeated and demonstrated through dedicated parishioners," the city wrote in a report.

"We just could not allow it to fall into the hands of someone who didn't have the religious respect of the community," said Nightingale, who learned of the sale after seeing Williams sitting on the parish steps.

Nightingale interviewed several Oakwood residents, including those who were part of the church, to learn what the community and the building meant to them. She asked: "How would you feel if you drove down the street and the church wasn't there?"

Herman Clay, a deacon at the church, told her: "How would people in Hollywood feel if they woke up one morning and they could not see the Hollywood sign?"

"It took four years, but we were relentless," said Nightingale, a professor and Oakwood resident. "We're still fighting because we still know that they haven't given up."

In late 2020, the church property was sold again, this time to Lee Polster, who in a June community meeting said he planned to "retain" and "reuse" the church and turn the adjacent parking lots into a mixed-income housing project. Polster said the historic designation wasn't necessary because he planned to rehabilitate the church "while being mindful of the cultural importance of the church building."

Outside the church, a "Black Prayers Matter" banner hangs from the top floor. On the entrance, "Matthew 6:33" is etched on the boarded-up doors. In giant letters, "Black Lives Matter" is painted in the middle of the road in front of the church.

The push to preserve the church building gained momentum after the police killing of George Floyd, when anti-police brutality protests in support of Black Lives Matter were held in Venice.



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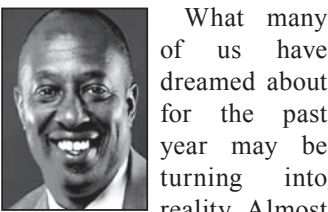
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# Black-owned businesses look to the FDA to protect them

By Ron Busby  
President & CEO,  
U.S. Black Chambers, Inc



What many of us have dreamed about for the past year may be turning into reality. Almost half of the nation has been fully vaccinated, the CDC has announced businesses can reopen along with lifted mask guidance, and the glimmer of hope is shining brighter each day.

However, as we cling onto this hope and adjust to what many are calling the “new normal,” we must not forget what we have learned and what practices we must bring into this next chapter with us. The reality for many black communities, especially black-owned businesses, is that they must continue to rely on lawmakers and regulators to protect them from virus spread and outbreak.

A year ago, in a quick fix reaction to the pandemic, the FDA released emergency guidance that lowered the

standards for germ-fighting products like hand sanitizer in order to get more on the market. This led to an ongoing wave of hand sanitizers that both smell horrible and seem to do virtually nothing. Now, a year later, city streets are refilling, businesses are starting to operate at full capacity, and we have a more reliable supply of hand sanitizer. Yet, businesses are still providing questionable products, and we are even seeing reports of products with toxic carcinogens steadily pop up.

With this in mind, I look to lawmakers and regulators to resolve this issue. As we come out of this emergency, it’s time for the FDA to withdraw the temporary guidance, and for Congress to use its power of oversight to ensure these toxic products are off the market for good.

We want to provide our patrons and employees with a safe experience; however, we are not public health officials. Clear and consistent guidance from those in power is vital to deciphering what hand sanitizer products are safe and

effective, where they should be positioned in our stores/offices/etc.

Because as is the case with many issues in this country, it is no surprise that the black community has been hit the hardest by the ripple effects of COVID-19.

As the president of the Black Chamber of Commerce, it is my responsibility to advocate for the 310,000 U.S. black-owned businesses we represent. With reports of hand sanitizer products containing high levels of methanol, benzene and other toxins, how can these employees, customers and business owners feel safe?

Not only are black people more likely to contract and die from COVID-19, but because of systemic inequities, black-owned businesses are more likely to lack sufficient resources needed to stay afloat and protect their customers.

This shows that while safer, more effective products may be available again, without clear guidance and access, there is a barrier to entry for

them to arrive at small, often black-owned, businesses. The latest census shows that 28 percent of U.S. businesses are black-owned. The U.S. economy relies on their success and health, and we will not see them flourish if they continue to be ignored.

The FDA fought to get more hand sanitizers on the market when we needed it most, but now we must deal with the unintended consequences that came along with it and rescind the emergency guidelines. I hope that along with the FDA, lawmakers, especially those on the Congressional Black Caucus, are as concerned about this as I am and will use their power to stop it.

Black business owners have enough on their shoulders. They do not need to worry about the toxicity of hand sanitizer products they put out to protect their patrons, but instead should feel confident that they have the support of regulatory bodies to keep them safe.

Ron Busby, president & CEO, U.S. Black Chambers, Inc.

# The vaccine, the mask and our children

By Dr. John Warren  
San Diego Voice and  
Viewpoint/NNPA Member



First let us say the vaccine saves lives; the life of the person vaccinated and the lives of those they come in contact with. The low deaths, if not no deaths, of those vaccinated should be proof for the doubters.

Second, masks save lives as evidenced by the statistical non spread among those wearing masks covering their mouth and nose. This is a scientific fact well documented. The combination of vaccines and masks save lives. The virus is not political, only its victims.

This brings us to the issue of our children. All our children are victims without our intervention. We cannot give them a vaccine, but we can give them masks and we know the masks work against the virus.

Question: Why put the children at risk with our own personal issues? If the masks work and children are given the opportunity to understand why it’s necessary, then we save little lives and that’s more important than party politics over the virus.

Until the vaccine is approved for children, masks should be a requirement and the priority should be saving the lives of our children as well as ourselves.

Finally, all elements of government, federal, state, county and local as well as businesses should require the vaccine and those who object have a right to file lawsuits to sell the issue. The lives of our children are more important than litigation. Let’s take the vaccine, wear the masks and live. Too many lives have already been lost due to foolishness over vaccines and masks.

Let’s get real serious about the vaccine, the masks, and our children.

# To protect Democracy, we have to fix the Supreme Court

By Ben Jealous  
People For the American Way



It’s been six months since the Biden-Harris administration began, ushering in an era of hope after four bitter and disheartening years. We have much to celebrate. At the same time, there are ways in which our future is wavering on a knife’s edge: will we fulfill the promise of a more inclusive democracy, or be dragged backwards by the same forces that tried to reverse the presidential election on January 6? Will our federal government step up to protect voting rights, or will more and more states suppress them? Can we protect and expand health care?

I am proud of the commitment of advocates who are pushing the Biden-Harris administration and the new leadership in Congress to be their best. But there is another critically important step we have to take if we want voting rights, or health care, or workers’ rights, reproductive rights, LGBTQ rights, or any of the rights we are fighting for to survive. We have to fix our Supreme Court.

For decades now, the same far-right forces that are fighting justice and equal rights for all our citizens have

been working to pack our federal courts. Their crowning achievement has been the capture of the Supreme Court, now dominated by ultraconservatives. The Supreme Court has dealt devastating blows to the Voting Rights Act. It has made it easier for companies to violate the rights of working people. It opened our elections to unlimited spending by corporate interests. And it is undermining health and safety regulations.

This matters greatly because even as we welcome the opportunities for change that we voted for in electing the Biden-Harris administration and Democratic leadership in Congress, there is a real risk that laws passed now – for progress that real people want – could be eviscerated by a far-right Supreme Court.

We can’t let that happen.

Fortunately, there are solutions on the table. President Biden has formed a Presidential Commission on the Supreme Court of the United States to study ideas for reforming the court. They include a first-ever code of ethics for Supreme Court justices – a good idea in any era. They also include proposals that would address the unique moment we are in now, when the court has been so politicized and dis-

torted by partisan interests. One idea is to set term limits for justices. Another is to add more seats to the court, which would have a direct impact in easing the current crisis of a “captured court.”

There will be lively debate over these proposals, including pushback from traditionalists who think we should not mess with the makeup of the court. But the number of seats on the court has been changed before – not once, but half a dozen times.

It’s also important to remember that we didn’t get here though a traditional or normal course of events. The current court makeup was achieved by cynical political machinations of Mitch McConnell, the former Senate Majority Leader. McConnell refused to hold hearings for President Obama’s SCOTUS nominee Merrick Garland, thereby stealing the seat for Neil Gorsuch. He did this on the flimsy pretext that it was too close to a presidential election. Then, proving conclusively that he has no shame, McConnell forced through Amy Coney Barrett’s confirmation for the late Justice Ginsburg’s seat even though voting had already begun in the next presidential election.

So there are clear wrongs to be remedied. The Roberts Supreme Court is losing the

confidence of the American people, if it hasn’t lost it already. In its current form it is becoming a political body incapable of protecting the rights of all, interested only in those of the privileged and powerful.

And that means Supreme Court reform needs to be an integral part of our campaigns for justice and equity on all fronts. We are fighting too hard for justice to see progress wrecked on the shoals of a rock-solid conservative court. Let’s raise our voices for term limits and more Supreme Court seats at the same time we’re calling for the For the People Act and John Lewis Voting Rights Act, the Equality Act, immigration reform, reproductive rights, health care and fair pay.

Let’s not trust our future to a captured court.

*Ben Jealous serves as president of People For the American Way. Jealous has decades of experience as a leader, coalition builder, campaigner for social justice and seasoned nonprofit executive. In 2008, he was chosen as the youngest-ever president and CEO of the NAACP. He is a graduate of Columbia University and Oxford, where he was a Rhodes Scholar, and he has taught at Princeton and the University of Pennsylvania.*

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## LEGAL

## NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR A USE PERMIT

**ZONING CASE NO. 4140**

By virtue of and pursuant to the authority and direction of that Ordinance by the City Council of Jackson, Mississippi, appearing in Minute Book 3G at page 115 thereof, notice is hereby given to all persons interested in or in any way affected thereby, that John W. Craig has filed with the Planning Board for the City of Jackson, an application requesting a Use Permit to allow for the operation of a tattoo studio in an UTC Urban Town Center Mixed-Use District for the property located at 605 Duling Ave. (Parcel 47-16) in the First Judicial District of Hinds County, Mississippi, and being more particularly described as:

LOT 1, lorena subdivision, a subdivision ACCORDING TO THE MAP OR PLAT THEREOF which is on file and of record IN THE OFFICE OF THE CHANCERY CLERK OF HINDS COUNTY, mississippi IN PLAT BOOK 1 AT PAGE 84, reference to which is hereby made in aid of and as PART OF THIS DESCRIPTION.

Said application will be heard at the City Planning Board Hearing in the Andrew Jackson Conference Room, First Floor, Warren A. Hood Building, 200 S. President Street in Jackson, Mississippi, at 1:30 p.m., on Wednesday, August 25, 2021, at which time all parties interested in or affected thereby will be heard both pro and con on said question, after which a record will be established upon which the City Planning Board can make its recommendation to the City Council of Jackson. Any objection thereto may be made by any person owning property within the area, and if made in writing must be filed with the City Zoning Administrator before said time if a hearing thereof or consideration thereof is desired, or by counsel on said date. If a request is made to the Zoning Administrator at least 72 hours in advance, the City will take steps to accommodate citizens need for interpreters or auxiliary aids for the visually/hearing impaired.

DUE TO COVID-19 AND THE CONCERN FOR THE PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE, THE PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS AND THE APPLICANTS HAVE THE OPTION TO ATTEND THE MEETING VIA TELECONFERENCE/VIDEO OR IN PERSON WITH REGARDS TO THE WEARING OF MASKS AND THE SOCIAL DISTANCING REQUIREMENTS. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC MAY ATTEND VIA TELECONFERENCE/VIDEO BY EMAILING [EAINSWORTH@CITY.JACKSON.MS.US](mailto:EAINSWORTH@CITY.JACKSON.MS.US) TO REGISTER PRIOR TO AUGUST 18, 2021.

WITNESS my signature this 26th day of July 2021.

/s/Ester L. Ainsworth  
Zoning Administrator  
City of Jackson, Mississippi

8/5/2021, 5/19/2021

## LEGAL

## NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR A USE PERMIT

**ZONING CASE NO. 4139**

By virtue of and pursuant to the authority and direction of that Ordinance by the City Council of Jackson, Mississippi, appearing in Minute Book 3G at page 115 thereof, notice is hereby given to all persons interested in or in any way affected thereby, that Abdullaziz Yafai has filed with the Planning Board for the City of Jackson, an application requesting a Use Permit to allow for the operation of a tobacco paraphernalia retail business in a C-2 (Limited) Commercial District for the property located at 1189 E. County Line Rd. (Parcel 738-8-3) in the First Judicial District of Hinds County, Mississippi, and being more particularly described as:

TRACT I

Commence at the Northwest Corner of Wildwood North, Part II, a subdivision according to the map or plat thereof, on file and of record in the office of the Chancery Clerk of Hinds County at Jackson, Mississippi, as now recorded in Plat Book 23 at Page 19; run thence North 89 degrees 56 minutes 55 seconds West along the South right-of-way line of County Line Road (as now laid out and improved) for a distance of 40.10 feet to the POINT OF BEGINNING of the parcel of land herein described; said point being the Point of Intersection of the West line of a 40 foot right-of-way (undeveloped street) with said South right-of-way line of County Line Road; from said POINT OF BEGINNING, run thence South 04 degrees 24 minutes 10 seconds West along said West line of a 40 foot right-of-way, said West line further being 40 feet West of and parallel to the West line of the aforesaid Wildwood North, Part II, for a distance 766.66 feet to a point; run thence North 86 degrees 04 minutes 09 seconds West for a distance of 578.27 feet to a point on the East top of bank of Purple Creek; run thence North 01 degrees 54 minutes 05 seconds East along said East top of bank of Purple Creek for a distance of 71.00 feet to a point; run thence South 89 degrees 59 minutes 55 seconds East for a distance of 221.00 feet to a point; run thence North 04 degrees 00 minutes 33 seconds East for a distance of 242.48 feet to a point; run thence South 85 degrees 59 minutes 27 seconds East for a distance of 69.97 feet to a point; run thence North 04 degrees 01 minutes 05 seconds East for a distance of 418.13 feet to a point on the aforesaid South right-of-way line of County Line Road; run thence South 89 degrees 56 minutes 55 seconds East along said South right-of-way line of County Line Road for a distance of 296.36 feet to the POINT OF BEGINNING, containing 261,912.573 square feet or 6.013 acres, more or less.

TRACT II

Together with those certain easement(s) appurtenant which constitute and interest in real property described in Reciprocal Easement And Operation Agreement of record in Book 3714, Page 384, as amended by Amendment To Reciprocal Easement And Operation Agreement of record in Book 5879, Page 958, as amended by Waiver For Reciprocal Easement And Operation Agreement of record in Book 5879, Page 972, as amended by Second Amendment To Reciprocal Easement And Operation Agreement of record in Book 6141, Page 001.

Reciproca

TRACT III

Together with those certain easement(s) appurtenant which constitute and interest in real property described in Declaration of Cross Access Easements and Covenants of record in Book 5879, Page 989, as amended by Amendment to Declaration Of Cross Access Easements And Covenants of record in Book 6141, Page 009.

Covariance

Said application will be heard at the City Planning Board hearing in the Andrew Jackson Conference Room, First Floor, Warren A. Hood Building, 200 S. President Street in Jackson, Mississippi, at 1:30 p.m., on Wednesday, August 25, 2021, at which time all parties interested in or affected thereby will be heard both pro and con on said question, after which a record will be established upon which the City Planning Board can make its recommendation to the City.

be established upon which the City Planning Board can make its recommendation to the City Council of Jackson. Any objection thereto may be made by any person owning property within the area, and if made in writing must be filed with the City Zoning Administrator before said time if a hearing thereof or consideration thereof is desired, or by counsel on said date. If a request is made to the Zoning Administrator at least 72 hours in advance, the City will take steps to accommodate citizens need for interpreters or auxiliary aids for the visually/hearing impaired.

accommodate citizens need for interpreters or auxil

MENTS. MEMBERS OF T  
EMAILING EAINSWORTH  
18, 2021.

## LEGAL

referred to as Mount Olive Cemetery and is more adequately described in an instrument recorded in Deed Book 18 at Page 581. The Jackson Cemetery Association was administratively dissolved in May 1989. The officers of the entity prior to administrative dissolution are not known. Persons other than you who are Defendants in this cause are Jackson State University.

You are required to mail a written response to the Complaint to Carrie Johnson, attorney for the Plaintiff(s) at Post Office Box 2779, Jackson, Mississippi 39207-2779. Alternatively, the response may be hand delivered to the Plaintiff's attorney at 455 East Capitol Street, Jackson, Mississippi.

Your response must be mailed or delivered not later than thirty (30) days after the date of first publication of this summons. If your response is not so mailed or delivered, a judgment by default will be entered against you for the money or relief demanded in the complaint.

You must also file the original of your response with the clerk of this Court within a reasonable time afterward.

You must also file the original of your response with the clerk of this Court within a reasonable time afterward.

Issued under my hand and the seal of said Court, this the 9th day of July 2021.

Eddie Jean Carr, Chancery Clerk  
Seal By: S Rankin, Deputy Clerk

8/5/2021, 8/12/2021, 8/19/2021







# 5 Florida officers charged over violent arrests of black men

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Newswire Contributor

Five Florida police officers have been charged with battery connected to the violent arrests of two black men last week, prosecutors announced Monday.

Miami-Dade State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle held a news conference to announce the first-degree misdemeanor charges against Miami Beach police Sgt. Jose Perez, Officer Kevin Perez, Officer Robert Sabater, Officer David Rivas and Officer Steven Serrano. The officers had previously been suspended, and Fernandez Rundle said additional charges might follow. All five officers turned themselves in earlier Monday.

Surveillance video shows an officer chase Dalonta Crudup, 24, into the lobby of the Royal Palm Hotel in South Beach in the early morning hours of July 26. The officer orders Crudup onto the ground at gunpoint, and Crudup complies. Moments later, more than a dozen other officers run into the lobby and surround Crudup, who can be seen on the ground with his hands behind his back.

Fernandez Rundle said body camera footage shows Sgt.

Jose Perez kick a handcuffed Crudup three times, while Officer Kevin Perez kicked Crudup at least four times.

Fernandez Rundle said surveillance video also shows Khalid Vaughn, 28, using a cellphone to record Crudup's arrest from about 12 feet away. Body camera footage shows Vaughn backing away at the instruction of an officer when Sabater tackles Vaughn to the floor and repeatedly punches him. Fernandez Rundle said Rivas and Serrano also struck Vaughn.

Officers said they initially followed Crudup into the hotel because he struck a bicycle patrol officer while driving a scooter recklessly. That officer was taken to a hospital for treatment of leg injuries. Crudup was charged with several counts, including aggravated battery on a law enforcement officer

Charges against Vaughn of resisting an arrest with violence and impeding a police investigation have been dropped.

The police officers' union didn't immediately respond to an email from The Associated Press seeking comment about the battery charges.

# Biden Administration extends eviction moratorium, potentially rescuing millions from losing housing

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Newswire Contributor

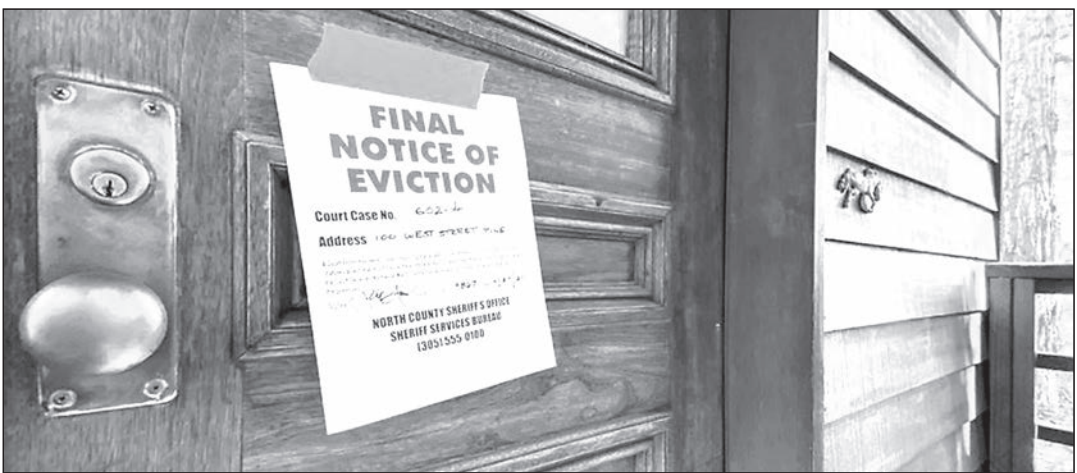
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has taken new measures to protect renters from evictions.

Over the past two months, the new prohibition on evictions will apply to communities with high or substantial COVID-19 transmission.

"My hope is it's going to be a new moratorium that in some way covers close to 90 percent of the American people or renters," President Joe Biden told news reporters on Tuesday.

The president expressed fears that the order would face court battles after the Supreme Court ruled that an extension to the original moratorium that expired on July 31 could not occur without clear and specific congressional authorization via new legislation. Still, members of Congress who had pressed the administration to act applauded the president.

"From the bottom of my heart and on behalf of millions of renters, I thank the president for listening and for encouraging the CDC to act," Congresswoman Maxine Waters (D-Calif.), the chairwoman of the House Committee on Financial Services, said in a statement. "This extension of the moratorium is the lifeline that millions of families have been waiting for. From the very beginning of this pandemic, it was clear that eviction moratoriums not only kept people housed but also saved lives," Waters remarked.



Congressman Jimmy Gomez (D-Calif.), a member of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, also applauded the president. "Today, the Biden administration answered our call to provide a lifeline to millions of Americans at risk of eviction. This new executive order represents the degree of empathy and responsiveness that this national health emergency demands," Gomez asserted.

The Biden administration has repeated its assertion that there remains about \$44 billion in federal COVID-19 relief available to states and municipalities to thwart evictions. The American Rescue Plan provided nearly \$47 billion in aid, but states and local governments have used just \$3 billion.

"We need to continue working with local and state governments to ensure all of the funds Congress allocated reaches our constituents," Gomez insisted.

"While my House Democratic colleagues work to secure sustainable housing solutions for the most vulnerable among us, I'd like to extend my appreciation to President Biden for helping us pursue every available option to keep our constituents healthy and in their homes."

On July 31, 2021, Gomez, Waters, and several of their congressional colleagues sent a letter reiterating their ongoing calls for President Biden and CDC Director Rochelle Walensky to extend the federal eviction moratorium.

"As chairwoman of the House Committee on Financial Services, I have made it a priority of mine to ensure that both renters and landlords are supported," Waters stated. "That is why I secured nearly \$50 billion in emergency rental assistance that would go directly into the pockets of landlords to cover every penny of back-rent they are owed and keep struggling families housed throughout the pandemic. I urged corporate landlords not to evict tenants, met with members of the Biden administration to expedite and simplify the emergency rental assistance program, and introduced legislation to protect renters from evictions."

The congresswoman continued: "This temporary reprieve will not go to waste. The CDC's targeted eviction moratorium will buy time for state and local governments to get their act together and ensure that renters and landlords receive the money that Congress allocated for them while keeping our most vulnerable off the streets. "In the days and weeks ahead, I will work with my colleagues in Congress and with the administration to help the governors, mayors and others who are implementing this moratorium to get the money out the door. Renters should not be thrown out on the street."

# Murder plot reveals a deadly mix: white supremacists and law enforcement

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Newswire Contributor

The FBI recently unearthed a deadly secret: top Ku Klux Klan members work in America's prisons, holding unlimited power over inmates, including recent revelations in Florida where authorities thwarted a plot to kill a black prisoner.

"I have long asked (Florida Department of Corrections Secretary Mark Inch), to no avail, to investigate this problem because so many of these individuals hide in plain sight," Florida Democratic State Rep. Dianne Hart said in a statement.

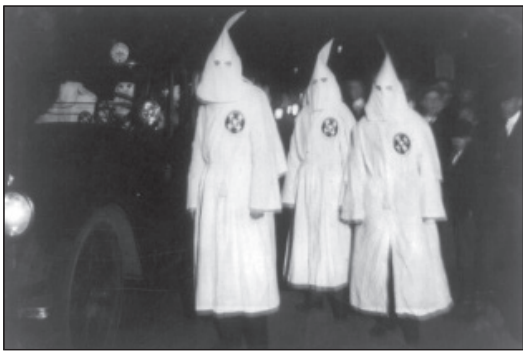
"Due to the reported interest in this issue by the federal government, I will now be asking the Federal Bureau of Investigation to conduct a thorough investigation into this matter and give recommendations to the Florida Legislature," stated Hart, the Tampa native who's affectionately known as "Miss Dee."

Hart reacted to the revelation of a deadly plot by Klan-affiliated corrections officers to kill an African-American inmate.

The would-be murder failed because the FBI had a confidential informant inside a Ku Klux Klan operation that planned the killing.

It involved Warren Williams, a black man serving a one-year sentence for assaulting a police officer.

The court ordered Williams to



The infiltration of Klan members and other white supremacists in law enforcement has rattled much of America/Florida Dept. of Corrections Photo

receive mental health treatment.

When confronted by white prison guard Thomas Driver, who degraded Williams by repeatedly blowing smoke in his face, the inmate and the officer began fighting.

As other guards responded, they pummeled Williams, who required hospitalization.

Angered, Driver met with fellow klansmen and determined that Williams should die upon his release from prison.

An informant recorded all of the conversations between the klansmen – three were involved in the scheme – and made arrests.

Driver received four years in prison for his role, while his co-conspirators Charles Newcomb and David Moran got 12 years for the 2015 crime.

This year, Driver will complete his four-year sentence.

The infiltration of Klan members and other white suprema-

cists in law enforcement has rattled much of America, particularly in the wake of the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis last year.

During the January 6 domestic terrorist attack on the U.S. Capitol, the FBI found that many of those involved were law enforcement or ex-military members.

But, the concerns about racists patrolling America's streets and prisons aren't new.

An October 2006 FBI Intelligence Assessment titled "White Supremacist Infiltration of Law Enforcement" was de-classified and unearthed in 2020.

According to the 10-page document, white supremacist groups have historically engaged in strategic efforts to infiltrate and recruit members from law enforcement communities.

Current reporting on attempts reflects self-initiated efforts by individuals, particularly among those already within law en-

forcement ranks, to volunteer their professional resources to white supremacist causes with which they sympathize.

"White supremacist presence among law enforcement personnel is a concern due to the access they may possess to restricted areas vulnerable to sabotage and to elected officials or protected persons, whom they could see as potential targets for violence," the document continued.

"In addition, white supremacist infiltration of law enforcement can result in other abuses of authority, and passive tolerance of racism within communities served."

Reports of white supremacist groups recruiting corrections officers have emanated from Alabama and Mississippi in the South, New York and New Jersey in the South, and Arizona and California in the West.

A 2020 report by the nonprofit Brennan Center noted that the



Justice Department has been delinquent in gathering data about overtly racist police conduct.

The lack of a federal database that tracks this type of misconduct or membership in white supremacist or far-right militant groups makes discovering evidence of intent more difficult.

The FBI only began collecting data on law enforcement use of force in 2018, after Black Lives Matter and other police accountability groups pushed for more federal oversight of police violence against people of color.

The Brennan report also revealed that "since 2000, law enforcement officials with alleged connections to white supremacist groups or far-right militant activities have been exposed in Alabama, California, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Michigan, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia and elsewhere."

The continued presence of even a small number of far-right militants, white supremacists, and other overt racists in law enforcement has an outsized impact on public safety and public trust in the criminal justice system, the report's authors wrote.

They concluded that the Department of Justice should establish clear policies regarding participation in white supremacist organizations and other far-right militant groups and on overt and

explicit expressions of racism – with specificity regarding tattoos, patches and insignia as well as social media postings.

"These policies should be properly vetted by legal counsel to ensure compliance with constitutional rights, state and local laws, and collective bargaining agreements, and they must be clearly explained to staff," the researchers determined.

They concluded that a diverse workforce should help because it would reflect the demographic makeup of the communities the agency serves. Law enforcement leaders also should establish mitigation plans when detecting bias officers, including referrals to internal affairs, local prosecutors, or the DOJ for investigation and prosecution.

Further, the researchers suggested establishing reporting mechanisms to ensure evidence of overtly racist behavior, the employment of Brady lists or similar reporting mechanisms, and encourage whistleblowing and protect whistleblowers.

"I have heard from correctional officers, inmates and families about how deep this problem goes," Hart remarked.

"There are officers who are part of gangs and white supremacy groups with positions of leadership within prisons around the state. So, unfortunately, I can't say that I am surprised by this reporting."



# Jim Hill Class of 1976 45<sup>th</sup> Reunion

Jackson, MS • July 31, 2021

PHOTOS BY JAY JOHNSON



## MISSISSIPPI BOOK FESTIVAL

8.21.21

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BOOK REVIEW:

# BREATHING FIRE

## FEMALE INMATE FIREFIGHTERS ON THE FRONT LINES OF CALIFORNIA'S WILDFIRES

BY JAIME LOWE

C.2021, MCB / FARRAR, STRAUS AND GIROUX

\$27.00 / \$37.00 CANADA • 303 PAGES

Mississippi Link Newswire

Your oversized plastic tote is all packed. You don't want to think about it, but if you have to bug out, you can. A backup laptop, extra dog bowls, every irreplaceable document, it's all there, ready to slide into the car. You can never be too careful when it's fire season and in the new book "Breathing Fire" by Jaime Lowe, you'll meet some of the women tasked with keeping you safe.

Shawna Lynn Jones had made mistakes in her life. The biggest

one got her sent to prison. She was young, though, and in good physical shape, which ultimately helped her get into the CDCR's (California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation) inmate firefighter program. She learned to be a buckler, tasked with cleaning up behind her partner, Carla, who was a sawyer with a chainsaw. Crew 13-3 consisted of two sawyer/buckler pairs, followed by other women with jobs specific to stopping wildfires.

Jaime Lowe grew up in California but until she read about

Shawna, she was unaware of the role that female inmate crews have in fighting fire. Inmate firefighters take the same qualifications tests as do free-world firefighters. They do the same work, face the same dangers, and they save the state millions of dollars: when Lowe began writing this book, inmate firefighters averaged less than \$3 an hour for their skills.

Still, despite low pay, many inmates pursued positions in "fire camp." Some, says Lowe, even hoped to fight fires after their release, although it was a

long shot: their felony records follow them, no matter where they might apply.

In learning about the program, Lowe got a chance to meet Selena, who "wasn't intending to go back to prison" after her release. She met Whitney, formerly a white-collar worker and ultra-marathoner. She met Laurie, who struggled to find a job after prison; Sonya, who delighted in a new grandson; and Marquet, who found solace in her religion.


And Lowe met Shawna, who gave her life to fight a fire....

Let's start here: this is a good story. It's very good. But for readers looking for boots-on-the-ground action and extended-wall-of-fire danger, it'll be a disappointment because "Breathing Fire" isn't that kind of book.

Rather than focusing on flames, author Jaime Lowe instead concentrates on the women of Crew 13-3 and the work they did for the State of California. In this, readers can expect pure honesty: Lowe unabashedly reveals what each woman did to land her in prison and the struggles each had in life, in prison,

and on the line. She also makes absolutely sure that readers understand the unfairness of a far-ranging system that denies good jobs to women who are essentially professionally trained, and who've paid their dues and are trying to move forward.

Overall, parts of "Breathing Fire" put you on charred grass and parts make you cell-bound. The rest of it shows flawed real-life heroes amid an area-wide "constant crisis," and if you're burning for stories like that, this book is packed.



## ZACK WALLACE

Hinds County Circuit Clerk

**FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT**  
Circuit Clerk's Office  
P.O. BOX 327  
Jackson, MS 39205  
Phone: (601) 968-6628  
Fax: (601) 973-5547

**Jury Duty Recording:**  
First Judicial District  
(601) 969-0052

**SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT**  
Circuit Clerk's Office  
P.O. Box 999  
Raymond, MS 39154  
Phone: (601) 857-8038  
Fax: (601) 857-0535

**Jury Duty Recording:**  
Second Judicial District  
(601) 857-8869

**Office Hours:**  
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Monday - Friday  
(Except on legal holiday)

**Services of the Clerk:**

- Civil/Criminal Filings of Circuit and County Court
- Marriage License
- Medical License
- Voter Registration/Absentee Voting

**VOTER INFORMATION**  
[Verify/Update your Registration Today](#)

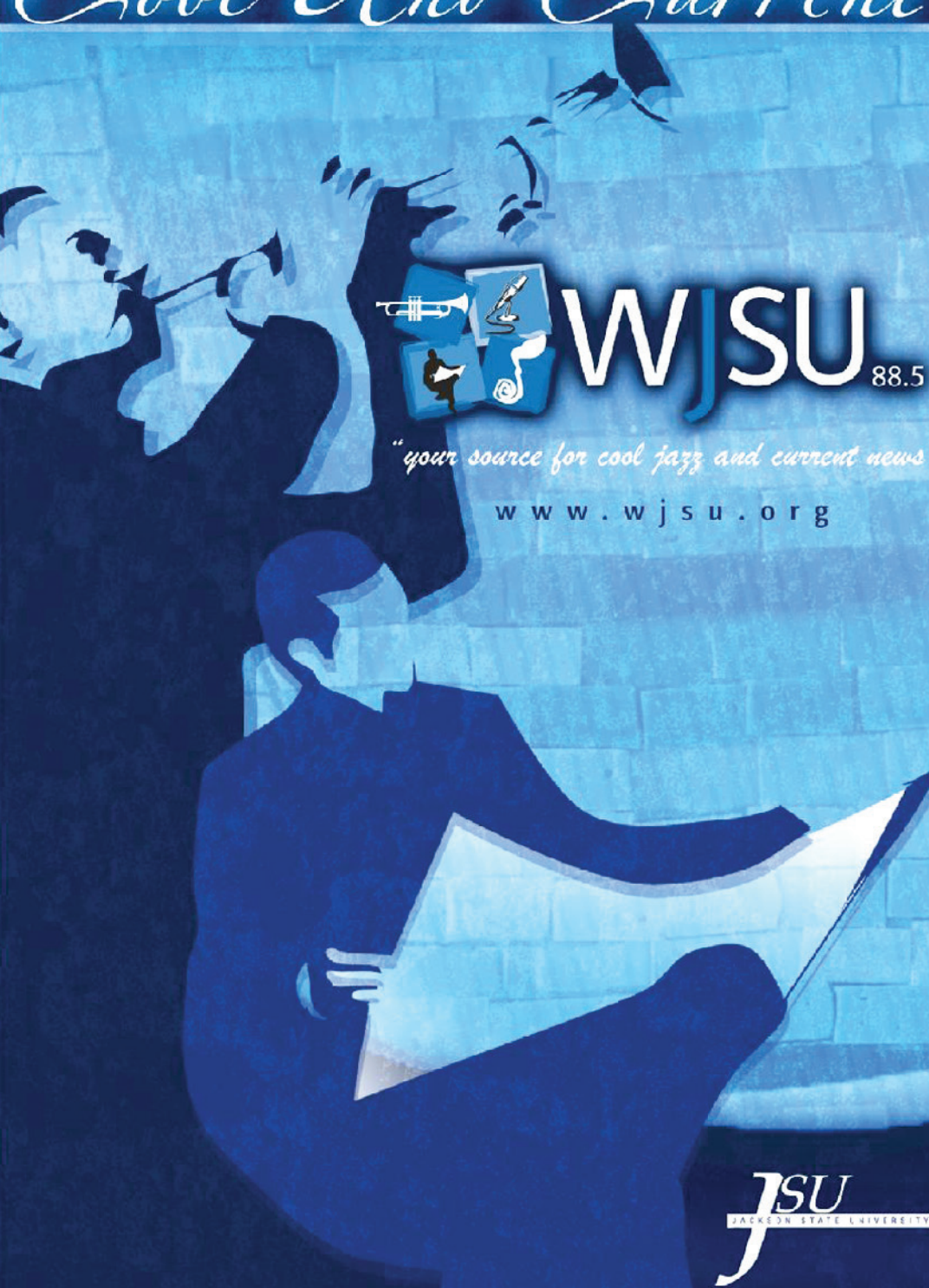
- You must be registered 30 days before the Election.
- Absentee Voting begins 45 days before the Election

**MARRIAGE INFORMATION**

- Marriage License: \$36.00
  - Both applicants must come to the Circuit Clerk's office together to apply
  - Proof of age must be provided in the form of Driver's License, Birth Certificate or other legal document which contains name and date of birth.

Website: [www.hindscountymiss.com](http://www.hindscountymiss.com)

# Cool And Current



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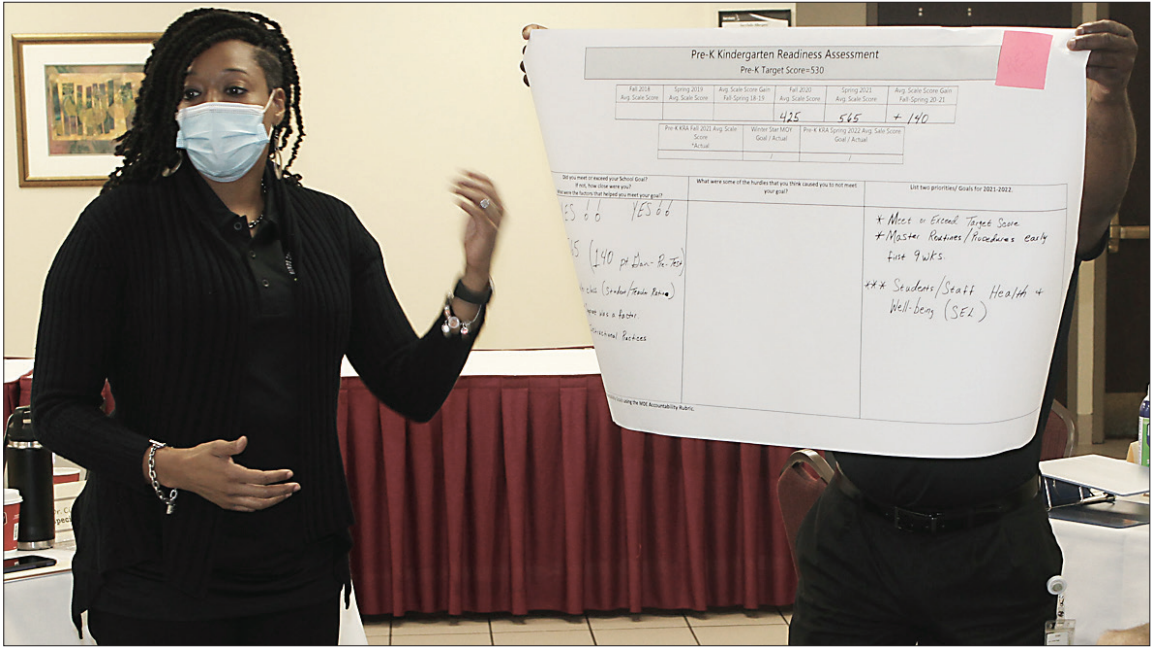


# Hinds County School District Weekly Update

## ENGAGING-EMPOWERING-ENSURING-EXCELLENCE

### HCSD Hosted its Annual Administrators Leadership Retreat for the 2021-2022 School Year

On July 28-30, 2021, the HCSD held its Annual Administrators Retreat at Eagle Ridge Conference Center in Raymond, MS. During the opening session, Dr. Delesicia Martin, superintendent of the HCSD, told her administrative team that as a school district they must be accountable to our community, but more importantly they must be accountable to providing the best education possible for our students.





THURS  
SEPT  
9TH

# JACKSON PRE-BAYOU CLASSIC CELEBRATION

F E A T U R I N G

# CHARLIE WILSON

## LIVE IN CONCERT

### JACKSON CONVENTION CENTER

(DOORS OPEN @ 6:30 / SHOWTIME @ 7:30PM)

WITH SPECIAL GUEST

"SHOW ME BABY" "SOPHISTICATED"  
"NO TIME FOR MYSTERIES"

*Rude*



TICKETS ON SALE NOW @ JACKSON CONVENTION CENTER BOX OFFICE

COUPLES NIGHT CLUB AND ONLINE @ EVENT BRITE

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL: 601-960-2321/ 225-273-3355

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WJMG, COUPLES NIGHT CLUB  
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