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HB 1020 power grab now in the Courts

By Christopher Young
Contributing Writer

Long before Governor Reeves signed HB1020 into law on April 21, 2023, it was evident that this Jim Crow-type legislation would be challenged. True to their word, the NAACP filed suit only hours after the bill became law, in Federal Court claiming the law is unconstitutional. Part of the suit reads, “These laws target Jackson’s Majority-Black residents on the basis of race for a separate and unequal policing structure and criminal justice system to which no other residents of the state are subjected.”

A second lawsuit was filed on April 24, 2023, in State Court on behalf of Jackson residents Ann Saunders, Sabreen Sharrief, and Dorothy Triplett by the Mississippi Center for Justice, the ALCU of Mississippi, the MacArthur Justice Center and Legal Defense Fund, in Hinds County Chancery Court.

The nuts and bolts of the law are this: “It would create a new unelected court system within an expanded Capitol Complex Improvement District, add temporary appointed judges to the Hinds County court system, increase the boundaries of the CCID and allow Capitol Police to work outside of that area, expanding their jurisdiction



The Honorable J Dewayne Thomas. AP PHOTO

tion to include the entire city, all of which local leaders have opposed,” per *The Clarion-Ledger* on March 31, 2023.

The bill which Representative Christopher Bell (D-65) – Hinds county, calls the creation of a city within a city, was drafted far away from Jackson, by a white lawyer who lives in Senatobia – John Lamar (R-08) – Lafayette and Tate counties, and was cosponsored by Fred Shanks (R-60) – Rankin county and Price Wallace (R-77) – Rankin and Simpson counties, also white men, and all professed Christians, of course.

According to Legiscan.com, the Bill passed the Senate on a

31-15 vote, with four Senators not voting on March 30, 2023, then passed the House the following day with a 72-41 vote with seven Representatives not voting – all done along party lines.

Had Lamar been sincerely trying to help Jackson/Hinds, he would have sat down with our legislators and asked to help. He would have solicited their ideas for improving their county and Capital City. He would have met with residents, arranged public forums, and sought input, but he did none of these. He drafted legislation and then sprang it upon us at the start of the legislative session in January, knowing full well that



The Honorable Henry T. Wingate

a Republican trifecta exists – a supermajority in both legislative chambers, and a Republican governor.

Long focused on discrimination and poverty issues in Mississippi, the Mississippi Center for Justice weighed in with a statement on April 21, 2023, that reads in part: “House Bill 1020 is a blatant power grab to usurp democratically elected officials and constitutional processes, and would further dilute black representation and voices in Hinds County and the City of Jackson, Mississippi. This is a gross example of gov

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In guns we trust

By Christopher Young
Contributing Writer

Gun Violence Archive (GVA) is an American nonprofit group which catalogs every incident of gun violence in the United States and has been doing so since 2014. It provides near real-time data and statistics, data which typically takes from several months to several years when distributed by the FBI and CIA.

Their website – <https://www.gunviolencearchive.org> – records police shooting injuries and deaths, mass shootings, individual gun related incidents, suicides, injuries, teen, child and adult related injuries and deaths.

This year, as of May 12, there have been 213 mass shootings in the United States, killing 96 and injuring 221 children ages 0-11, and killing 549 and injuring 1,340 children ages 12-17.

Not all gun deaths involve assault weapons and high-capacity magazines, “Once again I ask Congress to send me a bill banning assault weapons and high-capacity magazines. Enacting universal background checks.

Here is a graphic of the toll extracted by guns in America over the past seven years:

GVA - Seven Year Review	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Deaths - Willful, Malicious, Accidental	15,139	15,742	14,943	15,509	19,558	21,009	20,200
Suicides by Gun	22,938	23,854	24,432	23,941	24,292	26,328	Pending
Injuries - Willful, Malicious, Accidental	30,586	31,358	28,285	30,199	39,542	40,603	38,550
Children [aged 0-11] Killed or Injured	665	734	665	696	1,001	1,065	995
Teens [aged 12-17] Killed or Injured	3,154	3,296	2,883	3,129	4,159	4,645	5,157
Mass Shooting	383	348	336	417	610	690	647
Murder-Suicide	549	608	623	632	570	594	670
Defensive Use [DGU]	1,993	2,118	1,889	1,619	1,513	1,295	1,178
Unintentional Shooting	2,235	2,065	1,696	1,912	2,336	2,027	1,626

Number of Deaths, Injuries, Children, Teens killed/injured [actual numbers]
Mass Shooting, Murder-suicides, Defensive Use, Unintentional Shooting [number of incidents]
Suicide numbers supplied by CDC End of Year Report [actual numbers]

@gundeaths
www.gunviolencearchive.org
www.facebook.com/gunviolencearchive

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GVA

Requiring safe storage. Ending immunity for gun manufacturers. I will sign it immediately. We need nothing less to keep our streets safe,” Biden said on May, 7, 2023, per USA Today reporting.

Yet according to the Statista Research Department, “Handguns are the most common

weapon type used in mass shootings in the United States, with a total of 161 different handguns being used in 111 incidents between 1982 and April 2023. These figures are calculated from a total of 142 reported cases over this period, meaning handguns are involved in about 78 percent of mass shootings.”

Due to the use of assault rifles in high-profile mass shootings, a statistically inordinate focus is placed on them. Statista further reports, “Since 1985 there has been a known total 58 mass shootings involving rifles, mostly semi-automatics.” Mass

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Dr. Marilyn Johnson-Luckett President Biden’s Lifetime Achievement Award recipient taken by surprise

By Janice K. Neal-Vincent, Ph.D.
Contributing Writer

“When Dr. Chad Lawson Cooper attended Connecting the Dots Foundation’s Women History 2023 event, never did I think he was looking at me to consider awarding me the President Biden’s Lifetime Achievement Award. I was so humbled to know that I would even be considered for such an honor. I thank God for the favor He gives people.” That was Dr. Marilyn Johnson-Luckett’s response to Cooper’s selection of her as one of several recipients of the prestigious award.

Johnson-Luckett founded Connecting The Dots Foundation several years ago and serves as CEO. The entrepreneur, historian, philanthropist and community activist supported Cooper’s touring Broadway production, Justice on Trial that packed Jackson State University’s Rose E. McCoy Building last Saturday evening. She admits that she was spellbound by Cooper’s acknowledgement.

Of other honorees, Johnson-Luckett commented: “It gives me great pride to be among great people in Miss. who dedicated their life work to social justice and the betterment of their people. Justice on Trial provided the encouragement needed to persevere. It clearly reminded [those of us who attended] that there is much more work to be done, and it



Biden Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient, Dr. Marilyn Johnson-Luckett
PHOTOS: CDTF

challenges us to pick up the mantle and run with it for the good of community.”

Johnson-Luckett found Justice on Trial to be compelling, convincing, effective and worthwhile. She mentioned that it should be seen by all. “It takes you back to very difficult times in history when slavery, Jim Crow, segregation and violence described the state of Black America. It brought forth truths that were extremely painful but needed to be seen and heard by those who are unaware and those who have forgotten the great struggles of people of color, especially the young generation.”

While looking at the present state of America, the en-



Dr. Reba Perry, White House Representative & Johnson-Luckett.

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Lifechanging recommendations via color enlightenment for Jackson residents

By Janice K. Neal-Vincent, Ph.D.
Contributing Writer

For some time, Aaron Honeysucker – founder of Community Health Initiative Obesity Fighters, has worked with and looked at citizens of Jackson in different situational contexts. Observations have led him to discuss health-related matters that are beneficial for the inhabitants. He believes that they should know about the significance of colors for daily living.

“The colors represent situations that we could prevent if we change our lifestyles. For instance, exercising, eating healthy, staying away from stress, sugar, salt, breads and white flours are good for us,” stated Honeysucker. He further mentioned that proper sleep is essential, so it is imperative to get seven to nine hours of sleep every night. That means that there should be no television in the bedroom. All lights in the bedroom should be off at bedtime. No telephones should be in the bedroom. Going to bed each night at the same time enhances a person’s sleep routine.

The life-changer indicated that consuming too many sugary drinks and sweets are bad



Aaron Honeysucker – health champion – urges City of Jackson residents to fight obesity, improve sleep and exercise while utilizing color. PHOTO BY JANICE K. NEAL-VINCENT

for health. “Sugar rots our teeth, affects part of our brain when it comes to memory, damages cartilage between the joints, and it’s bad on the heart. It has no nutrients and causes obesity, he added.

The obesity fighter noted that the State of Mississippi is “the fattest state,” and the City of Jackson is “the fattest city in the country.”

African Americans make up the majority of those suffering from obesity. Obesity creates lack of movement which hinders us from getting exercise that is

needed for proper functioning.

To combat lack of exercise, Honeysucker recommends at least 3,000 steps a day and 30 minutes of uninterrupted walking.

“This month we have allergies, and we don’t realize that many of the foods we eat cause allergies. Red is the color for strokes, and we must do everything we can to prevent strokes, not just for May, but for every day. Green stands for mental health. We have a high rate of mental health in the City of Jackson. If we could eat the right types of food, i.e.,

blueberries, strawberries and raspberries, [improvements can be made in this area]. Yellow stands for suicide. May is suicide awareness month,” maintained Honeysucker.

Honeysucker suggests that citizens can wear colors that would remind them of their representation. Developing a habit such as this would contribute to healthier people.

The following chart was shared.

- Black = Melanoma
- Light Blue = Addison’s & Behcets disease
- Gray = allergies; asthma
- Brain cancer & brain tumors
- Dark Blue = arthritis
- Colitis & apraxia
- Crohn’s disease
- Huntington disease
- Orange = skin cancer
- Green = Mental health & childhood depression
- Tourette Syndrome
- Neurofibroma
- Teal = Agoraphobia, anxiety
- Yellow = Osteoporosis
- Suicide & Bladder Cancer
- Red = Stroke & Hepatitis
- Burgundy = Williams syndrome

To learn more contact Aaron Honeysucker at 601-506-2540.

Stop the bleeding and heal the city – community event to address crime

Special to The Mississippi Link

Crime data shows that for the second consecutive year in 2022, Jackson, Mississippi, led the nation in per capita homicide rates for cities with populations greater than 100,000. Residents of Jackson are exasperated by this level of bloodshed and find it to be unacceptable.

Men Who Care – Jackson is holding its second annual conference focused on stopping the violence in Jackson. The theme of the event is “Stronger Together.”

The event takes place May 20, 2023, at the JSU e-Center located at 1230 Raymond Road, Jackson, MS, 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. It is free to the public. Those who RSVP by Friday can receive a free breakfast. (Text: 601-951-1020; your name and “Yes”).

The event is sponsored by Restoration Community Church in Jackson, MS, pastored by Joseph White.

“This is an apolitical meeting where we are searching for solutions based on truth, compassion, and what is just for everyone. We are not looking for and will not be detracted by

political or religious debates. There is too much at stake for that,” White said. He believes that it is imperative for violent crime to be suppressed for the city to heal and thrive.

There will be a host of speakers who are searching for collaborative and innovative approaches to stop the killing, stop the shooting and to stop the unending mass incarceration of mostly poor, young, black, and educationally depressed males.

Speakers will include Chief James E. Davis (JPD), Sheriff Tyree Jones (Hinds County Sheriff Dept), Asst. Chief Derrick Jacobs of Capitol Police Department, community representatives, business representatives and faith leaders.

The goal is to advance the conversation beyond simply describing the problem, but to collaboratively seek and find innovative solutions to the problem of crime and violence in Jackson.

This is an opportunity for men (and women) of goodwill who care about the city of Jackson to come and share their concerns and offer recommendations for solutions.



Less worrying and more living.



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HB1020

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ernment overreach – an attempt by singularly focused state leadership to impose its will on a sovereign municipality and strip autonomy from Jackson and Hinds County. This should concern every single one of us – every community, large or small, regardless of racial or economic makeup across our state and nation. This unprecedented power grab exists only for Hinds County, a majority black county with a majority black electorate, where the legislature has created a new Judicial District for the Capital Complex Improvement District (CCID) for a sprawling area of Hinds County that includes the Capitol, the Jackson State corridor, and other important areas of the City of Jackson and Hinds County.”

MCJ CEO Vangela Wade goes on to say, “Notably, it appears the new court would have exclusive jurisdiction over all suits brought against the State of Mississippi and its agencies...reducing the jurisdiction of the duly elected justice court, circuit court, and chancery judges, as well as the District Attorney of Hinds County, blatantly disregarding the will of Jackson and Hinds County voters. Not only is this proposal likely unconstitutional, but it would also divert critical tax revenue away from Jackson – which still does not have clean drinking water – and siphon money from

the city taxpayers to fund this politically overzealous and unnecessary scheme.”

The lawsuit being heard by Chancery Court Judge J. Dewayne Thomas, is Civil Action styled G-2023-421 T/1 Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief. Thus far, Judge Thomas has issued a temporary restraining order to block the implementation of expanding Capitol Police jurisdiction, and has dismissed Chief Justice of the Mississippi Supreme Court, Michael Randolph and Hinds County Clerk of Circuit Court, Zack Wallace from the suit due to their statutory responsibilities, but he has added The State of Mississippi and Mississippi Attorney General Lynn Fitch to the suit, per WLBT reporting on May 11, 2023.

As this week begins, Mississippi Today reported on May 15, 2023, that “Judge Thomas has denied a preliminary injunction to block HB1020 from becoming law.” Quoting from his Memorandum, the article goes on to say, “However, disappointment and frustration with the legislative process does not create a judicial right to relief...and that plaintiffs did not provide enough evidence that the appointment of temporary judges within HB1020 and establishment of the Capitol Complex Improvement District court

are unconstitutional beyond a reasonable doubt.”

This ruling flies in the face of the one-page statement issued by sixteen Hinds County judges that appointing prosecutors and judges violates the Mississippi Constitution, reported by CNN on January 30, 2023. Not surprisingly, on May 16, 2023, the three plaintiffs filed an appeal to the Supreme Court of Mississippi, per a post on Twitter by attorney Blake Feldman.

On the Federal side, “U.S. District Court Judge Henry Wingate has issued an order blocking the Mississippi Supreme Court chief justice from appointing judges in Jackson in response to an NAACP lawsuit seeking a restraining order to prevent House Bill 1020 from going into effect, per WAPT reporting on May 12, 2023.

The Mississippi House Democratic Caucus said in a statement on January 31, “HB 1020 is a racist, unconstitutional power grab. It is control of a city masquerading as concern for its citizens.” They assert that this bill “follows a pattern we’ve become all too familiar with: starve a community of much-needed resources, blame black leaders for incompetence, attempt to take over.”

Guns

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shootings at Las Vegas Strip massacre in 2017, Sandy Hook school in 2012, Orlando nightclub in 2016, and First Baptist Church in Texas in 2017, were four of the five worst in our history – assault rifles were used in those four.

When the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act was voted on, all but 13 Republican Representatives voted against it, despite the bill being originally authored by Republican Senator Marco Rubio, he voted against its final passage. The act made various changes to federal firearms laws, including expanding background check requirements for gun purchasers under age 21, broadening the scope of existing restrictions, and establishing new criminal offenses. President Biden signed the Act into law on June 25, 2022, seven and a half months after it was introduced, with 193 Republican Representatives and 33 Republican Senators opposed. Among the 33 Republican Senators who voted against it were both of Mississippi’s Senators; Roger Wicker and Cindy Hyde-Smith. Fourteen Republicans did support passage.

On March 14, 2023, Biden issued Executive Order on Reducing Gun Violence and Making Our Communities Safer. This Executive Order increases the number of background checks by ensuring

that all background checks required by law are conducted before firearm purchases, moving the U.S. as close to universal background checks as possible without additional legislation. It Improves public awareness and increases appropriate use of extreme risk protection (“red flag”) orders and safe storage of firearms. It addresses the loss or theft of firearms during shipping. It provides the public and policymakers with more information regarding federally licensed firearms dealers who are violating the law. It helps catch shooters by accelerating federal law enforcement’s reporting of ballistics data. It improves federal support for gun violence survivors, victims and survivors’ families, first responders to gun violence, and communities affected by gun violence, and much more, per White House.Gov.

There is a link between the rise of domestic terror and white supremacy. On Mother’s Day, the one-year anniversary of the mass shooting in Buffalo, NY where ten African Americans were killed by a white supremacist at a grocery store, ABC News reported that per Department of Homeland Security “in this one-year period there have been 650+ mass shootings and 40,000 gun-related deaths in America, and the majority of gun-related deaths in

the country are racially motivated.”

It’s easy to see why, while delivering the commencement address at Howard University on May 13, 2023, President Biden stated that “the most dangerous terrorist threat to our homeland is white supremacy.” His remarks draw from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Department of Homeland Security - Strategic Intelligence Assessment and Data on Domestic Terrorism, dated October 2022, which states in part, “In 2020, the FBI and DHS assessed racially or ethnically motivated violent extremism, primarily those advocating the superiority of the white race, likely would continue to be the most lethal category of the domestic terror threat to the homeland.”

As we watch innocent citizens and children die each day in the most powerful and affluent nation on earth, 45% of House members and 35% of Senate members push back against more gun control/safety reforms – they are overwhelming white elected officials. Is their pushback a form of white supremacy?

What has to happen before they are willing to legislate in a manner that reduces gun violence and saves American lives – regardless of race and ethnicity?

Johnson-Luckett

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trepreneur acknowledged that Justice on Trial is the ghost that reminds the country that it needs a balancing of scales because of its instability. From her perspective, social justice hangs on trial in cities all across America. In that regard, she said, “It is my hope that Dr. Chad Lawson Cooper will continue his work, traveling all over the globe to enlighten the young and remind the old that the fight is not nearly over.”

When she was asked about past voices like Harriet Tubman and W.E.B. Du Bois who were among features within the production, Johnson-Luckett explained, “I can’t describe the energy brought forth while speaking with the descendants of Harriet Tubman and W.E. B. Du Boise. I am so thankful that these young black men have educated themselves, and they are ready to carry on the fight.”

Asked about her future plans in her role as “servant to humanity,” the Biden award recipient stated, “We will continue to connect the dots with others because it takes all of us to get the job done. I look forward to continuing the work with Dr. Chad Lawson Cooper and his Justice on Trial entourage.


The mission of Connecting The Dots Foundation is to inspire, empower and connect community service organizations by helping them realize their dreams to accomplish their goals through the development of activities, education and financial support.

Other Biden Lifetime Achievement Award recipients who were awarded at the Justice on Trial Broadway production are Dr. Flonzie Brown Wright (Civil Rights activist, author and educator); U. S. Congressman Bennie Thompson; Harvey Watkins Jr. (legendary gospel artist); Derrick Johnson (CEO and President of the NAACP); The Rev. Dr. Jerry Young (National Baptist Conventions USA. Inc); Alyce G. Clark (Retired State Representative District 69); Bill Washington (political consultant, tax advisor, community activist); Lannie Spann-McBride (social justice activist and musical genius); and Hezekiah Watkins (political activist).

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HINDS COUNTY HUMAN RESOURCE AGENCY

Helping Families,
Strengthening Communities

Health and resource fair assists unhoused citizens



Health screenings were provided by Rosalind Yarber and Shirley Perry of Jackson Hinds Comprehensive Health Center

The Mississippi Link Newswire

The first Thursday of each month is a Brighter Day for residents at the Billy Brumfield Men's Shelter. Each month, the Institute and its partners provide a plethora of services for shelter residents and other unhoused individuals via its A Brighter Day Resource and Health Fair.

On May 4, 2023, over 40 unhoused men took advantage of the opportunity to receive HIV/AIDS tests, COVID vaccinations, blood pressure screenings,

glucose screenings and tobacco cessation products/information. Cellular devices, food and hair were provided for free.

Melvin Young (DJ Mailman) of WJMI (99 Jams) radio station kept the atmosphere lively with great music.

In Mississippi, an estimated 1,107 people are experiencing homelessness. That equals 3.7 people for every 10,000 according to a report from the National Alliance to End Homelessness. Unhoused individuals are often



Delicious food was distributed by Shantay Griffith, outreach coordinator, Institute for the Advancement of Minority Health and Marcus Banks, B&B Barbecue.

exposed to violence and other traumatic experiences. These experiences often lead to the participation in risky behavior in order to survive in their environment.

"Because there are multiple reasons for homelessness, there is not a single solution," said Dr. Sandra Melvin, CEO/founder, Institute for the Advancement of Minority Health. "Our agency is committed to providing services to meet the needs of those currently unhoused. Via our part-

nerships, we will continue to deliver access to essential items and provisions as often as possible."

Partners for this resource and health fair were MS Move, Jackson Hinds Comprehensive Health Center, Meet Your Needs Service, WJMI, Gilmer Grooming and B&B Barbecue.

For more information or to partner with the Institute contact iamh@advancingminorityhealth.org or call (769) 572-5263.

The Mississippi Children's Museum to open new health exhibit, Kareem's Dreamy Day

The Mississippi Link Newswire

The Mississippi Children's Museum (MCM) will open its newest exhibit experience, Kareem's Dreamy Day, in the existing Healthy Fun gallery, Tuesday, May 23, 2023.

This exhibit is designed to teach children about healthy living and sleeping habits through nutrition, exercise, social wellness and bedtime routines. Each of Kareem's friends will teach guests about a different aspect of health so that they can learn to build their own dreamy days.

"Kareem's Dreamy Day is magical enough to inspire wonder, while grounded enough that each child will leave with actionable steps toward living a healthier life in their own homes," said William Moore, assistant director of Exhibits.

- Exhibit features include:
- Climb with Cody into a 12-foot tree house climber, look through a periscope into a magical world, and slide down to the backyard.
 - Rest with Rocky and practice healthy bedtime routines to get a good night's sleep.



Make meals with Matteo in a state-of-the-art play kitchen, where guests can learn how to pack a healthy lunch, practice cooking a nutritious meal, play with sizzling stoves and gurgling sinks, and discover recipes for a healthy day.

MCM is open Tuesday-Saturday 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sunday 1 p.m.-6 p.m. The museum will be open every Monday in June and July for Magic Mondays! Admission is \$10 for children and adults and free with museum membership.

For more information, visit www.mschildrensmuseum.org.

Hinds County School District Weekly Update

ENGAGING-EMPOWERING-ENSURING-EXCELLENCE

Hinds County School District honored and celebrated retirees from the Hinds County School District with a reception. Recognition was given from the area they worked in the district. Those retirees attending the reception were Brenda Smiley, retiring from Utica Elementary/Middle School; Krisstina Maynard retiring from Byram Middle School; and Dr. Delesicia Martin retiring as superintendent of Hinds County School District. May God bless them in their retirement.



Two set for trial in shooting at FedEx driver

The Associated Press

An August trial has been set for two white men in Mississippi who are accused of chasing and shooting at a black FedEx driver who had dropped off a package at a home.

Brandon Case and his father, Gregory Charles Case, were indicted in November on charges of attempted first-degree murder, conspiracy and shooting into the vehicle of D’Monterrio Gibson in January 2022.

On Monday, Lincoln County Circuit Court Judge David Strong set Aug. 8 as the starting date for their trial, the *Daily Leader* reported.

Gibson, who was 24 at the time, was not injured. But the chase and gunfire sparked social media complaints of racism in Brookhaven, about 55 miles (90 kilometers) south of the state capital, Jackson.

During a news conference days after the incident, Gibson said he was wearing a FedEx uniform and was driving an unmarked van that FedEx had rented when he dropped off a package at a house. He said as he was leaving, he noticed a white pickup truck pulling away from another house on the same large lot.

Gibson said the pickup driver tried to cut him off as he left the driveway. Gibson said he swerved around the driver and then encountered a second man who had a gun pointed at the van and was motioning for him to stop. Gibson said the man fired as he drove away, damaging the van and packages inside. He said the white pickup chased him to Interstate 55 near Brookhaven before ending the pursuit.

Carlos Moore, an attorney representing Gibson in a civil lawsuit in federal court, compared the incident to the killing of Ahmaud Arbery, a 25-year-old black man who was running empty-handed through a Georgia subdivision in 2020 when three white strangers chased him down and blasted him with a shotgun.

The lawsuit that Moore filed on behalf of Gibson in January 2023 is still pending. It is against FedEx, the city of Brookhaven, Brookhaven Police Chief Kenny Collins, Brandon Case and Gregory Charles Case.

Favre ends lawsuit after sportscaster McAfee apologizes over ‘stealing from poor’ remark

By Emily Wagster Pettus Associated Press

Retired NFL quarterback Brett Favre is ending a lawsuit against sportscaster Pat McAfee after McAfee publicly apologized Thursday for his previous on-air statements that Favre had been “stealing from poor people in Mississippi” in a welfare misspending case.

Favre and McAfee both announced the settlement. McAfee, a former NFL punter, apologized during “The Pat McAfee Show” on YouTube and said he did not have to make a payment to Favre to settle the suit.

“As I confirmed in my court papers and I repeat here, my statements expressed in comedic style were based solely on public information and allegations,” McAfee said, adding that he respects Favre’s football career.

“I would much rather talk about sports than about lawsuits, so I’m glad we have all of this behind us,” McAfee said.

Favre wrote in a Twitter post: “Like Pat said, he was attempting to be funny and not commenting based on any personal knowledge. We’d both much rather talk about football.”

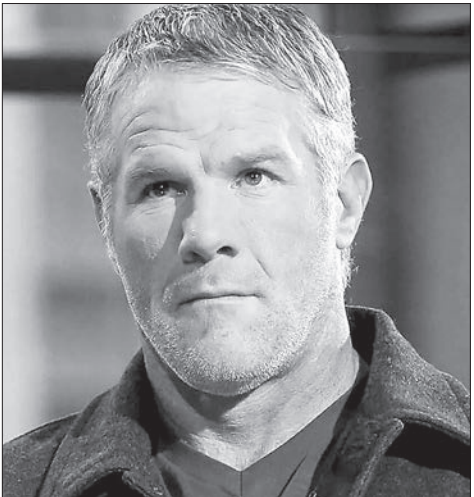
In a lawsuit filed in a Mississippi court in February, Favre’s attorneys wrote McAfee had used “outrageous falsehoods” that included calling Favre a “thief” who was “stealing from poor people in Mississippi.” In March, Favre dropped the state lawsuit and filed a similar complaint in federal court.

Favre still has defamation lawsuits pending against former NFL player Shannon Sharpe and Mississippi Auditor Shad White.

Favre said Sharpe made “egregiously false” statements about him on the Fox Sports talk show “Skip and Shannon: Undisputed,” including that Favre “stole money from people that really needed money.”

Sharpe’s attorneys have asked a federal judge to dismiss the case, writing in a May 3 filing: “Mississippi law protects Sharpe’s right to make caustic and critical comments on Favre’s involvement in a matter of public concern: the misspending of welfare funds intended for poor Mississippi families.”

White’s attorneys have said Favre cannot prove malice in any statements the auditor has made about the welfare case.



Favre

Vicksburg National Military Park commemorates siege anniversary with licensed battlefield guided walking tours May 19, 20 and 22, 2023

Celebrating the 160th anniversary of the Vicksburg Campaign

Special to The Mississippi Link

Vicksburg National Military Park will be commemorating the 160th anniversary of the May 19th and 22nd 1863 Union assaults with a series of walking tours by Licensed Battlefield Guides on-site where these clashes occurred.

Five walking tours at four locations including the Graveyard Road, Jackson Road, 2nd Texas Lunette, and Railroad Redoubt will bring visitors across the hallowed landscape where Union and Confederate soldiers clashed for control of Vicksburg during the American Civil War.

Walking tours are 30-40 minutes in length and will be on paved, level portions of the tour road unless otherwise noted. Program participants will be bussed from the park visitor center to the program locations. The Graveyard Road’s eastbound lane will be closed to vehicle traffic for pedestrian use only from Friday, May 19 through Monday, May 22, 2023. Temporary signs depicting soldiers’ experiences from the battle will be posted along the closed road to enhance the visitor experience.

All guided tours are limited to 40 people and registering is mandatory. Individuals interested in participating in these walking tour can sign up at: www.nps.gov/vick/planyourvisit/licensed-battlefield-guided-walking-tours.htm. Each tour has a registration link where they can secure a place to attend each tour.

White has said that from 2016 to 2019, the Mississippi Department of Human Services misspent more than \$77 million in welfare money. Prosecutors have said the department gave money to nonprofit organizations that spent it on projects such as a \$5 million volleyball facility at the University of Southern Mississippi – a project for which Favre agreed to raise money.

Favre is not facing criminal charges, but he is among more than three dozen people or businesses the state is suing to try to recover misspent money through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families anti-poverty program.

Favre has repaid \$1.1 million he received for speaking fees from a nonprofit group that spent TANF money with approval from the Mississippi Department of Human Services. White said Favre never showed up to give the speeches.

In December, the department made a new demand of up to \$5 million against Favre and a university sports foundation, saying welfare money was improperly used to pay for a volleyball arena at Favre’s alma mater, the University of Southern Mississippi.

Favre’s daughter started playing volleyball at the university in 2017. The volleyball facility was a pet project of the NFL Hall of Famer, and he pledged to lead fundraising efforts. Filings in the state’s civil lawsuit show text message exchanges between Favre and others about directing money to the volleyball facility from a nonprofit organization that had Department of Human Services contracts.

Mississippi removes hurdle to child care for low-income single parents

By Michael Goldberg Associated Press/Report for America

Single parents in Mississippi – one of the poorest states in the nation – no longer face a nearly 20-year-old state policy that made it difficult for them to get financial help paying for child care, officials and advocates said Monday.

Since 2004, single parents and guardians in Mississippi had to seek child support from the other parent in order to be eligible for assistance through the Child Care Payment Program, which offers help to low-income parents. As of Monday, that rule is no longer in effect.

To comply with the rule and receive child care assistance, single parents had to apply through two divisions in the Mississippi Department of Human Services. The dual application process was mired in communication breakdowns that jeopardized assistance, said Carol Burnett, executive director of the Mississippi Low Income Child Care Initiative.

“This policy deterred many single moms from applying for many valid reasons, ranging from informal payment agreements being jeopardized by court interference to avoiding abusive interactions,” Burnett said. Removing that hurdle is “a huge benefit for single moms, for their children, for providers and employers, and for all of us.”

After the policy went into effect in 2004, the wait list for assistance fell from 10,000 to about 208, Burnett said.

James Wiley, a 28-year-old single mother of six who works as a cashier, said taking the steps required to comply with the rule forced her to wait six weeks before she could receive assistance. During that period, she had to pay for child care entirely out-of-pocket.

“When you’re only making about \$1,600 per month, \$500 out of your check is a pretty significant chunk of money,” Wiley said. “Requiring parents and single mothers to comply with child support (enforcement) in order to qualify for assistance is forcing our hand instead of supporting our needs.”

Advocates sought the rule change for years. Chad Allgood, director of the department’s Division of Early Childhood Care Development, said the change happened after a shift in thinking within the agency.

“The key is just having people in policymaking positions that are willing to listen and they’re willing to look at what good data has said,” Allgood said at a news conference Monday. “Looking at the data, listening to those who are served by this program, we determined the policy wasn’t really doing anything other than hurting mothers and their children.”

The change was also set in motion after a council of early childhood administrators voted in March 2022 to recommend that the Department of Human Services do away with the rule.

Allgood said the move would help address an ongoing labor shortage for employers in the state, as a lack of child care remains a barrier for parents entering the workforce.

“Parents cannot maintain consistent employment without access to stable, quality child care, and that’s a point that I simply cannot emphasize enough,” Allgood said.

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Even CNN employees and Republicans panned Trump’s disastrous town hall

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior National Correspondent

For some Republicans, Democrats and journalists, CNN’s disastrous 70-minute town hall with Donald Trump proved what everyone thought it would be: a desperate network featuring a twice-impeached, criminally indicted wannabe despot.

The Trump presidential campaign rally, poorly disguised as a town hall, even received criticism from CNN’s own journalists.

“It was an interesting night,” longtime CNN anchor Jake Tapper observed.

“Trump’s first lie was told just seconds into the night with his false, familiar claim that the 2020 election was, quote, ‘a rigged election.’” Tapper wasn’t finished with his criticism.

“And the falsehoods kept coming, fast and furious, about the January 6 insurrection, about the threat to Vice President Pence, about Pence’s ability to overturn the election, about COVID, about the economy, and more,” he railed.

The cable network’s media reporter, Oliver Darcy, proved equally disturbed.

“It’s hard to see how America was served by the spectacle of lies that aired on CNN Wednesday evening,” Darcy wrote.

For his part, Trump was as bombastic and dishonest as ever. He claimed that his long-promised wall on the southern U.S. border was complete, although evidence and the naked eye proved him wrong long ago.

In addition to reaffirming the Big Lie that the 2020 election was rigged, Trump declared that he would pardon many of the convicted rioters who bombarded the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021. Despite the violence and the vows



of some insurrectionists to hang former Vice President Mike Pence, Trump incredulously said during the town hall that Pence was never in danger.

With Fulton County, Georgia, District Attorney Fani Willis poised to level charges against Trump for trying to influence the outcome of the 2020 election in the Peach State, Trump doubled down on his false contentions. He even offered a defense to pressuring the secretary of state to “find” him more votes.

“Yeah, I called questioning the election,” Trump stated. “I said, ‘You owe me votes because the election was rigged.’” Still, CNN released a statement praising the town hall’s host, Kaitlan Collins, for her “tough, fair and revealing questions.”

“That is CNN’s role and responsibility: to get answers and hold the powerful to account,” the statement continued.

MSNBC host Joe Scarborough,

once a close friend of Trump, called the program “a disgraceful performance.” “I’m constantly telling people not to catastrophize over Trump that he’s actually going to lose because he keeps drilling down deeper and deeper into his base,” Scarborough railed. “It was disgraceful on every level,” Scarborough added.

Scarborough continued:

“The most shocking part was an audience who cheered on a president who tried to overturn American democracy, an audience that mocked and ridiculed the woman who a jury of her peers, Donald Trump’s peers, found had been sexually assaulted. Cops getting the sh-- kicked out of them on January 6. Beaten up over and over again, calling a cop a thug who actually was trying to stop people on the House floor from being killed. I just could go on and on, basically saying he would turn over Ukraine to Vladimir Putin.”

Some Republicans also criti-

cized the town hall.

Republican Matt Whitlock, who worked for the late Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT), said in a tweet that “Trump’s performance tonight had plenty of fun fodder for his biggest fans,” but it was “toxic nuclear waste for the moderates and independents he (and Republicans everywhere) should be winning as Biden collapses.”

According to Mediaite.com, Republican political consultant Ryan Girdusky predicted that Trump would lose the 2024 election.

“Ten minutes into the CNN town hall, and it’s all January 6 and the stolen election,” Girdusky wrote on Twitter. “This election is gonna be all about Trump and he’s gonna lose... again.”

“If Kaitlan Collins wanted to actually embarrass Trump in front of his voters she would talk about him never building the wall, shutting down the economy and rising crime while he was president,” Girdusky said.

UPDATE: Ex-Marine charged with manslaughter in death of black homeless man



Neely

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior National Correspondent

On the day that the White House has demanded a “thorough investigation” into the murder of a homeless black man earlier this month on a subway car in New York, the suspect, an ex-Marine will face second degree manslaughter charges.

“We can confirm that Daniel Penny will be arrested on a charge of manslaughter in the second degree,” the Manhattan District Attorney’s office announced in a statement late Thursday, May 11.

While riding the F train on May 1, Jordan Neely appeared agitated as he sought food.

Penny inexplicably placed Neely in a chokehold for nearly 15 minutes.

Neely died shortly after the incident, and while police questioned Penny, they released him without charges.

Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg had said he would let a grand jury decide whether to file charges.

“Jordan Neely’s killing was tragic and deeply disturbing,” a White House spokesman said this week, ahead of President Joe Biden’s visit to the Big Apple.

“Our hearts go out to his family and loved ones. We firmly believe that the events surrounding his death demand a thorough investigation.”

Neely’s passing sparked protests and a national debate and brought attention to the occasionally harsh and violent treatment of homeless people, particularly those with mental illness.

Advocates and Neely’s supporters expressed anger that police only briefly held Penny and that he has not faced charges. Penny’s attorneys have defended him despite a national uproar over the incident.

They claim that Neely was the aggressor, and his alleged mental illness exacerbated the situation. “When Mr. Neely began aggressively threatening Daniel Penny and the other passengers, Daniel, with the help of others, acted to protect themselves until help arrived,” Penny’s lawyers stated.

“Daniel never intended to harm Mr. Neely and could not have foreseen his untimely death.” Neely’s relatives responded, alleging Penny never helped Neely and didn’t care about him.

According to Neely’s attorneys, Daniel Penny’s press release was not an apology, and the former marine hasn’t expressed regret for his deadly act.“It is a character assassination and a clear example of why he believed he was entitled to take Jordan’s life.”

Washington high court reverses black man’s conviction over racially biased jury selection

The Associated Press

The Washington Supreme Court has ruled that prosecutors discriminated against a black man by striking the last black person from his jury pool nearly two decades ago.

Theodore Rhone, 65, will get a new trial as the high court takes steps to rectify a national history of racism and the persistence of implicit bias in jury selection, *The Seattle Times* reported.

The unanimous decision was issued Thursday.

“They are keeping their prom-

ise and commitment to eliminating racial discrimination in the justice system,” Lise Ellner, Rhone’s attorney, said of the state Supreme Court justices.

Rhone argued before his 2005 trial that the state’s exclusion of the last black potential juror without reason was discriminatory.

“I don’t mean to be facetious or disrespectful or a burden to the court,” he told the judge at the time. “However, I do want a jury of my peers. And I notice that (the prosecutor) took the black, African-American, man off

the jury. I would like to have someone that represents my culture as well as your culture. To have this the way it is to me seems unfair to me.”

A new jury pool was denied. Rhone was convicted in Pierce County Superior Court of robbery, unlawful possession of a controlled substance with intent to deliver and other charges.

Because of previous robbery-related convictions, Rhone received a life sentence without the possibility of parole under Washington’s three-strikes law.

He appealed the case, which the state Supreme Court denied in 2010. However, things have changed since then, Justice Susan Owens wrote on behalf of the court in the ruling this week.

“It is undeniable that our understanding of the impact of implicit racial bias on jury selection has changed since our 2010 decision,” Owens wrote.

Rhone, speaking from the Stafford Creek Corrections Center Thursday, told the newspaper the decision means a fresh start.

IRS admits targeting black taxpayers for audits

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior National Correspondent

IRS Commissioner Daniel Werfel has acknowledged what many have known for some time: Black taxpayers face an IRS audit exponentially more than other groups.

Werfel acknowledged the disparity in a letter this week in which he responded to a request for information about the “apparent racial disparity” in selecting tax returns for audit, along with a plan to address the issue.

“Let me start by stressing that the IRS is committed to enforcing tax laws in a fair and impartial manner,” Werfel

said in the letter addressed to the U.S. Senate.

“When evidence of unfair treatment is presented, we must take immediate action to address it. It is also important to reiterate that we do not and will not consider race as part of our case selection and audit processes.” He continued:

“Nevertheless, a recent study estimated, using imputed race values, that black taxpayers are audited at three to five times the rate of non-black taxpayers.

“The research further suggests that most of this disparity is driven by dif-

ferences in correspondence audit rates among taxpayers claiming the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

“We are deeply concerned by these findings and committed to doing the work to understand and address any disparate impact of the actions we take.”

Werfel noted that as soon as Congress confirmed his appointment, he met with an IRS team that had already studied the issue of race discrimination in audits. He noted that the research has continued as authorities try to pinpoint what drives the disparity and how to fix the issue.

Researchers discovered that black taxpayers are five times more likely to face an audit when filing federal returns than any other race.

When President Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Act, the IRS received \$80 billion, which the agency pledged to use to determine a better system to eliminate such discrimination.

“Back in March, my colleagues and I raised alarms with the new IRS boss about black taxpayers being over-audited, and today he confirmed our suspicions,” tweeted Rep. Bill Pascrell, Jr. (D-N.J.). “The IRS is making strides, but extra audits of black Americans are

disgraceful and must end.”

Werfel promised that the IRS would accelerate an existing research effort to detect and ensure compliance among “ghost preparers,” individuals who are paid to prepare returns for others but do not identify themselves to the IRS.

“Initial evidence confirms that unscrupulous and ghost preparers disproportionately prepare returns in minority communities,” Werfel noted.

“We are making broad efforts to advance our commitment to fair and equitable tax administration and evaluating the best ways to address bias within our audit program.”

CDC surveillance reveals growing concerns about youth behavior, including their view on sex

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Contributor

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shared information from the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS), showing that young Americans face increasing health risks daily.

According to the research, young people are dealing with various difficulties, including mental health, aggression and poor health practices.

They are also viewing the definition of sex differently.

The CDC released data to identify specific risk factors, develop interventions and gain the support of families and youth. Data from around the country revealed that teenagers are battling suicidal ideation, bullying, dating violence, sexual assault and poor nutrition and exercise habits.

For example, the percentage of children who spent more than two hours a day watching TV or playing video games climbed from 14.9% in 2013 to 55.5% in 2021.

Furthermore, 23.5% of youth got eight or more hours of sleep on a typical school night, and only 21.7% got 60 minutes or more of physical activity daily.

The study found that the percentage of young people who text while driving was also significant, with 47% of young people engaged in the practice.

Regarding mental health and suicide, the statistics revealed that 41.5% of youngsters felt gloomy or despairing nearly every day for two weeks or more, a considerable increase from 33% in 2017.

Female and homosexual, lesbian, and bisexual students



were more likely to consider suicide than their male or heterosexual counterparts. The data show that from 12.6% in 2007 to 6.1% in 2021, fewer young people reported having their boyfriend or girlfriend hit, slap, or physically hurt them.

However, 20.6% of young people received abuse verbally or emotionally from someone they were dating or going out with, and 7.7% of young people were physically forced to engage in sexual activity when they did not want to.

The YRBSS survey is done at high schools nationwide every other year. For years, research has shown a fall in the rates of sex among American high school students.

The trend reportedly has continued, unsurprisingly, in the first years of the pandemic.

According to the survey, 30% of teens in 2021 reported having sex, down from 38% in 2019 and a significant reduction from three decades before,

when more than half of kids reported having sex.

According to Associated Press research, for today's youth, the dialogue about sexuality is shifting from a binary to a spectrum, as are the types of sex they are having. While the language of sex is changing, the key question on the CDC poll has remained the same since the government agency began its biannual survey in 1991: Have you "ever had sexual intercourse?"

"Honestly, that question is a little laughable," says Kay, 18, of Lansing, Michigan, who identifies as LGBTQ and attends a public high school.

"There's probably a lot of teenagers who are like, 'No, I've never had sexual intercourse, but I've had other kinds of sex.'" The Associated Press said it agreed to use teenagers' first or middle names out of fear of retaliation or backlash at school, at home, and on social media for speaking about their peers' sex lives and LG-

BTQ+ relationships.

Several experts told the AP that the CDC findings could indicate a shift in how teen sexuality is evolving, with gender fluidity becoming more widespread and stigma associated with not being heterosexual decreasing.

They refer to another finding in this year's research, which discovered that the proportion of high school students who identify as heterosexual had declined to around 75%, down from over 89% in 2015, when the CDC began asking about sexual orientation.

Meanwhile, the proportion of people who identified as homosexual, gay, or bisexual increased to 15%, up from 8% in 2015.

"I just wonder, if youth were in the room when the questions were being created, how they would be worded differently," said Taryn Gal, executive director of the Michigan Organization on Adolescent Sexual Health.

New study reveals excess mortality and years of potential life lost among the black population in the US from 1999-2020

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Contributor

A new study shows that after some progress, the number of deaths and years of possible life lost among America's black population stopped going down and then started going up again.

The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) said their results show that new ways of doing things are needed.

JAMA looked at statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which showed that when the coronavirus pandemic hit the world in 2020, the number of deaths and years of potential life lost went up.

Compared to white people, 1.63 million more black people died than they should have. Experts said that's the equivalent of 80 million years of potential life during the study period, which took place from 1999 to 2020.

"After a period of progress in reducing disparities, improvements stopped, and differences between the black population and the white population got worse in 2020," JAMA experts wrote. Because of the pandemic, experts stated that years of growth had ended.



They said the pandemic affected black Americans more than other groups. Herman Taylor, one of the study's authors and head of the cardiovascular research institute at the Morehouse School of Medicine, said, "The study is very important for about 1.63 million reasons." "Real lives are being lost. Real families are missing parents and grandparents," Taylor declared. "Babies and their mothers are dying. We have been screaming this message for decades."

Clyde Yancy, an author of the study and chief of cardiology at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine, told reporters that

high death rates among black people have less to do with their genes.

However, it has more to do with the country's long history of discrimination, which has hurt generations of black people's chances of getting an education, a good place to live, and a good job. Yancy said that black areas redlined in the 1930s, meaning that mortgages and other investments were too "high risk" for them, are still poorer and sicker today.

Yancy remarked that there were also more Covid infections and deaths in ZIP codes that used to be redlined.

"It's very clear that we have an uneven distribution of

health," Yancy said. "We're talking about the freedom to be healthy."

In 2021, non-Hispanic white Americans could expect to live to 76 years old, but non-Hispanic black Americans could only hope to live to 71 years old.

A big reason for this difference is another study that showed that non-Hispanic black babies are 2.5 times more likely to die before their first birthday than non-Hispanic white babies.

Non-Hispanic black mothers are more than three times more likely to die from a pregnancy-related problem than non-Hispanic white moms.

Gout

By Vince Faust
Tips to be Fit

Six million Americans suffer from gout. Gout is the most common form of inflammatory arthritis. Gout appears suddenly and causes severe pain, swelling and tenderness in the joints. Gout primarily affects the big toe, but it can affect other joints such as the ankles, knees, wrist and fingers.

Gout is most often associated with pain but it is now thought of as a condition that can also increase your risk for hypertension and cardiovascular disease.

Gout occurs when uric acid, which is a byproduct of metabolism, is produced in excessive amounts or when your kidneys do not excrete it efficiently. A buildup of uric acid causes the formation of urate crystals in the fluid that lubricates joints. These crystals can trigger an immune response that causes inflammation and excruciating pain.

Several factors contribute to the development of gout include:

Diet: Consuming foods high in purines, such as red meat, organ meats, shellfish and certain beverages (beer and sugary drinks) increases the risk of gout.

Genetics: A family history of gout can predispose you to develop the condition.

Medical Condition: Certain medical conditions like obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes and kidney disease can increase your likelihood of developing gout.

Gout attacks typically occur suddenly, often at night and are characterized by the following symptoms:

Intense joint pain: The affected joint becomes red, swollen and extremely tender. The pain is often described as throbbing or excruciating.

Limited mobility: The joint may become stiff and even the softest touch can cause extreme discomfort.

Inflammation and warmth: The affected area may appear red, swollen and feel warm to the touch.

Fever: in some cases, gout attacks may accompany by a low-grade fever.

Gout usually strikes at the base of the big toe causing pain that increases for 8 to 12 hours and subsides within 3 to 10 days without treatment. Other joints can also be affected. The attacks are intermittent and unpredictable. They may occur every few weeks or months, once or twice a year or every few years. Without treatment, the attacks can increase in both duration, as well as frequency.

The risk of untreated gout can cause permanent joint damage. Some patients progress from recurrent gout to tophaceous gout a severe form of which lumps of urate crystals form in and around the joints or even under your skin. Gout increases your

risk for kidney stones. Patients that don't achieve good control of their elevated uric acid levels are more likely to develop cardiovascular disease.

Patients who are suspect to having gout are advised to have a blood test to measure uric acid. Some asymptomatic patients have high levels of uric acid while those in the midst of an attack may have normal levels (3mg/dL to 7mg/dL). Uric acid levels peak about two weeks after an acute attack. Those in the mist of an attack can have normal levels 3 mg by DL 2 7 mg by DL. Typically your uric acids levels peak two weeks after an acute attack.

Joint aspiration is the best test for gout, especially in the early stages. Your doctor and hit insert a needle into your inflamed joint (lidocaine and numbing spray, minimize the pain of the needle) and withdraw fluid, which is then examined under a microscope. The presence of urate crystals means that you have gout regardless of urate crystals. concentration in your blood.

Ultrasound is now used by some doctors to diagnose gout. It's painless and completely non-evasive. It's good for detecting gout (which may not be evident with a physical exam); Ultrasound has a harder time diagnosing gout in the early stages without joint aspiration.

Treating gout is a two-step process. Depending on the severity of the attack various medications can be used to reduce pain and inflammation

Treatment can include:

Medication – Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). These medications, such as ibuprofen or naproxen help to relieve pain and reduce inflammation during gout attacks. Corticosteroids are used when NSAIDs are not suitable or effective, corticosteroids can be prescribed to alleviate symptoms.

Lifestyle Changes – Limit your intake of high purine foods and beverage can help reduce uric acid levels. Try to maintain a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetable, whole grain, low fat dairy and lean protein.

Hydration – Stay hydrated to help dilute uric acid and promote its excretion from your body. Aim for 6-8 glasses of water everyday.

Weight Management Maintaining a healthy weight through regular exercise and a balance diet can help reduce uric acid levels.

Alcohol consumption – Limiting or avoiding alcohol, especially beer

Dietary modification – Limiting your intake of high-purine foods and beverage can reduce uric acid levels. Opt for a balance diet rich in fruit, vegetables, whole grains, low fat dairy and proteins.

Before starting your fitness program, consult your physician.

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P R E S E R V E D

Stay the course... and follow God's directions

By Shewanda Riley
Columnist



“You are on the fastest route despite heavier than normal traffic.” After hearing my GPS calmly state this as I was staring at a line of red brake lights ahead of me on the highway, I chuckled and told her that she was wrong this time. It looked like the route I was on was the worst one. Then I laughed again because I realized I was talking to GPD and was so glad no one else was in the car.

Perhaps anticipating that I was going to get off on the next highway exit, my GPS stated again that my exit was at least ½ mile away and with the lengthy line of cars ahead of me it seemed like it would take me an hour to get it.

So, I got off at the next exit which was less than 200 feet away.

It took the GPS a few minutes to recalculate the directions, but she kept trying to get me back on the highway. Now that I was on the highway service road, I sailed along and looked to the left laughing at the poor people stuck in traffic. While I was driving, the GPS kept directing me back on the highway which I refused to do because I knew that I was now on the fastest route. Then, it happened: a slow down on the service road. And now instead of me flying by the cars on the highway, they were now flying by me and everyone else who made the mistake of taking the service road.

At this point, I halfway expected the GPS voice to mock me and say “I told you to stay

on the highway. That’s what you get for not listening.” Instead, the GPS came back on and said, “In 200 feet, take a left.” This time, I listened to her directions and was able to make it home, but it was 30 minutes after the original time that the GPS predicted. I only had myself to blame for wasting time and having to take the scenic route.

This reminded me of how I’ve sometimes gotten off track from the path that God has designed for me simply because I wanted to do it my way. Never mind that God is the creator of the universe and knows the plans for my life, the end from the beginning. I’ve made the mistake of figuring that my finite mind knew a better plan. And just like I had to do with the GPS, I’ve had to recalculate and get back on the path that God has created for me.

Proverbs 4:25-27 encourages us to remain focused on God’s path: “Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you. Give careful thought to the paths for your feet and be steadfast in all your ways. Do not turn to the right or the left....” God’s plan is always safer and more exciting than the scenic route also known as the path of disobedience.

Shewanda Riley (Aunt Wanda), PhD, is a Fort Worth-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 her at preservedbypurpose@gmail.com or follow her on Twitter @shewanda. You can also listen to her podcast at www.chocolateauntiepodcast.com.

Beloved, let us love one another

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



Only by knowing God can we have this love – and it is only by loving that we can know God. If that sounds like a riddle, that is not the intent; nor is it intended to sound like a vicious circle.

Only by learning to love God do we learn what His nature is like, that is, what He is like. Yet, we cannot have that love until we first come to know Him. It is through fellowship with Him that we come to know Him and receive His love. In using that love, we come to be like God, and only then do we really know Him.

John is saying that it is only in experiencing God’s love ourselves that we come to know Him. This kind of love is something that we have to practice. All of this is possible because God – at the beginning of the cycle – by His love initiates the relationship with us. At that point, by His love, He is the primary sustainer of the relationship. If He was not the primary one sustaining it, we would not have enough love to continue the relationship. So, Paul writes

in Roman 5:10, we are saved by His life. He takes the burden of our salvation primarily on His shoulders. And that is very comforting indeed. God calls us and grants us repentance, each being an act of love. He then forgives us because we repent. That too, is an act of love. He then gives us His Spirit, by which we can fellowship with Him and live in His presence. This is also an act of divine love.

By His giving us His Spirit, we begin to have elements of His love in us, so now we can begin to love Him. We are in fellowship with Him and can give that love back to Him. We experience it, and in experiencing it, we begin to know what He is like. The cycle is working. And as we give love back to Him, He gives more to us because we are growing. God’s love in us starts to be perfected.

Remember, “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.” (1 John 4:7-8)

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MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

SUNDAY
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9 a.m. Sunday School
10 a.m. in person

Or you may worship with us via
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Chauncy L. Jordan

New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church

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Winning the fights that matter

By Ben Jealous
People For the American Way



I thought last week about the psalm that describes how the most exalted pays closest attention to the smallest, the most in need among us.

I was at the White House Thursday marking a major step that the Biden administration took to protect the Earth. The interesting part was it wasn't related to the major news that day.

Earlier, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) had proposed the tightest limits ever on coal- and gas-fueled power plants' pollution. Those plants are the second largest source of planet-warming gases in the country.

The rules would require power companies to reduce their air pollution. Along with unprecedented federal spending to build clean energy, it's a key step toward meeting the President's pledge to cut U.S. greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2030.

It's a monumental step in a fight I've been part of for more than a decade, since we launched the NAACP's climate justice program and reported on the disproportionate harm to black communities from coal-fired power plants.

But we were on the White House lawn with Indigenous Alaskans and their allies in environmental groups celebrating the end to a decades-long fight to protect Bristol Bay from a proposed open pit gold and copper mine that would dump into the watersheds of two rivers emptying into the bay.

The EPA earlier this year made a final ruling under the Clean Water Act to prohibit the pollution. It was only the third such decision in the last 30 years.

Bristol Bay is a place where native culture and commerce both thrive. It's home to one of the world's last sustainable, salmon-based cultures in more than two dozen Native Alaskan villages and communities surrounding it.

The bay also is the world's largest sockeye salmon fishery, producing half the wild sockeye consumed annually and creating 15,000 jobs. The rivers and streams that run through Bristol Bay are vital spawning grounds for coho and chum as well as sockeye salmon and favorites for sport fishermen. In all, the pollution would have risked \$2.2 billion in economic impact.

"Salmon have sustained our indigenous ways of life and support thousands of American jobs. But for the last 20 years, the Pebble Mine has threatened to take all of that away – but our people stood up and fought back to protect what we hold sacred," Alanna Hurley, who leads United Tribes of Bristol, told us.

President Biden noted that the commercial salmon season begins June 1. Fishermen will "head out on the water at dawn, cast their nets, and fish the most abundant wild salmon on the planet; just like fishermen have done for generations." He added, "Just like they will do for generations to come thanks to all of you."

It was a reminder that local fights turn into significant victories, that diverse groups from native peoples to sport fishermen can find something they all care about and protect it together. It's how we will save the planet, keep it livable and keep this democracy strong.

Ben Jealous is executive director of the Sierra Club, the nation's largest and most influential grass-roots environmental organization. He is a professor of practice at the University of Pennsylvania and author of "Never Forget Our People Were Always Free," published in January.

Papa Bear is missing in the home

By LaShunda Calvert, Ph.D.
Guest Writer



One of my favorite childhood stories that I enjoyed reading about were books about the Berenstain Bears. I honestly believe that I was the biggest fan of the Berenstain Bears. I loved the Berenstain Family, I read their books over and over and I watched all their films. Of course, I ordered every Berenstain book that I possibly could for my children – this was a good excuse to continue my love and fascination for the Berenstain Family.

You know the popular Berenstain Family, furry, nice, overalls, Papa Bear, Mama Bear, Brother Bear, Sister Bear, and later around the early 2000's, they added Honey, a baby daughter. If you just found out about Honey please don't feel bad—I only know because our children were born in the later 2000's era. Further, don't act like I was the only one, who loved the Berenstain Bears.

Now, that I think about it, I loved the Berenstain Family story books because of the following reasons: they were an ideal family (opposite of my two parent home and five children – there was some good and bad – mostly good

from my mother) they depicted a good solid family, loving and fun family, imperfect children, who were taught the difference between right and wrong, and the books always promoted family unity, working to solve issues and trouble together, and a caring, devoted, and present father, who went out of his way to love and protect his family. Although, we have many homes, with husbands and wives today; Papa Bear is still missing in the home.

I asked on last week, should husbands have man caves? I am still asking this question. We have too many homes today where husbands/fathers are absent not due to work, business affairs, etc. but absenteeism is due to having man caves. Wives and husbands, if you are rearing young children and teens; please think twice about having man caves in your homes. Husbands and fathers need to dedicate their time to their families and not to a man cave where dark activities are often practiced, such as isolation from family, gambling, substance abuse, viewing pornography (divorce rates increased when pornography was first published, and it is still responsible for many divorces today), private phone calls, etc. Remember, I suggested that the opposite of man cave can be

cave man, uncivilized behaviors not conducive for a healthy and happy marriage and home.

According to my mother, an average husband's/father's man cave was their Lazyboy recliners. You remember, husbands' and fathers' get away and escape from a long and hard day was sitting in their recliners. Papa Bear's chair was sacred – one dared not to touch it, didn't look at it long, and many were taught not to sit in it. Their recliners typically resigned in the family room like the den or whatever space was designated as the family room.

Husbands/fathers' recliners were typically accompanied with the T.V. remote for the one TV that existed in the household, a good snack, cold soda like a Pepsi, beer, Sweet Tea, or homemade Kool-Aid, dinner, and for some, TV trays. Husbands' and fathers' recliners gave men the comfort they needed; could kick their legs out and recline, rock and nap. Even when husbands and fathers would nod off – they were still present – let little Eric or Ashley get too loud or mischievous – he would tend to wake up and call their names and things would quickly deescalate. In other words, Papa Bear's occupying of his recliner still made him present; he talked to his family,

he watched football and cowboy shows with his family, he ate dinner with his family, he laughed and fussed with his family, he taught valuable lessons about life and God with his family, he shared memories with his family, he debated and argued with his family, he flirted with his wife in his recliner, he grew old with his family in his recliner, and even in Papa Bear's death; out of respect, the recliner was still off limits in many households.

In conclusion, my husband's man cave is a large, leather recliner that resides in our family room – the den; he loves his man cave. Again, it is nothing wrong with a wife or husband wanting alone time within their home, but should a space be dedicated for alone time which will ultimately reduce or eliminate time from family? Let's make our house a home again where family is present together and Papa Bear is not missing in the home...

Contact Dr. LaShunda Calvert for speaking engagements (motivational, ministering, marriage workshops, marriage seminars, marriage conferences, etc.) on Instagram: letsstay2gether4ever (Dr. LaShunda Calvert) Facebook: Dr. LaShunda Calvert Email:letsstaytogether4eva@gmail.com or call 601-874-6176.

A mother's love always shines and never fades away

By James B. Ewers Jr.
*President Emeritus
Teen Mentoring Committee of Ohio*



Mother's Day is a special day for special people. We love and honor our mothers with a day devoted especially to them.

Happy Mother's Day was celebrated Sunday, May 14, 2023.

Many of us have celebrated a lot of these days with our moms. We take them out to eat, give them flowers and treat them like royalty.

A mother's love is unconditional. Simply put, they'll always love us. While we will have faults along the way, our mothers will be supportive and will be our refuge in times of challenge.

We all have stories about our moms. I have one and so do you. They are filled with laughter, tears, happiness and sadness.

The strength of a mom is undeniable. When we are down and need encouragement, they give us counseling and self-confidence.

My mom passed away many

years ago. She left an indelible mark upon my mind and soul.

It is not a day that goes by that I don't think about her. I wonder what she would do in certain situations and of course I wonder what she would think of me now.

My mother was a registered nurse (RN) in Winston-Salem North Carolina at Kate Bitting Reynolds Hospital. She possessed a kind and gentle spirit which I suspect led her into the healthcare field. While that was her profession, that was only a small part of who she was.

Everyone in our neighborhood knew who Mrs. Mildred Ewers was. There were always people in our house either eating or talking and sometimes both.

My dad respected and loved her because of her persona and the way she made others feel around her. There were other attributes that made her stand out. As I reflect now, our family was proud of her and her accomplishments.

My mom was a BBC (Black Betty Crocker). She was a master in the kitchen preparing meals that were delicious.

Real macaroni and cheese, real biscuits and real pinto beans were dishes that we ate daily. I will say we had leftovers on Monday. She would make some gravy and put on the fried chicken we had on Sunday.

We didn't go to fast food places. First, there weren't many of them and lastly, my mom's food was the best.

She taught me the importance of keeping clean and dressing appropriately as I wore shirts and ties at a very young age. The habit of dressing well has stayed with me throughout my life, and it is because of her.

She always wanted me to look a certain way so that people would know that I came from a home with standards. One of those standards both of my parents instilled in me was how to treat people. They knew that how you treated people would gain you respect. They were right.

I have known for many years that treating people with dignity and respect are fundamental principles in life. People don't want to know

how much you know until they know how much you care.

Education was valued in my home. My mom stressed the importance of having a good education. She believed that having one would lead to having a successful life.

She would tell me on countless occasions you must combine having a good work ethic with having a good education. Having the drive and the determination would shape my ability to get a good job. She was right.

My mom was the greatest. Without her, I would have been a frame without a foundation. I realize as I am in the 4th quarter of my life how truly blessed I was to have her as a mom.

If your mom is living, don't take her for granted. Don't say you'll do it tomorrow because you don't have time today. Time has a way of slipping up on us because tomorrow is not guaranteed.

This column is dedicated to my mom, Mrs. Mildred Ewers and to my aunt, Mrs. Lois Thacker who gave me the tools for successful living.

America must not descend into a new feudalism where money rules, and people suffer

By Rev. Jesse Jackson, Sr.
*Founder and President of
Rainbow PUSH Coalition*



The pomp and circumstance of the crowning of King Charles III filled TV sets.

The British crown is ceremonial; King Charles will take part in rituals, but not rule – that is in the hands of the British prime minister and the Parliament. Yet, beneath the vast spectacle of the Crown is another reality: the Crown is not only fabulously rich; it owns much of the land in the world.

Forbes put the royal family's wealth at \$28 billion, including fabulous castles, jewels, invaluable art and extensive land own-

ings across Wales and England. The royal family also enjoys exemption not just from inheritance tax, but from taxes in general.

But the actual holdings of the Crown are far greater than that. Kevin Cahill was a researcher on the *London Sunday Times* "Rich List." He has written a stunning book – Who Owns the World – that details who owns land across the world.

He reports that the British Crown is the legal owner of about 6.6 billion acres of land – one-sixth of the earth's land surface. Charles III will be the king of 32 countries, and the head of the Commonwealth of 54 countries in which a quarter of the world's population lives. In many of these countries – including Australia, which with its territories is the

second largest country on earth, and Canada – the feudal laws that were created under the British Empire still govern. The British Crown owns the land. The users of it are essentially leaseholders, some for specific terms, some in perpetuity. If King Charles could sell all the land for which the Crown holds the title, he would be, by far, the richest person who ever lived.

Much of the land is held in a tax haven – what Cahill calls the modern equivalent of a "bandit's lair." Of the world's 24 largest tax havens, King Charles will become sovereign of no fewer than 13.

Most of the land that the crown holds title over is governed in fact by government agencies – who lease or dispose of it on behalf of

the Crown. The Crown is not active in its governance – other than the extensive estates it owns in England. From most, it does not receive direct rents.

Its ownership, however, is a reminder of the force and impact of empire. In the days when the sun literally never set on the British Empire – with colonies stretching from North America to India to Hong Kong – the Crown and its agents collected rents, jewels, gold, minerals and more from the world. Needless to say, even after independence, this booty was never returned or repaid.

The American Revolution helped free the former colonies from this feudal arrangement. Under free market rules, America's land is privately owned, not owned by feudal lords. And

America's populist tradition helped ensure that land ownings – particularly outside the South – were initially small in size. Under Abraham Lincoln, the Homestead Act distributed the lands in the west to settlers in small claims. Slaves had no right to be part of that distribution.

Today, with inequality reaching new heights, America's small-d democratic distribution of lands and property is under pressure. Billionaires are accumulating massive tracts of land and massive holdings of buildings. Private equity investors have transformed the housing market, turning more and more Americans into renters, while they own homes by the thousands. Billionaires are also finding ways to avoid inheritance taxes, and to use tax havens and

tax dodges to avoid paying their fair share of taxes.

America's democracy thrived by distributing the land, making public education available to all, and extending the right to vote. When wealth got too concentrated, we taxed the rich and invested in what made the country strong. Now, wealth is once more concentrated. Big money dominates elections; corruption undermines our institutions from the Supreme Court to the local city councils.

Let's enjoy the ceremony of the British Crown, but let's act to ensure that America does not descend into a new feudalism where money rules, and people suffer.

In the end, for all its flaws, I choose a bottom up democracy – of, by and for the people – over a top down monarchy.

LEGAL

PUBLIC NOTICE
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
General Information

The City of Jackson ("City") is seeking to develop CDCB, HOME, HOPWA, CDBC-CV, ESG, HOME-ARP projects throughout the City of Jackson. This RFP is to secure a consultant to provide Categorically Excluded 24 CFR Part 58 environmental reviews using the HUD Online Environmental Review System (HEROES). The proposal will also include draft public notices as not required (not including cost of publication) and all required supporting documentation. The estimated hours and resources to complete the reviewed and provide any necessary technical assistance are listed below. If the project requires extensive compliance efforts due to potential adverse environmental impacts such as effects to historic properties, site contamination, or any of the other 58.5 or 58.6 laws and authorities, additional time may be required complete the process.

Proposal Submission Procedures

Prosperers shall submit one (1) original signed, six (6) copies of their response. For this RFP, all responses will be received by the Office of the City Clerk until 3:30 p.m., Central time on May 30th 2023. Electronic responses (thumb Drive/pdf) can be submitted at www.centralbidding.com . For questions relating to the electronic submission process, please call Central Bidding at 225-810-4814. Prospective prosperers should notify cdotson@jacksonms.gov to be added to the list to receive written addendum, and inquiry responses.

The City of Jackson is committed to the principle of non-discrimination in public contracting and professional services. It is the policy of the City of Jackson to promote full and equal business opportunity for all person doing business with the City.

Chloe Dotson, Director
Department of Planning and Development
City of Jackson, Mississippi

5/11/2023, 5/18/2023

LEGAL

ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI
HONORARY RENAMING BAILEY AVENUE (FROM RIDGEWAY STREET
TO MAYS STREET) TO LESTER RICHMOND, SR. DRIVE.

WHEREAS, The late Mr. Lester Richmond, Sr. an educator and former principal of Walton Elementary School, whose family continues to live in Jackson; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Lester Richmond, Sr. shall be remembered for his dedication to the students and community surrounding Walton Elementary School; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Lester Richmond, Sr. and his legacy shall be a recognizable part of history of the community by the designation of this street in his honor.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED that the Jackson City Council hereby honorary renames Bailey Avenue (from Ridgeway Street to Mays Street) to Lester Richmond, Sr. Drive.

Council Member Banks moved adoption; Vice President Lee seconded.

Yeas – Banks, Foote, Grizzell, Hartley, Lee and Lindsay.
Nays – None.
Absent – Stokes.

ATTEST:

Angela Harris
Municipal Clerk

I, Angela Harris, the duly appointed qualified Municipal Clerk and lawful custodian of records and seal of said City of Jackson, Mississippi, certify that the foregoing is a true and exact copy of an Order passed by the City Council at its Regular Council Meeting March 14, 2023 and recorded in Minute Book "6V, Pg. 726".

WITNESS my signature and official seal of office, this the 12th day of May, 2023.

SEAL Angela Harris, Municipal Clerk

5/18/2023

LEGAL

ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI
RENAMING GRIFFITH STREET TO JAMES H. MEREDITH DRIVE.

WHEREAS, Mr. James H. Meredith, an internationally recognized civil rights leader, trailblazer in higher education in the State of Mississippi, writer, political activist, and Air Force veteran; and

WHEREAS, Mr. James H. Meredith's life shall forever serve as a symbol of the fight for justice and the full exercise of equal rights under the law; and

WHEREAS, Mr. James H. Meredith and his legacy shall be enshrined by the designation of this street in his honor.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED that the Jackson City Council hereby renames Griffith Street to James H. Meredith Drive.

Council Member Banks moved adoption; Council Member Hartley seconded.

Yeas – Banks, Foote, Grizzell, Hartley, Lee and Lindsay.
Nays – None.
Absent – Stokes.

ATTEST:

Angela Harris
Municipal Clerk

I, Angela Harris, the duly appointed qualified Municipal Clerk and lawful custodian of records and seal of said City of Jackson, Mississippi, certify that the foregoing is a true and exact copy of an Order passed by the City Council at its Regular Council Meeting March 14, 2023 and recorded in Minute Book "6V, Pgs. 725-726".

WITNESS my signature and official seal of office, this the 12th day of May, 2023.

SEAL Angela Harris, Municipal Clerk

5/18/2023

LEGAL

Advertisement for RFP
RFP 2023-11 Re-Bid Jackson Public School District Depositories

Electronic RFP proposals for the above RFP will be received by the Board of Trustees of the Jackson Public School District, in the Business Office, 662 South President Street, Jackson, Mississippi, until 10:00 A.M. (Local Prevailing Time), May 24, 2023 at which time and place. Responses will not be publicly opened and read aloud due to the nature of the information listed. Interested parties may request an open records request once awarded proposal is approved by the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees reserves the right to reject any and all RFPs, to waive informalities, and to withhold the acceptance of any RFP if approved for forty-five calendar days from the date RFPs/ are opened.

There are two (2) options in which RFP proposals may be obtained. Download from Central Bidding website at www.centralbidding.com for a small fee of \$49.99 or visit JPSP website at www.jackson.k12.ms.us and download. Vendors must be registered with Central Bidding in order to electronically upload RFPs proposals at no cost. For any questions concerning the process, or how to register, please contact Central Bidding at 225-810-4814.

Until further notice, all hand delivery proposals delivered between 9:00 a.m. until 9:59 a.m. (local prevailing time) the date the bid is scheduled to open, must be delivered to JPSP Central Office, Business Office, Attn: Bettie Jones, C/O Mr. Earl Burke, 662 South President Street, Jackson, MS 39201

5/11/2023, 5/18/2023

LEGAL

PUBLIC NOTICE

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The City of Jackson is seeking submission of proposals from qualified professional firms for professional assistance with the following project: Shop Local Incentive System.

Detailed information pertaining to the submission of a response to this request for proposals may be obtained from the Department of Planning and Development, Suite 229, Warren Hood Building: 200 South President Street, Jackson, Mississippi 39201, or by contacting Chloe Dotson at 601-960-1993 or email: cdotson@city.jackson.ms.us.

One (1) original and eight (8) signed copies of the proposal must be received **no later than 3:30 P. M., on Tuesday, May 30, 2023**, at the City Clerk's Office, 219 S. President Street, Jackson, Mississippi 39201. Mailed proposals should be addressed to the Office of the City Clerk, P.O. Box 17, Jackson, MS 39205-0017. Packets should be sealed and clearly marked "Proposal for The Shop Local Incentive System."

The City of Jackson is committed to the principle of non-discrimination in public contracting and professional services. It is the policy of the City of Jackson to promote full and equal business opportunity for all persons doing business with the City.

Chloe Dotson BUPD. MURP., Director
Department of Planning and Development
City of Jackson, Mississippi

5/11/2023, 5/18/2023

LEGAL

PUBLIC NOTICE
REQUEST FOR QUOTES

The City of Jackson's Office of Housing and Community Development is currently seeking quotes for a professional to perform the following services.

1. Assist the Special Projects Officer with reconciling all federal grants balances.
2. Correct expenditures for each project, Matching and verifying budget line items in MUNIS/CAYEHTA
3. Grant balances for each grant per year.
4. Reconcile MUNIS to ID'S

The quote should be based on the costs necessary to perform the duties described above. We are requesting that quote be on an hourly basis for a total of 480 hours.

All interested parties should submit a statement of qualifications, copy of Master's degree, and a perhour price quote for the above-described services to the City of Jackson, Office of the City Clerk at 219 South President Street, Jackson, MS 39205 until 3:30p.m., Central Standard Time June 6, 2023. Each prosper must submit a signed original six (6) printed copies and an electronic copy (thumb drive w/ pdf) of its proposal. Official proposal documents can be downloaded from Central Bidding at www.centralbidding.com . Electronic responses can be submitted at www.centralbidding.com . For any questions relating to the electronic response process, please call Central Bidding at 225-810-4814.

The City of Jackson is committed to the principle of non-discrimination in public contracting and professional services. It is the policy of the City of Jackson to promote full and equal business opportunity for all person doing business with the City.

Chloe Dotson, Director
Department of Planning and Development
City of Jackson, Mississippi

5/18/2023, 5/25/2023

LEGAL

PUBLIC NOTICE
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The City of Jackson ("City") is seeking to develop a single family infill project in the City of Jackson. This RFP is for the onsite and related water and sewer infrastructure improvements for the development of four pre-fabricated homes.

Detailed information pertaining to the submission of a response to this request for proposals may be obtained from the Department of Planning and Development, Suite 229 Warren Hood Building: 200 South President Street, Jackson, Mississippi 39201, or by contacting Chloe Dotson at 601-960-1172 or email cdotson@city.jackson.ms.us

Responses will be received by the City of Jackson, Office of the City Clerk at 219 South President Street, Jackson, MS 39205 until 3:30p.m., Central Standard Time June 6, 2023. Each prosper must submit a signed original six (6) printed copies and an electronic copy (thumb drive w/ pdf) of its proposal. Official proposal documents can be downloaded from Central Bidding at www.centralbidding.com . electronic responses can be submitted at www.centralbidding.com . For any questions relating to the electronic response process, please call Central Bidding at 225-810-4814.

The City of Jackson is committed to the principle of non-discrimination in public contracting and professional services. It is the policy of the City of Jackson to promote full and equal business opportunity for all person doing business with the City.

Chloe Dotson, Director Department of Planning and Development
City of Jackson, Mississippi

5/18/2023, 5/25/2023

LEGAL

Advertisement for RFP
RFP 2023-13 - School Site Surveys
and Wireless Network Configuration Services

Electronic RFP proposals for the above RFP will be received by the Board of Trustees of the Jackson Public School District, in the Business Office, 662 South President Street, Jackson, Mississippi, until 10:00 A.M. (Local Prevailing Time June 05, 2023 at which time and place they will be publicly opened and read aloud. The Board of Trustees reserves the right to reject any and all RFPs, to waive informalities, and to withhold the acceptance of any RFP if approved for forty-five calendar days from the date RFPs/ are opened.

There are two (2) options in which RFP proposals may be obtained. Download from Central Bidding website at www.centralbidding.com for a small fee of \$49.99 or visit JPSP website at www.jackson.k12.ms.us and download. Vendors must be registered with Central Bidding in order to electronically upload RFPs proposals at no cost. For any questions concerning the process, or how to register, please contact Central Bidding at 225-810-4814.

Until further notice, all hand delivery proposals delivered between 9:00 a.m. until 9:59 a.m. (local prevailing time) the date the bid is scheduled to open, must be delivered to JPSP Board Room, 621 South State Street, Jackson, MS 39201.

Also, until further notice, all opening will be recorded and uploaded to the JPSP web site at <https://www.youtube.com/jpsiv> for public viewing due to covid 19. Vendors will not be allowed to sit in on the bid openings.

5/18/2023, 5/25/2023

LEGAL

ORDINANCE GRANTING DAVID SPRADLIN A REZONING FROM C-3 (GENERAL) COMMERCIAL DISTRICT TO I-1 (LIGHT) INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT TO ALLOW FOR A CANNABIS CULTIVATION FACILITY FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1369 COLLEGE HILL DR. (PARCEL 808-28-1), CASE NO. 4196.

WHEREAS, David Spradlin has filed a petition to rezone the property located at 1369 College Hill Dr. (Parcel 808-28-1), in the City of Jackson, First Judicial District of Hinds County, Mississippi, from C-3 (General) Commercial District to I-1 (Light) Industrial District to allow for a cannabis cultivation facility; and

WHEREAS, the Jackson City Planning Board, after holding the required public hearing, has offered the recommendation to rezone the property from C-3 (General) Commercial District to I-1 (Light) Industrial District to allow for a cannabis cultivation facility; and

WHEREAS, notice was duly and legally given to property owners and interested citizens that a meeting of the Council would be held at the City Hall at 2:30 p.m., Monday, January 23, 2023 to consider said change, based upon the record of the case as developed before the Jackson City Planning Board; and

WHEREAS, it appeared to the satisfaction of the Jackson City Council that notice of said petition had been published in the Mississippi Link on December 1, 2022 and December 15, 2022 that a hearing had been held by the Jackson City Planning Board on December 21, 2022, all as provided for by ordinances of the City of Jackson and the laws of the State of Mississippi, and that the Jackson City Planning Board has offered the recommendation to rezone the above described property from C-3 (General) Commercial District to I-1 (Light) Industrial District; and

WHEREAS, the Jackson City Council after having considered the matter, is of the opinion that such changes would be in keeping with sound land use practice and to the best interest of the City and that there has been a substantial change in the land use character of the surrounding area that justifies rezoning the property and there is a public need for additional property in that area zoned in accordance with the request in said application since any previous Jackson City Council action.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI:

SECTION 1. That the property located in the City of Jackson, First Judicial District of Hinds County, Mississippi, more particularly described as follows:

Lots 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33 and 34 White Rock Subdivision, a subdivision according to the map or plat thereof on file and of record in the office of the Chancery Clerk of Hinds County, Mississippi, recorded in Plat Book 5, at Page 24, reference to which is hereby made in aid of and as a part of this description.

is hereby modified so as to approve the rezoning of the property located at 1369 College Hill Dr. (Parcel 808-28-1) from C-3 (General) Commercial District to I-1 (Light) Industrial District to allow for a cannabis cultivation facility. However, that before any structure is erected or use thereof on the said property, the applicant must meet the requirements established through the Site Plan Review process. The Zoning Administrator is ordered to note such change on the Official Zoning Map to the City of Jackson, Mississippi.

SECTION 2. That the cost of publication of this Ordinance shall be borne by the petitioner.

SECTION 3. That this Ordinance shall be effective thirty (30) days after its passage and after publication of same by the petitioner.

Vice President Lee moved adoption; Council Member Lindsay seconded.

Yeas – Banks, Foote, Hartley, Lee and Lindsay.
Nays – None.
Absent – Grizzell and Stokes.

ATTEST:

Angela Harris
Municipal Clerk

I, Angela Harris, the duly appointed qualified Municipal Clerk and lawful custodian of records and seal of said City of Jackson, Mississippi, certify that the foregoing is a true and exact copy of an Order passed by the City Council at its Zoning Council Meeting January 23, 2023 and recorded in Minute Book "6W, Pgs. 572-573".

WITNESS my signature and official seal of office, this the 17th day of March, 2023.



Angela Harris
Municipal Clerk

5/18/2023

LEGAL

IN THE CHANCERY COURT OF HINDS COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI
FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF
LURETHA MCKENZIE, DECEASED

CAUSE NO.: P2019-333

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Letters of Administration having been granted on the 21st day of September, 2021 by the Chancery Court of Hinds County, Mississippi, First Judicial District, to the undersigned Administratrix of the Estate of Luretha McKenzie, deceased, notice is hereby given to all persons having claims against the estate to present the same to the Clerk of this Court for probate and registration according to law, within ninety (90) days from the first publication of this notice, or they will be forever barred.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED this the 8 day of May, 2023.

ELAINE HARDEN, ADMINISTRATRIX OF THE
ESTATE OF LURETHA MCKENZIE,
DECEASED

Elaine Harden
ELAINE HARDEN

5/18/2023 5/25/2023 6/2/2023

His music, his life

A tribute to the man in black

The Mississippi Link Newswire

New Stage Theatre will present the musical Ring of Fire: The Music of Johnny Cash May 30 – June 11. Curtain times and dates for performances are Tuesdays through Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. on Sundays. Ticket prices are \$40.00 with discounts available for students, senior citizens, military, and groups. Tickets can be purchased at the box office, charged by phone by calling the theatre at (601) 948-3533, or ordered online at www.newstagetheatre.com.

This production is sponsored by Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi, BankPlus and The Dorsey J. Barefield Charitable Trust. Security will be provided. Recommended for ages 10 and up.

From the iconic songbook of Johnny Cash comes this unique musical about love and faith, struggle and success, rowdiness and redemption and home and family. More than two dozen classic hits – including “I Walk the Line,” “A Boy Named Sue,” “Folsom Prison Blues,” and the title tune – paint a musical portrait of The Man in Black that promises to be a foot-stompin’, crowd-pleasin’ salute to a unique musical legend!

“This is, without question, the best ensemble I have ever had the good fortune to assemble for this show,” says Director Chris ‘Red’ Blisset who has directed Ring of Fire eight times at various other theatres throughout the country. “I can hardly believe how lucky we are to have this mix of world-class professionals from Mississippi and New York. Some days I want to stop rehearsal and get their autographs they’re so good. Seriously, come see this show; if you don’t like it, I’ll pay you back myself – I’m the red-headed guy,” jokes Blisset. “Ring of Fire is a fantastic



crowd pleasing show and is perfect as the closer for our 57th season,” says Artistic Director Francine Thomas Reynolds. “I am thrilled that Chris ‘Red’ Blisset is returning to New Stage not only as a performer but, this time, as the director/music director for the show. He has assembled a very exciting and skilled group of performers. With everyone playing multiple instruments, audiences will be amazed and delighted with the musical talent of every one on the stage.”

The cast includes: Rheanna Atendido* (New York), Chris ‘Red’ Blisset* (New York), Ben Clark* (New York), Trevor Lindley Craft (New York), Andrew Dillon (Jackson), Jennifer Smith (Clinton), Claire-Frances Sullivan (New York), Jayla Lomax (Jackson), Ryan Bergman (Gulfport).

*Rheanna Atendido, Chris ‘Red’ Blisset, and Ben Clark appear through the courtesy of Actors’ Equity Association. Tickets Online: Tickets may

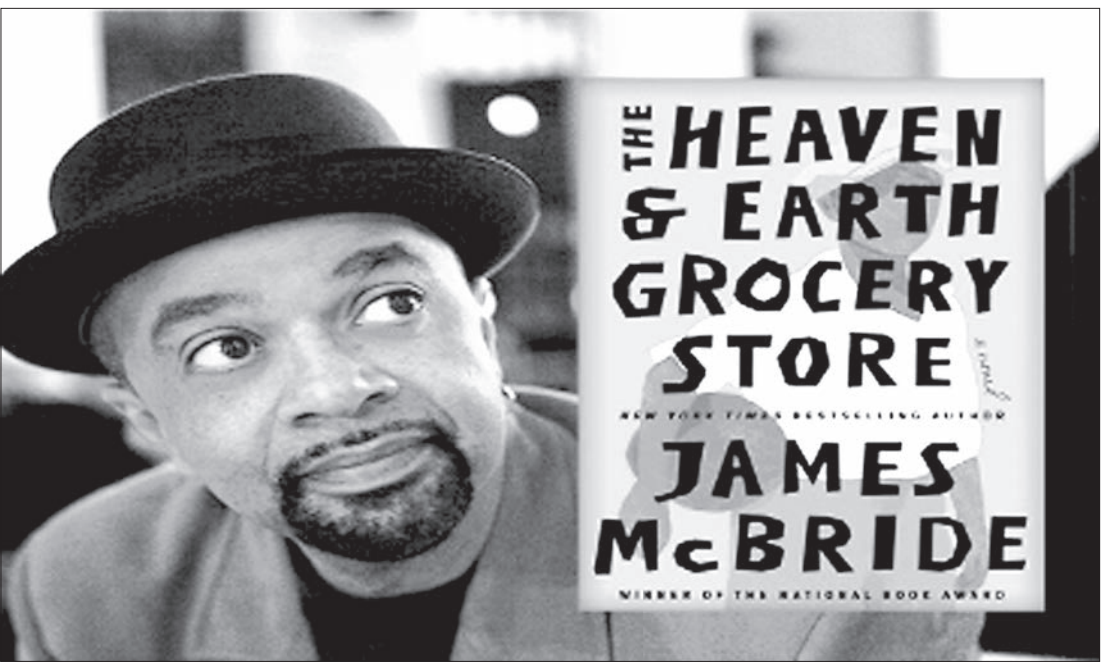
be purchased 24 hours a day, seven days a week at www.newstagetheatre.com (a per-ticket service fee of \$3 applies to all online purchases).

Discounts:
PAY WHAT YOU CAN NIGHT: Patrons can come to the box office beginning at 6:30 on Wednesday, May 31, 2023. If tickets are available they can be purchased at any value with cash, check, or credit card (\$5 minimum is required if using a credit card). This offer is only valid for the May 31 performance.

YOUTH NIGHTS: Youth 18 and under can reserve \$15 tickets for the performance on Friday, June 2, 2023. This discount is only available by calling the box office and mentioning “youth night” for the discount.

STUDENT RUSH DISCOUNT: One hour prior to curtain for any performance, students with a current academic ID may purchase an available seat for \$10. Limit one ticket per ID

James McBride joins the Mississippi Book Festival



The Mississippi Link Newswire

James McBride will join the Mississippi Book Festival with his latest book *The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store*, a novel about small-town secrets and the people who keep them. He is the author of the New York Times-bestselling *Oprah’s*

Book Club selection *Deacon King Kong*, the National Book Award-winning *The Good Lord Bird*, the American classic *The Color of Water*, the novels *Song Yet Sung* and *Miracle at St. Anna*, the story collection *Five-Carat Soul*, and *Kill ‘Em and Leave*, a biogra-

phy of James Brown. The Mississippi Book Festival will be held Saturday, August 19 from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at the Mississippi State Capitol Building & Grounds, 400 High Street in Jackson. This event is free to the public.

Mississippi podiatrist gets 2-year sentence in health fraud scheme

The Associated Press

A Mississippi podiatrist was sentenced Monday to two years in federal prison for his role in defrauding Medicare and the military insurer Tricare by prescribing and dispensing medically unnecessary foot bath medications.

Federal prosecutors said Dr. Marion Shaun Lund, 54, of Batesville, also ordered medically unnecessary testing of toenails in exchange for kickbacks and bribes.

On Feb. 2, Lund pleaded

guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit health care fraud. On Monday, U.S. District Judge Glen Davidson sentenced Lund to two years in prison followed by three years of supervised release, and ordered him to pay \$851,428 in restitution.

Court documents show Lund owned and operated a podiatry clinic and an in-house pharmacy. From April 2020 through March 2022, Lund caused submission of more than \$1.4 million in claims to Medicare and

Tricare for unnecessary prescriptions of foot bath medications and diagnostic testing of toenails, according to the U.S. attorney’s office. Prosecutors said that resulted in more than \$700,000 in reimbursements and Lund was paid cash kickbacks by a purported marketer in exchange for his prescriptions and orders.

Lund is the fourth defendant, including three medical professionals, to plead guilty and be sentenced in the scheme.

Lawsuit over appointment of MS judges dismissed

By Emily Wagster Pettus

The Associated Press

A Mississippi judge has dismissed one lawsuit that challenges a new law dealing with appointment of judges in the majority-black capital city of Jackson and the surrounding county, but a separate lawsuit remains alive in federal court.

In the ruling Monday, Hinds County Chancery Judge Dewayne Thomas wrote that appointing judges does not violate the Mississippi Constitution.

Three Jackson residents testified to Thomas last week that the new law tramples their rights because most Mississippi judges are elected.

Thomas wrote that a 1989 state law allows appointment of judges in some circumstances

and that “disappointment and frustration with the legislative process does not create a judicial right to relief.”

“While the Court is sympathetic to the Plaintiffs’ feelings, it cannot find that the same constitutes irreparable harm,” Thomas wrote.

Attorneys for the plaintiffs said they will appeal Thomas’ dismissal of the case and his decision last week to remove Mississippi Supreme Court Chief Justice Mike Randolph as a defendant.

Republican Gov. Tate Reeves signed laws last month to expand state policing in the capital city of Jackson, establish a court with an appointed judge in part of Jackson and authorize four appointed judges to work alongside

the four elected judges in Hinds County Circuit Court.

Members of the majority-white and Republican-led Legislature who pushed for the changes said they were trying to curb crime in the capital city. Local residents protested that state officials were usurping power in Jackson and Hinds County, which are majority-black and governed by Democrats.

The national NAACP, its Mississippi chapter and its local chapter filed a federal lawsuit hours after Reeves signed the new laws. On Friday, U.S. District Judge Henry Wingate temporarily blocked the appointment of four judges for Hinds County Circuit Court. Wingate set a May 22 hearing to consider extending his order

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Hinds CC graduation speaker invokes ‘service to humanity’



Ameerah Shaibi of Vicksburg was the graduation speaker for the 2 p.m. May 11 graduation ceremony at Hinds Community College. She is with some of her family members, including dad Gehad, brother Mohamed, 13, and sisters Shifa, 6, and Wafa, 8. A first-generation college student she came to the United States at age 7. (BRAD SMITH/HINDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE)

Special to the Mississippi Link

Ameerah Shaibi came to the United States from Yemen at age 7, not speaking English.

On May 11, she was the student speaker for the 2 p.m. graduation ceremony at Hinds Community College. A first-generation college student, she will attend nursing school at the University of Mississippi Medical Center beginning this summer.

“Graduating signifies hard work, determination and achievement,” said Shaibi, 19, who lives in Vicksburg. “It means opening up a door to a whole new world of opportunities. Hinds has helped me and many others achieve that dream, and I am incredibly grateful to be graduating from a distinguished college that has provided me with the foundation required to continue my academic pursuits.

“As I look around, I observe the uniqueness of each individual here. Regardless of race, gender, age, national origin, disability, socio-economic status, or who and what you are celebrating today, this room brings us together as humans,” she said. “Isn’t it beautiful how we learn, grow, develop and become functional adults simply to serve each other as humans? Whether you are a doctor or nurse helping patients and residents with their health, a lawyer representing a client in court, a construction worker ensuring the safety of people on the road, or an instructor imparting knowledge to students, we are at the service of humanity.”

Offering the invocation and benediction was James Robinson of Jackson, who was president of M2M-Minority Male Leadership. He will work toward a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Mississippi College in the fall.

Hinds President Dr. Stephen Vacik, in his remarks to graduates, asked them to remain connected to Hinds.

“I am reminded that you represent a very diverse set of viewpoints and circumstances. You are connected, however, by a belief that a community college



James Robinson, 39, of Jackson offered the invocation and benediction for the 2 p.m. May 11 graduation ceremony at Hinds Community College. He plans to transfer to Mississippi College to study psychology. “Graduation means the world to me, especially with the accolades and opportunities I’ve received. This has given me confidence and the much needed belief in myself.” (BRAD SMITH/HINDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE)



Shanya McFarland of Edwards, left, helps Tumeria McElroy of Canton with her mortarboard before the 2 p.m. May 11 graduation ceremony at Hinds Community College. (BRAD SMITH/HINDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE)

education is a gateway to building a better life and creating better communities for our future generations,” he said. “When you leave here today, our hope is that you remember that you are a part of us, part of the collective history of Hinds CC. Share your experiences with others. Come back and visit often. And consider how you can contribute to the endearing legacy of Hinds, which depends on our alumni, past, present and future.”

Hinds Community College had four graduation ceremonies over

three days, three at the Muse Center on the Rankin Campus, May 10-11, and one at Boyd Gym on the Utica Campus, May 13.

The college awarded 1,526 degrees and certificates to 1,107 graduates. A number of graduates received more than one credential.

In total, 239 students graduated cum laude with a grade point average of 3.2 to 3.59; 190 graduated magna cum laude with a grade point average of 3.6 to 3.99 and 82 graduated summa cum laude with a grade point average of 4.0.

Wingfield scholars compete for gold at Biology Boot Camp



JPS newswire

The Wingfield High School Freshmen Academy hosted its annual Biology Boot Camp for scholars in preparation for the state biology assessment. Scholars answered biology questions and participated in a series of physical activities.

Wingfield biology teachers Lorenzo Jackson and Stephanie Evans spearheaded the activities along with Assistant District Science Coach Aisha Cork, the Freshman Academy educators, and educators from the Wingfield science department.

This event was designed to

allow students the opportunity to have fun, reduce anxiety levels, and engage students in practice for their upcoming state test. The competition was between the upstairs and downstairs scholars.

The boot camp began with students answering a question aligned with the Mississippi College and Career Readiness Standards provided by MDE (Mississippi Department of Education). After answering correctly, the student advanced to the next phase of the obstacle course, which was the corn hole. After successfully getting 3 bean bags into the hole, the

student advanced to the next phase of the course where he/she transcribed a strand of DNA into mRNA.

After completing the transcription process, the scholar had to matriculate through a series of obstacles consisting of the pool noodle jump, a soccer maze, and the football toss. The first team to have all scholars go through the entire course from questions to football toss was the winner.

The Upstairs Team won the competition. Next year, the biology team will incorporate other fun activities and intellectual challenges into the event.





KING
A Life
Jonathan Eig

BOOK REVIEW:
KING: A LIFE
BY JONATHAN EIG
C.2023, FARRAR, STRAUS AND GIROUX
\$35.00 • 671 PAGES

By Terri Schlichenmeyer
Columnist

The life of the hero you most admire has been an open book. For much of your life, you’ve read about him, watched him on television, and heard epic stories about him. Sometimes, your hero almost feels like a close personal friend; absolutely, he’s someone you want to be like. So read the new book, “King: A Life” by Jonathan Eig and find out all the things you don’t know.

Head to your local book-store or library, and you’ll find

thousands of “excellent biographies” about Martin Luther King Jr. You’ll find books on his work, beliefs, and his activism. Still, says Eig, “the literature remains incomplete” – in part, because those books don’t tell much about King as a flawed, irritated, exhausted human.

Says Eig, “King was a man, not a saint, not a symbol. He chewed his fingernails. He shouted at the TV during quiz shows.” He cheated on his wife for so many years that “friends referred to [one] woman as his second wife.”

By the time he was a year old, young King had three names: Michael, Marvin and Martin; his father adopted the name Martin Luther “after a few years,” and the younger King was then called M.L.

As the middle child and older son, young Martin was close to his sister but tussled with his younger brother, sometimes violently. The elder Martin was a preacher, and M.L. said that God had called him to do the same – though he later claimed that he “tried to escape” the “responsibility on [his] shoulders,

and grew frustrated.

King was a ladies’ man who fell in love with a white woman before meeting Coretta Scott. He often felt insecure and had a “tendency to depression.” He “found strength in words,” vowing in a fiery speech in December of 1955 that “the world would change.

Their time had come. He promised.”

Since his activism as a young man and his assassination more than a half-century ago, surely everything there is to know about Martin Luther King Jr has

been told, right?


Surprisingly, no, as author Eig shows. In “King: A Life,” readers are given a glimpse of a man who was more complicated and flawed than we’ve seen before.

Part of the revelation lies in the stories Eig tells about King and the many people in King’s circle, friends, family and colleagues. It’s in these tales that we see a King that contemporary accounts generally didn’t reveal, but that “thousands of recently released FBI documents and tens of thousands of


other new items...” have shed light on.

In that, we learn much about the turbulent relationships that King had, broadly, and specifically with politics and presidents. There’s a fair amount of edginess and intrigue in that and, given the time-frame, a sense of doom.

The size of “King: A Life” may be daunting, but don’t let it scare you. It’s a surprisingly fast read that includes things you know and things you don’t know. Truly, you’re going to want to open this book.



ZACK WALLACE
Hinds County Circuit Clerk



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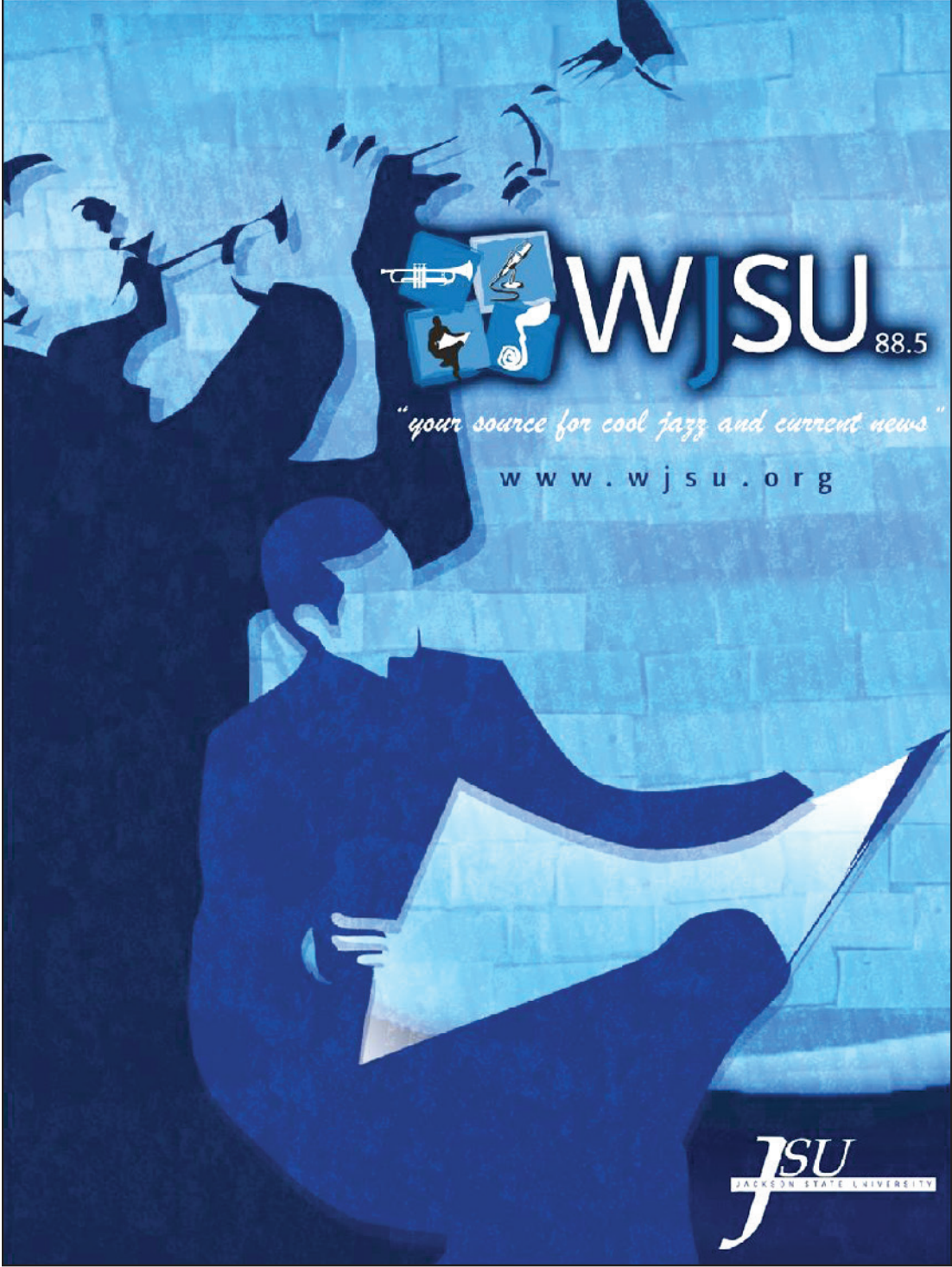
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Brittney Griner plays in first WNBA preseason game since detainment in Russia

By David Brandt
AP Sports Writer

Brittney Griner strolled down the sideline about 1-1/2 hours before the Phoenix Mercury played Friday night, giving hugs and high-fiving her teammates, coaches and opposing players.

Then it was a little stretching, a little shooting and a little agility work to prepare for a basketball game.

Just like old times. “I’m grateful to be here, that’s for sure,” Griner said. “I’m not going to take a day for granted.”

Griner returned to game action for the first time since a nearly 10-month detainment in Russia on drug-related charges ended with a prisoner swap in December. The seven-time All-Star, who missed the entire 2022 season because of the detainment, finished with 10 points and three rebounds in a WNBA preseason game against the Los Angeles Sparks.

The 6-foot-9 Griner looked good, especially considering the long layoff, casually throwing down a one-handed dunk during warmups. She stood with her teammates while the national anthem was played and received a loud ovation from the home crowd when she was introduced before tipoff.

“Hearing the national anthem, it definitely hit different,”



Griner

Griner said. “It’s like when you go for the Olympics, you’re sitting there, about to get gold put on your neck, the flags are going up and the anthem is playing, it just hits different.

“Being here today ... it means a lot.”

Mercury coach Vanessa Nygaard said the anthem and introductions were emotional for the entire team.

“We looked at each other and we just had chills,” Nygaard said. “We were here last year for all of it. I’m getting emotional about it now. Just to see her back out there – it’s an absolute miracle. It was amazing. It’s giving me chills again.”

Once the game started, the 32-year-old Griner immediately went to work, scoring on a turnaround jumper early in

the first quarter. A few minutes later, she was fouled on another turnaround and sank both free throws.

She even had a cameo with the medical staff in the third quarter. Teammate Sophie Cunningham went down with a knee injury and Griner helped carry her off the court so she didn’t have to put weight on her leg.

“When one of us goes down, we’re always right there,” Griner said. “That’s one thing about this team – we’re always there for each other. We’ve got each others’ backs, big time.”

Griner’s return to the Mercury rekindles hope the franchise can make another run to the WNBA Finals. The former Baylor star helped the franchise win its third title in 2014 and

has averaged 17.7 points and 7.6 rebounds during her nine-year career. She was runner-up for Most Valuable Player in 2021, when the Mercury also played in the Finals but lost to the Chicago Sky.

Griner said she was more rusty on the court than expected. But given the trials and emotions of the past 18 months, it was a pretty good night.

“Not where I want it to be, but on the right track,” Griner said. “We’re making the right moves.”

Phoenix opens the regular season in Los Angeles next Friday.

The extra exposure from being detained in Russia for having vape cartridges containing cannabis oil in her luggage has given Griner a platform to advocate for other Americans being detained abroad. She was already an LGBTQ+ activist since publicly coming out in 2013 and became the first openly gay athlete to be sponsored by Nike.

Griner announced in April that she is working with Bring Our Families Home, a campaign formed last year by the family members of American hostages and wrongful detainees held overseas. She said her team has been in contact with the family of Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich, who is being detained in Russia on espionage charges.

Black College World Series hopes to spur MLB careers for HBCU players

By John Zenor
AP Sports Writer

The spectators were mostly black kids, ranging from elementary school to high school. The teams – all from historically black colleges and universities – had names that won’t resonate with the average baseball fan.

Wiley College. Bluefield State. Rust College.

Not a single one of their HBCU predecessors was on an MLB opening day roster this year, despite a rich history of big league alums that includes Hall of Famers Lou Brock (Southern University), Andre Dawson (Florida A&M) and Larry Doby (Virginia Union).

“We all have concerns about the fact that we don’t have as many African-American players playing today,” Hall of Fame shortstop Ozzie Smith said. “But it’s all about what do you do about it? I think it’s going to take the work of all of us.”

The Black College World Series hopes to change that for baseball, and now it has support from MLB, one of several efforts by the league to boost participation among Black kids.

Only 59 of the 945 players (6.2%) on opening day rosters this season were black players born in the U.S. That’s a nearly two-thirds decline from when the Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sports started compiling Racial and Gender Report Card data in 1991. Back then, it was 18%.

There were no U.S.-born black players in last year’s World Series for the first time since 1950, not long after Jackie Robinson broke the MLB color barrier.

It’s a far cry from when Smith was starring for the St. Louis Cardinals starting in the early 1980s. Smith said it’s a trend that concerns current players and his contemporaries alike.

The process of addressing that issue, to him, starts with getting minor league baseball opportunities for one player at a time, not expecting wholesale increases overnight. Over the long term, it’s also about generating interest and chances for kids like the thousands brought out to watch the Black College World Series games.

Only 8.4% of black children aged 6-12 played baseball regularly, according to a 2020 report from the Sports & Fitness Industry Association.

Smith, who did not attend an HBCU, thinks part of the decline is kids seeing players having more rapid success in the NBA and NFL, instead of having to climb through the minor leagues. That includes high school phenoms-to-NBA stars like LeBron James and the late Kobe Bryant.

“Baseball probably will give you more longevity than some of the other sports, but

because it’s not that instantaneous success in making to the big leagues, I think, is what holds them back a little bit,” Smith said. “If a kid can play football or he can play basketball, they look at that as a quicker avenue to stardom.”

LaMonte Wade, the only Black player on the San Francisco Giants, said events like the Black College World Series are a great first step.

“Anytime that you can promote black players playing the game, and that’s what it sounds like they’re trying to do, I feel it will bring more attention,” Wade said before Thursday’s game at Arizona. “Representation is down, therefore not too many African-Americans are following the sport.

“Once you get into high school you kind of have to pick what sport you want to play,” he added. “Most African-Americans choose basketball or football. That’s mostly where our friends are playing, but if we can start them at a young age I think we can get the numbers up.”

Cleveland Guardians slugger Josh Bell sees other barriers to black participation.

“Fifty years ago, baseball was played in cul-de-sacs and streets and parks and now it’s a lot more kids are inside and baseball is more about taking your kid to private lessons and who has the best bat and who is on the best team,” Bell said.

“What’s really important for young kids is to see people that look like them,” said Jean Batrus, executive director of the Youth Development Foundation, a collective effort by MLB and the MLB Players Association. “And you’re more willing to play a game if you see a Black, African-American coach, you see other kids playing.”

Coker said none of the players have been drafted from the first two Black College World Series, though a handful of scouts have come out. The event, which concludes Saturday, includes Albany State, Savannah State, Bluefield State, Edward Waters, Miles College, Talladega College, Rust College, Wiley College and Paine College.

Pittsburgh Pirates outfielder Andrew McCutchen said the answer is clear-cut for improving HBCUs’ athletic prospects. It comes down to money. McCutchen cited current Colorado coach Deion Sanders’ efforts at Jackson State in football, where he coached previously.

“There’s only one answer, and we all know the answer to, and it’s the elephant in the room: funding,” McCutchen said. “That’s what every single college, and especially HBCUs, need. To be able to give their team the exposure that they feel like their players deserve, and to get that treatment that other divisions are able to get. It’s funding.”



Williams

Serena Williams documentary in the works at ESPN

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior Correspondent

Serena Williams has announced the start of production on her new ESPN series, In the Arena: Serena Williams.

Williams ruled tennis for over 20 years, winning 23 Grand Slams (singles). Like the Emmy-winning Man in the Arena:

Tom Brady, the Serena Williams installment of the franchise reportedly will be a multi-part series that features first-person perspective from Serena and key figures throughout her life to “provide the most complete, intimate, and compelling account of her legendary career.”

The series examines Williams’s most memorable Grand Slam tournaments and formative life moments.

It contrasts Williams’s triumphant professional career and cultural significance with her private struggles, including her battle to keep her tennis career on top while adjusting to the life-altering event of having a baby.

The Walt Disney Company said a new generation of competitors, eager to emulate Williams’ success and ultimately defeat her, marks a full circle in her career.


The series revisits the superstar’s defining matches, formative moments, heartbreak, and glory to trace her personal and generational journey from phenom to icon across her whole career and into her legacy.

ESPN, Religion of Sports, 199 Productions (under the direction of Tom Brady), and Nine Two Six Productions (under the direction of Williams and Caroline Currier) will all produce the series, which Gotham Chopra will direct.

The Walt Disney Company said it would provide more information later.



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