



JRA receives \$2.1 million from Cong. Bennie Thompson for renovations at Jackson Union Station in ‘The City with Soul’

By Jackie Hampton
Publisher

A press conference was held Monday, Jan. 8, at the Union Station, 300 West Capitol Street, at 11 a.m. in Jackson, where Congressman Bennie Thompson (D-MS Dist., 2) presented Jackson Redevelopment Authority a \$2.1 million check for renovations of Jackson Union Station.

JRA Board President Alex Lawson shared a tale of renewal, hope and transformation in the city where college students and others could receive reliable transportation as needed. He gave appreciation to Congressman Thompson whom he said gave priority to this project which led to the initial \$2.1 million which unlocked doors to other government and private industry providing funding as well.

Thompson said he was very excited to be a part of bringing this historical hub back to the city. “Everyone cannot afford to get on an airplane, don’t have an automobile to travel and this is a clear viable option for those seeking and needing transportation,” Thompson said.

Thompson said this facility also has the opportunity to lure businesses in this area such as restaura-



Greyhound bus parked in front of Union Station

PHOTOS BY JACKIE HAMPTON AND KEVIN BRADLEY



(L-R) Yolanda Owens, Brian Washington, Lemia Jenkins, Cleophus Amerson, III, Denise Drake, Congressman Bennie Thompson and Alex Lawson

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The takedown of Claudine Gay

Unnatural fall from grace; the targeting of the Black woman President of Harvard

By Christopher Young
Contributing Writer

Is it anything new in America for African Americans in prominent positions to be targeted by European Americans? It is not, and it is just as true for women as it is for men. Rosa Parks, Coretta Scott King, Shirley Chism, Angela Davis and even Oprah Winfrey immediately come to mind.

Always being second-guessed, motives questioned, judged on their worthiness, or for expressing an opinion – the truth is that a large swath of our country never has and still doesn’t accept black advancement or black equality; let alone embrace it.

This was the case just over a month ago when the posse was rounded up to take down Claudine Gay, Harvard’s first African American President, having served in that role just six months.



Dr. Claudine Gay
FROM WWW.HARVARD.EDU

COMMENTARY

“The daughter of Haitian immigrants, Gay received her bachelor’s degree in 1992 from Stanford, where she majored in economics and was awarded the Anna Laura Myers Prize for best undergraduate thesis. In 1998, she received her Ph.D. in government from Harvard, where she won the Toppan Prize for best dissertation in political science.

A quantitative social scientist with expertise in political be-

havior, Gay served as an assistant professor and then tenured associate professor at Stanford before being recruited to Harvard in 2006 as a professor of government. She was also appointed a professor of African and African American Studies in 2007. She was named the Wilbur A. Cowett Professor of Government in 2015, when she also became dean of social science at the Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences,” per <https://news.harvard.edu>.

Yet when she weighed in on a divisive issue, the Israel-Hamas war and the subsequent outpouring of protests on college campuses, during a December 5, 2023, Hearing of the House Education and Workforce Committee – under questioning by Trump devotee Elise Stefanik, Republican Representative of New York’s 21st District, and a Harvard alum herself, Gay

walked right into the trap. She rightly separates political rhetoric and threatening language, all a part of free speech, from actual conduct.

From the transcript of the Hearing, as reported by www.rollcall.com:

“Elise Stefanik: Dr. Gay, at Harvard, does calling for the genocide of Jews violate Harvard’s rules of bullying and harassment, yes or no?

Claudine Gay: It can be. Depending on the context.

ES: What’s the context?

CG: Targeted as an individual, targeted at an individual, severe, pervasive.

ES: It’s targeted at Jewish students, Jewish individuals. Do you understand your testimony is dehumanizing them? Do you understand that dehumanization is part of anti-Semitism? I will

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Judge Kenny Lewis impacts community with gifts

Learned from the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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

If you’ve been around Kenny Lewis for a brief moment, you would know that there is something about him that causes you to pause in observation. This Mississippian hails from Clinton and comes with profound knowledge and understanding of the seeds of humanity. During the course of his lifetime, he has grown under the influence of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who reckoned with unjust laws and inhumane treatment as the pendulum of justice swung around America and the world among higher to lower echelons during the turbulent 60s.

Neither government officials nor police brutality could deter Dr. King’s strides for the good of humanity. Neither order out of chaos, nor citizens’ resentment could halt his drive to instill youth and adults to pursue his dream of nonviolent resistance.

Such steadfastness touched the heart and soul of Lewis.

“The I Have a Dream speech was not only a speech, but a vision to future generations. Dr. King gave me the ability to dream for the unseen and supernatural. Dr. King taught me the importance of standing for right in the midst of wrong. Dr. King’s life encouraged me to love the unlovable, serve all [people], learn to forgive.” Lewis said that such service allows him to make an impact in his community without the use of violence.

Lewis credits working with the young to be enriching and inspiring. He has a job shadowing ministry called “I stand before them so they won’t stand before me.” Assisting him in this ministry is Constable Leon Seals. This ministry includes youth ages 12-17. “This is the age range responsible for committing the most violent crimes,” says Lewis.

The mentor has been working in Justice Court with job shadowing since 2019 when he was elected as Justice Court Judge by citizens of Hinds County District 4. The judge realized that juveniles were committing most of the crimes.



Judge Kenny Lewis – trailblazer, Man of God, Dr. King mentor, job shadowing mentor, proponent of light, community builder

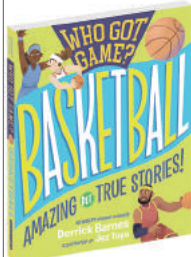
“I decided that I could use my platform to encourage the youth to be on the right side of the law and be [change agents] in their community.

In reflection of King’s quote: “We shall overcome because the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice,” Lewis gives his interpretation. “This tells me to not give up because right looks wrong, and wrong looks right. There is hope if we stay consistent that right will stand up along with freedom, equality and justice.” Not only does Lewis instill the above in the minds of the youth, but he shared this quote by King: “Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that.” In response to this quote, the judge made it clear: “I can’t fight someone with [her/his] same force. I am in need of something more powerful to subdue darkness and hate. That something is light and love.” Lewis then added, “The same is in the face of negativity or adversity. I have to respond with the opposite if I am to expect...progress.”

Fighting clean and not dirty is Lewis’s forte. Consistent with King’s hate/love analogy is a gratifying and rewarding experience that Lewis encountered as a worker in the Clinton Police Department.

He described Monique as a very disrespectful, angry, mischievous and promiscuous teen. Her mother was desperate for help for her child, so she

Lewis
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MSU plans MLK Jr. Unity Breakfast, Day of Service; Camille Scales Young, keynote speaker

The Mississippi Link Newswire

Mississippi State's 30th annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Unity Breakfast returns to The Mill at MSU on Jan. 15 with an 8 a.m. meal and 9 a.m. program. Day of Service activities will follow with volunteers working at sites across the community from 10 a.m.-noon.

"We look forward to gathering in person to commemorate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy through our fellowship, reflection and meaningful service in tribute to his memory and accomplishments," said MSU Vice President for Access, Opportunity and Success Ra'Sheda Forbes.

Doors open at 7:30 a.m., and seating will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. The Mill is located at 600 Russell St. A livestream of the program also will be available at <https://vimeo.com/event/3999156>.

This year's keynote speaker is MSU alumna Camille Scales Young, principal and director with Cornerstone Government Affairs, a full-service, bipartisan consulting firm specializing in federal and state government relations, public affairs and strategic communications and advisory services. Young is based in the Jackson office.

The Shannon native and former national board president of the MSU Alumni Association previously served as a government affairs representative with one of the state's leading law firms, Watkins Ludlam Winter & Stennis, P.A. She also worked with Missis-



Camille Scales Young

issippi Farm Bureau Federation where she spent time on Capitol Hill providing support for the agricultural community.

Her MSU degrees include a 1994 bachelor's in communication and a 1996 master's in agriculture and extension education with an emphasis in public policy. Young has received numerous prestigious accolades, including being named the 2021 College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Alumni Fellow, a member of the Mississippi Business Journal's Top 50 Business Women, and a Woman of Distinction by the Girl Scout Council of Middle Mississippi.

In 2017, she was in the inaugural class of Top 50 Most Influential People in Mississippi. She and her husband

Keith are parents of three children, including two MSU graduates. They are residents of Madison County.

In addition to welcoming remarks by MSU President Mark E. Keenum, the program also will feature music by the university's Black Voices Gospel Choir.

The program is sponsored by the Office of the President, Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President, Division of Access, Opportunity and Success, Maroon Volunteer Center and the university's Division of Student Affairs.

After the breakfast program, MSU's Maroon Volunteer Center, in coordination with Volunteer Starkville, will begin the MLK Jr. Day of Service activities. Volunteer opportunities are available at, among others, American Legion Post 13, Beehive Homes, Brickfire Project, Bully's Pantry, Camp Seminole, The Farm, Goldton at Adelaide, J.L. King Center, Montgomery Gardens, MSU Community Garden, Oktibbeha County Heritage Museum, Sally Kate Winters Family Services, Salvation Army, Starkville Area Arts Council, Starkville Fire Department, Starkville Public Library, Starkville Strong, Sudduth Elementary School and West Point Clay County Animal Shelter.

For more information on MSU's 2024 MLK Jr. Day observance, including volunteer service-day projects, visit <https://msstate.campuslabs.com/engage/service-opportunities>.

Judge Kenny Lewis Photos Continued from page 1



Mentee Brice Donaldson and Judge Lewis



Mentee Glen Robinson and Judge Lewis



Constable Leon Seals and Judge Lewis with Provine High Schools student mentees who chose Lewis to shadow



Interns from UDC David A. Clarke School of Law shadow Judge Lewis

PHOTOS COUTESY OF JUDGE KENNY LEWIS



Judge Lewis with MS State University student Darreneka Howard and Constable Leon Seals



Judge Lewis with Jackson Academy student/mentee Gavin Lomax and sister

Less worrying and more living.

BluePrimaryCare
MISSISSIPPI

Lewis

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sought Lewis’ help. “I was given the opportunity to mentor Monique for several years. Years later, Monique reached out to me and told me how much she appreciated me not giving up on her.” Today Monique is a nurse who is happily married. “The most gratifying and rewarding experience was being able to witness Monique graduate from high school, college and get married,” Lewis recalled. Then there were Stephen Simmons and his brother Preston Simmons – troubled youth who were strengthened by Lewis. Stephen recalled what his life was like 25 years ago and emailed Lewis on January 9, 2024: “My mom was a single mother with two knuckleheads to raise, and we did not make it easy for her...I remember you bringing me to your church with your family one Sunday. You showed me compassion, and it took me completely by surprise. I was so lost and didn’t think anyone cared...I’ve been up and down since then, but never forgot your kindness. You had a truly profound impact on my life, and I want to give you your flowers.”

Lewis is a staunch advocate of the young learning from their elders. “It’s essential so the young will be empowered, strengthened from the experiences of the elders,” he said. He also advises the elders to follow the advice of the Psalmist in Psalm 118:8: “It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in man.”

When it comes to working for the good of humanity, the job shadowing master shares the following with the young: (1) obey your parents; (2) get an education; (3) set realistic goals; (4) give back to your community; (5) make good decisions; (6) be accountable for your actions; and (7) pass down good information). Lewis believes that putting these components to action will provide assurance for successful goal attainment.

Born to Clara Lewis and the late Robert Lewis in 1971 in Jackson, Miss., Lewis obtained his educational training from Clinton High School (1989); Delta State University, B.S. – Criminal Justice (1993); New Foundation Seminary Masters of Theology (2016); and Mississippi Judiciary College (2019).

For approximately 33 years, Lewis has been serving the community in the following capacities: (1) ordained minister; (2) Koinonia Marriage Counseling Service; (3) Clinton Police Department chaplain; (4) Clinton Public School Board president; (5) State of Mississippi School Board; (6) youth speaker for the Clinton, Hinds and Jackson School Districts; (6) Friends of Jackson Mentoring Program; (7) Clinton Public School’s Real Man Mentoring Program; and (8) I Stand Before Them So They Won’t stand Before Me, Job Shadowing.

Lewis’ favorite scripture is Proverbs 18:16: “A man’s gift will make room for him and brings him before great men.” He shares that empowering individuals to smile from the heart is one of his greatest gifts. In light of that, Lewis’ greatest ministry “is exemplified in everything I do.”

Lewis is not on his journey alone. His wife Vickie co-ministers with him in small group settings as well as one-on-one counseling. Their ministry occurs in “a relaxed environment while endeavoring to solidify the bond of peace and the love of God for others.”

See photos on page 2.

Gay

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ask you one more time. Does calling for the genocide of Jews violate Harvard’s rules of bullying and harassment, yes or no?

CG: Anti-Semitic rhetoric, when it crosses into conduct

ES: And is it anti-Semitic rhetoric.

CG: Anti-Semitic rhetoric, when it crosses into conduct, that amounts to bullying, harassment, intimidation. That is actionable conduct, and we do take action.

ES: So, the answer is yes, that calling for the genocide of Jews violates Harvard code of conduct, correct?

CG: Again, it depends on the context.

ES: It does not depend on the context. The answer is yes. And this is why you should resign. These are unacceptable answers across the board.”

Per the *www.Politico.com* writer reporting on January 3, 2024, “Christopher Rufo, the conservative activist – best known for launching the crusade against “critical race theory” – was in a celebratory mood after Claudine Gay announced her resignation as president of Harvard University. On December 10, 2023 (five days after the Hearing) Rufo and the conservative journalist Christopher Brunet publicized accusations that Gay – the first black woman to serve as Harvard’s president and a political scientist held in high regard by her peers – had plagiarized other scholars’ work. Together with pressure from donors about Gay’s response to the war in Gaza, those accusations ultimately led to Gay losing her job. None of that happened by accident. As Rufo acknowledged Gay’s resignation was the result of a coordinated

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Congressman Thompson



Alex Lawson



Gilda Brewton

rants. “It’s important but can only survive if the community supports it. The partnerships which JRA has established has given me hope that this facility can be the best transportation model in the state of Mississippi.”

In the words of Jackie Gleason about the check, Thompson said, “How Sweet it Is.”

He stated as JRA continues to make plans, he wants his office to be a part of the partnership. He said, “The JRA commissioners have done a tremendous job in taking over this facility and also breathing not just life but hope in a part of Jackson that desperately needs it.”

Regional Vice President of Greyhound, Gilda Brewton, said, “I want to express my gratitude to Chairman Lawson and the JRA team that worked so hard in bringing life back to this location.”

Team members attending with Chairman Lawson included JRA Commissioner Brian Washington; JRA Commissioner Lemia Jenkins; JRA Administrative Analyst Denise Drake; JRA Project Manager Consultant Cleophus Amerson III; and JRA FUSE Executive Fellow, Yolanda R. Owens.

Appearing with Vice President Brewton were Jeffrey Bell, Greyhound ticket agent; Tasha Ellis, Greyhound state manager and Amos Campbell, Greyhound bus driver from Houston, Texas.

Brewton thanked Congressman Thompson for working tirelessly for his constituents. “He wants to make sure they have transportation in this city,” she said.



(L-R) Jeffrey Bell, Tasha Ellis, Gilda Brewton, Congressman Thompson and Amos Campbell

and highly organized conservative campaign.”

Dr. Gay’s work with DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion), a front-burner target for MAGA Republicans, has been lumped together with her testimony at the Hearing, and out of nowhere her scholarly honesty – claims of plagiarism in her dissertations.

It is a lot to take in, but we can’t just slough it off and move on – technically it’s not a hanging like we all know too well in American history – but how far away is it? The noose has been replaced by rabid conservatives, nearly all calling themselves Christians, using any means possible – venom-spewing politicians, social media clickbait, and misinformation fed to media outlets eager for breaking news – to thwart equity while steering the MAGA ship forward.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion refers to organizational frameworks that seek to promote “the fair treatment and full participation of all people,” particularly groups “who have historically been underrepresented or subject to discrimination. These frameworks don’t exist by accident.

This is America and while progress has been made at a snail’s pace over the decades, these programs are necessary. Those who attack them know that we don’t live in a post-racial society, they know that unfair treatment and discrimination exist, they just want to make others think that it doesn’t. They are so steeped in their privilege, and so fearful of the browning of America, they lash out and malign anything that doesn’t directly keep them in total power.

Happy Birthday Dr. Martin Luther King Jr



The World Misses Your Voice

The Children’s Defense Fund’s Southern Regional Office and the Southern Rural Black Women’s Initiative for Economic and Social Justice present these excerpts from a letter to Dr. King in the book, *The Sea is So Wide and My Boat is So Small* by Founder and President Emerita Children’s Defense Fund Marian Wright Edelman (2008).

A Letter To Dr. King

“Although you have been gone forty years, you are with me every day. We have made much but far from enough progress in overcoming the tenacious national demons of racism, poverty, materialism, and militarism you repeatedly warned could destroy America and all of God’s creation. So I wanted to write you a letter on what we have done and still have to do to realize your and America’s dream. What a privilege it was to know, work with, and learn from you in the struggle to end racial segregation, discrimination, and poverty in our land.

Just as many Old and New Testament prophets in the Bible were rejected, scorned, and dishonored in their own land in their times, so were you by many when you walked among us. Now that you are dead, many Americans remember you warmly but have sanitized and trivialized your message and life. They remember Dr. King the great orator but not Dr. King the disturber of unjust peace. They applaud the Dr. King who opposed violence but not the Dr. King who called for massive nonviolent demonstrations to end war and poverty in our national and world house. They applaud your great 1963 “I Have a Dream” speech but ignore the promissory note still bouncing at America’s bank of justice, waiting to be cashed by millions of poor and minority citizens. And they forget your repeated nightmares: the deaths of the four little girls in the Birmingham church and of three young civil rights workers in Mississippi’s Freedom Summer and others across the South.

You blessed America with your rich faith, spiritual traditions, and prophetic preaching. You gave us your deep and abiding love and lifelong commitment to nonviolence. You shared your moral clarity and courageous truth telling. You left us your unrelenting commitment to justice for the poor and every one of God’s children. You showed us the way through your example and call for massive nonviolent action in the service of justice and peace. And you gave us your life.

Thank you. We will carry on.”

Central District Commissioners celebrated by Democratic Party

Democratic leaders and supporters fill Johnny T's to capacity to celebrate wins

By Christopher Young
Contributing Writer

The 2nd Annual Democratic Legislative Reception and Inaugural celebration, hosted by Senator Derrick Simmons (D-12) and Representative Robert Johnson, III (D-94), was held from 5-7 p.m., January 4, 2024 at Johnny T's Bistro & Blues on Farish Street in Jackson, to celebrate the reelection of Central District Transportation Commissioner Willie Simmons and election of Central District Public Service Commissioner De'Keither Stamps.

The event was kicked off by welcoming remarks from Representative Zakiya Summers (D-68) who also serves as treasurer of the Mississippi Democratic Party, followed by party Executive Director Andre J. Wagner, who introduced party chairman, Representative Cheikh Taylor (D-38).

Taylor spoke of Mississippi's Democratic Party evoking Greek mythology, "We are on the move, we are rising from the ashes like the great Phoenix. How do I know that? Because we are here to celebrate wins tonight...our newly elected brother, De'Keither Stamps, and long-time champion of transportation, Willie Simmons."

He shared the story that South Carolina Representative James Clyburn shares about the cord string being unable to be snapped, but when unraveled into separate pieces can easily be snapped – reinforcing the critical importance of working together as one to turn



Newly elected Central District Public Service Commissioner De'Keither Stamps



Re-elected Transportation Commissioner Willie Simmons



Group photo with winning candidates, supporters and MS Democratic Party leaders and staff. PHOTOS BY CHRIS YOUNG

Mississippi blue.

Chairman of Mississippi's Legislative Black Caucus, Representative Christopher Bell (D-65), said, "I was born in the great city of Chicago and raised as a Chicago Cubs fan. The Chicago Cubs were known as loveable losers, and our Mississippi Democratic Party mirrors that. We fight hard, we do our best, we go out and champion issues that affect all Mississippians regardless of your color, religion, or your party affiliation. We are champions for those issues. We will not forever be loveable losers. In 2016 the Cubs won the World Series and my best friend died two weeks before – he couldn't live long enough to see the victory – and I don't want to die before I see a Democrat elected statewide as governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, secretary of state, insurance commissioner...let's keep it moving; get serious about the task at hand, and go out there and elect democrats."

As the drinks flowed and the gathering enjoyed a top-

notch buffet, Representative Robert Johnson came to the microphone and first brought acknowledgement to Greta Kemp Martin for her campaign for Attorney General and Ty Pinkins who ran for Secretary of State at the last minute after Shuwaski Young had to drop out due to health reasons.

Turning to Willie Simmons, Johnson stated, "for years in the Central District, where our folks live, we found out from Willie Simmons that we had been being underfunded by one-third. In Willie Simmons we have a transportation commissioner that looks like you and thinks like you, who lives like you – and what did he do – he went to the Legislature and pointed out that deficiency and made sure that we got that balance that we deserve." He hammered home the point that representation matters, voting matters.

Senator Derrick Simmons spoke about efforts to tackle the states healthcare crisis, education, criminal justice reform – "Mississippi has the

second highest incarceration rate in the entire world – election reform needs more attention, we are pushing for early voting – our voice is our vote. Infrastructure – the state has historically neglected infrastructure on the west side of I-55 – and we are seeing improvements already with Commissioner Simmons, who is now the chairman of the Transportation Commission."

He shifted to Commissioner Stamps, speaking of his long years of experience, "He's always been a champion in every public role that he has had and we look forward to working with him on the Public Service Commission. Democrats are always on the right side of history...all we care about is improving the quality of life for all Mississippians."

Stamps centered his remarks on courage and faith. He spoke to how many positions in government where candidates are running unopposed – "At the local level, at the supervisor level, state level...we need more people to have the courage to

step up and run for these offices. We need more people like Shirley Chisom – she ran unbossed and unbought. Without Shirley Chisom there would be no Jesse Jackson, and without Jesse Jackson there would be no Barack Obama – be that person in your county to change something...we have too much talent that is not expressing the God give talent that is in your heart, too much talent."

Simmons focused much of his remarks on the people that are on vacation, "Many of us took a vacation and they have not come back to work yet and until they decide to come off vacation and come to work then we are always going to be able to say that we are not in control, but once we show up and be about the work we are going to be okay. In 2018, you came off vacation and elected Willie Simmons – we were winners – the first Democrat to the Department of Transportation."

He gave ample evidence that when voters come out for the Presidential elections it makes

a huge difference. "If you look at the numbers, if we came off vacation for the state elections, many of our candidates would win, but we stayed on vacation."

Ty Pinkins gave an inspiring talk about Mississippi values that have guided his career; from growing up in Rolling Fork to Tougaloo College to twenty-one years on active duty with the U.S. Army and three combat tours in Iraq earning the Bronze Star to Air Force One while serving Republican and Democratic presidents.

Pinkins is a candidate for U.S. Senate, running against incumbent Senator Roger Wicker in 2024.

As the event began to wind down, State Democratic National Committee Representatives, Vice Chair, Jodie Brown, and National Committeewoman, Jacqueline Amos, offered support, encouragement, and hope for turning Mississippi Blue.

Amos led the charge for opening checkbooks and got immediate results.



MLK

NIGHT OF CULTURE

JANUARY 15 | 6 P.M.



Professor Emeritus of Poli-Sci at JSU to keynote 56th annual MLK Convocation

The Mississippi Link Newswire

The Margaret Walker Center at Jackson State University is pleased to announce Leslie-Burl McLemore, Ph.D., founding chair of the JSU Department of Political Science, will keynote the 56th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Convocation Friday, Jan. 19 at 10 a.m. in the Rose E. McCoy Auditorium.

McLemore is a native of Walls, Mississippi, and a Southern Civil Rights Movement veteran. As a Rust College student, he was the founding president of the college chapter of the NAACP. He organized and led several demonstrations and voter registration drives during his tenure at Rust.

“The opportunity to host Dr. Leslie-Burl McLemore at Jackson State is a perfect tribute to the legacy of those people who fought for access to the rights of American citizenship,” said Robert Luckett, Ph.D., director of the Margaret Walker Center.

In January 1969, Margaret Walker began the MLK Convocation at Jackson State to honor King just nine months after his assassination, making it one of the nation’s oldest celebrations of his life.

As the 60th anniversary of 1964’s Freedom Summer approaches, Luckett feels McLemore would be the ideal speaker for the memorial occasion.

“Dr. McLemore’s history of activism, including as a delegate for the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) in 1964, and his scholarly and political contributions to our community makes him uniquely positioned to keynote our 56th annual MLK Convocation,” Luckett shared.

McLemore was a founding member

and elected vice-chair of the MFDP in 1964. He also served as a member of the executive committee. In August of 1964, he was elected as one of the 64 Freedom Party delegates to the Democratic National Convention and worked closely with Fannie Lou Hamer, Bob Moses, Victoria Gray Adams, Annie Devine, Aaron Henry and other leaders of the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi and other parts of the American South.

Currently, a member of the Walls, MS Board of Aldermen, McLemore made history as one of two African Americans elected to the board. He also serves as an advisor to the Office of Alumni Development at Rust College. He is also a member of the National Park Service Roundtable of Scholars.

During his tenure at Jackson State, McLemore served as president in 2010. He was the founding director of JSU’s Fannie Lou Hamer National Institute on Citizenship and Democracy, the former dean of the graduate school and founding director of JSU’s Office of Research Administration.

McLemore earned his bachelor’s degree in social science and economics from Rust College, his master’s degree in political science from Atlanta University, and his doctorate in government from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. He has done post-doctoral work at The Johns Hopkins University and Harvard University.

McLemore is married to Betty A. Mallett, an attorney, and they are the parents of one son, Leslie II, a lawyer in Marietta, Georgia, daughter-in-law, Jacinta W. McLemore, and two granddaughters.

FRIDAY JANUARY 19

5 6 T H A N N U A L

MLK
BDAY



CONVOCATION


KEYNOTE SPEAKER


LESLIE-BURL
MCLEMORE, PH.D.

Scholar, Political Leader and Activist

ROSE E. MCCOY AUDITORIUM
10:00AM

streaming
live at  @JSUTV





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Civil rights pioneer Anne Moody to be part of the Mississippi Freedom Trail

Marker featuring her story will be erected in her hometown of Centreville

The Mississippi Link Newswire

The Town of Centreville has been approved for a Mississippi Freedom Trail marker that will honor the legacy of Anne Moody and her work in the civil rights movement of the 1960s, announced John Spann, program and outreach officer for the Mississippi Humanities Council.

Spann shared the news Thursday, Dec. 14, following a meeting of the Freedom Trail Scholarly Review Committee.

The memorial to Moody will be the first Freedom Trail marker erected in Wilkinson County. The location has not been determined, but it will be posted in 2024, according to Spann.

The Mississippi Freedom Trail was created to commemorate the people and places in the state that played a pivotal role in the American Civil Rights Movement. As of Dec. 14, a total of 35 new markers have been approved. The Freedom Trail markers are managed by the Mississippi Humanities Council, with partnership and funding provided by Visit Mississippi.

Moody's family, along with Centreville residents, business and community leaders, were ecstatic about Moody receiving a Freedom Trail marker.

"This is exciting news," said Frances Jefferson, Moody's sister. "This will certainly help the current generation understand the importance of her work for civil rights and her legacy."

Felicia Williams, Moody's cousin and former Centreville Alderwoman, said the marker will be good for Centreville and for Wilkinson County.



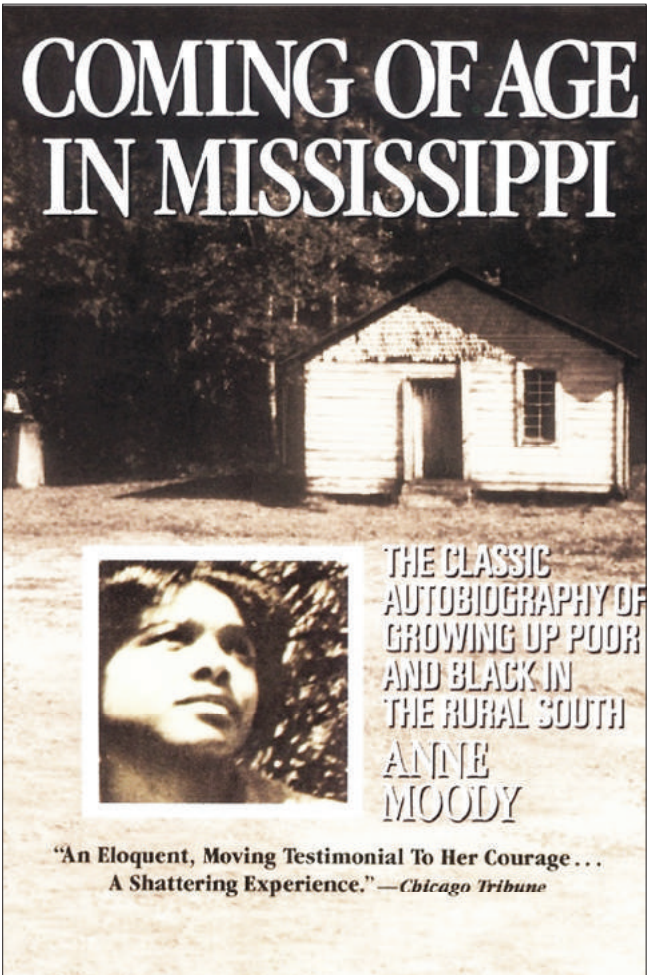
Moody

"I was elated to receive a phone call informing me that Anne Moody would be honored on the Mississippi Freedom Trail," Williams said. "This is not just an honor for her and her family but also for the Centreville community. Anne suffered greatly for a cause in which she believed in and a cause that now allows African Americans to live the long talked about

American dream."

Moody, who was born and raised in Centreville, was a civil rights activist and the author of "Coming of Age in Mississippi," which chronicles her life as a poor black girl growing up under Jim Crow. The book also provides riveting accounts of her work in the struggle for civil rights.

In raw details, Moody wrote about



veiled in The Louis Gauden and Riquita Jackson Family Memorial Park in Centreville.

Moody died at her home in 2015 at the age of 74. At the time of her death, she was living in Gloster, a small town located nine miles north of Centreville.

The Reverend Larry Lee, former mayor of Centreville, said he is happy to see Moody recognized on the Freedom Trail.

"The Mississippi Freedom Trail Marker for Anne Moody is a great honor to mark the trail blazed through her sacrifice and contribution during the Civil Rights Movement," he said. "Anne Moody is an icon for those who wanted justice, freedom and hope for communities suppressed by the challenges of racism in Mississippi. I am grateful to the committee for choosing to bestow such a great honor in memory of Anne Moody."

Guy McNabb, president of the Centreville Chamber of Commerce, agreed. "This is great news," he said. "Centreville Chamber of Commerce is honored to have given our letter of support for a historic event such as this."

McNabb said the chamber is proud to be a partner for this project.

Support for the marker was echoed by Centreville Town Clerk Kimberly Montgomery. "This is wonderful news," she said. "Although we were hoping to recognize Mr. Samuel O'Quinn with this significant marker, I am equally thrilled to further recognize the works of Anne Moody."

Montgomery said the new marker will undoubtedly "help to keep the history of Centreville relevant."

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.
DAY

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15
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All JPS schools and offices will be closed Monday, January 15, 2024, in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

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Mississippi governor says he wants young people to stop leaving the state

By Emily Wagster Pettus
Associated Press

Republican Gov. Tate Reeves used the theme “Mississippi Forever” Tuesday as he was inaugurated for his second term, saying he wants to curb the trend of young people leaving to pursue careers in other places.

“For too many decades, Mississippi’s most valuable export has not been our cotton or even our culture. It’s been our kids,” Reeves told lawmakers, state officials and several international diplomats during a ceremony outside the state Capitol on a chilly, blustery day.

He said people from Mississippi hold prominent positions in government, business and entertainment.

“They made other places better, and we missed out on all they could have done here at home,” he said.

Reeves held two other statewide elected offices before becoming governor four years ago. He served two terms as treasurer and two as lieutenant governor.

The state lifted its ban on

gubernatorial succession in the 1980s, and Reeves is the fourth Mississippi governor to win two consecutive terms. Republicans have held the Mississippi governorship the past 20 years.

The November general election was unusually competitive in a state where Republicans control all statewide offices and both chambers of the Legislature.

Reeves received nearly 51% of the vote to defeat Democrat Brandon Presley, who received nearly 48%, and independent Gwendolyn Gray, who received just over 1%.

Presley, a state utility regulator and second cousin of Elvis Presley, said Reeves had hurt the state by refusing to expand Medicaid to cover people working lower-wage jobs that do not provide health insurance. Presley pledged to clean up corruption, pointing to welfare money that was spent on pet projects for the wealthy and well-connected rather than aid for some of the poorest people in one of the poorest states in the nation.



Governor Tate Reeves and wife Elee at the inauguration

Mississippi Senate re-elected Democratic Caucus Leaders Simmons and Blount



Senators Simmons and Blount

Mississippi Link Newswire

Mississippi District 12 Senator Derrick T. Simmons will remain chairman of the Senate Democratic Caucus, commonly referred to as Senate Minority Leader, and District 29 Senator David Blount, remains vice chairman of the Senate Democratic Caucus, for the four-year Legislative term that began January 2, 2024.

Simmons and Blount on Wednesday, January 3, 2024,

were re-elected unanimously by 16 Democratic votes.

Their continued service will allow them to keep building coalitions and ensuring Democrats and minorities have an equal voice in the governmental process. The two have served since 2017 in those capacities.

Simmons, of Washington County, has served in the Senate since 2011. Blount, of Hinds County, has served since 2008.



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Celebrating 20 years of service in the Greater Jackson Area.

Congressman Bennie G. Thompson celebrates visionary talent in the 2023 Congressional App Challenge

The Mississippi Link Newswire

Congressman Bennie G. Thompson proudly announces the winners of the 2023 Congressional App Challenge for Mississippi's 2nd Congressional District.

Four brilliant minds, Jada Brown, Caleb Johnson, Kyla Collins and Nsean McGrew, students at Jackson Public Schools Career and Development Center, have clinched first place with their groundbreaking digital application creation, "Task Hive."

"We extend our utmost pride to our exceptional scholars for this remarkable achievement," declared Dr. Eric Cook, CTE director and principal of the JPS Career Development Center. "The students' unwavering dedication and ingenuity shone throughout the competition, culminating in an app poised to make a meaningful impact within our community," Cook added.

Task Hive emerges as an ingenious solution aimed at helping individuals grappling with



(L-R) Caleb Johnson (student), Kyla Collins (student), Myesha Wallace (instructor), Congressman Bennie G. Thompson (Rep. MS02), Jada Brown (student), Nesan McGrew (student)

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). "ADHD's prevalence in the United States affects approximately 5.3 million children. This complex condition often introduces a significant challenge: Procrastination, a subtle yet profound behavior observed not only in neurotypical individuals but also in

those navigating diverse neurodivergent paths."

Congressman Thompson (MS02), expressed his pride in hosting the annual Congressional App Challenge, urging students to pursue STEM careers. "I commend the outstanding efforts of Jada Brown, Caleb Johnson, Kyla Collins, Nsean McGrew, and all participating students. I look forward to a greater influx of innovative applicants in the future," Congressman Thompson stated.

The Congressional App Challenge, a revered national event, beckons middle and high school students keen on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) to conceptualize and design applications for computers, tablets, or phones.

The call for submissions for the 2024 Congressional App Challenge in Mississippi's 2nd Congressional District is now open until November 1, 2024.

For more information and to participate, visit the Congressional App Challenge website

Morgan Michelle Cheatham of Byram assists at State Capitol



(L-R) Senator John Horhn, Morgan Cheatham and Lt. Governor Delbert Hosemann

The Mississippi Link Newswire

Morgan Michelle Cheatham of Byram recently served as a page for the Mississippi Senate.

Pages generally run errands for officials and Senate staff. Lt. Governor Delbert Hosemann and Senator John Horhn sponsored her visit.

Morgan is the daughter of Tomeka Cheatham and attends Jackson Academy.

When asked about the week, Morgan said, "I have enjoyed being a junior page and learned many things throughout the week. I enjoyed learning about the history and architecture of the Capitol and meeting various influential people that serve in my community and in my state including the Senators and Governor Reeves. During my time as a junior page, I experienced my first Senate session, in which I learned more about how the Senate works. I am indeed grateful for this opportunity and cherish all the memories and knowledge I gained this week."

Chloe Taisan Jean Glasper of Jackson assists at State Capitol



(L-R) Senator David Blunt, Chloe Glasper and Lt. Governor Delbert Hosemann

The Mississippi Link Newswire

Chloe Taisan Jean Glasper of Jackson recently served as a page for the Mississippi Senate.

Pages generally run errands for officials and Senate staff.

Lt. Governor Delbert Hosemann and Senator David Blunt sponsored her visit.

Tai Williams and attends Hillcrest Christian School.

When asked about the week, Chloe said, "During my time as a page I have met new people and learned many things. The things I liked were exploring the Capitol and talking to the Senators. The experience was beneficial for me to help pick out my career in life. Overall, I am grateful for being here."

100 years of lifesaving work and counting: Happy Birthday to the American Heart Association

StatePoint

The American Heart Association is celebrating its Centennial in 2024 with “Bold Hearts” and a vision for advancing health and hope for everyone, everywhere

From humble beginnings as a small professional health society formed by six cardiologists in Chicago in 1924, the American Heart Association has emerged as the nation’s oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke.

Uniting more than 35 million volunteers and supporters and more than 2,900 employees, the Association today is a global force transforming the way the world understands, treats and prevents cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases.

In 2024, with Bold Hearts™ – the American Heart Association’s Centennial celebration – the organization celebrates 100 years of progress and a vision for a brighter future for all.

“One hundred years ago, heart disease was considered a death sentence. Little was known about what caused it and even less about how to care for people living with and dying from it. Dr. Paul Dudley White, one of the American Heart Association’s founders, described those early years as a time of ‘almost unbelievable ignorance’ about heart disease,” said American Heart Association Chief Executive Officer Nancy Brown.

“Through our relentless pursuit of lifesaving research, science and innovation, and our unwavering support of patients, families and caregivers, we are



creating healthier communities everywhere and transforming the way we all live, work and play, to empower longer, healthier lives,” said Brown.

Before the advent of antibiotics, infectious diseases, such as pneumonia, tuberculosis and diphtheria, were the most common cause of death in the industrialized world. Arteriosclerotic cardiovascular disease (ASCVD), characterized by blood vessel plaques and thickening of artery walls, first emerged as a leading health threat in the mid-20th century and has remained the #1 killer of people worldwide, according

to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“There is much to learn from this historic shift in the reduction of deaths from infectious diseases and the current prevalence in deaths from cardiovascular diseases,” said Joseph C. Wu, M.D., Ph.D., FAHA, the current volunteer president of the American Heart Association, director of the Stanford Cardiovascular Institute and the Simon H. Stertzler Professor of Medicine and Radiology at Stanford School of Medicine. “Through scientific research, technological advances and public health policy, most of

these infectious diseases have become controlled, and many have been or are nearly eradicated.” As we apply these same clinical and epidemiological methods to the someday hopeful eradication of heart disease and stroke, the American Heart Association is making great progress. Although still too many people die each year, many are living longer, more productive lives while managing their cardiovascular disease and risk factors, said Wu.”

“Times have certainly changed over the last century. Bold moves, and dedicated researchers and volunteers, have

resulted in significant medical advancements over 100 years, including the first artificial heart valve, implantable pacemakers, cholesterol-lowering medications, techniques for CPR and much more,” said Marsha E. Jones, current volunteer board chairperson for the American Heart Association and former executive vice president and chief diversity officer for The PNC Financial Services Group Inc.

“Even with today’s knowledge, gaps remain, particularly in ensuring health care access and quality care for people in diverse and underrepresented populations.

“Our grassroots network includes staff and volunteers in Washington, D.C., every state capital and in local communities across the country. Our advocacy priorities also include improving access to quality, affordable health care; increasing access to healthy foods; creating opportunities for physical activity; improving air quality; strengthening the public health infrastructure and systems of care; elevating the importance of addressing racism and other social determinants of health through public policy; and continually ensuring state and local governments address the health concerns of their residents, said Jones”

With more than \$5.7 billion invested in cardiovascular medical research since 1949, the American Heart Association is the nation’s largest non-government funder of heart and stroke research – second only to the U.S. government. The association has funded more

than 49,000 projects, leading to significant breakthroughs in cardiovascular and stroke discovery, translation and clinical application. In addition, 15 American Heart Association-funded investigators have won Nobel Prizes, confirming the Association is the focal point for excellence in cardiovascular and cerebrovascular disease research.

“At the heart of everything we do is the powerful commitment of our global family of volunteers, donors, advocates and survivors. From the early days of the Heart Fund when people went door-to-door to collect donations from neighbors, to our record-breaking community Heart Walks, from the generosity of local and national corporate sponsors, to the heartfelt philanthropy of our major donors, the financial support given to the American Heart Association over the years has been game-changing,” Brown said.

“Just as noteworthy has been the commitment of time, passion and dedication to our cause given by so many and marked in more ways than we could ever count. ‘Thank you’ seems inadequate and so I want to make a commitment to each person who has made any contribution of any kind to the American Heart Association. As we celebrate our 100th birthday we promise to never stop being a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives. As we move into the second century of our work, we are focused on advancing health and hope for everyone, everywhere. Our future is about improving yours.”

Pesticides and fresh produce

By Vince Faust
Tips to Be Fit

Fresh vegetables and fruits offer more nutritional value than the processed ones, but you should take some precautions before eating them. Pesticides are used to protect our crops against insects, weeds, fungi and other pests. Pesticides can be potentially toxic to humans and can have both acute and chronic bad health effects when ingested over a long period of time.

There are two groups of agricultural pesticides, synthetic and natural. Both can be toxic but synthetic pesticides pose the higher risk. Pesticides may induce adverse health effects that include cancer, effects on reproduction, immune or nervous systems.

A Consumer Reports survey found that pesticides are a concern for 85 percent of Americans. Pesticides distributed in the United States, must first be reviewed by the EPA to determine that it will not pose unreasonable risks to human health or the environment. The EPA must set limits on how much pesticide to be used on our food during growing and processing and how much can remain on the food when we buy it.

Government inspectors are responsible for monitoring food in interstate commerce to ensure that these limits are not exceeded.

The EPA also sets limits to protect workers from exposure to pesticides while on the job. Even today with the monitoring too many pesticides are found in high quantities on much of the produce millions of Americans eat every day. Some pesticides

can remain in soil and water for years.

There are over 1000 pesticides used around the world to keep food safe from damage and destroyed by pests. Every pesticide has different properties and toxicological effects.

Vegetables that carry the most pesticides:

- Bell Peppers
- Potatoes
- Eggplant
- Broccoli
- Brussels Sprouts
- Canned Vegetables
- Celery
- Corn
- Eggplant
- Peas
- Kale, Collard and Mustard greens
- Strawberries
- Spinach
- Peaches
- Apples
- Grapes
- Pears
- Green beans
- Cherries

There are a number of reasons young children may be especially sensitive to health risks posed by pesticides

- Children’s internal organs are still developing and maturing.
- Infants and children eat and drink more than adults, possibly increasing their exposure to pesticides in food and water.
- Because of certain behaviors a child’s exposure to pesticides used in homes and yards increases by such things as playing on floors or lawns or putting objects in their mouths.
- Pesticides may also harm a developing child by blocking the absorption of important food

nutrients necessary for normal healthy growth.

5. Another way pesticides may cause harm is if a child’s excretory system is not fully developed, the body may not fully remove pesticides.

6. There are “critical periods” in a child’s developments when exposure to a toxin can permanently alter the way their physiological systems operate.

A first step to safer eating can be smart shopping. Domestic fruits and vegetables have smaller amounts of pesticides than imported brands because many countries don’t have regulations on pesticides. For instance, imported cantaloupes are 7 times likelier to have pesticide residue than domestic brands.

You should wash all fruits and vegetables that have a peel you can eat. You can use a mild soap but you should rinse them well. Bananas and oranges can be peeled, but you should wash them because the pesticides on the peel will get on your hands when you peel it and into your system. Wash and peel apples, bell peppers, carrots, cucumbers, pears, strawberries and any vegetables that have been waxed. Avoid cooking tomatoes and apples that have been treated with pesticides because the pesticide residue in them becomes more concentrated with heat.

To help minimize the pesticide residue you take in, make sure you pull off the outer leaf of foods like cabbage and lettuce. The leaf tops of celery are like a sponge and draw pesticides into the stalk. Trimming them can reduce pesticide residue up to 90%.

Many people are enjoying fresh vegetables without pesti-

cides by planting their own gardens. Some Farmers Markets have foods with fewer pesticides than the chain supermarkets. Wherever you get your fruits and vegetables make sure they’re as healthy as possible by cleaning them thoroughly.

The body can handle small amounts of pesticides because the liver and kidneys detoxify our systems. But, this protective system doesn’t work if the body doesn’t have time to clear the pesticide residue from the body before you ingest more.

Here are some important facts

to remember. Buy domestic produce, the US has some regulations. Always wash your fresh produce even if you’re going to peel it. Remove the outer leaves of your leafy vegetables before eating or cooking them. Last and most important, eat a variety of fruits and vegetables so you don’t take in the same pesticides every day. Most vegetables and fruits are sprayed with a different pesticide, so if you don’t take in the same pesticide every day your body can get rid of most of the various pesticides one at a time.

According to Consumer Re-

port you don’t need any special washes for your produce. Researchers at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station compared rinsing fruit and vegetables in plain water for one minute with washing them with vegetable washes (four different ones) and a solution of dishwashing soap and water. Water alone was as effective as any of the washes or soap. Rubbing produce with soft skins like peaches or using a vegetable brush on harder items like potatoes or carrots will help remove residues, dirt and germs.

The Mississippi Link™

Volume 30 • Number 12

January 11 - 17, 2024

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Publisher.....Jackie Hampton




Copy Editor.....Minnie Garrett

Sports EditorTim Ward

Graphics.....Marcus Johnson

Photographers.....Kevin Bradley & Jay Johnson

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

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

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

Postmaster: Send all address changes to The Mississippi Link, P.O. Box 11307, Jackson, MS 39283-1307. Advertising: For all advertising information, please call (601) 896-0084.

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At Florida’s only public HBCU, students are wary of political influence on race education



Chad Preston, a senior political science major at Florida A&M University, poses for a photo before class on Sept. 27, 2023 in Tallahassee, Fla.
AP PHOTO/SHARON JOHNSON

By Sharon Johnson
The Associated Press

A core mission of Florida A&M University from its founding over a century ago has been to educate African Americans. It was written into the law that established the school along with another college, in Gainesville, reserved for white students.

At Florida’s only public historically Black university, some students now fear political constraints might get in the way of teaching parts of their history.

A law signed last spring by Gov. Ron DeSantis, a candidate for the Republican presidential nomination, blocks public colleges from using taxpayer money on diversity programs. It also forbids instruction of theories that “systemic racism, sexism, oppression and privilege are inherent in the institutions of the United States and were created to maintain social, political and economic inequities.”

The new law, part of broader GOP efforts to rein in campus efforts on equity and inclusion, has spurred protests on campus. Some students say they are watching for signs the new guidance will affect teaching of topics related to race and American history.

Chad Preston, a senior political science major, said he worries some viewpoints will be silenced.

“We deserve the same level of education that all these other states are getting. We deserve the same information,” he said.

DeSantis describes the law as an effort to rid university classrooms of what he calls left-leaning “woke” indoctrination. His education policies — including limits on what schools can teach about racism and which bathrooms students use — have faced criticism from civil rights leaders but fueled his political rise by harnessing culture war passions.

“In reality, what this concept of DEI has been is to attempt to impose orthodoxy on the university,” DeSantis said at a ceremony in May when he signed the bill into law. “This has basically been used as a veneer to impose an ideological agenda, and that is wrong.”

The university, founded in 1887, hosts about 10,000 students at its campus a few blocks from the state capitol.

The new law has made Florida a difficult learning environment for students and faculty of color, said Marybeth Gasman, a Rutgers University historian whose research focuses on HBCUs and systemic racism in higher education.

“I’ve talked to some FAMU faculty who have basically told me that they’re keeping their head down because they’re afraid they’re going to lose their jobs,” Gasman said. “If I were in Florida, I would probably be concerned as well.”

FAMU has not seen upheaval anywhere near the scale of New College

of Florida, a progressive campus where DeSantis and his allies overhauled the Board of Trustees and installed a majority of conservative figures. But many on the FAMU campus are wary.

Asked about the impact of the new law, a university spokesperson referred to a comment Florida A&M President Larry Robinson made in June.

“There are more than 30 pieces of legislation passed this legislative session that have some impact on educational institutions in Florida, including FAMU, and we take them all seriously,” Robinson said. “But our commitment to ‘Excellence With Caring’ remains strong and remains unchanged.”

In early December, the board overseeing Florida’s state university system released proposed regulations outlining programs that would be prohibited from receiving state or federal money under the new law. Programs on the outs would include any that promote “differential or preferential treatment of individuals, or classifies such individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, gender identity or sexual orientation.”

“The FAMU Democrats have been taking steps to ensure the messages of speakers they invite to campus are moderate, said Jovan Mickens, a senior and president of the student political group.

“With my organization, there are certain things I can’t do like bring certain people on campus for a panel discussion. We’re tip-toeing around this university,” he said.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities often receive less funding than predominantly white public colleges. A group of students at FAMU have filed a lawsuit against the state, saying it has underfunded their school by nearly \$1.3 billion.

“But for leaders of public colleges, pushing back on policies they disagree with what could put them at odds with the same officials deciding on their budgets, said Abul Pitre, chair of the Department of Africana Studies at San Francisco State University.

“It requires a certain kind of balance that does not allow them to have too much of an Afrocentric social justice perspective, because they have to go to the same politicians for money who are advocating to eliminate it,” he said.

Raghan Pickett, a senior at FAMU, traces her lineage back to Rosewood, Florida, where hundreds of black people were killed or driven out in 1923 by a mob of white men who then destroyed their neighborhoods. She fears the new law could stop instructors from teaching about such atrocities.

“Back then, it was fear of being lynched,” Pickett said. “Today, black people are still struggling. We’re still fighting to learn basic history.”

NNPA employs Mark Thompson as Global Digital Transformation Director

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior
National Correspondent

The Rev. Mark Thompson’s illustrious and groundbreaking journalism career, which found its roots in the Black Press of America nearly 40 years ago, has come full circle as he assumes a pivotal leadership role with the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA).

From his early days as a journalist with the historic AFRO newspaper in Washington, D.C., under the mentorship of the legendary Frances L. Murphy II, to trailblazing moments as the first talk show host on XM Satellite Radio, Thompson has consistently championed the cause of African American-owned media. Now, in his role as the new NNPA Global Digital Transformation director, he is poised to drive a new era of innovation, guiding member publishers through the intricate landscape of digital transformation and content distribution.

“After serious contemplation and after a review of the capabilities of more than 75 others who inquired about the job, not only did Mark’s resume and experience rise to the top in the digital space, but in his longevity of advocating the power and impact of the Black Press of America, this was not a difficult decision,” stated NNPA President and CEO Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr.

“In fact,” Dr. Chavis continued, “it was providential. We look forward to working as a team, and I’m very honored to invite Mark to join the NNPA’s national staff as a full-time Global Digital Transformation director. In addition to Mark’s experience in America, he also has an international perspective, particularly in the African diaspora, where the content produced and distributed by the Black Press of America will also, with his assistance, have extended reach and impact for communities of color throughout the world as the NNPA continues to be the most respected, vital and trusted voice of Black America.”

Currently a political, human rights, and breaking news podcast host, Thompson’s work in digital social media won his “Make It Plain” recognition among Best Civil Rights Podcasts, Best Human Rights Podcasts, Best Podcasts About Social Justice and Best Broadcast Television Podcasts in 2021.

A 40-year veteran on the frontlines of the ongoing struggle of African Americans and others, the 104th Annual NAACP Convention in Orlando in 2013 awarded Thompson “For 25 years of crusading journalism and outstanding leadership in furthering the work of civil and human rights.”

He not only has been a part of every significant social justice movement and event over the past 40 years, but he has also been a radio broadcaster and journalist for over three decades and has spent over ten years as a national network television commentator.

“In this pivotal time as it pertains to the Black Press of America, we need new blood and new vision that would take us to higher heights which include making a huge footprint in the digital transformation of black-owned media,” NNPA National chairman and *Westside Gazette* Publisher Bobby Henry added. “Mark has a proven track record in his endeavors of achieving success in bringing black-owned media to the forefront. We are positioned at the right time where a fresh undertaking would complement the 197 years of the rich history of the Black Press. Digital transformation is on the horizon for all media, and this is especially of benefit to black-owned media. The Black Press is here to stay and to be complemented by our digital platforms will only enhance our presence.”

Thompson graduated from the University of the District of Columbia with a bachelor’s degree in mass me-



Mark Thompson



Thompson speaking at NNPA National Convention with Chairman Bobby Henry and President/CEO Ben Chavis in background
PHOTO BY MARK MAHONEY/DREAM IN COLOR PHOTOGRAPHY

dia journalism long before the advent of the internet and social media, a testament to his foresight in the ever-evolving journalism world. He said his mandate with NNPA extends beyond technical aspects, encompassing a strategic approach to content distribution that emphasizes revenue generation.

“As media evolves, we’ve all had to adjust. I learned the importance of digital and social media at least ten years ago and jumped right in when others were resistant,” Thompson asserted. “When ‘Make It Plain’ was on Sirius XM, I pioneered a lot of digital and social media. Some people didn’t like it; only some were ready to embrace going into social media. However, we’ve all found something critically important: reaching a larger audience because more information is consumed via social media, and it’s an ever-growing and ever-standing market to reach our audience. We must keep ourselves on the pulse of that and make our publications more and more accessible digitally and on social media. That is important to the future and survival of the African American print media.”

Thompson noted that he and Chavis began the “Meet the Black Press” segment on his “Make It Plain” show some years ago and said the importance of that component was again amplified at the time of his NNPA hire.

“Without realizing it, this moment for the NNPA is timelier than we may have thought,” Thompson insisted. “On the very weekend that ‘Meet the Press’ has given a platform to someone (GOP Rep. Elise Stefanik of New York) who questioned the legitimacy of the past election and called insurrectionists hostages, shows how relative and timely it is to meet the Black Press not just as a segment, but to meet the Black Press as a way of life going forward.”

“Hiring Thompson in this role underscores the NNPA’s commitment to fortifying the 250 African American-owned newspapers and media companies within its membership,” Chavis exclaimed.

Chavis and Thompson proclaimed that the NNPA Digital Network is now positioned as the most prominent African American-owned digital network in America, with an ultimate

goal of global dominance in becoming the most influential, engaging and impactful digital news and content distribution network globally.

“Everyone knows about the downsizing and contraction of print newspapers,” Thompson said. “What the NNPA represents is what really boils down to is more than 200 bureaus, independent to some extent, but each local black-owned newspaper has an important role in letting the world know what’s happening in local communities. The more we work together and promote that, the more it sets NNPA apart because there are so few major print media have organizations of that size and depth anymore.”

Already, in a testament to the NNPA’s commitment to innovation, strategic collaborations have been forged with key players such as the Google News Initiative (GNI), the US Black Chambers of Commerce, the National Association of Black-Owned Broadcasters, the NAACP, and the National Urban League. Chavis said those partnerships are designed to aggregate and disseminate digital content, solidifying the NNPA’s position as a frontrunner in the digital realm.

“With NNPA, journalism is still taking place, not sensationalism,” Thompson continued. “We’re seeing much of the mainstream [seeking] click-bait material. As the Black Press, we must continue to be the moral conscious and moral authority of objective journalism. That’s most important as we set the example to educate the next generation of journalists because we want black students inspired.”

Chavis cautioned that, since 1827, when *Freedom’s Journal* was first published, there have been naysayers and turncoats that have tried unsuccessfully to silence the Black Press.

“I see clearly that 2024 will be another year of growth and expansion for the NNPA and the Black Press of America,” he said. “The acquisition of Mark Thompson as the Global Digital Transformation director will greatly enhance not only what we do in 2024 in the digital and print space, but also as we approach the 200th anniversary of the Black Press of America in 2027, we are all grateful that Mark Thompson has agreed to join the NNPA for this vital and transformational objective,” said Chavis.

Tyre Nichols’ family gathers for vigil 1 year after police brutally beat him

By Adrian Sainz
Associated Press

One year ago, Tyre Nichols was driving home to have dinner with his family when he was pulled over by Memphis police who claimed the black man was driving recklessly and yanked him out of his car. Officers hit him with a stun gun and pepper sprayed him, but he managed to get away and tried to run home. Five officers caught up with him just steps from his house, and, as he called out for his mother, they kicked him, punched him and hit him with a police baton. The attack was captured on the officers’ body cameras and a stationary police pole camera.

Nichols died in a hospital of his injuries three days later on Jan. 10, 2023. His death shook Memphis to its core and led to impassioned protests throughout the U.S. On Sunday night, Nichols’ family members and their supporters gathered at the site of the beating to remember the life of the father, FedEx employee, skateboarding aficionado and amateur photographer who was taken from them at the age of 29. More than 100 people held candles that flickered in the chilly Memphis air as they



RowVaughn Wells, the mother of Tyre Nichols, flanked by family members of Nichols, speaks during a candlelight vigil on the anniversary of her son’s death Sunday, Jan. 7, 2024, in Memphis, Tenn. Nichols lost his life following a violent beating by five Memphis Police officers in January 2023.
AP PHOTO/KAREN PULFER FOCHT

heard Nichols’ mother, stepfather and three siblings talk about how difficult the past year has been for them. His mother, RowVaughn Wells, recalled how her stomach began hurting the night of the traffic stop, not knowing that her son was being beaten just steps from her house. Wearing Converse sneakers her son gave her last Christmas, Wells cried as she talked about missing her son. “Regardless of wherever my kids are, they’re going to call

me, they’re going to come by if they’re close enough,” Wells said. “This year, I didn’t get that from Tyre. I didn’t get a phone call. I didn’t get a text message. I didn’t get a ‘Merry Christmas.’ I didn’t get none of that from my baby this year. “That’s the most hurtful thing because he used to try to be the first one to call,” Wells said. “Mama, was I the first one to call you today?”” Nichols’ beating was one in a string of instances of police violence against black people

that sparked protests and renewed debate about police brutality and the need for police reform in the U.S. His death also led to serious repercussions for the Memphis Police Department and the city. Seven officers were fired for violating department policies during the traffic stop and beating, while an eighth was allowed to retire before he could be fired. Five of the fired officers – Tadarrius Bean, Demetrius Haley, Emmitt Martin, Desmond Mills Jr. and Justin Smith – were charged with second-degree murder and other offenses in state court, and with civil rights violations in federal court. The five officers are black. Mills pleaded guilty in November to federal charges of excessive force and obstruction of justice. The plea is part of a larger deal in which prosecutors said he had also agreed to plead guilty later to state charges. The four other officers have pleaded not guilty to the state and federal charges. The officers said they pulled Nichols over because he was driving recklessly, but police Chief Cerelyn “CJ” Davis has said no evidence was found to support that allegation. An autopsy report showed Nichols died from blows to the head and that the manner of death was homicide. The report described brain injuries and cuts and bruises to the head and other parts of the body. After Nichols’ death, the crime-suppression unit the officers were part of was disbanded. Former members of the so-called Scorpion team have been assigned to other units within the police department. The U.S. Department of Jus-

tice announced an investigation in July into how Memphis police officers use force and conduct arrests, one of several “patterns and practices” investigations it has undertaken in other cities. In March, the Justice Department said it was conducting a separate review concerning use of force, de-escalation strategies and specialized units in the police department. The police department, the city and the former officers are also being sued by Nichols’ mother in federal court. Filed in April, the \$550 million lawsuit blames them for his death and accuses Davis of allowing the Scorpion unit’s aggressive tactics to go unchecked despite warning signs. Also last year, the Memphis City Council approved several ordinances in the wake of Nichols’ death, including one preventing traffic stops for minor infractions. News outlets have reported that then-Mayor Jim Strickland sent a letter to the council in December saying he did not enforce the ordinances because he believed they were illegal. New Mayor Paul Young, who took office Jan. 1 after Strickland’s two terms expired, told media on Tuesday that he would enforce the ordinances.

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—Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

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opportunity or go to
aarp.org/volunteerhere**



Tiger Woods, Nike end partnership after more than 27 years

By Doug Ferguson
AP Golf Writer

Tiger Woods has gone from “Hello, world,” to saying goodbye to Nike. Woods ended months of speculation by making it official Monday that the partnership between golf’s biggest star and the powerful Swoosh brand is ending after 27 years, a move that raises questions about the future of both in the sport.

Wood, in a social media post, thanked Nike co-founder Phil Knight for his “passion and vision” that brought them together when he turned pro.

“Over 27 years ago, I was fortunate to start a partnership with one of the most iconic brands in the world,” Woods wrote. “The days since have been filled with so many amazing moments and memories, if I started naming them, I could go on forever.”

Mark Steinberg, his agent at Excel Sports, confirmed the end of the deal that began in 1996 when Woods turned pro after winning his third straight U.S. Amateur.

“I guess, hello world, huh?” a 20-year-old Woods said at the Greater Milwaukee Open.

Nike launched a “Hello, World” campaign two days later, and Woods lived up to the hype. Within eight months, he already had four wins, including the watershed Masters victory that made him the first golfer of black heritage to win a major.

“It was time for the next chapter,” Steinberg told The Associated Press. “Amazing run. Great partnership.”



Tiger Woods tees off on the 13th hole during the final round of the PNC Championship golf tournament, Sunday, Dec. 17, 2023, in Orlando, Fla. AP PHOTO/KEVIN KOLCZYNSKI

Nike also posted to social media, saying in a photo, “It was a hell of a round, Tiger.”

“Tiger, you challenged your competition, stereotypes, conventions, the old school way of thinking,” the Nike post was captioned. “You challenged the entire institution of golf. You challenged us. And most of all, yourself. And for that challenge we’re grateful.”

Woods signed a five-year deal worth \$40 million when he turned pro. It was shocking money at the time to most in the industry except Nike, and his father.

“Chump change,” the late Earl Woods once said, and he was proven correct. Woods renewed the deal believed to be worth over \$100 million

in 2001. His eight-year deal in 2006 was reported to be \$160 million, and his latest deal was signed in 2013 for a reported \$200 million.

As recognizable as any athlete in the world, Woods became the face of Nike Golf and had his own “TW” brand.

On the golf course, Woods set records as the youngest to win the Grand Slam at age 24, the only player to hold all four major titles at the same time and his 15-shot win at the U.S. Open, the largest margin for a major in golf history.

But there were signs in recent years of a fractured relationship. Woods returned from his February 2021 car crash that shattered bones in his right leg by wearing FootJoy shoes, saying

it was a better feel considering his injuries.

Woods remained in them – Nike has a long history making shoes – even until the PNC Championship last month that he played with his son.

When asked about his deal with Nike, Woods replied, “I’m still wearing their product,” and sternly repeated the phrase when asked if this was the end of his deal.

More than just a face, Woods unwittingly delivered big moments for Nike, none greater than his 2005 Masters victory when he hit a pitch from below the 16th green that went up the slope and then rolled back toward the hole. The ball hung on the edge for a full second — the swoosh in full view — before it dropped. It remains one of the most famous moments in golf’s most-watched tournament.

He also was filming a commercial one year when between takes, Woods began bouncing the golf ball off his club. That led to a spot where he bounced the ball off the club, between his legs, behind his back, before hitting the ball in mid-air.

“Throughout the course of our partnership, we have witnessed along with the rest of the world, how Tiger not only redefined the sport of golf, but broke barriers for all of sport,” Nike said in a statement. “We watched him set records, challenge conventional thinking and inspire generations of people around the globe. We are grateful to have been a part of it. We wish him the best in the future.”

Woods has won 15 majors, second

only to Jack Nicklaus (18), and his 82 career PGA Tour victories are tied with Sam Snead. But he has been slowed in recent years by five back surgeries, shattered ligaments in his rebuilt left knee, the 2021 car crash and age. He turned 48 at the end of last year.

Nike stood by him when his personal life imploded in 2009 over extra-marital affairs, and when his schedule was reduced greatly because of leg and back injuries. Woods remarkably returned from fusion surgery to win the Masters in 2019, his fifth green jacket.

Nike also has shown signs of slowing its golf business. It decided to get out of the hard goods business in 2016, sending Woods to play different clubs and a different golf ball.

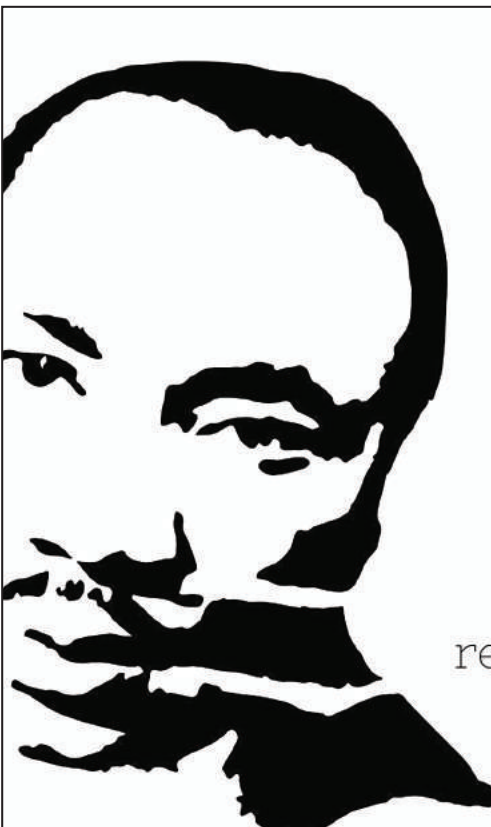
Nike, meanwhile, said in a recent earnings call it planned to cut \$2 billion over the next three years, raising questions about how much it would remain invested in golf.

The company still has a stable of golfers wearing its apparel – including Scottie Scheffler, the world’s No. 1 player who wears a “TW” brand shoe – and Rory McIlroy and Nelly Korda.

Jason Day, a former No. 1 player, did not renew his deal this year and switched to a different apparel company.


Woods has been optimistic that he can play once a month in 2024, which likely is to start at the Genesis Invitational in Los Angeles next month.

Steinberg said he was working on a new deal and that “I anticipate there could be an exciting announcement” at the Genesis Invitational.



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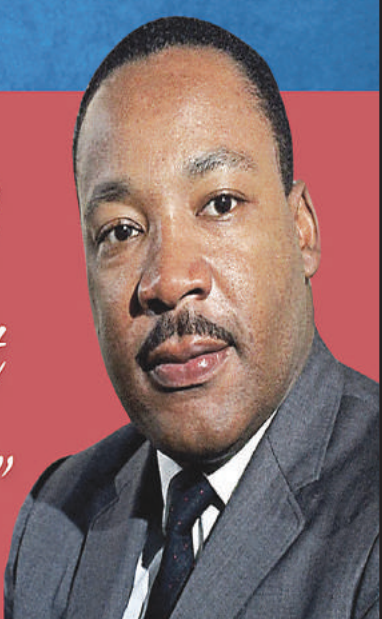
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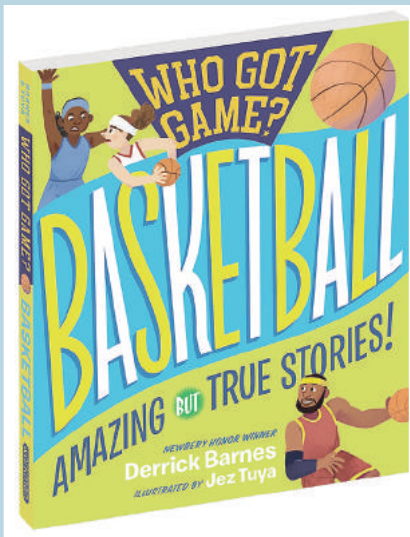


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*“Our lives begin to end
the day we become silent
about things that matter.”*



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BOOK REVIEW:

“WHO GOT GAME? BASKETBALL”

BY DERRICK BARNES, ILLUSTRATED BY JEZ TUYA

C.2023, WORKMAN PUBLISHING

RDCOVER, \$16.99 • 172 PAGES

By Terri Schlichenmeyer
Columnist

A little less than two feet. That’s how far you can get your two feet off the floor if you’re an average kid doing an average vertical jump. Not quite twenty-four inches, but don’t worry: the taller you grow, the higher you could be able to jump.

Practice some, dribble a little, shoot more three-pointers, and you might jump right into a book like “Who Got Game? Basketball” by Derrick Barnes, illustrated by Jez Tuya.

Here we are, football season’s

almost over, and your mind has turned to other things – namely, hoops set high over your head, and a round bouncy basketball. Kids like you who “got game” have had it for more than a century. Yes, the game of basketball was created by Dr. James Naismith in 1891 in Massachusetts.

In the years since, basketball has changed a lot, thanks to what Derrick Barnes calls “pioneers.” Julius “Dr. J” Erving improved the dunk. Before that, in 1950, the NBA first allowed black basketball players

on the teams. There have been super-tall players (Manute Bol and Gheorghe Muregan were both seven feet, seven tall) and smaller b-ballers – five-three Muggsy Bogues had a vertical jump of nearly four feet. And just two years after the game was invented, America had its first women’s team.

A lot of off-court people poured themselves into the game, too. Barnes writes, for example, about Pat Summitt, hoopster, leader and “one of the greatest coaches in all of sports history.” Her record of 1,098

wins ranks her at first-place in coaching women’s basketball, and as the coach with the second-most wins overall.

You can probably guess that in a book about buckets, there are bucketfuls of stats. Barnes includes a list of NBA players who jumped to a team right out of high school.

He writes about the greatest basketball park ever, he explains why winners cut down the net, how Title IX changed the game, why backboards rarely break into a zillion pieces anymore, high scores, bad in-



juries, “hoops movies,” and where in the world you can pick up a game today.

So your 9-to-13-year-old loves basketball so much that they dribble a ball in their sleep? They think their favorite jersey is church-wear? Then you’ll be the hero of the day when you bring home “Who Got Game? Basketball.”

But first, there’s one big thing you need to know: this is not a how-to book. There aren’t any instructions inside here, no rules or plays to follow. Instead, author Derrick Barnes makes

young b-ballers happy by sharing little-known info about the game they love so much, short lists, great stories about great players, wins and losses, and phrases they should know to talk the talk. All this knowledge is supported by colorful illustrations by Jez Tuya that kids will enjoy alongside the facts.

This book is for die-hard young b-ballers, but don’t be surprised if an adult finds a thing or two to learn here. “Who Got Game? Basketball” is a book any fan will want to jump on.



ZACK WALLACE
Hinds County Circuit Clerk

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

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

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

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

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

Services of the Clerk:

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

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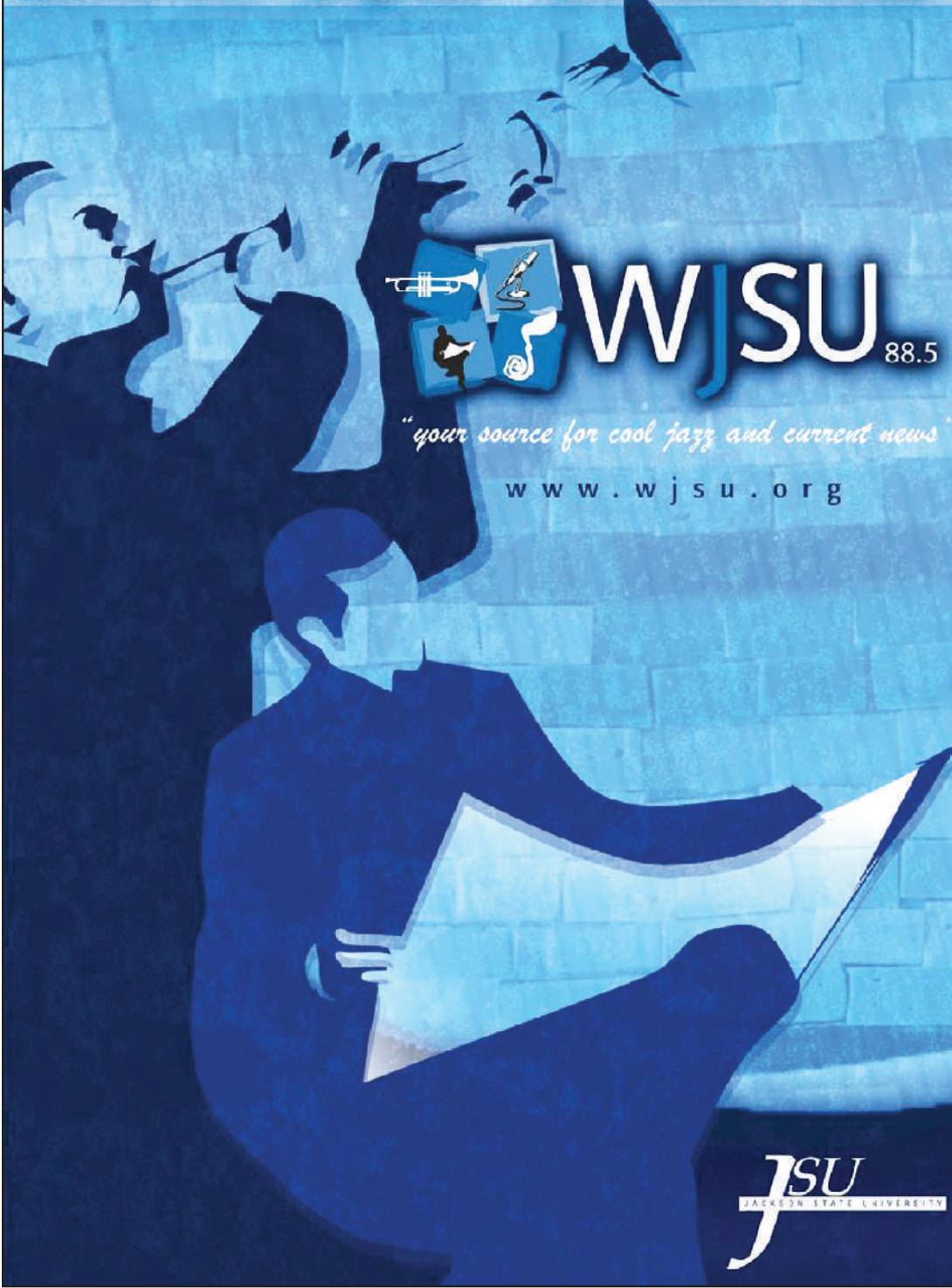
- You must be registered 30 days before the Election.
- Absentee Voting begins 45 days before the Election

MARRIAGE INFORMATION

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

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P R E S E R V E D

God’s grace range

By Shewanda Riley
Columnist



About 20 years ago, I moved to a neighborhood closer to my job. Instead of parking in the front, I now parked in the back of my townhouse and entered through the backyard. Even with the back porch light on, I noticed my backyard was very dark and so one of the first things I did was have a motion detector light installed. Not being a mechanically inclined person, I asked a good friend if he would install it for me as a favor. When he came to set up the light, I noticed it didn’t take him long. However, what took him the most time was setting the range for the light. As part of the process, he had me walk from the rear

of my backyard toward the back door a number of times to make sure that the light came on at the exact moment I entered the back yard. After a few minutes of me walking back and forth and tweaking it, he told me that it was ready, gathered his tools and left. I remember being so excited the first time I opened the gate to my backyard and the light came on. It’s not that I doubted that it would work, but it was beyond my understanding how the light would shine as soon as it detected me. I felt much safer knowing that all I had to do was make a motion like wave my hand and the light would come on all by itself. Fast forward a few years and that same light protected me in a different way. And it was ironic that I was talking on the phone to the same

friend who’d installed the light, when a neighbor came over and told me that she and my next-door neighbor had their cars broken into the night before. Another neighbor shared that one witness noticed that my backyard light was on around 2:30 a.m. but didn’t think anything about it. He then guessed that my light coming on probably scared away whoever was breaking into the cars. They even dropped the flashlight they’d been using as they apparently ran away. Even though I was sad that my neighbors had been victimized, I was glad the light did its job of protecting me and that nothing had happened to my car. Later, I thought about how the motion detector light had two purposes: it provided both exposure and protection at the same time. It reminded

me of how God’s word can do the same thing. Psalms 119:105 says that God’s word is a “lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.” God’s word provides protection when we need it but also gives light on those sometimes-dark paths that our lives may take us. God’s word also reminds us how God’s grace protects us even when we may not realize it. We just have to be sure that we are in “range” by praying, fasting and seeking God’s truth. *Shewanda Riley is a Fort Worth, Texas based author of “Love Hangover: Moving from Pain to Purpose After a Relationship Ends” and “Writing to the Beat of God’s Heart: A Book of Prayers for Writers.” Email her at preservedbypurpose@gmail.com or follow her on Twitter @shewanda.*

-Partial List- 2024 MLK, Jr. Holiday Events in Jackson

JANUARY 13 TO JAN 15, 2024
FREE WEEKEND AT THE TWO MUSEUMS
DOWNTOWN
222 North Street
Jackson, MS 39201

JANUARY 13, 2024 – 10:00 AM
MLK, JR. PARADE
The parade will start at Freedom Corner 3243 Medgar Evers Blvd
It will end at Lanier High School

JANUARY 14, 2023 – 2:00 PM
“STOP THE VIOLENCE” MARCH
The march will start at Freedom Corner
It will end at the Medgar Evers Library

JANUARY 15, 2024 – 6:00 PM
MLK NIGHT OF CULTURE
Two Mississippi Museums Downtown
222 North Street

JANUARY 15, 2023 – 10:00 AM
Wreath Laying at Freedom Corner
3243 Medgar Evers Blvd

JANUARY 15, 2024 – 12:00 NOON
Birthday Bash – Jackson City Hall
219 South President Street

JAN 15, 2024 – 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM
LIFT EVERY VOICE: MLK CELEBRATION
Mississippi Museum of Art
380 S. Lamar Street

JANUARY 19, 2024
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Convocation
Rose E. McCoy Auditorium
1400 John R. Lynch Street

Crossroads Church of God

Sharing The Love Of Christ With Others



Sunday Morning
Sunday School:
9 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.

Sunday Worship Service: 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.
(Fellowship following worship service 1st Sundays)

Wednesday Prayer/Bible Study:
7 p.m. - 8 p.m.

231-A John Day Road • Off Hwy 16 East • Canton, MS 39046
Church: 601-859-2858

New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church

Pastor, Dr. F. R. Lenoir



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



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

WEDNESDAY
7:00 p.m. - Bible Class

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

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

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WORSHIP SERVICE | SUNDAY 10:30 AM
BIBLE STUDY | WEDNESDAY 6:30 PM



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LEGAL

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

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF
EVA D. ERVIN, DECEASED


CAUSE NO.: P2023-417

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Letters of Administration having been granted on the 24th day of December, 2023 by the
Chancery Court of Hinds County, Mississippi to the undersigned Administratrix of the Estate of
Eva D. Ervin, 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 24th day of December, 2023.

TASHI CATCHINGS, ADMINISTRATRIX OF
THE ESTATE OF EVA D. ERVIN, DECEASED



1/4/2024; 1/11/2024; 1/18/2024

LEGAL

Advertisement for Electronic Bid
Bid 3254 ESSER Program: Restroom Improvements and HVAC/Indoor Air
Quality Improvements for Isable Elementary School

Sealed, written formal bid proposals for the above bid 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) Thursday, February 08, 2024, at which time
and place they will be publicly opened and read aloud. A Pre-Bid Conference
concerning the project for Isable Elementary will be held at 2185 Coach Fred
Harris Drive, Jackson, MS 39204 on Friday, January 26 at 2:00 P.M. Attendance
at the pre-bid conference is not mandatory but strongly encouraged. The Board
of Trustees reserves the right to reject any and all bids, to waive informalities, and
to withhold the acceptance of any bid if approved for forty-five calendar days from
the date bids are opened.

Plan holders are required to register and order bid documents at www.jpdsdm-projects.com. A \$350.00 Non-refundable deposit shall be required on each set
of bid specs/documents and must be purchased through the website. All plan
holders are required to have a valid email address for registration. Questions
regarding website registration and online orders, please contact Plan House
Printing, 607 W. Main Street, Tupelo, MS 38804, (662) 407-0193. Questions regard-
ing bid documents please contact Anderson Ervin at Durrell Design Group.
Phone: 601-708-4788 or Email: contact@durrelldesigngroup.com.

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 JPSD Board Room, 621 South State Street, Jackson, MS 39201. All
bid openings will be recorded and uploaded to the JPSD web site at www.jackson.k12.ms.us at YouTube: [/JPSITV](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JPSITV) for public viewing. Due to COVID 19, vendors will
not be allowed to sit in on bids openings.

1/11/2024; 1/18/2024

LEGAL

Public Notice

All interested public and private transit and paratransit operators within Hinds,
County, are hereby advised that the Jackson Medical Mall Foundation is applying to
the Mississippi Department of Transportation, Jackson, Mississippi, for a grant
under Section 5310 of the Federal Public Transportation Act, as amended, to pro-
vide transportation services to elderly and disabled persons. These services will
be beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Service is being
provided within Hinds County. This program consists of existing services with no
environmental impact, and no relocation resulting from the project.

The purpose of this notice is to advise all interested parties, including transit and
paratransit operators, of the service being planned for providing transportation
services for persons with disabilities within the area as described above, and to
ensure that such a program would not represent a duplication of current or of
proposed services provided by existing transit or paratransit operators in the area.

Comments either for or against this service will be received at any time beginning
December 26, 2023, through January 26, 2024, from 8:00am to 5:00pm. All com-
ments should be addressed to Mr. Primus Wheeler at the Jackson Medical Mall
Foundation at 601-982-8467 or via email at pwheeler@jacksonmedicalmall.org.

1/11/2024 1/18/2024

LEGAL

NOTICE TO BIDDERS
City of Jackson Jackson, Mississippi

Sealed, signed BID'S are invited and will be received by the City of Jackson, Mis-
sissippi, until 3:30 P.M. in the City Clerk's Office of Jackson, the bid must be
stamped in by 3:30 P.M. Tuesday, February 6, 2024, at which time said bids will be
publicly opened at the City Hall located at 219 South President Street (City Council
Chambers) in City Hall for the following:

BID# 07100-020624- 12 Month Contract For Police Pursuit Vehicles of 2022-2025

BIDS ARE NOW AVAILABLE AT WWW.JACKSONMS.GOV / WWW.CENTRAL-BIDDING.COM

The above must comply with the City's specifications. Copies of proposal forms
can be obtained from the Purchasing Division, 200 South President Street, Room
604, Hood Building, Jackson, Mississippi 39201. Copies of bid specifications are
filed with the City Clerk for public record in accordance with House Bill No 999,
1986 Regular Session of the Mississippi Legislature.

The City of Jackson is committed to the principle of non-discrimination in Public
Purchasing. It is the policy of the City of Jackson to promote full and equal busi-
ness opportunities for all persons doing business with the City. As a pre-condition
to selection, each contractor, bidder or offer shall submit a completed and signed
Equal Business Opportunity (EBO) Plan Application with each bid submission, in
accordance with the provisions set forth by authority of the City of Jackson's
EBO Ordinance. Failure to comply with the City's EBO Ordinance shall disqualify
a contractor, bidder or offer, from being awarded an eligible contract. For more infor-
mation on the City's EBO Program, please contact the Office of Economic Develop-
ment at (601) 960-1638. Copies of the EBO Ordinance, EBO Plan Application
and a copy of the EBO Program are available with the Office of Economic Devel-
opment at 218 South President Street, Second Floor, Jackson, MISSISSIPPI.
The City reserves the right to reject any and all bids. The City also reserves the
right to waive any and all informalities in respect to any bid submitted. Bid awards
will be made to the lowest and best bidder quoting the lowest net price in accor-
dance with specifications. The award could be according to the lowest cost per item: or to
the lowest total cost for all items; or to accept all or part of any proposal. Delivery
time may be considered when evaluating the bid proposal. In those cases where it
is known prior to advertising that the City's intention is to award according to the
lowest total cost for all items, or in some variation thereof, statements to this af-
fect will be included on the proposal form. Absence of such statement means the City
will make that determination during the bid review.

Monica Oliver, Manager, Purchasing Division
(601) 960-1025 or 1028

1/11/2024 1/18/2024

LEGAL

Advertisement For Bids
MEDIUM TO HEAVY DUTY LOW OR NO EMISSION TRANSIT BUSES
CITY PROJECT NO. RFP#2023-04

Sealed bids will be received by the City Clerk of the City of Jackson, Mississippi
at the office of the City Clerk, City Hall, 219 South President Street, P.O. Box 17,
Jackson, Mississippi 39205 until 3:30 P.M. CST, Tuesday, February 6, 2024, from
qualified providers to manufacture and delivery of medium to heavy duty Low or
No Emission Transit Buses, along with training, testing/diagnostic equipment and
special tools in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth in RFP #2023-
04. The Contract shall be a firm-fixed-price contract over the term of five (5) years.
Each proposer must submit six (6) signed copies of its proposal and of the re-
quired forms, certifications, and affidavits attached hereto or electronically submit
on www.centralbidding.com.

The City of Jackson is committed to the principle of non-discrimination in public
contracting. It is the policy of the City of Jackson to promote full and equal busi-
ness opportunity for all persons doing business with the City. As a pre-condition to
selection, each contractor, bidder or offeror shall submit a completed and signed
Equal Business Opportunity (EBO) Plan, with the bid submission, in accordance
with the provision of the City of Jackson's Equal Business Opportunity (EBO)
Executive Order. Failure to comply with the City's Executive Order shall disqualify
a contractor, bidder, or offeror from being awarded an eligible contract. For more
information on the City of Jackson's Equal Business Opportunity Program, please
contact the Division of Equal Business Opportunity at 601-960-1856. Copies of
the Executive Order, EBO Plan Applications and a copy of the program are avail-
able at 200 South President Street, Suite 223, Jackson, Mississippi.

The City of Jackson hereby notifies all bidders that in compliance with Title VI of
the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 2000d to 2000d-4, that all
bidders will be afforded full opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation
and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, national origin,
or sex, in consideration for an award.

The City of Jackson, Mississippi ("City of Jackson") is committed to cultivating and
ensuring the quality of life of its citizens, through various programs, employment,
initiatives, and assistance. The City encourages all persons, corporations, and/or
entities doing business within the City, as well as those who seek to contract
with the City on various projects and/or conduct business in the City to assist the
City in achieving its goal by strongly considering City residents for employment
opportunities.

The City of Jackson ensures that the Disadvantaged Business Enterprises
(DBEs), as outlined in 49 C.F.R. Part 26, as amended, have the maximum oppor-
tunity to participate in the performance of contracts. Therefore, it is imperative that
you read the DBE Section and complete the necessary paperwork in its entirety.
If there is any evidence or indication that two or more bidders are in collusion to
restrict competition or are otherwise engaged in anti-competitive practices, the
submission of all such bidders shall be rejected, and such evidence may be cause
for disqualification of the participants in any future solicitation undertaken by the
City of Jackson.

Bids shall be made out on the bid proposal forms to be provided, sealed in an
envelope and plainly marked on the outside of the envelope: "Bid for MEDIUM
TO HEAVY DUTY LOW OR NO EMISSION TRANSIT BUSES (RFP)#2023-04." Bids,
EBO and DBE plans shall be submitted in triplicate (bound/stapled sepa-
rately), sealed and deposited with the City Clerk, City Hall, Jackson, Mississippi
prior to the hour and date hereinbefore designated. No bidder may withdraw his
bid within 90 days after the actual date of the opening thereof.

Official Bid Documents can be downloaded from Central Bidding at www.centralbidding.com. Electronic Bids may be submitted at www.centralbidding.com.
For any questions related to the electronic bidding process, please call Central
Bidding at 225-810-4814.

Awarding public contracts to non-resident Bidders will be on the same basis as
the non-resident bidder's state awards contracts to Mississippi Contractors bid-
ding under similar circumstances. Current state law, Mississippi General Laws of
2010, Chapter 383, section 31-3-21 of the Mississippi Code of 1972, as amended,
requires a non-resident bidder to attach to the bid a copy of the Bidder's resident
state's current laws pertaining to such state's treatment of nonresident contrac-
tors. Non-resident bidders must attach to their bid a copy of any bid preference
law of the state, city, county, parish, province, nation or political subdivision where
they are domiciled. If there is no such law where they are domiciled, all non-
resident bidders shall attach a letter to their bid stating that there is no bid prefer-
ence law where they are domiciled. The bid of any non-resident bidder who fails
to attach to its bid a copy of its domicile's bid preference law or a letter stating
that its domicile has no such bid preference law, whichever is applicable, shall be
rejected and not considered for award.

The City of Jackson hereby notifies all Bidders that minority and women business
enterprises are solicited to bid on these contracts as prime contractors and are
encouraged to make inquiries regarding potential subcontracting opportunities,
equipment, material and/or supply needs.

The City of Jackson reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to waive any
informalities or irregularities therein.

Christine Welch, Deputy Director
Office of Transportation

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

	4		2			8		6
		9		6				
	5							
	6			7			8	
		1	9					7
							3	1
						5	9	
1		2						4
		3		4			1	8

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Sudoku Solution

3	4	7	2	9	1	8	5	6
2	1	9	5	6	8	4	7	3
6	5	8	7	3	4	1	2	9
9	6	4	1	7	3	2	8	5
8	3	1	9	2	5	6	4	7
7	2	5	4	8	6	9	3	1
4	8	6	3	1	7	5	9	2
1	7	2	8	5	9	3	6	4
5	9	3	6	4	2	7	1	8

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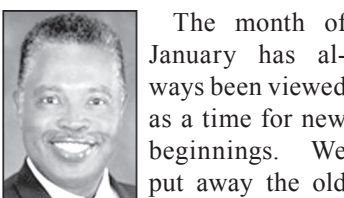
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Week of December 31, 2023

It's just January and there has already been one school shooting – not a good sign

By James B. Ewers Jr., Ed.D.
President Emeritus
Teen Mentoring Committee of Ohio



The month of January has always been viewed as a time for new beginnings. We put away the old and start afresh with the new. It gives us hope for the dawning of a new day. There are some people who are getting new jobs during the month of January while others are getting promotions. If you are a student and starting the second semester, you are set to make good grades that will earn you a scholarship. Teachers have had a break, so they are ready to impart knowledge and wisdom.

If you have retired, you are probably planning a trip for fun and relaxation. You are finding new things to do and old friends to visit. Some retirees have found physical fitness and dance classes to stay fit. However as joyous and intentional as we are about new goals and dreams, some things for the new year remain the same. School shootings happened throughout last year. Each time there were proposed remedies and solutions. Public officials pledged their support and, in some state, school budgets were amended to support school safety. According to the organization, Education Week, there were 37 school shootings

in America last year. These shootings left 74 people killed or injured. Sadly, schools have become targets for would be shooters. They are no longer the safe havens for children and teachers that they once were. What happened? Our society seemingly changed from caring to callous. Being tender with the young has now turned into being treacherous with them. Schools, once building blocks for the future, are slowly turning into crumbling stones for our children. What does the year 2024 look like so far? It doesn't look good. Just last week, there was a school shooting in the state of Iowa. The small community of Perry, Iowa, not far from Des

Moines, Iowa, has the unenviable distinction of having the first school shooting in America this year. Mind you, it's January. Dylan Butler, the shooter, killed a 6th grade student and injured 4 students and a school administrator. This tragedy happened at Perry High School. Butler died of a self-inflicted gunshot. He was 17 old. It leads to the question, what is a teenager doing with a gun? Sadness now grips the city of Perry. Governor Kim Reynolds called the shooting a senseless tragedy. Mitch Mortvedt, assistant director of the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation, said, "Butler made a number of social media posts around the time of the shoot-

ing." It is scary to think that Butler was giving people a step by step unfolding of this heinous act. This is what he did in my opinion. He was armed with a pump-action shotgun and a small-caliber handgun according to reports. Information has still not been revealed about how Butler acquired the guns. There is a strange and sad irony to the school shooting in Iowa. The Iowa Caucus will take place on January 15th. Many Republicans have been lukewarm when it comes to sponsoring gun control legislation. They seem to want no changes in the laws. It will be interesting to see whether the Iowa shooting is a part of the discussions at the

caucus sites. The polls show that the former president is leading in the polls by a wide margin. Does he have a position on gun violence? Probably not as he is busy talking about the 2020 election. Guns are too accessible in this country. What will tilt the scales and make legislators pass gun control legislation? How many children will have to lose their lives before lawmakers pass stronger laws? Now the families of those assaulted will grieve and be stricken with fear. The 6th grader who lost his life will not be in school next week. His seat will be empty and he won't be on the playground. Oh America, we can't go on this way.

In the gap between January 6 and MLK Day, once forbidden history offers hope

By Ben Jealous
People For the American Way



Even Ron DeSantis had to admit, when pressed at a CNN townhall, January 6 was a bad day for America. Invariably, following this past week's anniversary of the insurrection, we're forced to ask ourselves: Will we ever be able to pull this country back together again? It's a reasonable question. The fissures run deep. For the answer to that big, terrible question, I turn to the history books. And to the history of our country that was long kept out of those books. In the wake of the Civil War, America was still a tinder keg. In 1867, two years after the Civil War had ended and nine years before another almost erupted, Frederick Douglass laid out the argument for why, as Americans, we should remain optimistic about our future and our ability to come together. In "Our Composite Nation," Douglass explained, a nation's character is defined by that nation at its best, not its worst. And America's character (at our best), our geography, and our already diverse population "all conspire to one grand end" ... to make us the most "perfect national illustration of the unity and dignity of the human family, that the world has ever seen."

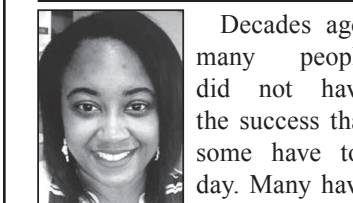
It seemed a tall order in those tough times, as it does now. And yet close to 15 years after he gave that speech, a new movement erupted in Petersburg, Virginia that swept across the old Commonwealth

uniting freedmen and former Confederate soldiers in a shared quest to save the public schools. The Readjusters Party emerged amid an attempt by the old plantation owner oligarchs to reassert their influence, following the Hayes-Tilden Compromise. The Compromise – which both prevented the possible outbreak of a second civil war and unleashed the terror of the Ku Klux Klan – resolved a bitter dispute over the election of 1876 and re-enfranchised former Confederates. With the Confederates' votes restored, the old oligarchs presumed their political power was assured. But they made a fatal mistake. They tried to dissolve the free public schools created by black-led Reconstruction governments, claiming war debt made them unaffordable. With the Readjusters offering a haven, working-class white former Confederates fled the Democratic Party of the plantation oligarchs to defend their children's schools. At the same time, sparked by both President Hayes's betrayal of black communities in the South and the same concern over public schools, my grandmother's grandfather, Edward David Bland, led an exodus of Blacks from the Republican Party to join them. The math of democracy necessitated that if they were going to save their children's schools, they would have to join up with the white parents who shared their same fears. The new Readjusters Party quickly took over the state and won the governorship, control of both houses of the legislature, and would appoint both US senators (state legislators

still appointed US Senators back then). In four years, the Readjusters succeeded in saving the free public schools. They radically expanded Virginia Tech to make the college the working white person's answer to the patrician University of Virginia, and aided the creation of what is now called Virginia State University – the first public university for the training of black teachers. They also abolished the poll tax and the public whipping post, and even pushed the state out of a deficit into a surplus. However, at the end of the one term any governor is allowed in Virginia, the Readjusters would be swept out of power by a political movement built on disinformation, ruthless violence and a call to white supremacy. The new political regime of Jim Crow then took steps to ensure that the history of the Readjusters would never make it into the lessons taught to Virginia school children. Jim Crow politicians knew how much of a threat that example was to their power structure, built on lies and hate. The story of Frederick Douglass's optimism and confidence in America's destiny, and the Readjusters' courage in pursuing it, is a reminder that the people of our country were always more resilient and greater than most politicians were ever willing to bet on. It also begs the question: If they could unite then in the interest of all their children, what is actually keeping us from uniting now in the interest of all of ours? Ben Jealous is the executive director of the Sierra Club and a Professor of Practice at the University of Pennsylvania.

Something is still missing

By LaShunda Calvert, Ph.D.
Tips for a Good Marriage



Decades ago, many people did not have the success that some have today. Many have ascertained education, nice cribs, fancy toys like cars, savvy technology, good jobs, prestigious titles, successful businesses, disposable incomes, etc. Further, we have accomplished more than our grandparents and parents could have ever fathomed or dreamed for themselves. Additionally, some beat the odds by excelling the statistics that predicted a life of poverty, substance abuse, crime, incarceration and premature death, etc. Moreover, many are fortunate enough to provide their children a lifestyle of dining out, vacations to places that some adults have never been, lavish parties, wearing brand name clothing and shoes, providing the latest toys, games, cell phones, earbuds/headphones, private school education (nothing is wrong with this – our children attended private school during their primary years, and it was very beneficial), private musical/sports lessons, extracurricular activities, restricted diets, etc. Many parents emphasize that they want to give their children what they didn't have. But something is still missing in marriages and homes. Although many have made major accomplishments – many marriages and homes are still broken. Why are successful people's marriages and homes broken? One could assume that success automatically equals a happy and healthy marriage and family. But in some instances, it does not. There are so many married couples legally married on paper but are separated at heart, living in separate bedrooms, living separate lives, and are miser-

able to say the least. Moreover, there are children who have little to no love and respect for their parents. Yes, the children who have been given what their parents didn't have, are more inclined to respect and love their technology more than their parents – as the young people say – FACTS. I remember how children and even young adolescents would flock to our mother at church – children would sit on the bench with us; every Sunday sometimes knocking the five of us off the bench (I know some of our churches have gotten boujee now and we don't sit on benches anymore – we have chairs now – this is another article for another day). I questioned why children would gravitate towards poor people like us, especially children of successful parents? I also remember children from our neighborhood opting to play with us versus going to their homes. Why did our peers want to come to our poverty-stricken home and play with us knowing that we did not have toys, nor video games, no cable television, no bikes, no skates, and sometimes we didn't have food. Yes, our peers appeared to have everything, but something was still missing. What is still missing in marriages and homes today? • God – God is non-existent or is on the backburner – some children's churches spend more time coloring, snacking, watching cartoons than learning about God – families previously sat in church and learned about God together but now the church has separated the family. (Another article for another day or I can come speak about it if you want me to.) • Present spouses and parents – spouses and parents aren't available – little to no support system • Social media and technology are rearing the children now – parents have voluntarily been replaced

- Structure – parents holding their children accountable at home, school – requiring respect
- Empathy – Care, support, understanding, kindness, tough love
- Love – love is barely or never illustrated – cussing versus hugging – never express, I love you, etc.
- Neglecting to gather at the dinner table together as a family – get back to the dinner table and bless your food together
- Quality Time – spend time with your spouses and children – yes date your spouse but don't forget about your babies too
- Communication – talk to one other about everything – I am so tired at times – would rather talk to my pillow but I try my best to talk to my husband and our children even if one eye is closed – at least I'm trying – don't judge

In conclusion, when something is still missing in some marriages and families; one often observes the impacts of separation, divorce, children seeking love from all the wrong things, people and places resulting in a life of substance abuse, crime, incarceration and premature death, etc. Our mother didn't have much, but she was genuine – our peers recognized that we had a mother who loved and cared for us – some of them were missing love and all the above in their homes. I challenge every couple and family to ensure that something is still not missing in your marriages and homes today. Contact Dr. LaShunda Calvert for speaking engagements (motivational, ministering, marriage counseling, marriage workshops, marriage seminars, marriage conferences) Marriage Ministry: The Restoration Church, Suite H, Jackson, MS. 39206, Instagram: letsstay2gether4ever (Dr. LaShunda Calvert) Facebook: Dr. LaShunda Calvert Email: letsstaytogether4eva@gmail.com or call 601-874-6176.

Perspective: Children born poor have little margin for mistakes or bad decisions, regardless of race

By Gary Fields
Associated Press

Alfred King was lying in the parking lot of a small apartment building, mortally wounded when police in Alexandria, Louisiana, got to the intersection of 12th and Magnolia Streets shortly before 1:30 a.m., Jan. 20.

The 34-year-old was the first fatal shooting of 2023 in the small city where I grew up and a large portion of my family lives.

Alfred’s death was similar to some I have covered since my first in 1985, a 38-year period when hundreds of thousands of people of all races and ethnicities have died violently in the U.S.

I know the details of too many of those incidents, from school shootings to a drug hit in a phone booth. I’ve heard the scream of a mom coming home from work and seeing her son in the street, encircled by yellow police tape. I’ve watched more than one mother gently touch the face of her teenage son then close the lid on the casket.

Some stories are burned into memory, like the Washington, D.C., teenager who asked his mom to send him out of the region to escape the violence. He spent years away only to come home one weekend to plan his high school graduation party and be randomly stabbed to death by a stranger.

While I know some of those back stories, Alfred’s is the one I can personally trace from a decision made years ago by adults to gunshots near the end of a rundown street.

Alfred is my first cousin. When he was 13 my wife and I tried to get legal custody of him after his mom was murdered, but his guardian said no. I think about him often and the decision that kept him from reaching escape velocity, the things you need to go right to lift the weight of your birth circumstances off of you. Those include family, education, jobs, friends, neighborhoods, adult interventions, hard work and



Gary Fields, AP reporter poses for a portrait at a public park, Wednesday, Dec. 20, 2023 in Washington.
AP PHOTO/MARK SCHEIFELBEIN

good luck.

We say people can be whatever they want to be. To a degree that is true, but moving through the socioeconomic levels of America’s economics-based caste system is like the Apollo moon missions of my youth. Millions of parts have to work perfectly to get you there, and back.

According to “Race and Economic Opportunity in the United States: An Intergenerational Perspective,” part of the groundbreaking Opportunity Insights project based at Harvard, only 2.5% of black kids born to a parent or parents in the bottom quintile move to the top quintile of household income. For white kids, the figure is 10.6%. What is more likely for both is they will stay in the poorest quintile or at best, move up one level to lower middle class. For white kids, that figure is 53.4% and for black kids, 75.4%.

The focus on the statistics tends to be on the racial dis-

parity. I see the disparity, but what I also see is that black or white, less than half of the kids born poor move up much. Even if they make it one step, a car repair, a missed day at work or a high utility bill can begin a downward spiral.

And there are millions born into that world, although we treat it like a moral failing. One measure of Census data shows more than 10.7 million children younger than 18 lived below the poverty level in 2022, and that figure is undoubtedly higher because millions more lived in places where the incomes couldn’t be determined.

Millions of young people live in homes where social security payments, WIC, SNAP and TANF, various food, nutrition and income assistance programs, are the order of the day.

Poverty isn’t the purview of one race. Neither is violent death. Socioeconomics is a good predictor for victimhood and criminal justice involvement, as well as deficient health

care and educational outcomes.

Alfred came into the world on the bottom economic rung and when he was 13 the critical decision was made that likely kept him there. His mom had been shot to death months before in Alexandria. My uncle, his dad, had done what he could but was broken down from working hard labor jobs, usually several at once and was living on limited income himself. He couldn’t promise his son much future.

The first time I met him Alfred was a thin, gangly, very shy kid who kept his head down, avoiding eye contact. He spoke softly and slowly and was the target of bullies.

I don’t remember him smiling – ever. Around me, at least, his nature was melancholy.

For Alfred, I was the cousin who had a charmed life. The truth is, for reasons I will never comprehend, I had nearly everything go right.

We love to talk about people pulling themselves up by their

boot straps. A lot of people contributed to my boots and showed me how to use the straps. There were teachers, friends, family, neighbors and luck stirred together. That mixture was added to the foundation, a ninth-grade drop out unwed mom who truly valued education who married a good man who helped her raise me.

Alfred’s grades were not good. Something about the way he looked at me made me ask when he’d last had an eye exam. One optometrist visit and a pair of glasses later he could see the blackboard.

My wife and I decided then. We wanted to bring him back to Maryland where we live. We wanted legal custody so my work benefits could cover him. We also wanted to be able to make decisions on his behalf without unforeseen bureaucratic or legal barriers that might arise.

My now dead uncle said yes but his message to me was Alfred’s now late-grandmother

said no. Alfred was getting a government check of some sort. I don’t know how much it paid or what program it was. This year I asked the Social Security Administration what it might have been and there were a couple of possibilities. As a minor, he could have been eligible for benefits because of his dead mom. It also might have been Supplemental Security Income for some health problem he had.

In a place where minimum wage was \$5.15 an hour at the time and people lived on the edge financial ruin, it did not matter how much, or for what. If you are born into a certain economic class everything goes towards basics: food, rent, utilities, clothing.

Alfred stayed in Louisiana. Over the years, he reached adulthood and when I came home I would give him what cash I had, especially when he had kids of his own. By then he had a criminal record but he treated me the same and he checked on my mom, Aunt Shirley.

I can’t and won’t judge the decision that was made for the 13-year-old. I sadly understand the necessity of it. But I can wonder what would have happened if we had gotten him. I can’t say for certain everything would have been OK but I believe we could have given him more options to a different path. What I want remembered is changing his path would also have changed the lives of anyone he may have wronged, too.

There are abandoned houses and empty lots in the neighborhood where he lived and died. I have been there multiple times this year.

I have seen a few young kids there, born into circumstances they didn’t ask for, lives without margin for errors or bad luck. I pray for them and the millions of kids like them, regardless of race or ethnicity, that everything goes right and they reach escape velocity.

Gary Fields, an award-winning, veteran journalist, writes about democracy for The Associated Press.

New year, new legislative priorities

By Senator Rod Hickman
District 32



It is tradition for many of us to make resolutions for the new year, a tradition I’m sure many of us have participated in this year. Additionally, here

in Mississippi, each new year also brings with it a new legislative session. This year, instead of sharing my resolutions, I thought it would be better for me to share my legislative priorities. I am extremely hopeful that my colleagues and I will use the 2024 legislative session to put Mississippi on an upward trajectory. Specifically, this year I will introduce bills that reduce or eliminate the grocery tax, eliminate warrantless searches based solely on the smell of marijuana, expand Medicaid and create a sustainable plan to save our rural hospitals, and make our elections both safer and more accessible.

Overall, the state’s current economic outlook seems promising. Currently, Mississippi has \$4 billion in unanticipated funds

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to spend. But the promising outlook prompted by the current “revenue surplus” means little if the general welfare of Mississippi’s citizens through investments in public education and infrastructure are not met.

The truth is that our public K-12 schools were underfunded by nearly \$300 million for the 2022-2023 school year; not all Mississippians have access to clean, safe drinking water; and many rural hospitals are closing as Mississippians cannot access quality, affordable healthcare services.

Some of my colleagues will argue that we should save money from our surplus or spend it on eliminating the state’s individual income tax – a move that would provide yet another large tax cut for the state’s wealthiest, and little benefit for anyone or anything else. However, I contend that we should advance legislation to help families put more food on the table and afford basic needs.

For example, instead of eliminating the individual income tax, it would be more helpful

for us to cut the state’s grocery tax and make local governments whole in that process.

With nearly 1 in 4 Mississippians living below the poverty line, Mississippi still has the nation’s highest poverty rate. And according to a report by the United Way, another 31% of Mississippians cannot afford basic household necessities – including food. Eliminating the state’s grocery tax would cost much less than eliminating the income tax, save the state much-needed revenue to pay for vital public services, and provide more targeted tax relief for the state’s lowest-and middle-income earners.

It’s also worth noting that the revenue from the state income tax accounts for a third of our general fund – the portion of the budget that takes care of the most basic services you expect the government to handle. Things like education funding and money for roads and bridges come from this portion of the budget.

All Mississippians, especially women and children, should have access to the services and programs that allow them to live

a long, healthy life. Unfortunately, Mississippi women and children continue to face some of the greatest barriers to economic well-being in the country.

Therefore, I plan to introduce legislation that requires the state to give six weeks of maternity leave to its employees. A six-week paid maternity leave for state employees in Mississippi should include generous, competitive paid leave, should be made available for all employees, and should be made available for women and adoptive parents. Adopting this law will help contribute to healthy child development, improved maternal health, reduced financial insecurity and improved retention and productivity in the labor force.

Also, I will introduce legislation to make our elections safer and more accessible. Mississippi’s voting laws are some of the most restrictive in the nation. For instance, Mississippi is one of only three states to permanently restrict people convicted of certain felonies from voting. Mississippi also requires a photo ID to cast a ballot in person at the polls or by absentee bal-

lot in the circuit or municipal clerk’s office, does not provide no-excuse absentee voting, does not allow early voting, and does not allow mail-in voting, except for a few categories of absentee voting.

To make our elections safer and more accessible, I will introduce and support legislation that allows for: automatic, online, and same-day voter registration, extended voting hours, and no-excuse early voting and mail-in voting. It’s also critically important that we make the process for restoring the right to vote after criminal conviction clearer and more effective, and that we work to restore the state’s ballot initiative process.

Lastly, I will also introduce legislation to advance criminal justice reform. I’m currently working on legislation that would forbid police from using the smell of marijuana as probable cause to conduct a warrantless search of a motor vehicle, home or other private property. This is important to protect citizens now that the state has implemented a medical marijuana program which includes smoke marijuana. Under current law,

a law enforcement officer can conduct warrantless searches and arrest simply because the officer smells what he or she believes to be marijuana. This law would stop unwarranted invasions of privacy simply because an officer smelled marijuana.

The bottom line is that patients shouldn’t have to worry about what happens in every interaction with a police officer because they could possibly smell like illegally-obtained medication.

In all, I am hopeful that this new year will bring about more opportunity and prosperity for all Mississippians and bring as many resources as possible into Mississippi District 32.

As I work with my colleagues to ensure a successful, impactful 2024 legislation session, my hope is that residents across the state engage in the legislative process and make their voices heard, as well. Together, we will move Mississippi forward.

Senator Hickman, an attorney in Noxubee County, represents District 32 that includes Kemper County and portions of Lauderdale, Noxubee and Winston Counties.

Hinds County School District Weekly Update

ENGAGING-EMPOWERING-ENSURING-EXCELLENCE

RIGGS MANOR RETIREMENT VISITATION

Ivan Smith, director of Maintenance for Hinds County School District, and his staff, organized a Christmas visit to Riggs Manor Retirement Facility, along with the Central Office Staff of Hinds County Schools, and the Raymond High School Choir. The Raymond High School Choir provided an excellent song service which brought in a festive atmosphere during this Christmas season.

