



Usher and Jackson State University's Sonic Boom of the South Marching Band wow fans during the Apple Music Super Bowl LVIII Halftime Show

By Rachel James-Terry
Director of Public Relations,
Jackson State University

Jackson State University's Sonic Boom of the South Marching Band made a special appearance with eight-time Grammy-winning artist Usher during the Apple Music Super Bowl LVIII Halftime Show in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The Boom showed television viewers and football fans in Allegiant Stadium why they are known as the "Summa Cum Laude of Bands," making the most of a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

"It feels surreal. It's not every day you are invited to participate in such a monumental moment. The reality of the situation did not hit us until we began rehearsals in Vegas," shares Roderick Little, Ph.D., director of bands at JSU. "I cannot think of anything more exciting or rewarding than walking onto the field, hearing the roar of the Super Bowl crowd, and immersing ourselves in the spirit that Usher brought to his performance."

Little says he was met with jaw-drops and wide-eyed faces when he informed the band students that they would participate in the halftime show. "They deserve this adventure and have worked hard to be



JSU's Sonic Boom of the South Marching Band delivers a captivating halftime performance alongside singer, songwriter, dancer, actor and producer Usher. PHOTOS BY WILLIAM H. KELLY III/JSU UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS.

here. I am also proud that I could fulfill two of my strategic goals for our band program: provide life-changing experiences for our students and place our program on one of the most visible national stages in this country. It does not get any bigger than the Super Bowl."

The band's appearance at the bowl started with a conversation between JSU alum Cortez Bryant and his friend Jesse Col-

ins, executive producer of the halftime show.

"He hit me and asked if I knew of any HBCU bands. Of course, Jackson State's Sonic Boom is the best band in the land. Without a doubt, they were going to receive my recommendation," says Bryant, also a Sonic Boom alum and Co-CEO of Blueprint Group/Maverick. The rest is Jackson State University history.

This is the fifth year the Roc Nation has executive produced the halftime show.

About the Sonic Boom of the South

The Jackson State University Marching Band was dubbed The Sonic Boom of the South in 1971 by students in the band. In 1974, the band's theme, "Get Ready," an old Motown

*Super Bowl
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Is Medicaid expansion truly on the table?

The best interests of all Mississippians not the norm, 2024 Legislative session could change that



L-R: Corey Millier, Mississippi State economist; Maria Morris of Community Health Center Association of MS
PHOTO BY DEBBIE PANTENBURG, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS, LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MISSISSIPPI

By Christopher Young
Contributing Writer

COMMENTARY

It's innately informative that 418,233 Mississippians, nearly 51% of voters, chose to reelect the incumbent governor – Jonathan Tate Reeves – as our state ranks #49 overall in health care and #50 in healthcare quality, per *US News & World Report*. If our chief executive viewed the health and welfare of Mississippians as a top priority, there is little chance we would be in this position.

Reeves has always opposed Medicaid expansion. He calls it Obamacare, thereby connecting lifesaving health services and an enormous influx of federal dollars to blackness, knowing his dog whistle will be heard by his political base. Two months before the November elections, a Mississippi Today/Siena College poll showed "92% of likely voters surveyed are concerned about the hospital crisis, with 70% saying they are very concerned." The poll also showed that "Medicaid expansion is favored by 72%, opposed by 23%, with 5% not answering."

New House Speaker Jason White (R-48) says he wants legislators to consider Medicaid expansion as a way to bring up to \$1 billion of federal money to the state each year," per the Associated Press on January 12, 2024.

Mississippi is one of only ten states who have not expanded Medicaid; seven of the ten are former Confederate states. The Department of Health and Human Services said on December 18, 2023, that "the ten states have disenrolled more children than those (states) that have expanded Medicaid combined." Ten chief executives do not prioritize the health of our children.

For over two years Reeves refused to expand a portion of the state's traditional Medicaid program to include

post-partum mothers. His decisions cost lives, before finally conceding.

As of December 2023, poor uninsured mothers will now receive full health coverage for one year postpartum, instead of sixty days, and 90% of the cost is paid by the federal government.

Data provided by the Center for Healthcare Quality and Payment Reform "shows that 34 of Mississippi's 74 rural hospitals are struggling financially and at risk of closure. Twenty-five of those are at risk of closing immediately, or within the next couple of years," as reported by *Mississippi Today* last July.

The Affordable Care Act is a life-ring provided by the federal government that became law in 2010 and was to go into effect throughout the nation in 2014, but in 2012 the Supreme Court ruled that making it go into effect in all 50 states was unconstitutionally coercive, therefore states maintain the option to expand or not, per Corey Miller, economist for the State of Mississippi, a panelist at a League of Women Voters (Jackson Area) membership meeting at the Ridgeland Library on February 10, 2024.

He indicated that 24 states initially chose to expand their Medicaid plans, and now that number is 40. No state has elected to disenroll.

Miller shared that President Biden's America Rescue Plan added an even higher share of federal funds to entice the remaining ten states to expand their programs. He made clear that his office does not provide recommendations, just data and analysis.

He estimates that 250,000 people, 19-64-year-olds, between 100-138% of the federal poverty level (a rate that

*Medicaid
Continued on page 3*

Jackson City Council approves measures to tackle homelessness and enhances city governance

By Edelia J. Carthan, Ed.D.
Editor

In a significant development during the special council meeting February 13, 2024, at City Hall, the Jackson City Council took decisive steps to address key issues facing the city, including homelessness, historic preservation and enhancing city governance through strategic appointments and contracts.

Historic Preservation and City Representation

The council approved the appointment of Bessie Glass to the Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Jackson, reinforcing the city's commitment to preserving its rich historical heritage. Monique Davis was reappointed to represent restaurants on the Jackson Convention and Visitors Bureau Board of Directors, ensuring the continued promotion of Jackson as a prime destination for visitors.

Legal and Lobbying Contracts

Drew M. Martin's appointment as city attorney was con-

firmed, marking a pivotal step in strengthening Jackson's legal framework. Additionally, the council approved a 12-month contract with Ice Miller, a lobbying firm tasked with representing Jackson's interests at the federal level for \$135,000, showcasing the city's proactive approach in securing favorable federal support and resources.

Addressing Homelessness

A significant portion of the meeting focused on the city's initiative to combat homelessness. The council approved a contract with the Jackson Resource Center to establish 60 tiny homes for the unhoused population, utilizing \$2,876,054 in funds received from the American Rescue Plan. This initiative sparked a lively debate among council members and citizens alike, reflecting the community's diverse perspectives on tackling homelessness.

Mayor Chokwe Lumumba emphasized the project's aim to provide a comprehensive solution to homelessness, highlighting the transition from congregate

to non-congregate housing as a means to integrate the unhoused population back into the community while addressing common complaints related to homelessness.

Community Concerns and Debate

The council's deliberations were not without controversy. The debate became heated when Mayor Lumumba was interrupted by Councilman Ashby Foote, prompting Council President Aaron Banks to restore order. Councilman Brian Grizzell, Ward 4, brought attention to the plight of unhoused young people, stressing the importance of addressing their needs through education and support services. Councilman Kenneth Stokes also shared his insights on the impact of homelessness on neighborhoods, reflecting on past disagreements and emphasizing the need for effective solutions.

Other Decisions

The council faced a setback with the failure to pass a vote on the four largest claims

on the docket amounting to \$17,379,144.72, demonstrating the complexities and challenges in city governance. However, they authorized a full and complete settlement of a property damage claim for Mary Thompson, amounting to \$17,673.54, without admitting liability, showcasing the council's commitment to resolving disputes amicably.

In a move to address urgent matters, the council voted to enter a special session to discuss the garage contract before its deadline, underlining the council's responsiveness to time-sensitive issues.

The Jackson City Council's actions on February 13, 2024, reflect a multifaceted approach to addressing the city's challenges, from homelessness to historic preservation and legal representation.

Through strategic appointments, contracts and a keen focus on community concerns, the council aims to pave the way for a more inclusive, well-represented and effectively governed

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If You See Them

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Trailblazer Rep. Alyce Clark honored with portrait at the State Capitol

By Jackie Hampton
Publisher

History was made in Mississippi Tuesday when, for the first time, a female portrait was hung in the State Capitol.

Alyce Clark, former state representative, watched in awe as her portrait was mounted on the walls of the Capitol, where it should remain forever.

The portrait, painted by Ryan Mack, was first unveiled at Clark's retirement celebration on Jan. 26 at the downtown Jackson Convention Complex. The event was presented by Connecting the Dots Foundation, Inc., which was founded by Marilyn Johnson-Luckett, Ph.D. "I can't think of a more deserving, a more beautiful woman than Rep. Alyce Clark to hang on the walls of the Capitol," stated Luckett at the time of the unveiling.

Student leaders from Alcorn University were at the capitol to witness the hanging of the portrait, which by the way was Alcorn's Day at the Capitol.

Clark made history when she became the first black woman to be elected to the Mississippi Legislature in 1985 and has now made history as not only the first black woman, but the first female, to have her portrait displayed in the State Capitol.



Artist Ryan Mack assists with the hanging of his painting of Rep. Clark.



Rep. Clark looks at portrait along with artist Ryan Mack and Marilyn Luckett, Ph.D.



Rep. Clark thanked her friends and fellow lawmakers. PHOTOS BY JAY JOHNSON



Sen. Robert Johnson (District 94) addressed the crowd with supporters in the background.



Artist Ryan Mack and Rep. Clark after portrait placement



Mr. & Miss Alcorn and SGA president with Rep. Clark

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Super Bowl

Continued from page 1



JSU President Marcus L. Thompson, Ph.D. (center) and Dr. Roderick Little, (5th from left) JSU director of Bands with the Sonic Boom of the South's J5 drum majors before the Apple Music Super Bowl LVIII halftime performance.

favorite, was selected. Three years later, the "Tiger Run-On" was perfected, which is a fast, eye-catching shuffle that blends an adagio step with an up-tempo shuffle, then back to adagio

– a "Sonic Boom" trademark that brings fans to their feet during halftime performances.

The "Sonic Boom" has performed many halftime appearances, including the Atlanta Falcons,



(Left) Courtney Lett, executive administrative assistant for the Sonic Boom, (Center) Roderick Little, Ph.D., director of Bands at Jackson State University, and the Sonic Boom J5 drum majors

Detroit Lions, New Orleans Saints and Cincinnati Bengals; a television special for Motown's 30th Anniversary and the 34th NAACP Image Awards, with a special guest performance by

"Cedric the Entertainer."

The band is a favored entry in halftime performances during football season and for parades throughout Mississippi and the U.S.

Medicaid

Continued from page 1

does fluctuate from year to year) would be eligible if the the state expanded Medicaid. He estimated that another group, about 100,000 residents make too much income to be eligible for traditional Medicaid and don't have enough income to qualify for the federal marketplace, hence the term Coverage Gap.

In response to the moderator's question as to the cost of expanding Medicaid in our state, Miller indicated a number between \$200-230 million per year gross, not net cost. Yet substantial savings would also be realized, including; the increased federal matching rate for the first two years (\$600-700 million), shifting groups from the traditional plan to the expanded plan shifts federal matching rates from about 76% to 90%, outside care exceeding 24 for prison-

ers would be covered where now it is not – equating to millions more savings per year, several taxes would be altered favorably, as well as the decrease in uncompensated care. "We estimate that for the first 7-8 years of expansion, the cost would be offset, and after those 7-8 years the state cost of expansion would have reduced to less than \$100 million per year," per Miller.

The other panelist, Maria D. Morris, Community Health Center Association of Mississippi, and the original director of Mississippi's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), spoke to myriad issues involving rural, poor, children, elderly, disability and other groups in need of services. She also indicated that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services determined

that Mississippi was one of those states that needed more in-person assistance in helping eligible citizens learn about and perhaps join the marketplace health plans. She is a certified application counselor and indicates there is now at least one counselor at all 21 community health centers throughout the state. She advocated having a Medical Home – so that patients have continuity of care, choose your own doctor so that the doctor truly gets to know you, leading to a higher level of care within a hub of providers and services that your doctor will help you navigate.

Visit <https://lwv-ms.org> to learn more about this and many more issues. Disclosure: This writer is a member of League of Women Voters.



Martha Phillips – panel moderator and membership chair of League of Women Voters (Jackson Area) PHOTO BY DEBBIE PANTENBURG, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS, LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MISSISSIPPI



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New Hope Baptist Church
Dr. Jerry Young, Pastor
1555 Beasley Road, Jackson, MS 39206

Thirteenth Annual

"Back In The Day", A Black History Celebration

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Civil Rights Legends Honorees

Special Guest



Mrs. Maude BALLOU (Posthumously)



Mr. Bennie RICHARD



Mr. Robert WALKER



MADDRAMA
Dr. Mark Henderson
Director

Participants:

Murrah & Jim Hill High School Color Guards, New Hope Mass Choir, NHCS: Pre-school and Elementary Divisions, Bro. Charles Taylor and other Youth.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2024 | 6PM

Grand Finale Speaker and Special Guests



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Jim Hill High School Concert Choir
Ms. Pamela Byrd-Moody, Director



Cong. Bennie THOMPSON

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Sponsored by New Hope Baptist Church | Black History Committee
For more information, contact: Dr. Flonzie Brown-Wright
Project Director, 601-981-8696 or 601-366-7002



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www.newhope-baptist.org



New Hope Baptist Church's 13th Annual "Back in the Day" Black History celebration features Civil Rights legends and MADDRAMA

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

Persistent, determined and focused are adjectives that describe New Hope Baptist Church's acknowledgment of the roots of African Americans, their struggles, their triumphs and their aspirations. The annual "Back in the Day" Black History events during the month of February are loaded with necessities for past, present and future strides of African Americans. For thirteen consecutive years, the church has reached out and reminded the community of the significance of knowing and understanding African-American history. For thirteen consecutive years, attendees have left the events filled with deference for the African-American race and jubilation to carry forth a transformation of character and goodwill.

One of two "Back in the Day" events for this month occurred inside the church – and virtually – on Thursday, February 8, 2024, at 6 p.m. Like two peas in a pod, Shana and Nadia Harper (sisters) were the perfect duo for the night's occasion. They appealed the audience with their grace and dignity while bringing forth program occurrences.

Under the leadership of Senior Army Instructor and Retired Major Robert O. Morton, Murrah High School Color Guard participated in the posting of colors. The American flag and the Christian flag were placed in their predetermined positions. Then the audience engaged in a salute to the American flag.

The songs, "O Freedom" and "We Shall Overcome," led by New Hope Mass Choir and MADDRAMA, served as overarching elements of the saga of the African-American people – a people forced from the shores of Africa, held in bondage in America, protesting against that enslavement and standing tall among generations. These songs also served notice that "the struggle" is not over. Hence, striving for greater commitment and higher gain are the hallmarks of the race's destiny.

Creative excellence and positive impact danced throughout the evening's event. New Hope Christian School's youth shared the historical context of Black History in their "somebodness."



Back In The Day" Project Director Flonzie Brown Wright gives words of appreciation to participants and audience for supporting the Part 1 celebration.
PHOTOS BY JANICE NEAL-VINCENT



"The Struggle Is Not Over" performance by MADDRAMA.



Howard Ballou, WLBT news anchor, receives Civil Rights Legend Plaque in honor of his mother Maude Lerita Williams Ballou (posthumously) from New Hope pastor Dr. Jerry Young.



New Hope's mass choir sings "O Freedom."

Their confidence appealed to the audience as they revealed knowledge of various accomplished African Americans.

The "Back in the Day" celebration's guest was MADDRAMA (Making A Difference Doing Respectable and Meaningful Art), founded in 1998 at Jackson State University by Dr. Mark Henderson (artistic director). While broaching a space for inclusivity, the local and national performers presented "Voices from Back in the Day (Introduction of Living Civil Rights Legends)."

The edutainment dramatization propelled reflecting minds to understand that the African-American race

is clear about its mission. It showed Black History as a reflection of African Americans walking in their truth and dispelling the myth of inferiority. Such a performance seemed typical of Henderson – creative extraordinaire.

Plaques were presented on behalf of legends. The Maude Lerita Williams Ballou Civil Rights Legend Award was presented to Howard Ballou, news anchor – WLBT – on behalf of his mother, who was secretary to the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Bennie Richard, educator, principal and administrator, received The Living Legend Award. Robert Major Walker – the first African-American Mayor of Vicksburg, Miss., received The Civil



Bennie Richard, educator, principal and administrator (C), received The Living Legend Award, flanked by Dr. Young and Robert Patterson.

Rights Legend Award.

In their remarks, Flonzie Brown Wright (project director) and the Rev. Dr. Jerry Young (pastor) expressed gratitude to program participants, The New Hope "Back in the Day" Black History Committee and attendees. Both embraced the celebrations of contributions made by Black Americans, encouraged attendees to show up and cast their ballots, and created new spaces to connect with others. Both appealed to attendees to avoid negativity by exercising positivity.

The "Back in the Day" Black History Committee includes: Ethel Brooks, George Brooks, Maggie Cotton, Charlene Evers Kreele, Ret. Major Nicholas

Kreele, Ava Lloyd (teen member), Avis Lloyd, Timothy Lloyd, Sandra McCall, Joann Mickens, the Rev. Wendell Howton Paris, Brenda Patterson, Robert Patterson and Flonzie Brown Wright.

"In Memoriam" recognized Ineva May Pittman, Obadiah Myles and Elizabeth Myles.

New Hope's "Back in the Day" grand finale is slated for Thursday, February 22, 2024, at 6 p.m. (virtual and local). The Church is located at 1555 Beasley Road, Jackson, MS 39206.

The Struggle Is Not Over. Pensively Focusing Ahead Is The Mark Of Achievement – a stance nurtured by MADDRAMA.

PHOTO OF THE WEEK



AKA and DST Day at the Mississippi State Capitol February 6th, 2024

Jay D. Johnson

The AKA Day at the Capitol and the Delta Day at the Capitol - African American Women joining forces to make positive changes in Mississippi

Tougaloo College receives a \$1 million donation at 36th annual business luncheon

By Jackie Hampton
Publisher

Tougaloo College held its 36th annual business luncheon Thursday, Feb. 8, 2024, at the Jackson Hilton Hotel at 11:45 a.m. This year, as in previous years, the event brought together many of the state's most preeminent business, government and educational leaders, as well as those in other private and public sector organizations. They reflected on the theme, "Emerging Trends in Business and Technology: Implications for Equity and Inclusion."

A surprising \$1 million donation was presented to the college by alumna Carrie Lapsky Davis, class of 1964. Davis presented the \$1 million donation in honor of her grandmother Carrie Ellen Rice. Davis' grandmother sent her to Tougaloo with her life savings - \$700 packed in a Folger's coffee can. "It's something that will live with me for the rest of my life and I can never think of how she was able to do it," Davis expressed.

Davis grew up in Port Gibson, Mississippi, and she believes that her grandmother propelled her life in the right direction. While at Tougaloo, Davis joined the Civil Rights Movement and became a protegee of civil rights icon Medgar Evers.

The guest speaker was Ashlee V. Davidson, vice president of Communications for Lockheed Martin. She was introduced by Angelique Lee, City of Jackson, Ward 2 Councilwoman.

Lee spoke about the rapidly changing way businesses are now operating due to new technologies and developments in artificial intelligence. She noted that artificial intelligence has evolved from being used as just a tool to now reaching the status of collaborator and co-creator for businesses.

Davidson implored businesses to be intentional about diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) practices.

Closing remarks were given by Tougaloo President Donzell Lee.



\$1M Donor Carrie Lapsky Davis, Tougaloo College Class of 1964



Guest speaker Ashlee V. Davidson, VP of Communications for Lockheed Martin, addresses the crowd at the business luncheon.

PHOTOS BY DAREK ASHLEY, ASHLEY'S PHOTOGRAPHY



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Carrie Lapsky Davis '64



Mississippi taxpayers continue aiding segregation academies



Rep. John Thomas Lamar, III
FROM WWW.LEGISLATURE.MS.GOV



Entrance to Magnolia Heights School in Senatobia, MS. PHOTO BY CHRIS YOUNG

By Christopher Young
Contributing Writer

Despite the law of the land, lawmakers find workarounds to maintain segregation funding. Sometimes, you just have to see for yourself. Sure enough, after a three-hour drive from Jackson in overcast conditions with a few sprinkles, there it was at the height of a hill, 1 Chiefs Drive in Senatobia – Chief Country – the K-12 private school named Magnolia Heights School. Other names for such institutions exist, like independent and preparatory, but the most historically accurate term is segregation academies. At one time, there were 57 of these academies in Mississippi, six of which are now closed, according to https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Segregation_academy.

According to www.magnoliaheights.com, they have been in operation since the 1970-71 school year with an initial enrollment of 225 students. The school's history page on the website begins with this sentence: "Magnolia Heights School was the dream of a group of citizens who felt the need for alternative education in the Tate County area for any child interested in a college preparatory education," as if public schools don't offer the same.

State Representative John Thomas "Trey" Lamar III, not only a graduate, currently serves as vice president of Magnolia Heights Board of Trustees. Lamar (R-08 Lafayette & Tate), since 2012, is also chairman of the lower chamber's Ways and Means committee and has drafted legisla-

tion to funnel federal funds through the state to private schools, HB1663 to name just one.

Keeping their white kids segregated from black kids is always their version of "alternative education," despite the laws against it and the conscience of the nation. The Brown v. Board of Education decision was handed down by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1954, mandating public school desegregation – no more separate but equal shenanigans. In the 1976 Runyon v. McCrary decision, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that private schools that discriminate on the basis of race or establish racial segregation are in violation of federal law.

Today, Magnolia Heights School has an enrollment of 695 students, according to a lady in their office during this writer's February 8, 2024 visit. I was told a lady named Jacqueline would have answers to my questions about enrollment and demographics. I left my card and received assurances I would hear from her, but that didn't happen as we went to press a week later.

Perhaps it was the use of the word, demographics? Their website indicates they have 64 teachers – 100% of the faces look white. They have this rotating photograph thing on the home page; I count 63 faces in total, 61 of them are white faces. Another page spoke about their National Honor Society inducting 25 new members; the photo has 50 faces in total, 49 out of 50 are white faces.

Looking back, "from the mid-

1960s to 1980s, as public schools in the Deep South began to slowly desegregate through federal court orders, private school enrollment increased by more than 200,000 students across the region – with about two-thirds of that growth occurring in six states: Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina and South Carolina. During this time, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) vacillated in its allowance of tax deductions for private schools... leading to a Mississippi-based lawsuit against the IRS in 1969 in which federal courts issued a preliminary injunction denying exemption to private schools that were segregated by race.

Following this court order, the IRS adopted a non-discrimination policy applying to private schools in 1970, though it took eight years to be implemented," according to <https://southerneducation.org>

Nancy Loome, executive director of the Parents Campaign, a public-school advocacy group, told *Mississippi Today* in April 2022, "During and following integration in the 60s and 70s, lawmakers diverted much-needed funding and resources away from public schools and into private segregation academies. It was wrong then, and it is wrong today. The public's funds belong in the public's schools, and our constitution makes that plain."

In October 2022, Hinds County Chancery Court Judge Crystal Wise Martin blocked a state law that put \$10 million of federal pandemic re-

lief money into infrastructure grants for private schools. On February 6, 2024, a three-judge panel of the Mississippi Supreme Court led by Justice Leslie King heard oral arguments, and a ruling is pending.

Mississippi's residents pay dearly in a multitude of ways for not prioritizing public education and its funding. We are currently ranked #49 overall by <https://worldpopulationreview.org> and others. We passed a law in 1997 for the Mississippi Adequate Education Program but haven't followed it in 15 years.

This state fought against the equitable funding sought for HBCUs in the Ayers case for nearly 30 years. Too many wrongheaded people elect wrongheaded leadership, and we suffer and remain at the bottom.

Using personal funds to support one's alma mater happens daily, but folks like Representative John Thomas Lamar III, just 43 years old and a former law clerk in the Office of Governor Haley Barbour, go about it differently – like a cowpuncher heaving a lasso around the necks of all Mississippi taxpayers to pony up the desired funds for their alma mater and other segregation academies. Do you suppose it is a coincidence that it was Representative Lamar who authored HB1020 – aka Jim Crow 2.0 – the blatant disruption of black power in our 80+% Black City? He received his training at Magnolia Heights School, where the website is overflowing with words, with the exception of these three, Black History Month.

Republican Col. Timothy "Ghannon" Burton calls for open debates in Senate race

By Edelia J. Carthan, Ed.D.
Editor

In a significant move ahead of the March 12 primary election, Republican candidate Col Timothy "Ghannon" Burton, a decorated retired U.S. Marine Corps Colonel and Top Gun pilot, is pushing for a series of open debates in the U.S. Senate race. Burton, who has been awarded the Bronze Star for heroism in combat, emphasizes the importance of trans-



Burton
BALLOTPEDIA.ORG

parent discussions to address the challenges facing Mississippi and the nation.

Burton has issued a direct challenge to incumbent Senator Roger Wicker, urging him to participate in open debates alongside himself and fellow candidate Dan Eubanks. "It's imperative that the voters of Mississippi hear directly from the candidates before they cast their ballots," Burton stated, highlighting the necessity for voters to be fully informed on where each candidate stands on critical issues such as border security, inflation, the weaponization of the military and government accountability.

Burton's call for debates underscores his commitment to voter information and transparency. He believes that engaging in open discussions will not only clarify each candidate's positions and proposals but also empower voters to make informed decisions in the upcoming primary.

As the incumbent, Senator Wicker faces the responsibility to address his challenger and the concerns of Mississippi voters. Burton's readiness to debate on any platform showcases his dedication to presenting alternative solutions and perspectives on key state and national issues.

Burton invites voters, supporters and the media to advocate for these debates, emphasizing the need for transparency and accountability in the electoral process. "By demanding open debates, we ensure that the voices of Mississippians are heard, and their concerns are addressed before casting their votes," says Burton.

Col. Timothy "Ghannon" Burton, a candidate for the United States Senate in Mississippi, brings a wealth of military experience and a commitment to transparency to the political arena. As a retired U.S. Marine Corps colonel, Top Gun pilot, and recipient of the Bronze Star for heroism in combat, Burton is focused on addressing critical issues and informing voters ahead of the March 12 primary election.

For more information or to support Burton's call for open debates, visit burton4ussenate.com or contact Ron Boutwell at reboutwell@gmail.com

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Purple Diamonds Open Auditions: A community event fostering talent and sisterhood in Jackson

By Edelia J. Carthan, Ed.D
Editor

On February 10, Champion Gym at 1355 Hattiesburg Street in Jackson, was abuzz with excitement and talent as it hosted the 17th Annual Purple Diamonds Open Auditions. Known as one of Jackson's premier dance teams, the Purple Diamonds have graced several national television shows, including Lifetime's "Bring It!" and the OWN hit show, "Belle Collective."

The event saw hundreds of aspiring dancers and their parents eagerly lining up for a chance to join the esteemed team, which features three levels: Diamond Minis for ages 4-6, Diamond Misses for ages 7-11 and Purple Diamonds for ages 12-17.

The gym was filled to capacity, standing room only, as participants showcased their dance skills, hoping to secure a spot on the team.

Alexius Colton, a parent attending the auditions for the first time with her daughter Ja'asia, shared her excitement and nervousness about the day. "I was so nervous for Ja'asia. This is her first time dancing on a drill team. She did cheerleading. She loves flipping and tumbling. I enjoyed myself here today. If you want your daughter to dance, regardless if they have rhythm or not, bring them on down. It starts from yay high to high school, and you will see the difference



The girls sit and wait to try out for Purple Diamonds Dance Team
PHOTOS BY DR. JAY



Parents and supporters pack Champion Gym to watch Purple Diamonds Open Auditions



Girls waiting to audition for Purple Diamonds Open Auditions

in two months, and it also helps with sisterhood and discipline," she stated.

Dexter Brown, owner of Dexter Brown Dance Company, expressed his admiration for the event's atmosphere and its impact on the participants.

"The 17th Annual Purple Diamond Auditions was packed with love and genuine care that will help nurture those beautiful black young ladies on the floor. I wish that every city across America would celebrate our culture in Dance as it relates to providing our youth with opportunities and experiences of a lifetime that will keep them thriving

and not become a statistic."

Shanika Kelly Lee, owner of Diamond Dance Company and the Purple Diamonds Dance Team, reflected on the team's inception and its goals. "I started Purple Diamonds in 2007 to give young ladies in our community an outlet to showcase their talent in dance while gaining other life skills that they can use in the future. It has definitely been rewarding, and I am so happy to have touched so many lives."

Lee further emphasized the broader mission of the Purple Diamonds, stating, "When the ladies become Purple Diamonds, it is my hope that they will not

only experience dance but sisterhood, a family-oriented environment and a space in which they feel loved. It is also important to me that they learn to be respectful, respectable, accountable and responsible, as these qualities will take them far in life."

The Purple Diamonds Dance Team not only offers young girls and teenagers an opportunity to excel in dance but also nurtures essential life skills, fostering a sense of community and belonging.

To learn more about the Purple Diamonds Dance team, visit them online at PurpleDiamondsJxn.com.



Parents and supporters stand in line to enter Purple Diamonds Open Auditions held at 1355 Hattiesburg Street in Jackson.

It's All A Blur: JSU Sonic Boom of the South Alumni band touring with rap icon Drake

By Rachel James-Terry
Director of Communications,
Jackson State University

When Drake and J. Cole launched the "It's All A Blur – Big as the What?" tour on Feb. 2 in Tampa, Florida, social media was in a tizzy. Yes, the world had been anticipating the megastars' link-up, but fans were further sent aflutter when Jackson State University's Sonic Boom of the South Alumni Marching Band high-stepped into Amalie Arena with their signature sound and showmanship.

While people debated if it was indeed the Boom, Christopher "CJ" Gibson, who is Drake's road manager, a graduate of Jackson State, and a former member of the Boom, confirmed that an extension of the Summa Cum Laude of bands is indeed touring with the superstar.

"The first 'It's All A Blur Tour' featured 21 Savage as a co-headliner. As we were planning the tour's second leg, we changed the artist. This new tour is with J. Cole as a headliner, so they just wanted to add a different aspect from the old tour," Gibson explained. "Drake came up with the idea to make it a sports theme show, and he wanted to add a marching band. Now, everybody we work with knows that I was in the marching band."

Gibson was determined that the spot would not go to any band but the Sonic Boom. "I had to vouch for my home and alumni band. I knew it had to be Jackson State. There was no question. I would not let them get anybody else," explained the Jackson, Mississippi, native, who began his foray into the entertainment industry as an assistant to Cortez Bryant, Lil Wayne's best friend, one-time manager, and a JSU and Sonic Boom alum.

Putting the tour plan into

IT'S ALL A BLUR TOUR BIG AS THE WHAT?			
Fri Feb 02	Tampa, FL	Sun Mar 10	Lexington, KY
Sun Feb 04	Tampa, FL	Thu Mar 14	San Antonio, TX
Wed Feb 07	Nashville, TN	Fri Mar 15	San Antonio, TX
Thu Feb 08	St. Louis, MO	Mon Mar 18	Oklahoma City, OK
Mon Feb 12	St. Louis, MO	Tue Mar 19	Oklahoma City, OK
Tue Feb 13	Pittsburgh, PA	Sat Mar 23 *	Sunrise, FL
Fri Feb 16	Pittsburgh, PA	Sun Mar 24 *	Birmingham, AL
Sat Feb 17	Columbus, OH	Wed Mar 27 *	State College, PA
Tue Feb 20	Columbus, OH	Sun Mar 31 *	Elmont, NY
Wed Feb 21	Cleveland, OH	Thu Apr 04 *	Elmont, NY
Sat Feb 24	Cleveland, OH	Fri Apr 05 *	Memphis, TN
Sun Feb 25	Buffalo, NY	Mon Apr 08 *	Denver, CO
Tue Feb 27	Buffalo, NY	Mon Apr 15	Denver, CO
Wed Feb 28	Buffalo, NY	Tue Apr 16	Denver, CO
Sat Mar 02	Kansas City, MO		
Sun Mar 03	Kansas City, MO		
Wed Mar 06	New Orleans, LA		
Thu Mar 07	New Orleans, LA		

without J. Cole



JSU Alumni Sonic Boom of the South Marching Band



Dressed in tour attire, Sonic Boom alumni members of the drum section War & Thunder throw up their signature hand sign.



Christopher "CJ" Gibson
PHOTOS SPECIAL TO JSU

action, Gibson reached out to his cousin Maurice Gibson, an '08 JSU grad and former snare drum player in the Boom. Together, they spoke with Rodrick Little, Ph.D., director of bands at Jackson State. Little gave his blessing and suggested they tap Boom members who recently graduated.

Courtney Lett, administrative assistant for the Boom, then sent Maurice a list of potential participants, whom he began to call with the news. He admitted

that some were skeptical of the opportunity.

"They were thinking it was a scam. When they hear Drake and J. Cole, all expenses paid, plus compensation, they are like, 'Who is this guy calling me? I don't know him.' Once I gave them all the information, some contacted Dr. Little to verify if it was true," Maurice shared. "Some people could not do it due to scheduling conflicts and other obligations."

Their collaborative efforts

resulted in a 24-person Sonic Boom Alumni Band from classes 2022-2023. For a week, the alums rehearsed several songs belonging to the "Slime You Out" rapper. Their practice hall was the former home arena of the New Jersey Nets. Then, it was time for the Boom to make its debut.

Nathaniel Kenner served as head drum major for the Sonic Boom's iconic J5. He graduated with a degree in civil engineering in May 2022.

Standing in the Tampa arena, preparing to march Drake through the crowd, Kenner shared that he was overwhelmed but in a "good way."

"There was joy and excitement. I was also nervous at the same time, but it was all a good feeling. I was a little anxious because I wanted to make sure we represented the Boom and ourselves in the best light," says the New Orleans native, who works as an engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. However, a

virtual component allows him to work and tour.

Maurice, who manages the alumni band, explained that they all had to sign non-disclosure agreements before the tour opened to ensure nothing was leaked. So, he enjoyed watching the news spread once the word was out. While the flashing lights can be enticing, Maurice, a husband and father of three, said the tour is big business for him.

"I have a family to take care of, so I take this opportunity seriously and do not want to do anything to jeopardize it," said Maurice, who has worked in IT for the past 15 years.

Kenner reflected on his time at JSU and credited his experiences at the HBCU for helping to develop his character and accountability.

"Coming from Jackson State University taught us how to adapt to certain situations, especially being in the Boom. It taught us discipline and how to react to certain crowds and make sure that we understand our responsibility and handle the tasks that need to be handled. Being at Jackson State taught me how to become a better young man," he said.

"It's All A Blur" represents a full-circle moment characterized by the connections and bonds established at Jackson State University.

"After that first show, I had to call Cortez when I woke up Saturday morning. I told him it is just a totally different feeling when you can pay it forward and help out in a positive way. Jackson, Mississippi is being talked about for something positive. When you can participate or be a part of something that puts the city in such great light, it is probably one of the most rewarding feelings I've had," said Gibson.

Winter Workouts

By Vince Faust
Tips to Be Fit

Just when I thought winter was over, it's back and it is cold. If you're going to exercise outside, there are some winter rules you should follow to be prepared for this cooler workout weather.

You don't have to stop running or exercising outside but you should try to dress for the season. Don't wear clothes that restrict your circulation. Wear loose fitting clothes in layers. You can wear spandex under sweat pants and wear leg warmers around your ankles to keep the lower leg warm and absorb shock. Wear 3-5 layers of lightweight clothing and don't forget your knitted gloves. You can lose up to 40% of your body heat if your head is not covered, so wear a hat and ear muffs. In extremely cold weather, try to cover as much skin as possible.

When jogging, walking and cycling at night or during the day, you should wear brightly

colored clothes that are different from the landscape. Yellow is good because it never blends in. Red is great and day-Glo orange will definitely be seen. White is great at night and you can also carry a flashlight.

There's no law that says you can't warm-up and cool down inside. Once you've gotten your blood pumping indoors, those first few steps outside won't feel as cold. If you're going to be running, run into the wind on your way out and with the wind on your way home. This will decrease the wind chill factor when you're sweating the most. Avoid running in open areas. Buildings can help block-chilling winds.

You should try to run, walk or bicycle with a friend and avoid isolated and poorly lit areas. If you use a route that others use or you go with a friend when working out you'll be less likely to be a victim of the weather or of foul play. Always let someone know what route you're taking and when you

expect to return. You should always carry identification. Don't wear headphones; they make you less aware of traffic sounds, dogs, approaching strangers and they can cause problems with your equilibrium. Dress to be seen by traffic and follow pedestrian laws.

Being seen is important while bike riding. During the day, a bike flag will help drivers notice you. A whistle will help to warn drivers if you need to get their attention. At night you'll need reflectors, white or yellow for the front and red for the back. You can also put them on your pedals. Most state laws call for lights on the front and back if you're riding during the night. Halogen lights and rechargeable batteries are best.

If you're going to workout outside you should wear sunglasses even during the winter. Everybody needs sunglasses, and not just in the summertime. Exposure to ultraviolet light over the years can damage the lenses of your eye. Any

sunglasses are better than no sunglasses. You should look for a pair of sunglasses that will block the harmful effects of the sun. The tint, the special chemicals added when lenses are made are what blocks ultraviolet light. Brown or amber tinted lenses block the sun's rays best, but they sometimes distort your vision. Gray and green lenses don't block as much ultraviolet light but they don't distort your vision. Wrap-around frames are good; they block light above and below the eyes, but they shouldn't block your side vision.

Your sunglasses should be dark enough so you don't see your eyes in a mirror. Plastic lenses are light, but glass lenses don't scratch as easily. Mirrored lenses offer extra protection against glare but scratches are a problem. Double gradient lens sunglasses are darker at the top and the bottom. These glasses are good for sports, such as tennis and skiing. These glasses are not good for

highly reflective sports, such as bicycling and water sports. Everyone's sunglasses needs are different but everyone needs sunglasses. If you have special problems, you should see a professional.

Drinking some type of fluid before exercising outside is always important, even during cooler months. It's always good to drink fluids before, during and after your outdoor workout. Water is the best liquid you can drink before, during and after a workout. You should drink small amounts of water at 10 to 20 minute intervals. If you're going to be outside more than 45 minutes, it's a good idea to bring something to drink during your workout. Drinking water during your workout helps to increase your blood volume, which will increase cardiac output.

Cardiac output is the amount of blood being pumped during each heartbeat. The more blood your heart pumps with each heartbeat the more nutrients

are transported throughout the body. These nutrients provide energy for work. Many people run out of steam during an exercise session because they don't replace water lost through exercise. Studies show that drinking water before, during and after a workout increase energy production. This is true during hot and cold weather. Don't wait until you become thirsty; by then it's too late and your body will start to fatigue.

As temperatures get lower, adjust your workout, even if you're in good shape. If you're overweight, slow down your workout pace. Your extra body fat and the cold will make your bodywork overtime. The body doesn't store water very well, so if you drink a lot of it at one time, your body will just get rid of it.

Read your body. If it's running out of energy or it seems affected by the cold, stop.

Before starting any health or fitness program consult your physician.

Pneumococcal pneumonia can be life-threatening - Here's what to know

StatePoint

Pneumococcal pneumonia can disrupt your life for weeks and, in some cases, be serious or even life-threatening. To help adults understand how they can help protect themselves against pneumococcal pneumonia, the American Lung Association and Pfizer are partnering to share important information and patient insights about the disease.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that this lung disease causes an estimated 150,000 hospitalizations annually nationwide. Symptoms include high fever, excessive sweating, shaking chills, coughing, difficulty breathing, shortness of breath and chest pain. Some symptoms can appear quickly and without warning.

Risk Factors

The immune system naturally weakens with age, so even if you're healthy and active, being 65 or older puts you at increased risk for pneumococcal pneumonia. In fact, adults 65 and older are over 10 times more likely to be hospitalized with pneumococcal pneumonia than those aged 18-49.

In adults 19 and older, certain factors increase pneumococcal pneumonia risk compared with healthy adults of the same age. These include smoking cigarettes, chronic lung diseases like asthma and COPD, chronic heart disease and diabetes.

Prevention

Pneumococcal pneumonia vaccination can help protect against the disease and is recommended for at-risk groups. For adults living with certain chronic health conditions and those 65 or older, vaccination helps protect against a potentially life-threatening illness.

"Having asthma can sometimes restrict me from doing things I love, so I really try to take proactive steps to help keep myself healthy, like avoiding my known asthma triggers and following my doctors' advice," says



Catherine, a patient who was diagnosed with asthma in adulthood. "I didn't even think I was old enough to get vaccinated for pneumococcal pneumonia, but when my doctor recommended it, I got it because I trust him. I like the comfort of knowing it's helping to protect me against this potentially serious lung disease."

In addition to being up to date on your vaccinations, washing your hands, and not smoking are all habits that can help prevent pneumococcal pneumonia. Those with chronic illnesses should also follow the care recommendations for their condition.

Disparities

The 2025 Vaccines National Strategic Plan has pneumococcal disease vaccination rate targets of 90% for people 65 years and older and 60% for adults with underlying health conditions at increased risk of disease. Unfortunately, current vaccination rates are falling far short of these goals - especially among Black and Hispanic/Latino communities. In 2021, pneumococcal vaccination coverage among all U.S. adults aged 65

and older was 70.1%. However, the rate was around 60% among the Black population and around 52% among the Hispanic/Latino population of the same age group. Latino and Black adults are also at greater risk of developing certain chronic health conditions, such as asthma and diabetes, compared to individuals who are white. It's important that all adults at risk take steps to help protect themselves against infection.

What Should You Do?

If you're at increased risk for pneumococcal pneumonia, talk to your doctor or pharmacist about vaccination. Being an active part of your healthcare team, advocating for yourself and asking questions is important. Even if you've previously had a pneumonia vaccine, your healthcare provider may recommend additional vaccination for increased protection. You can learn more, as well as take a quiz to assess your risk, by visiting lung.org/pneumococcal.

Pneumococcal pneumonia can be serious. Talk to your healthcare provider about how to help prevent this lung disease.

American Heart Association recognizes change makers who work to improve the health of Black communities



Williams



Suggs



Hamlin

The American Heart Association

Black Americans have the highest incidence of cardiac arrest outside of the hospital and are significantly less likely to survive. Cardiac arrest in Black neighborhoods is associated with alarmingly low treatment and survival rates and recent studies have shown lower rates of both bystander CPR and bystander AED use in these neighborhoods. Recognizing the unique intersection of American Heart Month and Black History Month, the American Heart Association, celebrating 100 years of service saving lives, marks the occasion by honoring three individuals for their work to improve access to equitable health and change health outcomes.

In ceremonies in New York City on Feb. 1 hosted by CBS News National Correspondent Michelle Miller, Buffalo Bills safety and cardiac arrest survivor Damar Hamlin received the Association's Voice of the Mission Award, recognizing his historic efforts to spread awareness about the need for CPR education and providing opportunities for training particularly for young athletes. As the national ambassador for the American Heart Association's Nation of Lifesavers™ initiative, he is committed alongside the American Heart Association to ensure everyone, everywhere is empowered with the lifesaving skill of CPR and has access to AEDs (automated external defibrillator) in their community, schools, workplaces and places of worship.

The Voice of the Mission award is one of the highest volunteer honors annually bestowed by the Association. It recognizes an individual who has made a major impact in driving awareness or education by using their voice to amplify the lifesaving mission of the American Heart Association. The recipient of this award

must have demonstrated success at telling their personal story. The recipient must also have inspired others to take action.

"Damar Hamlin is an incredible role model for the next generation. He has turned his recovery into a meaningful journey that has led to thousands learning the lifesaving skill of CPR," said Nancy Brown, chief executive officer of the American Heart Association. "Together, the American Heart Association and Damar's charity, the Chasing M's Foundation, are turning a nation of bystanders into a nation of lifesavers with CPR and AED training."

In addition, American Heart Association Impact with Heart Awards were also presented to two local community leaders who have developed and implemented specific local entrepreneurial innovative solutions that provide tools and resources to support both physical and mental well-being.

Andrew Suggs, a 2019 National EmPOWERED to Serve Business Accelerator finalist, is the CEO & Founder of Live Chair Health in Baltimore. Through Live Chair, barbers are trained and equipped with cuffs to measure blood pressure, scales to check body mass index (BMI), and health risk assessments to detect clients' likelihood of developing hypertension.

The concept for Live Chair Health was born in the chair of a Maryland barbershop in 2017, after Andrew's father had congestive heart failure and three cardiac arrests. Its early days were spent convincing Black men to track their vital signs while getting their hair cut. In the cultural context of the circle of trust between barber and client, Live Chair Health has helped thousands of members overcome a deep-seated resistance to sharing personal information for their

health and wellbeing.

Ashley Williams, also from Baltimore, is an educator, emotional wellness advocate and mindfulness expert with more than a decade of experience in the field of emotional wellness. She founded Clymb after watching children with stress struggle with rage, misbehavior and anxiety at the school where she worked.

Clymb is a Baltimore-based organization that offers web-based emotional health software for school-age children designed to enhance their emotional intelligence and develop healthy coping strategies. One of the American Heart Association's social impact funds, the Bernard J. Tyson Impact Fund, first supported Clymb, in 2021. Since then, the organization has expanded its services outside of Baltimore to schools across the country including additional language options to help young people develop emotional intelligence skills.

The American Heart Association Social Impact Funds were launched in 2018 to support community-based solutions that reduce social and economic barriers to health equity. Nine out of 10 new businesses need capital and women-led startups receive less than 3% of all venture capital investments. For many entrepreneurs and startup organizations, this lack of support can be a barrier to success and leave communities without resources. Helping these champions advance their work across maternal health, food security and healthcare access complements the work of the American Heart Association's strategic goal to confront nonmedical, social and economic barriers to health and help everyone live longer, healthier lives.

The funds are devoted to evidence-based, sustainable solutions led by local nonprofits and small businesses across diverse markets and issues.

LEGAL

Advertisement For Bids SECURITY CAMERA SYSTEM SOLUTIONS CITY PROJECT NO. RFP#2024-01

Sealed proposal 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 20, 2024, for Security Camera System Solutions which will function as an access control system by integrating alarm monitoring, digital video indoor and outdoor IP security cameras, ID badging, visitor badging and monitoring, and database management into a single platform for the public transportation system in the City of Jackson (as specified) necessary for REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)#2024-01.

The term of the contract will be for three (3) years with an option to renew for two (2) additional one (1) year periods by consent of both parties.

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 business 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 available 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-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 opportunity 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 SECURITY CAMERA SYSTEM SOLUTIONS, REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)#2024-01."

Bids, EBO and DBE plans shall be submitted in triplicate (bound/stapled separately), 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 bidding 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 contractors. 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 preference 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

1/25/2024, 2/1/2024, 2/8/2024, 2/15/2024

LEGAL

RULE 81 SUMMONS BY PUBLICATION

IN THE CHANCERY COURT OF HINDS COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF
BEATRICE K. YOUNG, DECEASED CAUSE NO. P2023-89 G/2

PETITIONER: ROSIE BUCKHAULTER

SUMMONS

THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

TO: THE UNKNOWN HEIRS OF BEATRICE K. YOUNG, DECEASED

You have been made a Defendant in the suit filed in this Court by Rosie Buckhalter Petitioner, seeking the adjudication of heirs of Beatrice K. Young, Deceased.

You are summoned to appear and defend against the complaint or petition filed against you in this action at 9:00 o'clock a. m., on the 6th day of March, 2024, in the Chancery Courtroom of Hinds County before Honorable Tiffany Grove, Chancellor. In case of your failure to appear and defend a judgment will be entered against you for the money or other things demanded in the complaint or petition.

You are not required to file an answer or other pleading but you may do so if you desire.

Issued under my hand and the seal of said Court, this the 29th day of January, 2024.

EDDIE JEAN CARR
CHANCERY CLERK OF HINDS COUNTY,
MISSISSIPPI

K Howard

2/1/2024 2/8/2024 2/15/2024



LEGAL

Advertisement for Bid 3255 Powell Middle School Phase 2 Project ESSER Renovations

Electronic and sealed 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, March 7, 2024, at which time and place they will be publicly opened and read aloud. A Pre-Bid Conference concerning this project will be held at 3655 Livingston Road, Jackson, MS 39213 on Thursday, February 22, 2023, at 10:00 A.M. Attendance at the pre-bid conferences is non-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 \$150.00 non-refundable deposit shall be required on each set of bid 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 regarding bid documents please contact Charles Bunniran at Allen & Hoshall, Phone: 601-977-8993, or Email: cbunniran@allenhoshall.com.

Also, until further notice, all opening will be recorded and uploaded to the JPSPD web site at https://www.youtube.com/jpsitv for public viewing due to covid 19. Vendors will not be allowed to sit in on the bid 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 JPSPD Board Room, 621 South State Street, Jackson, MS 39201.

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

2/8/2024, 2/15/2024

LEGAL

LEGAL NOTICE REQUEST FOR STATEMENTS OF QUALIFICATIONS DOWNTOWN MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT, CITY PROJECT NO. 2025

The City of Jackson intends to employ a Hotel Developer, Parking Garage Developer and Mixed-Use Developer for the development of 7.75 acres in Downtown Jackson. The Master Plan envisions an ultimate linkage of downtown together with a complete system of entertainment, greenspace, vehicular, bicycle, pedestrian and an integration with the city's new state-of-the-art transportation network, intended to promote a vibrant, environmentally equitable and sustainable downtown environment. We are seeking developers wanting to create a "place making" as a destination - an experience - that intertwines green space, outdoor entertainment and museum possibilities, parking garage, commercial, mixed-use, retail, a hotel and restaurants. Statement of Qualifications will be accepted by the City Clerk of the City of Jackson, Mississippi, until 3:30 p.m., Tuesday March 12, 2024. The proposed contract will include complete Architectural/Engineering services required for this renovation.

Official bid Documents can be downloaded from Central Bidding at www.centralbidding.com. Electronic bids and/or reverse auction bids can be submitted at www.centralbidding.com. For any questions relating to the electronic bidding process, please call Central Bidding at 225-810-4814.

Development firms interested in providing these services may so indicate by furnishing the City of Jackson seven (7) copies of a Statement of Qualification, which should consist of the following:

A cover letter specifying the complete project name, DOWNTOWN MIX USED DEVELOPMENT, CITY PROJECT NO. 2025, the name of the project manager, and the location and address of the office to be assigned the majority of the work.

A resume for each principal member, the project manager, and employee(s) of the firm anticipated to be assigned to the project including consulting engineers. Also, provide an organizational chart and list each person's experience and qualifications, including proof that the Project Manager is licensed as a Mississippi Professional Architect/Engineer and that the firm has met state licensure and certification requirements. Include a business recovery plan in the event of a disaster.

Knowledge of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) procurement processes, Section 3 requirements, certified payroll, Davis-Bacon Act; and other reporting requirements of CDBG funded projects.

A description of similar type developments completed during the past five (5) years which qualifies the developer for this work.

The City will evaluate the Statements of Qualification based on the following factors listed in their relative order of importance:

Experience of the firm in performing specific services and experience in competing projects funded by Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).

Qualifications and experience of staff and consultants to be assigned to the project based on requested scope of services.

Size of the firm's professional and technical staff with respect to the services required.

Resume of the firm's current and completed projects of a similar nature.

Equal Business Opportunity participation plan submitted with the Statement of Qualification package.

The City reserves the right to select one (1) consultant or select a short list of consultants from whom more information will be required. The City reserves the right to reject any and all Statements of Qualification, discontinue Contract execution, and/or request additional information with any party at any time prior to final Contract execution. For any Statement of Qualification questions, contact Chloe Dotson via email at cdotson@city.jackson.ms.us

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 business opportunity for all persons doing business with the City. As a pre-condition to selection, each proposer shall submit a completed and signed Equal Business Opportunity (EBO) Plan with the proposal submission, in accordance with the provisions of the City of Jackson's Equal Business Opportunity (EBO) Executive Order. Failure to comply with the City's Executive Order shall disqualify a proposer 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 601-960-1055. Copies of the City of Jackson's Executive Order, EBO Plan Applications, and a copy of the program are available at the following location: 200 South President Street, Room 223, Jackson, Mississippi; or can be accessed on City of Jackson's Equal Business Opportunity webpage.

The City of Jackson hereby notifies all proposers that in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 2000d-4, that all proposers will be afforded full opportunity to submit proposals 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 is committed to cultivating and ensuring the quality of life of its citizens, through various programs, employment, initiatives, and assistance. The City of Jackson encourages all persons, corporations, and/or entities doing business within the City of Jackson, as well as those who seek to contract with the City of Jackson on various projects and/or conduct business in Jackson to assist the City of Jackson in achieving its goal by strongly considering City of Jackson residents for employment opportunities.

Chloe Dotson, BUPD. MURP, Yika Hoover
Director Planning and Development Deputy Director Economic Development

2/1/2024 2/8/2024, 2/15/2024, 2/22/2024

LEGAL

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING FOR PROPOSED TEXT AMENDMENTS TO THE CITY OF JACKSON ZONING ORDINANCE

By virtue of and pursuant to the authority and direction of that Ordinance by the City Council of Jackson, Mississippi, appearing in Minute Book 3G at page 115 thereof, notice is hereby given to all persons interested in or in anywise affected thereby, that the Planning Board for the City of Jackson, will be conducting a public hearing on proposed text amendments to the City of Jackson Official Zoning Ordinance as adopted on May 29, 1974 and subsequently amended.

Amendments to the text of the Zoning ordinance are intended to provide for a more efficient Zoning Ordinance and establish more effective zoning regulations for each of the zoning districts. Copies of the proposed text amendments will be available for review at the Office of City Planning 200 S President Street, Suite 204, Jackson, MS 39201. For additional information please submit an email to eainsworth@city.jackson.ms.us.

The said proposed text amendments will be heard at the City Planning Board Hearing in the Andrew Jackson Conference Room, First Floor, Warren A. Hood Building, 200 S. President Street in Jackson, Mississippi, at 1:30 p.m., on Wednesday, February 24, 2024 at which time all parties interested in or affected thereby will be heard after which a record will be established upon which the City Planning Board can make its recommendation to the City Council of Jackson. Any objection thereto may be made by any person owning property within the area, and if made in writing must be filed with the City Zoning Administrator before said time if a hearing thereof or consideration thereof is desired, or by counsel on said date. If a request is made to the Zoning Administrator at least 72 hours in advance, the City will take steps to accommodate citizens need for interpreters or auxiliary aids for the visually/hearing impaired.

DUE TO COVID-19 AND THE CONCERN FOR THE PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE, THE PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS AND THE APPLICANTS HAVE THE OPTION TO ATTEND THE MEETING VIA TELCONFERENCE/VIDEO OR IN PERSON WITH REGARDS TO WEARING OF MASKS AND THE SOCIAL DISTANCING REQUIREMENTS. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC MAY ATTEND VIA TELECONFERENCE/VIDEO BY EMAILING EAINSWORTH@CITY.JACKSON.MS.US TO REGISTER PRIOR TO FEBRUARY 21, 2024.

WITNESS my signature this the 9th day of February 2024.

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

2/15/2024, 2/22/2024

LEGAL

Advertisement for Rebid RFP 2024-03 Lead University Partner for TEACH JPS Residency Program

Electronic RFP proposals for the above RFP will be received by the Board of Trustees of the Jackson Public School District, in the Business Office, 662 South President Street, Jackson, Mississippi, until 10:00 A.M. (Local Prevailing Time), Monday, March 04, 2024, at which time and place they will be publicly opened and read aloud. The Board of Trustees reserves the right to reject any and all RFPs, to waive informalities, and to withhold the acceptance of any RFP if approved for forty-five calendar days from the date RFPs/ are opened.

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

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

Also, until further notice, all opening will be recorded and uploaded to the JPSPD web site at

https://www.youtube.com/jpsitv for public viewing due to covid 19. Vendors will not be allowed to sit in on the bid openings.

2/15/2024, 2/22/2024

LEGAL

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

Angela Taylor, Plaintiff(s)

VS

Civil Action Number *G2024-11*

Martez Taylor, Defendant(s)

SUMMONS (By Publication)

THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

TO: *Martez Taylor*

You have been made a Defendant in the suit filed in this Court by

Plaintiff(s), seeking *Divorce*

Defendants other than you in this action are:

You are required to mail or hand deliver a written response to the Complaint filed against you in this action to *Angela Taylor*, Plaintiff(s), whose address is *1140 Autumn St Jackson ms 39212*.

YOUR RESPONSE MUST BE MAILED OR DELIVERED NOT LATER THAN THIRTY DAYS AFTER THE 15 DAY OF *February, 2024* WHICH IS THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS SUMMONS. IF YOUR RESPONSE IS NOT SO MAILED OR DELIVERED, A JUDGMENT BY DEFAULT WILL BE ENTERED AGAINST YOU FOR THE MONEY OR OTHER RELIEF DEMANDED IN THE COMPLAINT.

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

Issued under my hand and seal of said Court, this 8th day of *Feb.*, 20²³



EDDIE JEAN CARR, Chancery Clerk
P. O. Box 686, 316 S. President St.
Jackson, Mississippi 39205

By: *K Howard*, D.C.

2/15/2024 2/22/2024 2/29/2024

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Christian peace and contentment

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



God has not only gone public with this secret but invites us and longs for us to know it. He does not want us to merely know about this secret – not to merely preach it, explain it, enjoy the idea of it, or wish for it, but to know it by experience. Jesus described the kind of experience He wants us to know.

We read “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on, for your Father knows that you need them. Instead, seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you” (Luke 12:22, 30-31).

Paul, from prison, shared his experience of the secret

with all who would listen: “I have learned in whatever situation I am in to be content.” I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:11-13).

The secret to contentment is very simple. It does not require heroic acts of piety. No, in fact it requires a child-like response from us. The secret is beautifully summed up in this phrase: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart” (Proverbs 3:5).

Is it really that simple? Just trust God? Yes. So simple, but in reality is revolutionary. God designed us to operate on trust. We are reasoning creatures made in God’s im-

age. But God did not make us gods; He made us small measure like God. He did not give us His capacities to contain all knowledge and all wisdom. We only contain very small amounts of each. Nor did He give us His power to bring into being whatever we wish. Our power is very limited. God designed us to trust Him in whatever knowledge, wisdom, and strength He provides us and to trust His knowledge, wisdom, and strength when ours reach their limits.

What happened with Adam and Eve in the garden is that they broke trust with God by eating the forbidden fruit. When they did this, they unhinged their reason from reality (Genesis 3:6) and besides living in a world subjected to futility (Romans 8:20), they had to deal with the overwhelming complexities of

the knowledge of good and evil without the capacities of wisdom and knowledge and strength to adequately proceed them. The story of redemptive history, culminating in Jesus’s incarnation, death, and resurrection, is God undoing the catastrophe of the garden and restoring sinful humans to holiness and once again trusting in Him with all their heart.

No matter who we are, no matter what our gifts and abilities, no matter what our background, it all really does come down to trusting God with all our heart. If we trust Him, our hearts will not be sinfully troubled (John 14:1). And trusting is simple. However, it is by no means easy.

Simeon R. Green, III, First Church of God 6517 Walmsley Blvd. Richmond, Virginia 23224.

PRESERVED Connecting the disconnected

By Shewanda Riley
Columnist



Does relationship equal purposeful connection? I thought about this recently as I sat mesmerized watching too many hours of those infamous courtroom TV shows during a recent battle with a cold that had me stuck at home in bed.

From Judge Greg Mathis to Judge Lauren Lake, daytime TV offers a peculiarly intriguing display of the best and worst of human relationships. I’m not sure what it says about me that I consider watching these shows a guilty pleasure. I really shouldn’t watch them, but I just can’t resist sometimes. I even try to convince myself that it’s “research” for my writing.

These shows also make me reevaluate how easily we can be fooled into believing that we have a connection with others because there is a superficial external relationship. After seeing the negative aftereffects (paternity tests, lawsuits, name calling and outright cruelty) of all that “connection,” it seems like the external relationship sometimes masks an internal disconnection.

The relationships on these television shows seem to be more about convenience than connection. Numerous couples discuss how they began living together after a few short weeks or days of meeting each other. One couple even proudly shared how they got married after just 2 weeks of knowing each other.

It seems like some are more concerned about the temporary satisfying convenience of sharing their lives with anybody than with preparing themselves for something more meaningful: building a permanent bond with someone with whom they might have a purposeful connection.

The couples on these shows are examples of where there is con-

venience, there is often disconnection especially from purpose.

It could be that the disconnection comes from a poor understanding or even worse: a hardening of the heart as a result of past hurts and not properly dealing with those past hurts. This results in no connection or worse a connection that’s weak. Unfortunately, this is what we see so often on these shows and, for some of us, in our lives.

Connecting to others is made easier when we reconnect with God. Ephesians 4:23-24 talks about the renewing of the mind which creates a new self and allows us to be honest with others. “And be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”

This renewal often means that we stop seeing ourselves as we’d wish we were but acknowledge who we are through the eyes of God.

Can you achieve your purpose by being connected to others? Some would say yes because after all you are doing the work. Others would say no because no one achieves success in a vacuum.

What does purpose have to do with connection? When allowed, purpose forces acknowledgment of vulnerabilities. Oftentimes, authentic connection can heal the wounds that come from vulnerabilities. Once acknowledged, letting go of vulnerabilities can make you more open to healthy, authentic connections with others which will ultimately help you achieve your God-given purpose.

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.

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Setting the record straight on an important piece of Black History

By Ben Jealous
People For the American Way



With the start of Black History Month, I brace myself for the mis-telling of Black History yet again.

In schoolhouses and everywhere the stories are told, a persistent myth shows its ugly head: the ridiculous notion that great Black leaders are not just exceptional but exceptions.

It is an idea rooted in the historical and unnatural misperception that the most notable Black Americans were superhumans that sprung forth from collective misery. It discounts the many, many Black leaders who were – and are – the children and grandchildren of courageous leaders in their own right.

Paul Robeson was a phenomenal actor, orator, singer, athlete and activist. The family that produced him might be even more impressive. His father escaped enslavement to earn two

college degrees and become a prominent minister. His mother was part of the Bustill family, who were famous abolitionists and included Grace Bustill Douglass, the crusading abolitionist and feminist.

Kamala Harris's path to the vice presidency began as a transformative district attorney. She refused to pursue the death penalty, and shifted her department's punitive focus away from sex workers and squarely onto sex buyers and traffickers. She both provided a model for the movement to elect more Black and progressive district attorneys and spawned the national training institute for female candidates known as Emerge America. Harris would readily admit there is no explaining her uncommon courage without accounting for her civil rights activist parents and her education at the very university that produced Thurgood Marshall.

Martin Luther King, Jr. is perhaps Black America's best-known leader. His grandfather was himself a crusading Black

Baptist preacher and the first president of the Atlanta branch of the NAACP.

Whitney Houston became an iconic star of radio and the silver screen. Her first cousin was Dionne Warwick. Through Warwick, Houston had close, life-shaping relationships with other celebrated female singers and actors like her "honorary aunt" Aretha Franklin, godmother Darlene Love and close friend Cicely Tyson.

Malcolm X is America's most famous Black nationalist. Before him, his father Earl Little was a Black nationalist Baptist preacher who organized for Marcus Garvey. Harassment by the Ku Klux Klan forced the Littles to relocate from Omaha, Nebraska to Lansing, Michigan, where Earl was murdered by a Klan-like white supremacist group.

Stacey Abrams rose to become the first woman leader of a party in Georgia's legislature and the most impactful voting rights activist of the 21st century. Her parents were courageous

civil rights activists and her father was among the youngest leaders of the Hattiesburg boycott in Mississippi.

Middle Tennessee claims a famous political father-son pair in former Congressman and Senator Albert Gore, Sr. and former Senator and Vice President Al Gore. But western Tennessee saw its own confrontational and crusading former Congressman Harold Ford, Sr. followed by the diplomatic, incisive, and consensus-building former Congressman Harold Ford, Jr.

From the time he started preaching at the age of four, Reverend Al Sharpton's early years were shaped by the mentorship of Black leaders like Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., James Brown, and the incomparable Jesse Jackson. But it was his mother Ada Sharpton's work that inspired her son's founding of the National Action Network. Mrs. Sharpton rose from poverty to power as a prominent civil rights activist in New York City's outer boroughs and became president of Mothers in

Action. Fifteen years ago, I was named the youngest national president in the history of the NAACP. My grandmother Mammie Bland Todd trained future US Senator Barbara Mikulski as a social worker early in her career. In researching my latest book, I followed my own ancestry back to my grandmother's grandfather. In the late 1800s, Edward David Bland led Black Republicans into coalition with former white Confederate soldiers to form a third party that took over the Virginia state government. Known as the Readjusters, the bipartisan political movement won all statewide elected offices and controlled the Commonwealth of Virginia from 1881-85.

In that time, they abolished the poll tax and the whipping post; radically expanded Virginia Tech and created Virginia State University; and readjusted the terms of the Civil War debt to save the free public schools and take the state from a financial deficit into a surplus.

Parentage and family connections are not and never should be a prerequisite for leadership in our country. But we can still recognize that one of the greatest traditions in Black leadership is Black leaders who raise Black leaders.

Some of those leaders inspire with their art; others with their activism; many with both. The historical arc they help form – which sometimes wavers but ultimately bends towards justice – would not be possible without that tradition.

So, if it occurs to you that you do not know enough about how your ancestors might have led, get curious and do some research. You might just find an interesting and inspiring piece of family history.

Ben Jealous is executive director of the Sierra Club, professor of practice at the University of Pennsylvania and author of "Never Forget Our People Were Always Free" and "Reach: 40 Black Men Speak on Living, Leading and Succeeding."

Will parents be incarcerated for the actions and decisions of their children?

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



I can say with certainty my parents gave me a foundation built on love. I always felt cared about and safe. They poured their humanity into me every day.

Having a good name was important. Keeping a good name was even more important. You kept your good name by making good decisions. As children, we made some immature decisions, however those decisions did not cause hurt, harm or danger to anyone.

Being mischievous back in the day simply meant carrying out childish pranks. For example, you might leave an empty carton of juice in the refrigerator. The question would arise, who did it?

We had neighborhoods in Winston-Salem, NC where everyone knew everyone. As kids, we were always in and out of someone else's house. We were all pretty much social and there weren't any deep, dark secrets.

With a sense of pride and thanksgiving, I can say we had a caring East Winston community. If something strange or unusual was happening with us, parents would know about it and do something about it.

If you are of a certain age, you probably had similar experiences to mine. The formula was love, caring and communication. These three traits kept

us out of confusion and gave us emotional stability.

My dear childhood friends, William Earl and Bishop Graham, whom I have known since elementary school, often talk about the joys we had simply being kids. Laughing, playing and joking were things we did in abundance. Our responsibilities were to do our best in school and to act like we had some sense. We managed to do both.

Being quiet and a loner didn't happen in our neighborhood. We played outside every chance we had even in cold weather. Being inside was not appealing to us. Being with our friends was ten times better than watching television or listening to a radio.

Guns were not a part of our community. Deep in my spirit, I don't believe adults owned guns. That was just the way it was. Now it seems that everyone at least knows someone who owns a gun. Suffice it to say, things are just different these days.

Children and teens now have ready and immediate access to weapons. How can that be? It can be because parents leave guns out and visible coupled with the fact they are loaded. Restrictions on who can purchase them are weak, too.

Some parents have only minor restrictions on their children which sometimes lead to bad outcomes. The other side of that debate is that you want your children to be responsible and to learn how to make wise

choices. That's the fine line that parents find themselves in today. Some parents become querulous and complaining while others remain silent and still.

I suspect the Crumbley family in Michigan grappled with that question. A few weeks ago, Jennifer Crumbley was found guilty of four counts of involuntary manslaughter. The jury found that she bore some responsibility for her son, Ethan Robert Crumbley, age 15, killing four students and injuring seven other people. This tragedy happened on November 30, 2021, at Oxford High School outside of Detroit, Michigan.

The husband, James Crumbley is set to go on trial next month. He, too, is charged with four counts of involuntary manslaughter. Reports say that Mrs. Crumbley is the first person to go on trial for a mass shooting carried out by their child.

This case will have reverberations with parents across America. Joe Tamburino, a criminal defense attorney said, "The case will create a huge precedent for further cases. Think about it, the next time there's some type of school shooting, they could arrest the parents. This is going to change the landscape."

Parenting today is both rewarding and challenging. There are no easy answers and solutions. Being thoughtful and proactive can be safeguards for parents as they raise and rear their children. We are living in perilous and uncertain times.

Valentine's day is not just another day

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



America has designated days and months to recognize and celebrate various themes, events and/or holidays for decades. Some of the days that many celebrate and recognize are Veterans Day, Independence Day, Domestic Violence Awareness, Grandparents Day, Christmas Day, Valentines Day, etc.

Many have embraced these special days as part of family traditions, school events, community events, work events, etc. One of the most popular days celebrated in America is February 14. Yes, you guessed correctly, Valentine's Day!

Scholars often debate on when America began recognizing Valentine's Day, but many agree that it began during the 1840's. Although, we don't know the details of how the celebration of Valentines began, we do know that many countries celebrate Valentine's Day across the world from the United States to the U.K. to Japan.

Valentine's Day has been recognized as a day to show love especially to wives, girlfriends, not sidepieces/turf (not the real grass – turf burns quick). It doesn't matter when Valentine's Day was first celebrated and recognized in America – it's more important to focus on how to celebrate this day. Yes, some complain and argue that Valentine's Day is unnecessary, and an industry money-making initiative. And yes, some of this may be true but let's not forget that it is a special day to express and declare your love to your spouse.

Our son, who is sixteen years old has a friend girl...

okay it is a struggle for me to admit that he has a girlfriend. Our son has been 'courting his girlfriend,' as my grandparents would have said, for two months. Their boyfriend/girlfriend status is defined by occasional phone calls due to both having concerned parents who feel that they should prioritize God and academics over a serious relationship right now. However, I was very impressed with our son's excitement about getting his girlfriend a gift.

I thought about husbands who never go out of their way to make Valentine's Day special for their wives. I also thought about husbands who does the same ole purchasing a dozen of roses or a bouquet of flowers. Please don't get me wrong – it's nothing wrong with giving your wives a dozen of roses for thirty years but I'm sure that some wives want you to do something different every now and then.

Also, I thought about the complaining, selfish husbands who feel that their love is depicted through providing for the household (paying the bills) ...are you serious – yes, many wives are grateful for your provision but if your perspective about expressing love to your wife outside of paying bills doesn't change – you may soon be helping pay divorce court fees.

Our son didn't do anything grand, but he worked hard to earn enough funds to buy something special for his girlfriend. He purchased a cute pink bear, and pink artificial roses (her favorite color), and candy. Furthermore, he added glitter to the roses at his girlfriend's request...I know sixteen with requests, but he did a beautiful job.

In conclusion, husbands please go out of your way and woo your wife on Valentine's

Day especially if you have a good wife. If you have a wife who has stuck with you through the good and the bad – how dare you not declare your love for her on Valentine's Day? If you didn't do it – it's not too late – do it today.

Husbands you should go out of your way to woo your wives on Valentine's Day for the following reasons: she is your wife, duh, she is your good thing, she is your soulmate, she loves you, she looks out for your household, you and your children's wellbeing. Expressing your love for her is reassuring. It makes her feel acknowledged, special and shows care and concern. She desires you to decree your love for her on this day. If you still don't understand it; it's like your favorite team scoring that winning touchdown like the Chiefs did in overtime during the Super Bowl.

Also, it doesn't take a lot of money to make your wife feel special on Valentine's Day – sometimes creativity can be more special than big purchases which don't take much thought but a swipe of a card. But it's nothing wrong with big purchases – you know your wife preferences. It's no excuse, you have all year long to prepare for this special day.

Husbands, you have the honor and privilege of expressing to your wife, your soulmate, that Valentine's Day is not just another day.

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, on Instagram: letsstaytogether4eva (Dr. LaShunda Calvert) Facebook: Dr. LaShunda Calvert Email:letsstaytogether4eva@gmail.com or call 601-874-6176.

Biden warns of a 'nightmare' future if Trump should win again

By Darlene Superville and Gabe Stern
The Associated Press

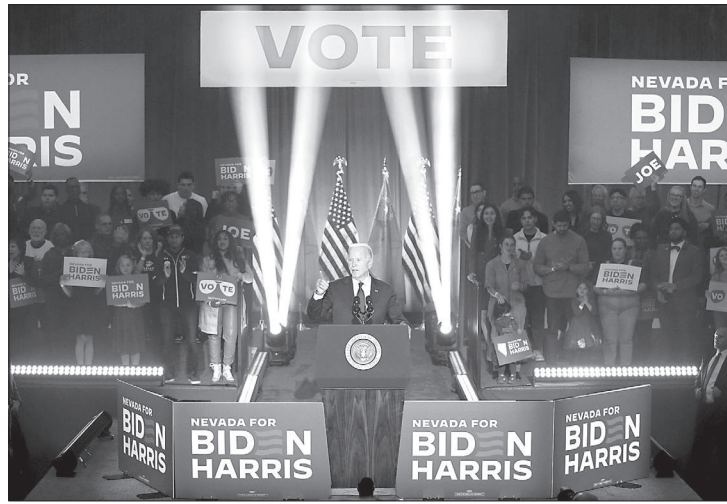
President Joe Biden on Sunday ticked through a list of reasons he says a second Donald Trump presidency would be a "nightmare" for the country as he urged Nevada Democrats to vote for him in the state's presidential primary this week and for his party at large in November.

Biden opened a campaign swing with a fundraiser where he focused on Trump's ample history of provocative statements — his description of Jan. 6 rioters as "hostages," his musings about a former top military officer deserving execution, his branding of fallen soldiers as "suckers" and "losers," his wish to be a Day One "dictator," his vow to supporters that "I am your retribution," and more.

Then it was on to a community center in a predominantly Black section of Las Vegas, where he told his crowd of several hundred that "you're the reason we'll make Donald Trump a loser again."

Biden said the stakes were huge when he took on Trump in 2020 — "what made America America, I thought, was at risk" — and they are even larger now as a likely rematch looms.

He told donors at the private



President Joe Biden speaks at a campaign event Sunday, Feb. 4, 2024, in North Las Vegas, Nev. AP PHOTO/JOHN LOCHER

home in Henderson, Nevada, that if they came to Washington, he'd show them the White House dining room table where Trump, according to ex-aides, sat transfixed for hours in front of the TV as the rioters he'd fired up with his rhetoric stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

"We have to keep the White House," he said. "We must keep the Senate" and win back the House.

Accomplish that, he said, and "we can say we saved American democracy."

He was equally blunt in talking up his record at his subsequent rally where he implored voters to "imagine the nightmare of Donald Trump."

Trump campaign spokesperson Steven Cheung responded in kind, saying Biden "has been a nightmare for this country in just three short years in the White House, and no amount of gaslighting will make Americans forget about all the misery and destruction he has brought."

In Tuesday's Nevada Democratic presidential primary, Biden faces only token opposition from author Marianne Williamson and a few relatively unknown challengers. He won Nevada in November 2020 by fewer than 3 percentage points. But he came to Nevada to rouse voters for the fall campaign as well.

The state known largely for its

casino and hospitality industries is synonymous with split-ticket, hard-to-predict results. It has a transient, working-class population and large Latino, Filipino and Chinese American and Black communities. Nevada has a stark rural-urban divide, with more than 88% of active registered voters — and much of its political power — in the two most populous counties, which include the Las Vegas and Reno metro areas.

In 2022, Democrats successfully defended their Senate seat and lost the governor's office. The six constitutional officers elected statewide are split evenly among Democrats and Republicans.

The narrow victory of Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto helped Democrats keep control of the Senate for the remainder of Biden's current term.

Working in Biden's favor this year is the vast Democratic operation built by the late Sen. Harry Reid. The "Reid Machine" has for years trained operatives and retained organizers and is partially why, despite Nevada's status as a purple state, Democrats have won every presidential election here since 2008.

But early signs show Biden could have more ground to make up than in past races. Voters are largely dissatisfied with the like-

ly Biden-Trump rematch. A New York Times/Siena poll from November put Biden's approval rating at 36% in Nevada.

"I know from my reelection, the issues that matter to Nevadans are still those kitchen table issues," Cortez Masto said in an interview.

Biden has built his reelection campaign around the theme that Trump presents a dire threat to U.S. democracy and its founding values. The president also has championed the defense of abortion rights, recently holding his first big campaign rally, in Virginia, where the issue energized Democrats who won control of the state's House of Delegates.

Biden also promotes his handling of the economy, arguing that his policies have created millions of jobs, combated climate change and improved American competitiveness overseas. But polls suggest many voters aren't giving his administration credit.

The Democratic National Committee recently announced a six-figure ad buy in Nevada and South Carolina, where Biden won the leadoff primary Saturday. The ads are meant to boost enthusiasm among Black, Asian American and Latino voters statewide, including radio, television and digital ads in Spanish, Chinese and Tagalog, and a billboard in Las Vegas'

Chinatown.

As early voting began a week ago in Nevada, Trump asserted without evidence during a campaign rally in Las Vegas that he was the victim of the Biden administration's weaponizing law enforcement against him. Trump has been indicted four times and faces 91 felonies.

Dan Lee, an associate professor of political science at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, said that for Biden, "the map says he has to hold on to Nevada."

The Republican presidential primary is also Tuesday but the state GOP is holding caucuses Thursday to allocate delegates. Trump is competing in the caucuses; rival Nikki Haley opted to stay on the nonbinding primary ballot.

Stern reported from Reno, Nevada. Associated Press writer Will Weissert in Washington contributed to this report.

Stern is a corps member for the Associated Press/Report for America Statehouse News Initiative. Report for America is a nonprofit national service program that places journalists in local newsrooms to report on undercovered issues. Follow Stern on X: @gabestern326

Historic Obesity Bill of Rights unveiled amidst surging obesity rates nationwide

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior
National Correspondent

In response to a relentless surge in obesity rates nationwide, a powerful alliance of leading consumer advocates, aging experts, and public health groups have introduced the groundbreaking Obesity Bill of Rights for Americans. The initiative, with the National Consumers League (NCL) and the National Council on Aging (NCOA) at its forefront, aims to transform obesity care by enacting significant changes in federal, state and employer policies.

The Obesity Bill of Rights is the culmination of a yearlong, meticulous fact-finding effort involving experts and communities, marking a crucial turning point in the battle against the United States' most pervasive and expensive chronic disease. Shockingly, even a decade after the American Medical Association (AMA) classified obesity as a severe disease requiring comprehensive care, it continues to be largely overlooked and untreated.

"Our aim with the Obesity Bill of Rights is to designate quality obesity care as the inherent right of all adults, empowering those with the disease to demand unbiased treatment, regardless of their size or weight," Sally Greenberg, CEO of the National Consumers League, said in a news release.

Developed in collaboration with leading obesity specialists and backed by nearly 40 national obesity and chronic disease organizations, the Obesity Bill of Rights establishes eight fundamental rights. These rights are designed to ensure that individuals with obesity undergo screening, diagnosis, counsel-



ing, and treatment according to medical guidelines, eradicating pervasive weight bias and ageism within the healthcare system.

The staggering statistics surrounding obesity underscore the critical need for this initiative. Presently, only 30 million out of an estimated 108 million adults living with obesity have been diagnosed, and a mere 2% of those eligible for anti-obesity medications have received these treatments.

Officials noted in a news release that the consequences of untreated obesity include worsening outcomes for over 230 obesity-related chronic diseases, approximately 400,000 premature deaths annually, and an estimated \$1.72 trillion in direct and indirect costs to the U.S. economy.

"These rights collectively ensure that adults with obesity have reliable, accurate information about their disease, respectful and nondiscriminatory care from medical professionals, and insurance that provides access to all treatments deemed appropriate by their health providers," stated Ramsey Alwin, NCOA president and CEO.

NCL and NCOA have started the Right2ObesityCare grassroots movement to drive the radical change that the Obesity Bill of Rights envisions. Officials said the movement aims to engage individuals with obesity, caregivers, health professionals, community leaders, employers, and a network of obesity and chronic disease organizations to foster the adoption of the Obesity Bill of Rights in clinical settings.

The online hub, www.right2obesitycare.org, will serve as the epicenter for mobilizing stakeholders, focusing on national and state policy efforts. Right2ObesityCare will develop national "obesity goals" for fully implementing the Obesity Bill of Rights by December 31, 2029. Plans include regional town halls, workshops, advocacy forums and meetings with federal and state legislators and regulators.

Additionally, the American Psychological Association (APA) said the health crisis in Black communities are intricately linked to a myriad of societal elements, including but not limited to disparities in stable and affordable hous-

ing, income inequality and limited access to quality education. Each of these factors, individually or collectively, can significantly influence an individual's chances of leading a longer and healthier life. A complete picture of the obesity epidemic emerges when access to affordable, wholesome food and secure spaces for physical activity is unequal, APA officials noted.

Statistics show nearly 48 percent of African American adults are clinically obese, with a detailed breakdown exposing 37.1 percent of affected men and 56.6 percent of women, in contrast to 32.6 percent of whites.

Meanwhile, the Obesity Bill of Rights has garnered initial endorsements from 36 prominent organizations, including the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, the American Nurses Association, and the Obesity Action Coalition. The coalition's efforts have also received support from influential policymakers such as Rep. Brad Wenstrup (R-OH) and Rep. Gwen Moore (D-WI), who are championing the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act (TROA) to expand access to obesity treatments.

"Obesity is a chronic condition — not a personal or moral failing," Moore asserted. "We need to ensure our healthcare system treats it as a disease, so that Americans with obesity can access holistic, high-quality care that meets the full spectrum of their needs. I am proud to be a co-lead of the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act, which puts us on a path toward effectively treating obesity, helping create healthier outcomes for Americans and supporting enhanced quality of life for Medicare beneficiaries who need comprehensive care."

Historic White House gathering celebrates descendants of Civil Rights icons

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior
National Correspondent

In a Black History Month event at the White House Tuesday, Feb. 13, Vice President Kamala Harris addressed the descendants of some of the most influential civil rights leaders from the 1950s and '60s, along with other foundational historical figures. The gathering marked the first time many of those families convened in the same room.

Prominent figures such as Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, Booker T. Washington, Ida B. Wells, Malcolm X, Rosa Parks, Emmett Till, Thomas Jefferson, and Sally Hemings were scheduled to attend.

Harris praised the descendants as "extraordinary American heroes" who embody the promise of the nation and the Constitution. "They've passed the baton to us," Harris remarked during her address.

Stephen K. Benjamin, the director of the White House Office of Public Engagement, outlined the administration's initiatives, including an executive order related to police accountability and President Joe Biden's signing of the law establishing Juneteenth as a federal holiday.

The group, known as "The Descendants," gathered to pay homage to their familial legacies in celebration of Black History Month. One of the coordinators, Joshua Jordison, revealed that discussions to bring this diverse group together began several years ago. "It was amazing that many of them had never met," he said.

While invitations were extended to other notable families, some could not attend due to scheduling conflicts and other factors. According to Kenneth B. Morris Jr., a descendant of



Vice President Harris addresses descendants of influential civil rights leaders

Frederick Douglass and Booker T. Washington, the goal of The Descendants is to lead the nation in a spirit of collaboration and community.

"This historic event marks the beginning of coalescing The Descendants' families and like-minded leaders and organizations to catalyze transformative positive societal change amongst the most significant challenges faced by our country," Morris emphasized.

Beyond the White House reception, a series of activities were planned for the descendant families in Washington on both Tuesday and Wednesday. The itinerary included stops at the U.S. Capitol, the Lincoln Memorial, the Supreme Court, and a tour of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture. Additionally, there were dinners and opportunities for group dialogue.

Ernestine "Tina" Martin Wyatt, a great-great-grand-niece of Harriet Tubman, was among those to express excitement about meeting the descendants of fellow freedom fighters. "It's an equal collaboration. We are all coming together," Morris asserted.

Joy Reid of MSNBC speaks at Two MS Museums

By Jackie Hampton
Publisher

Joy-Ann Reid, host of MSNBC ReidOut, discussed her latest book, *Medgar & Myrlie: Medgar Evers and the Love Story That Awakened America*, Tuesday at the Two Mississippi Museums in Jackson, Mississippi in a sit-down conversation with Ebony Lumumba, chair of the English Department at Jackson State University.

Michael Morris, director of Two Mississippi Museums, welcomed the room full of guests and those that were in three overflow rooms due to the crowd. This event was a part of the Medgar Wiley Evers Lecture Series which was established in 2003.

Morris introduced Reena Evers-Everette, executive director of the Medgar & Myrlie Evers Institute and daughter of Myrtle and Medgar. Her first words were, "Hello my family in Mississippi. It's good to see y'all."

Everette told the audience that they would be getting a history lesson. After which, she introduced the First Lady of Jackson,



Author and TV host Joy-Ann Reid talks with Ebony Lumumba, Ph.D., chair of the English Department at Jackson State.



Reid poses for a photo with husband Jason. PHOTO BY JACKIE HAMPTON

Ebony Lumumba, and the host of MSNBC's *The ReidOut*, Joy-Ann Reid.

The two ladies walked hand-in-hand as they approached the stage for a sit-down conversation about Reid's book and about the history

of Mississippi.

Lumumba recognized and greeted the large crowd and assured the audience that though they would be addressing Myrtle and Medgar by their first names, it would not be out of disrespect

for them as their elders. This was something Everette had emphasized in her book, due to the deep respect she had for the loving couple.

The book not only explored the love story of Medgar and Myr-

lie Evers but was indeed a history lesson about the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi.

There was deep discussion between the two ladies regarding the ups and downs the loving couple had in life, just like everyday cou-

ples have in life.

Reid signed copies of many of the books that were purchased prior to the 6 p.m. event but the lines were so long, many new book-owners were not able to get their books signed until after the event.

PHOTOS BY JAY JOHNSON





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Hashtags and Humanity

MCA Conference advances dialogue on technology and humanity

By Jaheim Wilder
MVSU Student Writer

On Feb. 9, 2024, the Mississippi Communication Association (MCA) held its annual conference at Mississippi College, bringing together scholars, educators and students from across the region to explore the convergence of technology and human interaction. This year's theme, "Technology Meets Humanity," was exemplified by a series of presentations, discussions and keynote addresses that delved into the complexities of communication in the digital age.

Dr. Pete Smith, an associate professor of Communication and Media Studies at Mississippi State University, served as the keynote speaker. He delved into the historical friendship between communication theorists Marshall McLuhan and Edward T. Hall. Their collaboration, Smith argued, significantly influenced our understanding of technology's impact on human communication.

Smith's address provided a comprehensive timeline tracing the evolution of technology and communication.

A key feature of the conference was its inclusivity and focus on educational diversity, as evidenced by the participation of JPS-Tougaloo College's Early College program, led by Dr. Randrika Henderson. She shared her enthusiasm for the event, stating, "This conference was a great experience for my early-college students. They were excited and thrilled to experience a collegiate conference firsthand."

She also expressed a desire for increased participation from a broader range of educational levels and institutions in future conferences, emphasizing the value of diverse perspectives in enriching academic discourse.

Dr. Henderson's emphasis on inclusivity and the broad spectrum of topics addressed by presenters underscored a collective aspiration towards a more integrated and empathetic communication landscape. The MCA 2024 conference examined the past and outlined a promising future for communication in Mississippi and beyond in the rapidly changing digital landscape.

Dr. Henderson chairs MCA's Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity which was established at last year's 2023 conference.

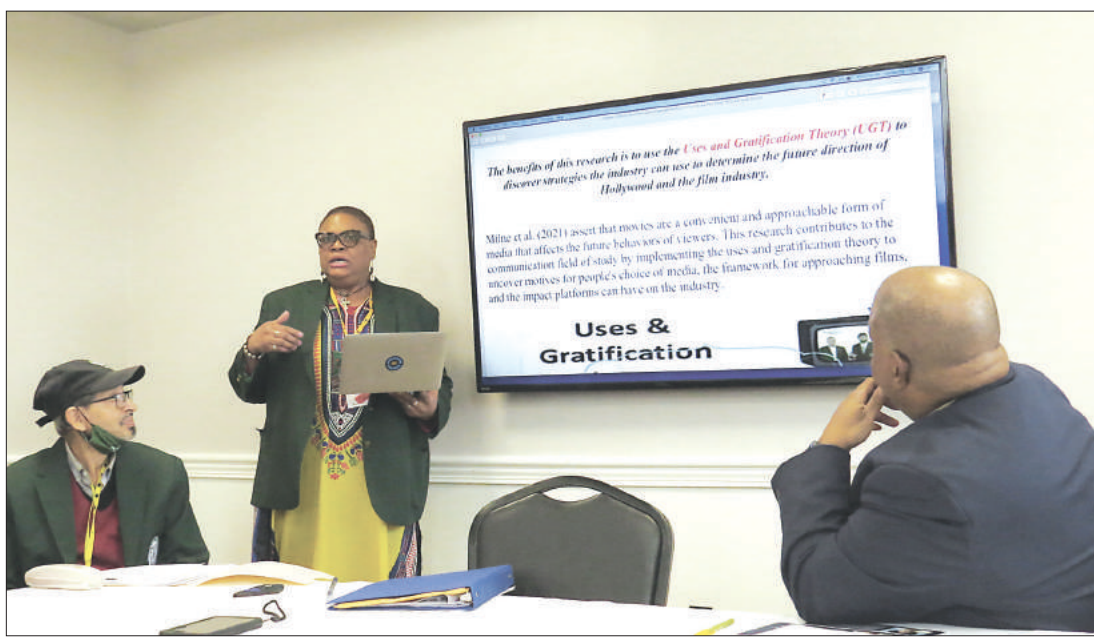
Mississippi Valley State University's presence was strongly felt, with faculty members actively contributing to the academic discourse. Instructor of Speech and Mass Communication Shannon Bowden and As-



Dr. Pete Smith, keynote speaker



MCA President Brad Bailey and Dr. Lindsay Dancy



Shannon Bowden, MVSU instructor, Speech and Math Communication, presenting faculty research paper PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE DELTA DEVILS' GAZETTE



Dr. Randrika Henderson



Myiesha Smith, door prize winner



Breakout room packed with early college students, faculty and staff



MCA members who hold 10 or more years of membership



New MCA members



Public Relations Education and Practice roundtable discussion chaired by Dr. Gail H.M. Brown

sociate Professor of Mass Communication Dr. Zainul Abedin presented research on post-COVID-19 challenges in the film industry and the role of swing jazz in racial reconciliation, respectively, while Assistant Professor of Mass Communication Dr. Gail H. M. Brown led a roundtable discussion on public relations education and practice in Mississippi, where panelists discussed the necessity of diversity and modernization in

the field. Throughout the day, attendees engaged in four concurrent sessions that explored a wide array of subjects, from the portrayal of mortality in media to the psychological impacts of undocumented immigration narratives. The sessions fostered robust discussions and provided invaluable learning opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students alike. Dr. Phillip Poe, MCA's in-

coming president, shared his enthusiasm for the 2024 conference's success and outlined his forward-looking goals for the association. "This year's MCA was a resounding success, and I could not be more pleased with how things went," Dr. Poe said in a recent interview. "We had more attendees than we've ever had in my 10 years of involvement in MCA. I think all who attended – whether they are MCA veterans or attended

for the first time – had an enjoyable time and likely learned something new or met someone new." The conference concluded with a wrap-up session that not only celebrated the top papers of the event but also served as a reminder of the MCA's centennial celebrations, marking a significant milestone in the association's history. The Mississippi Communication Association is a schol-

arly not-for-profit organization which promotes the study, criticism, research, teaching, appreciation of the artistic, humanistic and scientific principles of communication. MCA also seeks to create a sense of unity among high school, community college and university communication departments in the state of Mississippi. (<http://www.misscom.org/>)



BOOK REVIEW: IF YOU SEE THEM: YOUNG, UNHOUSED, AND ALONE IN AMERICA BY VICKI SOKOLIK C.2024, SPIEGEL AND GRAU \$30.00 • 336PAGES

By Terri Schlichenmeyer
Columnist

You've looked everywhere. In the closet, beneath the sink, in the corners of drawers and storage areas. You've opened totes, then taken your search outside, turned the garage upside-down, and checked every square inch of the back yard. Nothing. That confirms it. As author Vicki Sokolik says in her new book "If You See Them," America's teens may be affected by a hidden problem.

of means in a palatial home, she knew she was lucky. She never went without and, years later, neither did her teenagers, both of whom were taught generosity and the spirit of giving.

It was a good lesson, then when, as they were delivering holiday meals to families near their Florida home one winter, Sokolik met a woman who reluctantly revealed that she was employed but couldn't afford permanent housing on her salary.

Sokolik loved to volunteer. Growing up in a household

the woman, taught her financial basics, and helped her find housing. Eventually, the woman asked Sokolik to move on, to find someone else to help.

And so she did: Sokolik's son was a compassionate soul. He worried about a classmate who seemed to have little-to-nothing and again, Sokolik seized the chance to help. Alas, it didn't work out but the experience taught her and her family something important.

Some teens in America are in crisis.

Officially, they're called "un-

accompanied homeless youth," but the reality is harsher: they're kids who were kicked out or chose to permanently leave home for a variety of reasons.

Because they weren't removed by social workers or the state, they're not eligible for welfare or any other assistance programs. They stay with friends or distant relatives that will have them, or they sleep on park benches. They get by, and they fall through the cracks.

Few people notice them, says Sokolik, because they do a good job at staying hidden but she

knew those kids were out there. And she was going to do something about them.

For as long as there've been kids, there have been kids without a place to eat, shower, or lay their heads at night. The thing, says Sokolik, is that those she writes about in "If You See Them" don't want you to see them.

That seems odd until you know their reasoning, and Sokolik helps with that. She shows readers how this nationwide issue happened and what's being done about it, through memories

of her own life, work, family and essays written by the "kids" she helped who are now adults.

Dip in, and see how easy their tales are to read, even despite that many of them will make you wince. Still, without spoiling things, you can expect happy endings among the sad stories.

You can also expect your heart to be shattered.

This book is a gently urgent call to arms, a plea for attention, and a good read altogether. When you care about kids, "If You See Them" is a book to look for.



ZACK WALLACE
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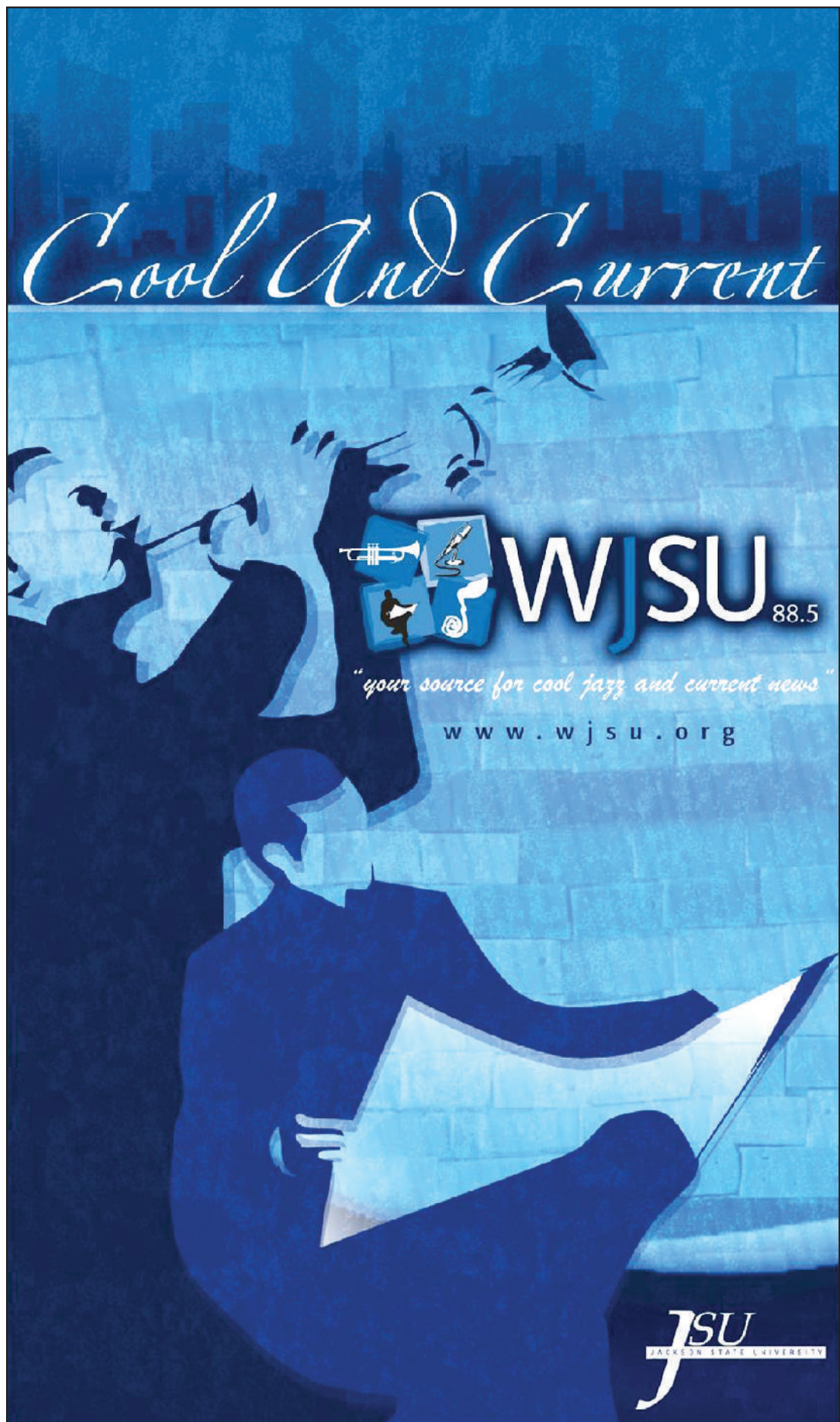
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Lady Tigers remain perfect, 11-0 in the SWAC

By Tim Ward
Sports Writer

The Lady Tigers had to shake off the travel to Pine Bluff, Arkansas, as they found themselves trailing 7-0 early in the first quarter before igniting for an 11-0 run to get themselves going.

By the end of the first quarter JSU led 19-12. Andriana Avent led JSU with 20 points. Teammates Ti'lan Boler contributed 18 points, and Angel Jackson had a full stat line, scoring 5 points, grabbing 8 rebounds, making 2 steals and getting 2 blocks.

JSU led at the half, 37-26. The Lady Tigers came out determined to put the game away in the third quarter. Four big turnovers gave JSU momentum, and they pushed their lead to 53-37 by the start of the fourth quarter. From there, JSU cruised to its 11th straight win, 72-56.

The loss dropped Arkansas Pine Bluff into a two-way tie with Grambling State, both with an 8-3 SWAC record.

On Saturday, JSU defeated Mississippi Valley State 70-54 in Itta Bena, MS.

Next up for the ladies is a home game this Saturday against FAMU at 3:30 p.m.



Andriana Avent (JSU)



Keshunna Luckett (JSU)

Jackson State men bounce back with 2-game winning streak

By Tim Ward
Sports Writer

With their victories over Mississippi Valley State and Arkansas Pine Bluff, the Jackson State University Men's team improved to 6-5 in the SWAC, placing them in a three-way tie for 3rd place with Alabama State and Alcorn. JSU defeated Valley 77-69 Saturday and followed up with a 76-63 win over Pine Bluff. Both wins came on the road.

Riding the momentum from Saturday's victory, Jackson State took a 39-36 halftime lead against Pine Bluff. Jordan O'Neal paced the Tigers with

17 points, matched by Keionte Cornelius's 17 points, while Keiveon Hunt added 14 points and a couple of steals. JSU's defense caused havoc, forcing 15 turnovers and converting those turnovers into 16 points. Zeke Cook contributed 3 steals for JSU, and Keiveon Hunt had 2 steals.

FAMU currently sits at 2-9 in the SWAC and is on a 4-game losing streak.

Next up for JSU is Florida A&M (FAMU) this Saturday at the Lee E. Williams Athletics and Assembly Center. Tip-off is scheduled for 5:30 p.m.



Jordan O'Neal (JSU)



Keionte Cornelius (JSU)

Tougaloo Bulldogs continue to win

By Tim Ward
Sports Writer

As the regular season winds down, the Bulldogs of Tougaloo boast a record of 20-4, 12-2 in the GCAC. Keondre Montgomery leads the team with an average of 18 points per game, while fellow Bulldog, Antonio Patterson, follows with 12 points per game.

After losing seniors from last year's incredible journey to the Elite 8, where Tougaloo won 32 games, there was speculation about whether the team would have to rebuild. However, under the leadership of head coach Eric Strothers, the Bulldogs are proving they're still contenders.

This past weekend marked senior night, and Wiley University, riding a four-game winning streak, was the opponent. Wiley fans were quick to point out the absence of their two leading scorers, Delor Johnson, the top scorer in the GCAC, and Demarius Pitts. However, given the intensity Tougaloo played with, it's uncertain how much of a difference their presence would have made.

The game saw both teams scoring quickly in spurts, with the lead changing back and forth in the initial minutes of the first half. Coach Strothers rallied his team, who responded with runs of 12-2 and 14-0, bringing the halftime score to Tougaloo 44, Wiley 26.

The Bulldogs kept up the pressure, opening the second half with a 12-0 run, essentially securing the victory. Tougaloo won 73-47.

Antonio Patterson led the scoring with 21 points and added 14 rebounds, while Keondre Montgomery contributed 17 points and 12 rebounds. This duo has paced Tougaloo all season.

Wiley was led in scoring by Tayvoion Fisher's 13 points, with Devon Barshow adding 11 points and 9 rebounds.

Hinds County School District Weekly Update

ENGAGING-EMPOWERING-ENSURING-EXCELLENCE

HINDS COUNTY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS PAY APPRECIATION TO HINDS COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

The Administrators of Hinds County School District brought gifts and expressed appreciation to the Hinds County School District board members for the work that they perform to make Hinds County Schools continue to go from good to great.

Board members are Robbie Anderson, Mary Killingsworth, Carolyn Samuel and Kayla Banger. Dr. Linda Laws was not present in person but on zoom.



JXN Food & Wine FESTIVAL

03.02.24 | 6-10 pm
MISSISSIPPI MUSEUM OF ART GARDEN

FEATURING
CAT CORA & NICK WALLACE,
REGIONAL CHEFS & 10+ LOCAL CHEFS
INCLUDING: FABIEN BIRAUD, DAMIEN CAVICCHI,
HUNTER EVANS, GRANT HUTCHESON, CRISTINA LAZZARI,
GENO LEE, CHAZ LINDSAY, PIERRE PRYER, SR.,
LAMARCUS ROBINSON, JOSEPH SAMBOU,
ENRIKA WILLIAMS & EDDIE WRIGHT

FULL CHEF LINEUP & TICKETS at
JXNFOODANDWINE.COM