

The Clinton Massacre of 1875 is commemorated 150 years later

U.S. Rep. Thompson applauds awareness efforts to ‘resurrect’ this history

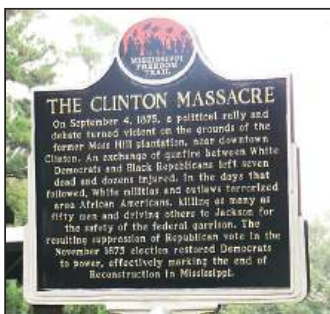
By Gail H.M. Brown, Ph.D.
Contributing Writer

Community members, historians, elected officials, and descendants of victims gathered at Mt. Hood Missionary Baptist Church Sept. 6 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Clinton Massacre, a violent turning point in Mississippi’s Reconstruction history. The violence ignited Sept. 4, 1875,

when approximately 1,500 Black Republicans and their families and about 75 White Democrats gathered for a peaceful political rally. Violence erupted when armed white Democrats opened fire, resulting in at least five Black individuals and three white men killed that day, including two white children. In the days following, white vigilantes killed an estimated 30 to 50 African

Americans, marking a turning point in Reconstruction by weakening Black political power through fear. Many Hinds County citizens admitted they had not heard of the Clinton Massacre until later in life or not at all. “I’m from Bolton, and I was out of college and had become Mayor of Bolton before I heard about

Massacre
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A Mississippi Freedom Trail marker dedicated on Sept. 23, 2021. It is located on Northside Drive across the street from Federation Towers. PHOTO BY GAIL H.M. BROWN/HELP MEET, LLC

Damon Stevenson appointed to newly created Circuit Court Judgeship in Hinds County by Governor Tate Reeves

By Othor Cain
Guest Writer

In a move aimed at strengthening the judicial system in Mississippi’s capital county, Governor Tate Reeves has appointed Damon Stevenson to a newly created circuit court judgeship in Hinds County. Stevenson was officially sworn in this past Friday, marking the beginning of his tenure on the bench.

The new subdistrict, which includes the Capitol Complex Improvement District (CCID), was created in response to increased case volume and a long-standing backlog in the county’s court system. While the seat is tied to the CCID, Stevenson emphasized that the role is designed to serve all of Hinds County.

“The subdistrict is the CCID district, but the judge hears cases from all over the county just like every other judge,” Stevenson explained. “So, it will benefit the entire county and help with the backlog.”

Stevenson, an experienced attorney and former municipal court judge, brings a reputation for fairness, legal acumen, and community-focused justice to the bench. For him, the new role is not only a career milestone but a chance to make a tangible difference in the lives of Hinds County residents. “Being a circuit judge allows



Stevenson

me to utilize my experience as an attorney and municipal court judge to work with the current judges to strengthen the court system in Hinds County,” he said. “My goal is to run a courtroom in an efficient manner that provides justice, promotes respect for the law, and equips people in the criminal justice system with the ability to pay their debt to society while equipping them with the support to turn their life around in a positive manner.”

As a circuit court judge, Stevenson will preside over felony criminal cases, civil mat-

ters, and appeals from county court, critical areas that affect thousands of people across the county. His work will be central to moving cases more swiftly through the system while upholding the rights of all parties involved.

Stevenson is one of the youngest, if not the youngest people to serve on the circuit bench in Hinds County. His appointment marks a new chapter of leadership and energy in the county’s judicial system. He is already working on building capable staff within the resources provided by the state and coun-

ty governments. “I just want to make a difference and do right by people,” he said. “I am focused on getting my courtroom restored and getting to work for the people in Hinds County.”

Looking ahead, Stevenson is focused on collaboration and service. “We have work to do, and I am ready to serve,” he said.

For Hinds County, his appointment represents more than just filling a seat, it’s a step forward in addressing justice system challenges with integrity, experience, and a deep commitment to reform.

‘Catastrophic Failures’: Why dozens of killings in Mississippi prisons go unanswered

By Daja E. Henry
The Marshall Project
and Mina Copuz
Mississippi Today

This story is part of a reporting collaboration with Mississippi Today, the Clarion Ledger, Hattiesburg American and The Mississippi Link.

At least 42 people have been killed inside Mississippi prisons in the past decade, leaving scores of grieving families questioning a system that fails to protect people in its custody or hold anyone accountable.

There are sisters wracked with guilt, mothers with depression, and children struggling to fill the voids in their lives. Former prison employees talk about lying sleepless in bed, replaying the killings they’ve witnessed but could not stop.



The Mississippi State Penitentiary in Parchman in April 2023. PHOTO BY ERIC J. SHELTON/MISSISSIPPI TODAY

In Mississippi, prison homicides are the culmination of long-documented festering problems: chronic understaffing, lax oversight, gangs that rule by violence and delays in treating life-threatening injuries, an investigation by

a statewide reporting team found. Murders signal “catastrophic failures” of prison administrators, whose number one job is to keep incarcerated people safe, said David Fathi, director of the ACLU National Prison Project.

The perpetrators haven’t faced justice in most cases. Just six of the 42 homicides have led to convictions.

And the killings show no sign of ending. In the first half of this year, there were five homicides in three Mississippi prisons.

Sydney Miller said her family was given almost no details by prison officials after her elder brother, Gregory Emary, was stabbed to death at the Chickasaw County Regional Facility in Houston in 2020.

Over the past five years, they have received no contact from prison investigators or prosecutors about what happened or if someone would be held responsible. Miller did not know Emary’s death had been deemed a homi-

Failures
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Expanding Surveillance of Immigrants – at what cost?

In partnership with American Community Media - National Briefing Series

By Christopher Young
Contributing Writer

For the past several weeks, The Mississippi Link has partnered with American Community Media to develop a series of stories in the wake of dramatic DOGE and anti-DEI cuts in federal spending.

This week we explore the conversation on immigrant data surveillance and sharing.

The Issue: The U.S. government has steadily expanded its use of surveillance tools, often under the banner of fighting fraud, stopping crime, or detecting undocumented immigrants. But those same tools, from DMV database access and facial recognition to cell-phone tracking and data broker contracts, are now building a vast infrastructure that reaches far beyond immigration enforcement. This digital dragnet has the potential to place every American under unprecedented scrutiny. By compiling and cross-linking personal information, the state increases the risk of political targeting, identity theft, and massive data breaches. What starts as surveillance of immigrants can quickly become surveillance of all, eroding the privacy rights of every resident.

Nicole Alvarez, Senior Policy Analyst for Technology Policy at Center for American Progress, was the first panelist and recently published a report, “the Trump administration is using American sensitive data to build a digital watchtower.” Alvarez defined the digital watchtower as “a rapidly expanding system of surveillance that threatens not only the immigrant communities currently being targeted by this administration, but the privacy rights of all Americans.” When citizens interact with the government, whether applying for benefits, filing taxes, etc., they share information – social security numbers, birthdates, medical information, income and tax information, etc. Her report focused on two major developments: 1) secondary data abuse, and 2) centralization of federal data systems.

She highlighted the Privacy Act of 1974 as the main law that governs how federal agencies handle our personal data and that it should only be used for the intended purpose – known as purpose limitation,



Panelists Nicole Alvarez. PHOTO: WWW.AMERICANPROGRESS.ORG.



Emerald Tse. PHOTO: WWW.LAW.GEORGETOWN.EDU.



Sophia Cope. PHOTO: WWW.EFF.ORG.

yet the law was written prior to the internet and the mass storage of data, which translates to less accountability in today’s world. She indicated that “with agencies sharing information, personal data is now able to be used for other than its intended purpose and without your knowledge or consent.”

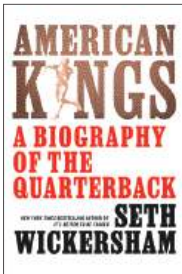
She spoke about the very “little public transparency and oversight around how this is happening in practice and how the IRS commissioner, who was appointed by President Trump earlier in 2025 ended up resigning in protest over privacy concerns.” She indicated that “Medicaid enrollment records have been reportedly used to identify immigrants for deportation. “Again, the individuals involved were engaging with these systems in good faith – turning healthcare safety nets

Surveillance
Continued on page 3

Inside
USM snaps JSU’s 11 game winning streak and their own 11 game losing streak



American Kings



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Above and Beyond – Hinds County’s Sergeant Jasmine King

By Christopher Young
Contributing Writer

Hinds County Sheriff’s Office Sergeant Jasmine King was raised in North Jackson in a neighborhood behind Veteran’s Memorial Stadium. Her parents, Subrince King and Curtis Mays, had seven children and she’s the baby. “From the time I was in the third or fourth grade I knew I wanted to help people, I just liked helping, and I knew when I got old enough, I wanted to try to help people, no matter who they were, I wanted to try to make a difference in the world.” She attended Bailey Magnet High School, before attending Holmes Community College studying Criminal Justice. She has plans to resume college level studies in January. When we met for the interview at The Mississippi Link newspaper offices, she had just gotten off her night shift but was ready to roll – thoughtfully and humbly answering questions, recalling events and dates. The ability to dig deep may well be her superpower, but that is not what caught my eye about her at the May 4, 2025, Loyalty Day Program at Veteran’s of Foreign Wars Post 9832.

Along with serval other public safety professionals, she was honored that day. She strode in just before the ceremony started, with her four children in tow, plus a nephew - Princeton. Jada (13), Kelsey (11), Camille (7), and Karter



Former VFW Post 9832 Auxiliary President Deborah Turner, SGT King receiving VFW Post 9832 Community Service Award from Post Commander Patrick Powe.



SGT King at the funeral service for former Hinds County Sheriff Malcolm Mamillin, in August 2025.

where she just knew her time was up. She was one of just a few women in a facility full of men. She was on the floor, and another female was at the board, and an inmate kept asking for a pen, which was prohibited as contraband. Her intuition kicked in and she saw a look in another prisoner’s eye that told her not to go into that room. She kept talking to the inmate seeking a pen as she backed up to the gate and got out. She then watched on video as over twenty men filed out of that room; they were trying to get her into. Close call. “Who knows what would have happened, but I was through with that and working in Canton about two months later.”

When asked about the balance between a career in law enforcement and raising four children, she said, “it’s simple – structure. My house is structured. How do I do it? I just do it. Their dad helps, and I do what I have to do. My own mom set an example, and she had no help. I won’t quit on my kids, even if I’m tired, I find the strength. Without God I’m nothing, and He is always first. Balancing is a real job, but with support from their dad being very active, I get it done.” Do you take the children to church in Yazoo every Sunday? “Yes, of course, they love church, and they know God is real. My youngest, my little boy says – ‘Don’t give up on God, because He won’t give up on you,’ that little Ca-

mille comes right behind him and says, ‘that’s right, you’re sure right, I know God loves me and Mommy loves me and Daddy loves me.’”

In 2024, Sergeant King was selected as Hinds County Sheriff’s Office Deputy of the Quarter. In early 2025 she was selected as 2024 Deputy of the Year. A significant achievement considering the number of deputies in Hinds County. As mentioned earlier, she received a VFW Post 9832 Annual Loyalty Award for First Responders and Community Heros. Ten days later she stood before the Governor of Mississippi to receive honors as 2025 Hinds County Top Cop. Deputies are entry-level. Corporals have additional duties. Sergeant’s lead a team of deputies. Sergeant King is still months away from turning 35 years old!

As a female law enforcement officer, a mother in an unpredictable world, and a God-fearing Christian – what counsel do you have for others, especially young women, about navigating, priorities, balancing? “The best advice I would give - always put and keep God first, just do the right thing, do right by people, and you will go a long way in life. Using a sports reference – you’ve got to have that inner dog in you and drive – that is the key.” The Mississippi Link newspaper adds its name to the long line of salutes to our very own, Sergeant Jasmine King.

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Remembering and Reflecting on the Clinton Massacre of 1875

PHOTO BY GAIL H.M. BROWN/HELP MEET, LLC



Yvonne Huddleston



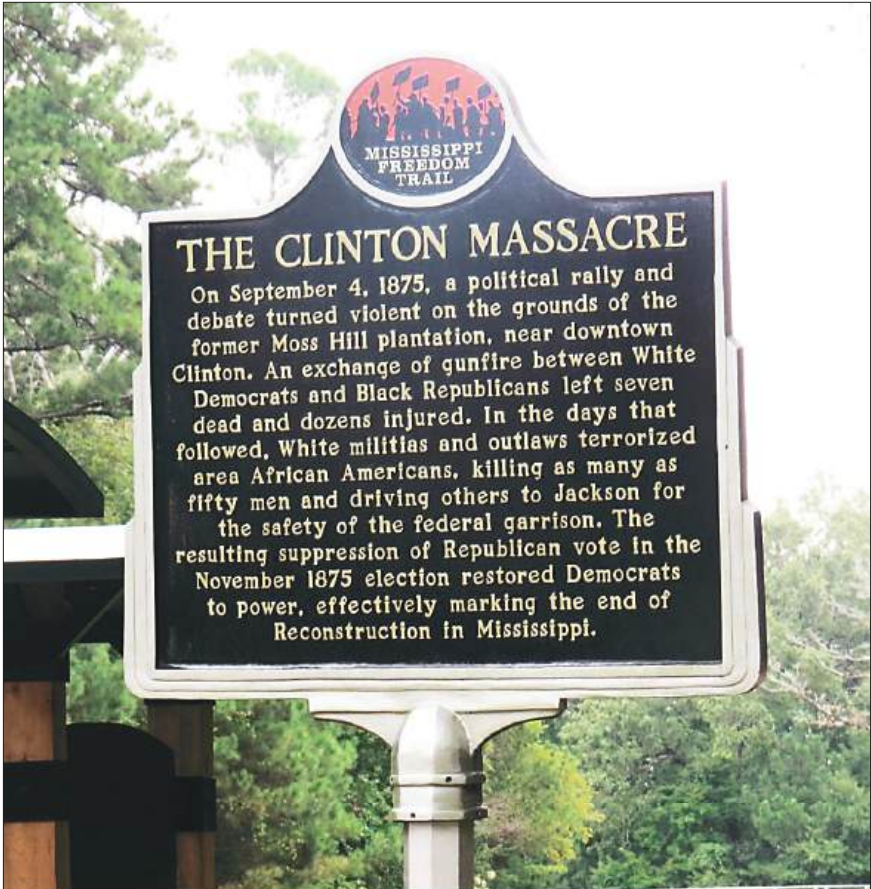
NAACP President and CEO Derrick Johnson comments on the event.



Portrait of Ex-Slave Sally Lee who reportedly witnessed the Clinton Massacre. PHOTO COURTESY OF JAMES S ROBINSON, A CURRENT DESCENDANT OF A VICTIM.



Singer (Janice McQuirter, Pleasant Green Baptist Church (Clinton, MS) member



Above a Mississippi Freedom Trail marker dedicated on Sept. 23, 2021. It is located on Northside Drive across the street from Federation Towers.



Sen. Hillman Frazier, Descendant James Robison, and U.S. Rep. Bennie G. Thompson.



Joining in a photo opportunity after the presentation of the Mississippi Senate Resolution are Clinton Ward 6 Alderman James Lott, Deacon John Robinson, Deacon Chairman Kenneth R. Evans, Sen. Hillman Frazier, Mt. Hood Member and Hinds Co. Supervisor Tony Smith, MSU Associate Professor/Engagement Librarian & Commemoration Organizer Dee Dee Baldwin, U.S. Rep. Bennie G. Thompson, and Mt. Hood Associate Minister Larry Thompson.



From left, Organizing Committee Member Sandra Robinson, Program Guide Ezra Price, and U.S. Rep. Bennie G. Thompson



The congregation listens attentively.



Members Hinds Co. Supervisor Tony Smith and Kristiana Johnson conduct the candle lighting in memory of the known and unknown Clinton Massacre victims.



Descendent of Massacre and Pleasant Green Baptist Church (Clinton, MS) member Deborah Hulitt Bradford displays various historical pieces.

Democratic prosecutor Scott Colom announces US Senate race in Mississippi

By Sophie Bates
Associated Press

Scott Colom, a Democratic district attorney in Mississippi, is running for U.S. Senate, challenging incumbent Republican Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith.

Colom announced his candidacy in a video last week that criticized Hyde-Smith for voting for President Donald Trump's 'big beautiful bill', a sprawling piece of legislation that included Medicaid cuts, tax breaks and new money for national defense and deportations.

"Her last vote is going to run up our debt, kick over 100,000 Mississippians off their health-care and put our hospitals at risk all so billionaires in California and New York can get a tax break," Colom said of Hyde-Smith in his announcement video. "That's not who I am."

Colom also said he would fight to eliminate income taxes



Colom

for teachers and law enforcement and boost wages for Mississippians.

Colom joins the race alongside U.S. Army Veteran Ty

Pinkins, a former Democrat who announced he would be challenging Hyde-Smith as an Independent earlier this year.

"We welcome Scott Colom

to the race and congratulate Senator Chuck Schumer and national Democrats on their recruit," Nathan Calvert, the communications director for

Hyde-Smith's campaign, said in a statement. "Make no mistake — Mississippians know the difference between conservative values that work and the liberal Biden/Colom policies that have failed us."

It is not the first time Colom and Hyde-Smith have clashed. In 2023, Hyde-Smith blocked President Joe Biden's nomination of Colom to a federal judgeship.

Hyde-Smith cited concerns about Colom's connection to George Soros, a New York billionaire who gave money to Mississippi Safety and Justice, a political action committee that supported Colom's 2015 race for district attorney. Soros did not contribute directly to Colom's campaign.

In an attempt to sway Hyde-Smith, Colom wrote to her that he did not request the funds from Soros and did not know the money would be contributed to his campaign.

She also criticized Colom for opposing "legislation to protect female athletes," after Colom signed a letter in June 2021 condemning efforts to criminalize gender-affirming care for transgender people.

Colom is running to flip a seat in a state where Republicans control all statewide offices and both chambers of the Legislature. Democrats have attempted to gain a foothold in the state in recent years. In 2023, Democrat Brandon Presley was narrowly defeated in a gubernatorial election by Gov. Tate Reeves, who received nearly 51 percent of the vote.

Colom is the district attorney in Lowndes, Oktibbeha, Clay and Noxubee counties. He is the first Black prosecutor in those counties, defeating the longtime incumbent Forrest Allgood in 2015. Colom was unopposed when he won a second term in 2019.

Northern Mississippi residents demand new electrical provider after years of city's negligence

By Alex Rozier
Mississippi Today

After five hours in a courtroom where attendees struggled to find standing room, the Mississippi Public Service Commission voted to petition a judge to put the Holly Springs Utility Department into a receivership.

The PSC held the hearing Sept. 4 about a half hour drive west from Holly Springs in New Albany, known as "The Fair and Friendly City." Throughout the proceedings, members of the PSC, its consultants and Holly Springs officials emphasized there was no precedent for what was going on.

The city of Holly Springs has provided electricity through a contract with the Tennessee Valley Authority since 1935. It serves about 12,000 customers, most of whom live outside the city limits. While current and past city officials say the utility's issues are a result of financial negligence over many years, the service failures hit a boiling point during a 2023 ice storm where customers saw outages that lasted roughly two weeks as well as power surges that broke their appliances.

Those living in the service area say those issues still occur periodically, in addition to infrequent and inaccurate billing.

"I moved to Marshall County in 2020 as a place for retirement for my husband and I, and it's been a nightmare for five years," customer Monica Wright told the PSC at the hearing. "We've replaced every electronic device we own, every appliance, our well pump and our septic pumps. It has financially broke us."

"We're living on prayers and promises, and we need your help today," she said.

Another customer, Roscoe Sitgger of Michigan City, said he recently received a series of monthly bills between \$500 and \$600.

Following a scathing July report by Silverpoint Consulting that found Holly Springs is "incapable" of running the utility, the three-member PSC voted unanimously Sept. 4 to determine the city isn't providing "reasonably adequate service" to its customers. That language comes from a 2024 state bill that gave the commission authority to investigate the utility.

The bill gives a pathway for temporarily removing the utility's control from the city, allowing the PSC to petition a chancery judge to place the department into the hands of a third party. The PSC voted unanimously to do just that.

The hearing gave the commission its first chance to direct official questions

at Holly Springs representatives. Newly elected Mayor Charles Terry, utility General Manager Wayne Jones and City Attorney John Keith Perry fielded an array of criticism from the PSC. In his rebuttal, Perry suggested that any solution — whether a receivership or selling the utility — would take time to implement, and requested 24 months for the city to make incremental improvements. Audience members shouted, "No!" as Perry spoke.

"We are in a crisis now," responded Northern District Public Service Commissioner Chris Brown. "To try to turn the corner in incremental steps is going to be almost impossible."

It's unclear how much it would cost to fix the department's long list of ailments. In 2023, TVPPA — a nonprofit that represents TVA's local partners — estimated Holly Springs needs over \$10 million just to restore its rights-of-way, and as much as \$15 million to fix its substations. The department owes another \$10 million in debt to TVA as well as its contractors, Brown said.

"The city is holding back the growth of the county," said Republican Sen. Neil Whaley of Potts Camp, who passionately criticized the Holly Springs officials sitting a few feet away. "You've got to do better, you've got to realize you're holding these people hostage, and it's not right and it's not fair... They are being represented by people who do not care about them as long as the bill is paid."

In determining next steps, Silverpoint Principal Stephanie Vavro told the PSC it may be hard to find someone willing to serve as receiver for the utility department, make significant investments and then hand the keys back to the city. The 2024 bill, Vavro said, doesn't limit options to a receivership, and alternatives could include condemning the utility or finding a nearby utility to buy the service area.

Answering questions from Central District Public Service Commissioner De'Keither Stamps, Vavro said it's unclear how much the department is worth, adding an engineer's study would be needed to come up with a number.

Terry, who reminded the PSC he's only been Holly Springs' mayor for just over 60 days, said there's no way the city can afford the repair costs on its own. The city's median income is about \$47,000, roughly \$8,000 less than the state's as a whole.

This story was originally published by Mississippi Today and distributed through a partnership with The Associated Press.

Gun used in Emmett Till's lynching is displayed in a museum 70 years after his murder



By Sophie Bates
Associated Press

The gun used in the lynching of 14-year-old Emmett Till is now on display for the public to see, 70 years after the killing.

The Mississippi Department of Archives and History unveiled the .45-caliber pistol and its holster during a news conference, that highlighted the 70th anniversary of Till's murder.

The gun belonged to John William "J.W." Milam who, alongside Roy Bryant, abducted Till from his great-uncle's home Aug. 28, 1955. The white men tortured and killed Till after the teenager was accused of whistling at a white woman in a rural Mississippi grocery store.

Till's body was later found in the Tallahatchie River. Bryant and Milam were charged with Till's murder, but they were acquitted by an all-white-male jury.

Deborah Watts, the co-founder and executive director of the Emmett Till Legacy Foundation and

Till's cousin, said she has mixed emotions about the weapon being on display.

"It is an emotional day for us, and I just don't think that associating a murder weapon with the 70th anniversary is appropriate at this time," Watts said.

Watts wants Till's story to be preserved. However, she sees the weapon not as an artifact, but as a piece of evidence in a struggle for justice that is still ongoing.

According to a press release from MDAH, Wheeler Parker, another of Till's cousins, who was there when Till was kidnapped, is grateful to see the artifacts in a museum for the public to see.

"I think it's good because it brings closure," Parker was quoted as saying. "I hope you guys can find the ring and cotton gin. Thank you for doing this."

The gun was previously in the possession of a family in the Mississippi Delta, who donated it on

the condition of anonymity. It will be displayed in the Emmett Till exhibit at the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum. The gun was authenticated using the serial number, which matched the one written in FBI reports on Till's murder.

Michael Morris, the director of the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum and the Museum of Mississippi History, said he hopes the anniversary will cause people to reflect on how Till's story has impacted societal progress.

"To me, that's the legacy. It's not just his death. It's the way that he still finds a way to inspire folks to be the change that they want to see in the world," Morris said.

Till's murder was a pivotal moment in the Civil Rights Movement. Thousands came to his funeral, and his mother, Mamie Till Mobley, insisted on an open casket so the country could see the gruesome state of her son's body.

The Game: What Black city gets the National Guard

By April Ryan
Mississippi Today

“I refuse to pretend that any of this is normal,” said Governor JB Pritzker (D-II) over the weekend, referring to President Trump’s threat to send National Guard Troops to Chicago under what Pritzker called the “fake guise of fighting crime.” Large-scale protests with scores of demonstrators took to the streets in cities like Washington, D.C., and Chicago over the weekend in efforts to push back on Trump’s plans for National Guard troops in those cities.

Trump is playing in an almost game-like fashion as he seems to determine which city deserves National Guard troops. While Baltimore and Chicago were on his lips earlier last week, New Orleans is



his latest pick. New Orleans Black Mayor LaToya Cantrell was recently indicted by a federal grand jury on charges including lying, conspiracy, and wire fraud. The Big Easy is located in the republican state of Louisiana. There have

been growing concerns that the president has been racially bullying cities with Black mayors with diverse populations in democratic states.

Los Angeles, California, was the first city to receive a convergence of National



Guard troops when the president declared an immigration crisis. A federal judge ruled that the administration’s actions were illegal. Needless to say, Los Angeles is a diverse city with a Black mayor in a blue state. That same judge

ruled that the Trump administration violated the Posse Comitatus Act by using military personnel for domestic law enforcement functions, such as security patrols and crowd control.

Since the demobilization of

most National Guard troops in L.A., a small contingent has remained deployed, and California’s governor continues to protest. Currently, Washington, DC, has troops, and more states are sending reinforcements as the city cooperates with federal efforts. Just thirty miles north, in a city Trump calls a “Hellhole,” Baltimore’s former mayor Kurt L. Schmoke told this reporter, “There is not a crime emergency in Baltimore.” Schmoke, the President of the University of Baltimore, situated in the heart of Baltimore City, says that in the 1980s, when crime was worse, he had considered calling in the National Guard. However, the city’s 47th mayor decided against it, considering Baltimore would always carry that negative stigma if he did.

‘We are not losers yet’; Cosby talks prison life, NBC, and media erasure

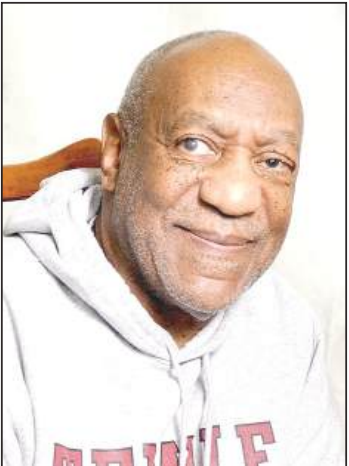
By Stacy M. Brown
Black Press USA Senior National Correspondent

Bill Cosby said his widely criticized admonition that young Black men should “pull their pants up” was less about fashion and more about a system that profits from negative images of African Americans.

“But what was it they used to say? They not only did that, but what got a lot of attention was the shoes, the untied laces, and then the pants down around the crack. And if this is the attention, then it’s something put towards you like they would put drugs into the neighborhood. They would lace the marijuana. They are putting us under siege,” Cosby said during a candid interview on Black Press USA’s “Let It Be Known.” He tied those images directly to incarceration. “No prisoners had or were allowed to have their pants around the crack. No prisoners were allowed at Phoenix to go around with untied shoelaces,” he said. “So, I just felt this was a move by people who didn’t want to be tied up to have a picture. They would rather have a picture of a youth doing nothing, not studying, and having his pants lowered.” The remarks came in Cosby’s first wide-ranging interview about his prison experience, the long-standing NBC rumor, the media’s portrayal of his life, and the erasure of Black history.

Refusing to Sign Away Innocence

Cosby, famously known as “America’s Dad,” served nearly three years at Pennsylvania’s SCI Phoenix following a 2018 conviction on an aggravated indecent assault charge. In June 2021, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled that his trial and conviction were illegal, ordered his release, and barred any retrial. He said prosecutors offered him a way out — if he admitted guilt. “My lawyer came to me and said, the district attorney is offering you to sign a paper saying you did it, and that you would be, you wouldn’t have to do prison time,” Cosby stated. “And I told my lawyer to continue with the trial, don’t stop the trial. I wasn’t signing any papers or anything.” Even in



Cosby

prison, Cosby said, the same deal was dangled before him. “Sign the paper and go to these classes, and then we will let you go,” he said. “Well, my signature would be in a sealed envelope, and nobody could open it. So anyway, it was all set up from way in the beginning.”

Life at Phoenix

Cosby recalled his first hours inside. “When I entered Phoenix for the first time, I could not see,” he said. “And there were regulations such as taking off your clothes and switching to other things, and then the search for some things that you might have.” He said he was kept alone at first. “I was by myself except for a guard or two around the area,” he said. Later, he was moved onto a unit with “convicts who really and truly had done some things like murder, rape, and et cetera, et cetera.” He described the food as barely edible. “It was just that the food was so salty, and it was just that the food appeared from, if you fixed it or it could be written how it’s fixed, it wouldn’t be healthy for human consumption,” he said. Inside, Cosby also became a speaker at peer programs like “Mann Up” and “Men of Valor.” Because the men talked so much about their faith and reverence of Jesus Christ, Cosby said, “As you leave this prison, whatever you go out and become... make Jesus smile.”

The Release

Cosby described being asleep in his cell when word came. “A resident... said, Mr. Cosby, Mr. Cosby, you have to wake up. You can go home. You can go home,” he said. A

white female officer with the rank of major came to push his wheelchair out. “I said, This is not like driving Miss Daisy. And she said, Who’s Miss Daisy?” Cosby recalled. He said as he was wheeled down the corridor, he heard applause from two levels of cells. “It was enough to have all of these fellows clapping,” he said.

The NBC Rumor

Cosby addressed the decades-old claim that his downfall stemmed from an attempt to buy NBC. “I have no evidence to that effect, and nothing comes up to it,” he said. He recounted a Wall Street meeting with financiers that ended in rejection. “The reason for rejecting us for the loan was that they, the people loaning the money, didn’t know anything about television,” he said. Still, he said, the rumor consumed media attention. “Media was the most egregious because I have never been hassled so much in are you going to buy NBC?” Cosby said. He pointed to an article suggesting he would “hire his friends” if successful. “That gave me an idea of how these people were protecting things from, and I think it was a wink that this fellow was writing about... well, he’s going to bring all his Black friends,” he said.

Media Erasure and “The Cosby Show”

Cosby said there was a deliberate effort to erase his achievements. “I heard from a source that a person went on TV and said, let nothing good be said about Bill Cosby,” he said. “From that point on, every source that I know of in the media only printed negative things.” He defended the cultural impact of “The Cosby Show.” “Media didn’t like the fact that the Huxtables were that,” he said. “They said they were rich, which they’re not. That’s middle income. He’s a doctor, she’s a lawyer. And they don’t have a maid or a butler or anything like that.” He recalled a moment when executives considered removing a small set detail. “It just said, abolish Apartheid,” he said of the sign on Theo’s door. “And somebody said to me, well, they want to take that sign down. I said, if you do, you can take the show with it.”

The violence Trump claims to fear occurs mostly in red states

By Stacy M. Brown
Black Press USA Senior National Correspondent

Donald Trump continues to attack cities and jurisdictions heavily populated by minorities, often painting them as crime-ridden and unsafe despite evidence showing overall declines in many categories of crime. Nowhere is this tension clearer than in Washington, D.C., where residents face relentless scrutiny from Trump while red states — many with far less diversity — quietly struggle with some of the highest murder rates in the nation.

The District of Columbia recorded the nation’s highest murder rate in 2023 at 39 per 100,000 residents, with 265 murders. Despite local efforts to address violence, Trump routinely depicts the city as unlivable. To many residents, the greater tragedy is not just the crime itself but the reality that the capital of the United States now looks like an occupied third-world country, with National Guard and federal troops visibly stationed throughout the city. Washingtonians, who have already been denied full congressional representation, have become political pawns in Trump’s rhetoric. What Trump avoids mentioning is that several Republican-led states top the list of the deadliest places. Louisiana



had a murder rate of 14.5 per 100,000, recording 663 killings in 2023. New Mexico, Alabama, Tennessee, and Arkansas — all governed by Republicans in recent years — also posted murder rates higher than 9 per 100,000 residents.

In Missouri, another GOP stronghold, the murder rate stood at 9.1 per 100,000 with 564 murders, disproportionately concentrated in cities like St. Louis and Kansas City. South Carolina, Alaska, and Georgia each ranked high, while Mississippi, often touted by conservatives as a bastion of “traditional values,” has at times led the nation in murder rates. Meanwhile, states with larger minority populations that Trump targets — including Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Maryland — often have lower murder rates than many of these red states. Illinois, home to Chicago, recorded a rate of 6.56 per 100,000,

below Alabama, Tennessee, and Arkansas.

Critics argue this is no accident. Trump’s fixation on minority-heavy jurisdictions is part of a long-standing strategy of scapegoating urban areas with large Black and Latino populations, while sidestepping the systemic problems facing states where his support is strongest. “Murders were far more common in [Mississippi] than they were nationwide,” the World Population Review reported, with Louisiana, Alabama, Missouri, and Arkansas following close behind. The report’s numbers show that while Trump fixates on minority-heavy cities, the deadliest conditions are playing out in red states that rarely draw his attention. “Murders are disproportionately concentrated in urban areas, especially in New Orleans and Baton Rouge,” the researchers concluded.

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P R E S E R V E D

Falling in love with laughter

By Shewanda Riley
Columnist



Before I could stop it from happening, I was already on my side on the floor and unable to move for a few minutes. It was actually probably just a few seconds, but the stunned looks on my students' faces made it seem much longer. I left like a California Redwood tree as I was falling and like I should have been yelling, "Timber!" What was the "it?" I fell on my side in front of a college class that I was teaching a number of years ago.

Because I fell on my left side, I couldn't easily maneuver my body so I could sit up. And because the loose strings on my boots kept my feet twisted together, I couldn't even attempt to

stand up. Because my skirt was so long, they didn't know that I couldn't stand up since they couldn't see my legs. My students didn't know if they should help me or if they would get in trouble if they laughed at me. So, they did neither and kept staring at me as I struggled to roll over and get up.

One student got over her shock and quickly assisted me in getting up; she even offered me a chair to sit in so I could finish teaching class without hurting myself. My now wounded body and pride wouldn't let me sit in the chair. By the time class was over, I regretted hastily pushing the chair back into the corner since both my upper arm and back were starting to throb with pain.

From that point until the end of class, every time I moved during the lecture, I could feel the students watch-

ing to make sure I didn't fall again. It was a little awkward in the classroom as I tried to finish teaching about learning from examples in our everyday lives. I ended up telling them that it was okay for them to laugh and we had a quick 2-minute laugh break which we all needed.

Finally, we were able to finish class but not before the topic of my fall came up a few more times. As they filed out of the room when the class was over, a few jokingly told me to be careful going home; one male student even apologized for laughing at me.

If there was a deeper spiritual lesson, I may have missed it. Maybe I should learn to be more graceful; I've been working on that one since I was a child...

Obviously without much success. Rather than get angry or more embarrassed, I made the connection to the lecture

topic of learning from real-life examples. Without trying, it seems like I'd given them a real-life example of trying to learn how not to die of embarrassment. As I've gotten older, I have also learned to laugh more at myself and my many failings. Proverbs 17:22 teaches an important lesson that laughter is sometimes the best medicine when it says, "A cheerful heart is good medicine..."

Shewanda Riley (Aunt Wanda), PhD, is a Fort Worth-based author of "Love Hangover: Moving from Pain to Purpose After a Relationship Ends" and "Writing to the Beat of God's Heart: A Book of Prayers for Writers." Email her at preserved-bypurpose@gmail.com or follow her on Twitter @she-wanda. You can also listen to her podcast at www.chocolateauntiepodcast.com.

When I Surrender

Laura Story shares how surrendering to God is a form of worship, and the real secret to joy - a joy that's never threatened by circumstances

By Laura Story
Author

My first real job—if you don't count a few summer stints in food service—was leading worship in a local church. My church needed a worship leader, and I was naïve enough to think that my brand-new music degree and the four guitar chords I knew might qualify me. I mean, I loved the Lord and I knew music—I could play and sing. Surely that was enough, right?

It took God no time at all to show me how unprepared I was to truly worship Him, much less to help anyone else do likewise.

Four months into the job, when Martin became ill, I struggled to stand before a congregation of people singing songs of praise to God. How in the world could I lift my voice in joy when our lives seemed to be falling apart? How could I proclaim His faithfulness when my own faith was taking such an awful pounding?

During this season of personal wrestling, my whole concept of worship began to change. I discovered that God wasn't offended if I couldn't "feel it" on a Sunday morning. Instead of worship as a warm and fuzzy, emotional experience, I began to see it as a deeper, conscious choice to praise my always-worthy God.

But getting there wasn't easy.

I began to search the Scriptures for a solid definition of worship, something I could hang my hat on when my feelings didn't automatically inspire me to praise.

It was in the book of Romans that I finally found the answer I was looking for.

When we surrender ourselves to God, we worship Him. Surrendering doesn't lead us into worship; our surrender is our worship.

The first eleven chapters of Romans contain what many theologians agree is the most comprehensive exposition of grace found anywhere in the Bible. After these eleven chapters full of rich truth, it's as if Paul took a deep breath and answered the obvious question now hanging in the air: Considering all that Christ has done for us—making us right

with God by His atoning death, freeing us from the penalty and power of sin, lavishing us with His grace—how should we respond?

I wonder if his answer surprised them. It surprised me.

"Therefore," he wrote, "present your bodies as a living sacrifice" (Rom. 12:1, ESV). In other words, "Surrender your life, body and soul, to God. Give yourself up!"

Paul's readers would have understood the concept of sacrifice. He wrote to the first-century house churches in Rome, made up of Jewish and Roman converts to Christianity. Both groups were familiar with the practice of offering sacrifices in worship—Jewish or pagan—and both would also be reminded of Jesus' sacrifice on their behalf.

One key word in Paul's instruction showed me that he wasn't talking about a martyr's sacrifice: living. He wasn't suggesting that followers of Jesus should all die for their faith; he was asking them all to live for it—with lives of sacrifice that were holy and acceptable to God. This kind of surrendered life, he said, is our true and proper response. Worship is a lived experience.

I've heard worship described through the years in so many ways, as an hour-long service you attend on Sunday morning, or a genre of music played on your local Christian radio station. But I'd never heard it described, like Paul did, as a full-on, lifelong surrender.

When we surrender ourselves to God, we worship Him. Surrendering doesn't lead us into worship; our surrender is our worship.

That seemed so profoundly simple!

My first response was relief. In Paul's worship paradigm, surrender outranks emotion. Of course, worship of God engages our emotions, but for Paul, emotion wasn't the main requirement. Surrender was. The proper response of people who have been given everything is to present their very lives to the One who has given them everything. This is our reasonable act of worship.



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Alcorn’s STEM MBA program welcomes fifth-generation Alcornite, Voston Heidelberg

The Mississippi Link Newswire

Voston Heidelberg, a fifth-generation Alcornite from Riverdale, Ga., has enrolled in the Alcorn State University STEM master of business administration program, joining a long line of family members who have attended the institution. The decision continues a legacy that began with his great-great-great-grandparents, Herienne and Joseph Dunbar, who were among Alcorn’s first students.

Heidelberg’s family history at Alcorn dates back to the Dunbar family. His mother, Naundra Lyon-Heidelberg, a 1994 Alcorn graduate and the university’s director of student engagement, his father, his great-grandmother, and two brothers also attended the university. His brother, Voshon Heidelberg, recently graduated in 2023, and his other brother, Vonterrius Heidelberg, is currently pursuing his master’s degree.

Although Voston chose to attend North Carolina A&T State University for his undergraduate studies, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in agribusiness with a minor in supply chain management, he knew his educational journey was not complete without experiencing Alcorn.

Voston’s connection to the university is rooted in his childhood, as he grew up attending homecomings and football games at the university. “They say the air is a little bit cleaner down there,” said Heidelberg. “It’s always been in my heart.”

Coming from a Mississippi lineage, Voston understands the broad and often overlooked impact of agriculture on daily life. That was what led him to choose his undergraduate degree. “People don’t think about it on a daily basis, but agriculture is connected to so many things,” Voston said. “The clothes we wear, the food we eat, the products we use. It all comes from agriculture.”

His mother, Naundra, a 1994 Alcorn graduate and the university’s director of student engagement, was excited when she learned about his decision.

“I am ecstatic that Voston



Heidelberg

has chosen Alcorn State University as his secondary education platform,” she said. “It warms my heart to know that he has carried the generational legacy, and I can’t wait to see his end results.”

When she learned of his decision, Mrs. Lyon-Heidelberg said she felt the program was perfectly aligned with his undergraduate studies.

Alcorn’s STEM MBA program incorporates science, technology, engineering, and mathematics into a traditional business curriculum, equipping students with the interdisciplinary skills needed to succeed at the intersection of business and STEM fields. The program’s coursework covers areas such as finance, marketing, operations, strategy, and entrepreneurship, with specialized STEM-focused concentrations.

“The ambiance and friendliness of Alcorn are unmatched,” said Voston. “It’s a family-oriented place, and I knew that if I didn’t attend Alcorn for undergrad, it would have to be for something else. I am excited to be a part of the history of this program and to show others that graduating from a STEM MBA program at an HBCU in one year is

possible.”

Heidelberg chose Alcorn’s accelerated STEM MBA program after conversations with Dr. Joyce Buckner-Brown, provost and vice president for academic affairs, and Dr. Antwon Woods, who both impressed him with their leadership and the program’s unique structure.

“The real beauty is coming to an HBCU that your family has gone to, and you meet professors, office workers, and other students who have gone through the same process of generational legacy just as you have,” said Naundra. “I just hope that people understand that because you’ve gone to another university to complete a degree, there’s no reason why you cannot continue your legacy at the same universities, especially historical black colleges that your parents, grandparents, or great grandparents have gone to as well.”

Voston advises future students to be trailblazers and take advantage of all the opportunities and funding available to them. “You can’t sit back and expect these things to fall into your lap; you have to be hungry and go get these things,” Voston said.

Callaway Assistant Coach honored with WAPT Alyce Clarke Education Award

The Mississippi Link Newswire

Christopher “C.T.” Taylor, assistant basketball coach and first-year teacher at Callaway High School, has been honored with WAPT’s Alyce Clarke Award for his impact on scholars and the community.

The Jackson native was overcome with emotion as he accepted the award. “This is real? Oh wow, this is amazing,” he said. “It’s a really great feeling to come back and teach the generation behind me, but I also went to school with their moms and dads.”

A proud Provine High alum and former Ole Miss basketball player, Taylor returned home after two



Taylor

decades away, bringing experience in athletics, youth development, and event management, including work at the Rose Bowl Stadium and the Justin Reed Basketball

Academy. Inspired by his late best friend and NBA player Justin Reed, Taylor is committed to mentoring the next generation.

At Callaway, he’s already building strong bonds with students. Senior point guard Jonathan Brister shared how Taylor recently ran a final lap on the track with a player, saying, “He pushed him through.” Head Coach Skip Harvey described Taylor’s return as an answered prayer.

Coach Taylor hopes to help lead Callaway to its ninth championship while continuing to inspire young people in his hometown.

Fresh coat of history: Mural adds color and culture to JSU Post Office

The Mississippi Link Newswire

Jackson State University (JSU) has unveiled a new mural inside its postal office created by JSU alumni and award-winning contemporary artist Christopher Windfield. The mural, located in the Jacob L. Reddix Hall illustrates the university’s rich history and features key civil rights figures.

The project was led by JSU’s Auxiliary Enterprises Executive Director Kamesha Hill, Assistant Director Victor Mills and JSU Postal Manager Stephanie Luckett.

“Our goal in Auxiliary Enterprises is to always tell our own story and to partner with alumni or vendors who love Jackson State University as much as we do,” Hill said. “We wanted to give students a visual of excellence and create a warm, inviting space. I am grateful that Victor and Stephanie executed the project so well.”

“This mural should serve as a daily reminder of the strength, resilience and legacy of Jackson State University,” said Mills. “By honoring our alumni, civil rights heroes, we show students, faculty, staff and the community that they, too, can make a difference. It’s a beautiful addition to our campus and a powerful reflection



of our commitment to service through Auxiliary Enterprises.”

Illustrations of historical figures such as Jackie Robinson, Constance Baker Motley, Joanne Trumpauer, Malcolm X, Booker T. Washington and César E. Chávez cover part of the wall alongside postal stamps and other cultural elements. Another section highlights the first Black women mail carriers for the U.S. Army and a depiction of the 1970 Gibbs-Green tragedy, featuring Philip L. Gibbs and James Earl Green.

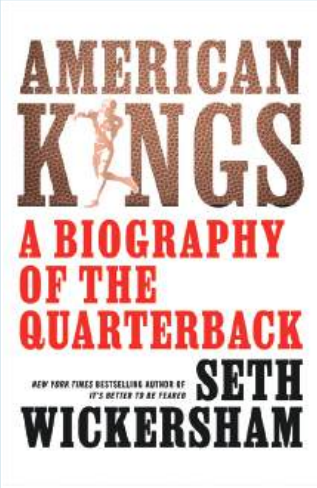
“I always feel drawn to do anything for Jackson State,” said Windfield. “I love to create art, but when I create something for Jackson State, I definitely try to put my all into it. I think it’s so important now that

people don’t just see the beauty of the art, but also learn the history behind it.”

Windfield began the project in June after a call from Mills, a fellow JSU alumnus and former classmate. He completed two phases of the project in August.

“It’s all about feeling pride. I hope the students walk through the building and see firsthand the history and stories that have helped make up our university,” said Luckett. “We’ve painted that history with our students in mind so that they can also feel proud to be a part of JSU’s history.”

The mural project will continue to expand, with upcoming phases highlighting notable JSU alum and a special dedication to JSU’s Sonic Boom of the South.



BOOK REVIEW: AMERICAN KINGS: A BIOGRAPHY OF THE QUARTERBACK

BY SETH WICKERSHAM
C.2025, HYPERION AVENUE
\$29.99 • 407 PAGES

By Terri Schlichenmeyer
Columnist

Snap.

And with that, and a catch that’s picture-perfect, your team is on their way to another win. The guy that threw the football sure knows his stuff. He’s worth every penny he’s paid, and in the new book “American Kings” by Seth Wickersham, you’ll see what it took to get there.

Like so many little boys, Seth Wickersham wanted to play pro football when he was growing up; specifically, he wanted to be a quarterback. Unlike most

other boys, though, he took it to an extreme, becoming “obsessed” with throwing a football with the best accuracy, hoping to match the skills of the players he admired.

Alas, despite an entire childhood of near-constant practice and a few wins on the field in high school, he didn’t make varsity and ended up playing as a receiver.

He knows now that to be a quarterback is to be a star, but it’s also “a way of life.”

Here, he writes about Archie Manning, “a legend, a folk hero,

a song title... and the beginning of a family franchise...” Wickersham shares the story of Warren Moon, how he stepped up to help his mother when his father died, how domestic violence almost derailed his legacy, and the racism he quarterbacked under for years.

He spent time with Caleb Williams, “the first true professional amateur quarterback” to get money for playing at the college level. He interviewed James Harris, who was prepared to become a teacher “If the league didn’t want a Black quar-

terback...” Wickersham “spent much of 2022 with” Andrew Luck, who “learned quickly that greatness requires an... unlimited selfishness.” He writes about how Jack Elway influenced his son’s choice of career, what Hollywood had to do with one pro footballer’s life, and the post-career of the first player “to throw a consistently beautiful spiral.”

Says Wickersham about his subjects, “Anyone could throw a football. Only a quarterback could make people cheer.”

Your favorite chair is oiled for smooth reclining and fast

slam-downs. The snacks are laid in for at least a week, and beverages are on ice. You know exactly what you’re wearing for the game this weekend. All you need is “American Kings” and you’re set.

Author Seth Wickersham calls his book “a biography,” but it’s just as much a history, since he refers often to the earliest days of the game, as well as the etymology of the word “quarterback.” That helps to lay a solid background and it adds color to a reader’s knowledge about football itself, while explaining

what it takes for men and women to stand out and to achieve gridiron greatness. On that, Wickersham is honest, sometimes calling out his subjects for their attitudes toward teammates and others. Blunt words are used that are unprintable in family newspapers, so beware if you’re sharing.

Is your team’s QB in this book? Maybe, or a past favorite surely is, so check out “American Kings” and see what you find. Football fans and pigskin prognosticators both will love this book in a snap.



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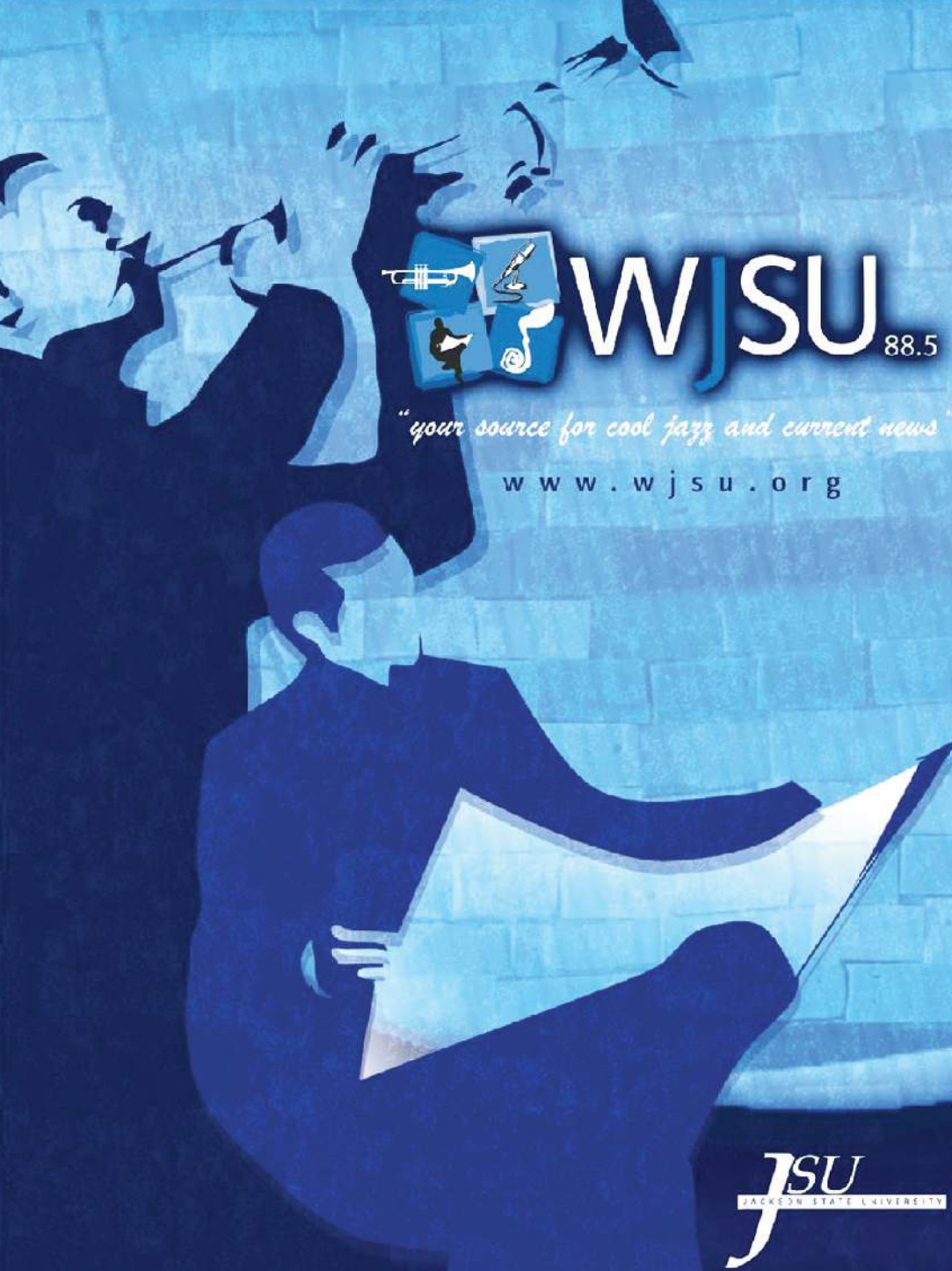
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