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Volkswagen apology ads ignore Black, Latino media

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA News Wire Contributing Writer

Still facing an uphill battle to regain its reputation as a trusted automobile manufacturer, Volkswagen has turned a blind-eye to consumers in the Black and Latino community.

To some, it's puzzling that the scandal-plagued automaker would ignore African-Americans, whom a Nielsen Company study revealed possess \$1.1 trillion in collective buying power that's expected to increase to \$1.3 trillion by 2017.

Equally inexplicable is the company's exclusion of Latinos, whose college enrollment has more than tripled since 1996 and who now represent 20 percent of the white and gray collar labor force.

In an effort to garner some needed goodwill, Volkswagen earlier this month placed advertisements in the Wall Street Journal, New York Times and 28 other newspapers apologizing to what it called its "trusted consumer" base for its misdeeds.

Those ads were not placed in any of the more than 200 National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) Black-owned newspapers that carry a combined weekly readership of more than 20 million people.

Nor were they placed in any of the National Association of Hispanic Publications (NAHP) newspapers, which serve 41 markets in 39 states



Volkswagen did not place any "mea culpa" ads in any of the more than 200 National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) Black-owned newspapers that carry a combined weekly readership of more than 20 million people. (VW)

with a combined circulation of more than 23 million readers, according to the NAHP.

"While new vehicle purchasing remains steady overall, more Latinos and African-Americans are buying new cars, yet we do not see Volkswagen engage with our communities especially when brand loyalty is one of the strengths of our consumers," said Martha Montoya, the president of the NAHP and publisher of the award-winning El Mundo newspaper.

Montoya provided statistics that revealed that Latinos and African-Americans accounted for at least 18

percent of new vehicle purchases in 2018, up by three percentage points from last year.

"[Yet], Volkswagen's spending in Latino media declined by 49 percent so far this year, when compared to last year.

"Now that they have the opportunity to grab a market share with relevant cultural material, they keep insisting on ignoring our industry which is absolutely puzzling," Montoya said.

That means ignoring more than \$1.5 trillion to \$1.7 trillion in annual

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Black grad rates up significantly

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NDG's Holiday Gift Guide

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Xmas Pops is a treasure

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COMMENTARY

Justice Scalia defends racism from the bench

By Julianne Malveaux
NNPA News Wire Columnist

On the same day that President Barack Obama gave a stirring and historically grounded commemoration regarding the 150th anniversary of the passage of the 13th Amendment, the one that "abolished" slavery, Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia chose to disregard tenets of equality and opportunity from the bench during the hearing for Fisher V. University of Texas when he

suggested that African American students would benefit more if they went to "lesser track" schools. His verbatim comments:

"There are those who contend that it does not benefit African-Americans to get them into the University of Texas, where they do not do well — as opposed to having them go to a less advanced school, a slower-track school where they do well," Scalia said. "One of the briefs pointed out that most of the

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James C. Belt, Jr.



Zulu Ali



Garwin Chan

Join thousands of readers who visit NorthDallasGazette.com daily!

James C. Belt, Jr.

(Editor's Note: On behalf of the Publisher and Staff of the North Dallas Gazette we send our deepest sympathies to the Belt family during this time of loss. James Belt leaves a remarkable legacy of service to the Dallas community.)

(The Dallas Examiner) - The Dallas Examiner and the Law Office of James C. Belt Jr. mourns the loss of Attorney James C. Belt Jr.

For close to 40 years, he has served the community as a civil and criminal lawyer. He received his Bachelor of Business Administration Degree from Pan American University, Edinburg, in 1968. And went on to earn a Juris



Doctorate from Thurgood Marshall School of Law at Texas Southern University in Houston in 1977. He opened his private practice in the heart of South Dallas, where he served those who needed him most.

Belt, who was also a Dallas

Examiner co-publisher, sat on the board of the National Newspaper Publisher Association, the official Black Press of America and the NNPA Foundation Board. He served as more of a silent partner and advisor, but it was his support that has helped The Dallas Examiner continue to serve the community for almost 30 years.

He was the founder of the Dallas Black Criminal Bar Association - an organization of Black lawyers in the private practice of law in Dallas County. He was a member of the National Bar Association, Texas Bar Association, J.L. Turner Legal Association and the Inns of Court.

In September, he received the Living Legends award

from J.L. Turner Legal Association.

As a well-respected leader in the community and activist, he also served the community by offering his words of wisdom and years of knowledge and experience. During the early 2000s, he co-hosted Dallas Examiner Live on KNON Radio. He previously sat on the Texas Southern University Board of Regents in Houston, Dallas Area Rapid Transit Board and the Texas Rural Foundation Board.

He was also a lifetime member of the NAACP.

Belt held strong spiritual beliefs and was dedicated to serving the Lord. For close to 40 years, he was a dedicated

member of St. Luke Community United Methodist Church, where he was an active member of the Good News Sunday School Class. Each year, the class would offer scholarships to college students and automobiles for those in need of transportation. He was a founder and chairman of the St. Luke Community Leadership Luncheon. He also served as a trustee board chairman at St. Luke.

At the end of a long battle with pancreatic cancer, Belt was admitted to Baylor Medical Center, where he died Sunday at 5 p.m. due to complications. He was 71 years old.

He was a dedicated family man. He is survived by his

wife of 45 years, Mollie F. Belt; his children, James C. Belt III, Melanie Belt, MD and Carlos Cavazos; 10 grandchildren, Brittany Cavazos, Jerry Cavazos, C.J. Cavazos, Joshua Cavazos, Michael Cavazos, Lejond Cavazos, Chloe Cavazos, Bryce Belt, Dylan Belt and Melania McDaniel; two daughter-in-laws, Melba Cavazos and Cherrese Belt; and one son-in-law, Demetrius McDaniel, Esq.

The wake will be held on Thursday at 6 p.m. at Black and Clark Funeral Home, located at 2517 E. Illinois Ave.

The funeral will be held on Friday at 11 a.m. at St. Luke "Community" United Methodist Church, located at 5710 E R L Thornton Freeway, 75223.

Zulu Ali

(BlackNews.com) -- Attorney Zulu Ali of the Law Offices of Zulu Ali in Riverside, California was honored on November 24, 2015 as one of the top 100 black lawyers by the prestigious National Black Lawyers Top 100, an honor given to only a select group of lawyers for their superior skills and qualifications in their field. Membership in this exclusive organization is by invitation only, and is limited to the top 100 attorneys in each state or region who have demonstrated excellence and have achieved out-



standing results in their careers.

The National Black Lawyers: Top 100 is a professional honorary organization composed of the Top 100 Black Lawyers from each state who serve individ-

uals, families and businesses needing attorneys to represent them in the American legal system. Membership is extended to those individuals who exemplify superior qualifications and leadership in their respective state and area of specialty.

Attorney Ali, a native of Shelbyville, Tennessee, is a U.S. Marine Corps veteran, who served with the Marine Security Forces. After graduating from the Tennessee Law Enforcement Training Academy, Attorney Ali served as a sworn police officer with the City of Shelbyville, City of Lewisburg, and Vanderbilt Police De-

partments respectively.

Attorney Ali earned a Juris Doctorate from Trinity International University Law School and a liberal arts degree with an emphasis in African Studies from Regents College through a consortium with Tennessee State University. He has been admitted to the California State Bar; United States District Courts for the districts of Central California, Southern California, Northern California, and Colorado; United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth, Ninth, Tenth, and Eleventh Circuits; and the United States Supreme Court.

In 2007, inspired by civil rights attorneys Thurgood Marshall and Avon Williams, Jr., who used the law and courts as a vehicle to make change and protect all people against injustice, Attorney Zulu Ali opened the Law Offices of Zulu Ali with a focus on representing persons accused of crimes and seeking criminal justice, immigrants, victims of discrimination, and persons seeking civil justice. Attorney Ali and his law firm takes on extremely difficult cases and matters that provide an opportunity to make changes in the law, through the courts, when the law is unjust.

Attorney Ali serves as Director of the American Committee for United Nations Oversight, an advocacy group lobbying the United Nations for police reform; Director of the Stop and Frisk Academy, which trains at risk youth and others to deal with police encounters; Director of the Southern California Veterans Legal Clinic, a legal clinic offering no cost and low cost legal services to military veterans; and a member of the National Conference of Black Lawyers.

For more details about his law firm, visit www.zulualilaw.com.

Garwin Chan

5miles, one of the nation's fastest-growing mobile marketplace apps, has named as its chief financial officer a veteran executive with deep experience in global technology, goods and services.

The Dallas-based company's appointment of Garwin Chan as CFO marks the latest advancement of the app, which launched less than a year ago and now has nearly 4 million users and averages more than 30,000 downloads a day.

Chan, 35, will be based in Hong Kong, reporting to Dr. Lucas Lu, 5miles' founder and chief executive officer.

"Garwin is a seasoned financial professional with exceptional knowledge and



vast relationships from his work in a highly competitive field," Dr. Lu said. "He has documented success in leading and exceeding business objectives as we continue our growth."

Chan previously was a managing director at Founder H Fund, a private equity fund in China. Before

that, he was vice president of Bain Capital, where he led diligence teams for investments in Asia and in the U.S. Chan played key roles on multiple transactions, including a \$120 million investment in a global call center company, a \$1.6 billion buyout of an industrial goods company and a \$165 million buyout of an auto supplier.

Chan began his career as an investment professional at Sankaty Advisors, the mezzanine and debt-focused affiliate of Bain Capital. At Sankaty, he was part of a two-person team that managed a \$400 million telecom portfolio, investing in distressed debt, high-yield bonds, mezzanine and public equities.

Chan received a bachelor's degree in economics from Harvard College, and an M.B.A. from Harvard Business School.

5miles is a hyper-local mobile marketplace app, one of the nation's fastest-growing online shopping ventures in only a year of operation. It is the first app of its kind to include services, housing and jobs, in addition to second-hand trading. Putting a premium on safety and security, 5miles does not permit personal information on an item description, offering instead a proprietary messaging system that keeps contact information private. To learn more about 5miles, visit 5milesapp.com.

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Blackonomics: Stop wasting your tax refund

By James Clingman
NNPA News Wire Columnist

As we talk about what to do and not do with our dollars during the holiday season, retailers are eagerly awaiting and preparing for another way to get your money. After the “after Christmas” sales, furniture stores, electronics outlets, car dealers, and anyone else with something to sell will be licking their lips about yet another high-spending season. It is a time of the year when consumers are quite vulnerable because many of us feel like we have “extra” money to spend. That extra money is called “tax refunds.”

Other than folks who get

the earned income credit, most people do not view tax refunds as their own money that has IRS has held for a year or more. Many treat it like found money, which makes it very easy for us to go out and spend it on “Tax Refund Sales.” Truth is, it’s already your money; you earned it and the IRS is just giving it back to you. Irrespective of that reality, each year consumers splurge and go on buying binges with their “windfall” refunds.

This is not an effort to tell you how to spend your refund; that’s your decision. This is an effort to inform my readers about Compro Tax, a national Black owned and operated tax preparation and financial

services firm. As I have done virtually every year via this column and in the five books I have written, I continue to write about Compro Tax, especially around this time of the year because if we have to hire someone to prepare our taxes, at least let it be a Black-owned company.

According to Franchise Help.com, “The tax preparation industry is big business – 38,287 firms operated in the field last year, generating 7.7 billion in annual revenue. Because it is required, tax preparation tends to be recession resistant.”

Compro Tax, started more than thirty years ago, comprises over 200 affili-

ates throughout the country, was founded by Jackie Mayfield, and is domiciled in Beaumont, Texas. Mayfield and his partners, associates, and staff are dedicated not only to being the best of the best in the tax industry but being great corporate citizens in the communities in which they reside. In addition, Compro Tax offices are open and active all year long rather than just moving in for the tax season and disappearing after April 15th.

Further, prospective Compro Tax affiliates are offered across-the-board assistance with start-up and continuous training in an ef-

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Black scientists in this country don’t come from schools like the University of Texas. They come from lesser schools where they do not feel that they’re being pushed ahead in classes that are too fast for them.”

What does Justice Scalia mean by “lesser schools?” Does he suggest that the African Americans, most at the top 10 percent of their high school class (as required by Texas law) can’t compete with their peers, similarly situated students at the top of their classes? Abigail Fisher, who is bringing this lawsuit, was deficient, and judged as so. She was not in the top 10 percent at her Texas high school; according to the Top Ten Percent Plan any graduating senior in the top 10 percent of their graduating class receives admission to the University of Texas at Austin. More than three quarters of the slots at the University of Texas-Austin are reserved for that group of students – the best and the brightest of their high schools. What about Fisher? She didn’t make the cut. A middling student, she had not enough redeeming social value to be considered among the 8 percent whose admission is a function of the

Personal Achievement Index (PAI) and Academic Index (AI). These are the folks who

based on their race, socioeconomic status, family background, extra curricular activities and other factors stand out. These folks are not all African American; in fact of the 841 that make up the 8 percent, only 47 of them scored lower than Fisher and only five of them were African-American. They are folks whose portfolio deserved special consideration.

Abigail Fisher is an ordinary White girl who was so seeped in White skin privilege that she fully expected to have her way. She is a whiner who has been enabled by the anti-affirmative action crowd. She is pushing a point because she cannot own her own deficiencies. She is attacking affirmative action because that is her excuse for being deficient and mediocre.

Lots of students don’t get into their first choice school. Most recover – they go to their second or third choice, graduate, and manage their lives happily. From time to time, they may ruminate that they would have liked to have their first choice. They may show up at football games, cheering for the school they weren’t admitted to, or they may relish the success that comes to them, despite their early disappointment. But they are grown people, used to a set-

back (who isn’t), and prepared to move on with their lives. They know they weren’t in the top 10 percent, and they are happy if they made the second cut at UT, or content to go to another school and excel. Not Fisher. Buttressed by the dollars that come from affirmative action opponents, she is willing to be the poster girl for inadequacy.

From his remarks from the Supreme Court bench, Judge Antonin Scalia is willing to consider her point and exhibit his own racism. What does he mean by “lesser schools?” Is he familiar with the data on African American accomplishment? Does he share the same hubris that Abigail Fisher does, asserting that a deficient white student deserves an edge over a well-prepared black one? Scalia needs to look at the data before running his mouth. Both African American and white students go to schools that are less highly rated than the University of Texas (lesser schools, really). Most of them succeed. They would have succeeded at UT, too. Regardless of race, they accept the fact that, not in the top 10 percent of their class, they were not entitled to admission. After that, their admission was a roll of the dice.

While President Obama talked about freedom, invoking the history that made the

13th Amendment important, reminding us of “the preachers, black and white, (who) railed against this moral outrage from the pulpit.

Where are these preachers now? They know that there are racial economic gaps, but they are silent. They know that there is a structural racism that perpetuates unfairness, but they are unwilling to fight against it. They will offer preaching, perhaps tepid, perhaps rousing. But they won’t step up and attack the systems that produce disparate economic results. They won’t condemn attacks on affirmative action.

How would Justice Scalia’s respond to President Obama’s eloquence with his White-privileged arrogance? If there is a poster girl for fairness, she isn’t Abigail Fisher. To lift her up is to embrace the arrogance of White skin privilege. To lift her up is a disgraceful rebuff to the University of Texas students who achieve against all odds. To denigrate the students who were admitted instead of Fisher is a laughable attempt by a so-called justice to justify his injustice, and it flies in the face that our President made when he spoke of the 13th amendment.

Julianne Malveaux is an author and economist based in Washington, DC and can be reached at www.julianne-malveaux.com.

For communities of color, the fight against diabetes is far from over

Patricia Maryland
NNPA News Wire
Guest Columnist

Recently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced the rate of new cases of diabetes in the United States declined by about 20 percent from 2008 to 2014. This represents the first sustained decrease in diagnosis since the disease emerged as a major threat to public health over the course of the past two decades. But the fight is far from over, especially for communities of color.

While the CDC report is good news regarding an

overall decline in diabetes rates, it did not acknowledge a significant change in prevalence among the African-American community, which continues to be far more vulnerable to the disease than other racial and ethnic groups.

Consider the data: Black adults are about twice as likely to have diagnosed diabetes as non-Hispanic White adults. They are also twice as likely to die from the disease. What's more, African-Americans are more than three times as likely to suffer from health complications related to diabetes, such as lower-limb amputation and kidney fail-

ure.

It's clear that the African-American community is shouldering an unequal burden when it comes to diabetes treatment, prevention, research and education. And so the CDC's announcement — while welcome news — does not signal that the fight against the disease is over. There is more work to do to not only overcome the diabetes epidemic, but also eliminate the health-care disparities that disproportionately plague our community.

To do that, we must redouble our efforts to create a culture of health in African-American commu-

nities—one that removes the stigma of seeking care and helps our neighbors and family members access the opportunities provided under the Affordable Care Act. Healthcare.gov is now available for the open enrollment period through January 31, 2016, and taking advantage of the options available today is the first step our community can take to reclaim Black health and wellness.

But coverage alone isn't enough to guarantee better health outcomes for African-Americans. Healthcare providers have a responsibility to deliver inclusive, quality care that con-

siders the needs of the whole patient. That means providing patients with relevant, reliable information that empowers and engages them to make choices for a healthier life.

The truth is that all healthcare providers should strive to provide an environment where no one is excluded—where everyone has access to compassionate, personalized care and the opportunity for better health regardless of their struggles or station in life. And that's the right model for all providers. Because we must get to know our patients on an individual, holistic level—not prescribe a

one-size-fits-all approach—if we intend to truly improve their health outcomes.

Finally, our policymakers, civic leaders and all who have a stake in the health of our community must address the social determinants that influence and widen the diabetes equity gap. For years, we've known that diabetes can be prevented and managed with healthy lifestyle changes such as exercise and good nutrition. But it's difficult to go for a run around the block when you live in a high-crime neighborhood. It's challenging to find fresh fruits and vegeta-

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fort to stay up to date on all tax policies and other financial issues and benefits of which customers can take advantage.

If you hire someone to prepare your tax return, even if you do not use Compro Tax, please hire a Black owned company. It makes no sense for us to be so ensconced in demonstrations and protests around Black dollars while not making every effort to spend some of those dollars with a Black owned tax firm—and other Black companies, not just because they are Black but also because they provide excellent service.

Compro Tax is committed to improving communities and affording business

opportunities to prospective entrepreneurs. As a glowing example of community involvement and “giving back,” Compro Tax built, owns, and operates a convention/event center in Beaumont, Texas to serve the needs of residents for a top-notch, first-class meeting facility.

Eighty-two million tax returns are filed by paid preparers. Don't you think that in light of our rhetoric about supporting Black businesses we should support Compro Tax? Franchise

Help.com also wrote, “The vast, vast majority of tax preparers are small – 37 percent were run by a single person, while 53 percent were operated by less than ten. There were 128,393 total employees in the field last year. There were plenty of tax returns to go around.”

Unlike other tax firms, Compro Tax does not hire folks in clown suits to wave placards in front of their offices to attract customers; Compro Tax gets its business simply by providing outstanding customer service from industry experts.

Finally, for those who believe that advocating for

support of Black businesses is separatist, divisive, or unfair, as some Black folks in Detroit voiced back in 2005 when Dr. Claud Anderson attempted to develop a Black business enclave in that city, I offer one more quote from the article on FranchiseHelp.com: “One approach some tax preparation businesses take to avoid the stark seasonality of the tax preparation business is to diversify and enter other related fields. Others, like Siempre Tax+ are focused on specific markets, like the ‘Hispanic’ population.” I rest my case.

To find the Compro Tax

office nearest you or if you are interested in starting your own Compro Tax office, go to their website: www.comprotax.net or call (409) 882 9893; toll free, 1-888 884 2829. And don't spend all of your tax return in one place.

James Clingman is the nation's most prolific writer on economic empowerment for Black people. His latest book, Black Dollars Matter! Teach your dollars how to make more sense, is available on his website, www.Blackonomics.com.

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CLC unveils Women Veterans Wall in Dallas

The Community Living Center (CLC) at VA North Texas Health Care Center recently unveiled a Women Veterans Wall of Honor, celebrating the service and sacrifice of our Nation's female Veterans.

"The goals of this project are to honor and recognize our women Veterans, educate them about VA services available to them, and ultimately, reduce the number of advanced gynecologic cancers in the aging, female Veteran population," said Geriatrics & Extended Care Physician Assistant Pam Korzeniowski, PA-C, one of the event planners. "This wall has been a labor of love from everyone who works here."



Marine Corps Veteran Brenda Powell (seated) and Navy Veteran Constance Lewis, ARNP's service photos were among the items featured on the Women Veterans Wall of Honor; a project guided by Geriatrics & Extended Care Physician Assistant Pam Korzeniowski, PA-C (center).

With uniforms and photographs donated by women Veterans who were either residents or employees of the Community Living

Center, the five shadowboxes represent the five branches of the military.

"I was a resident of the Community Living Center,

on three different occasions," said 20-year Marine Corps Veteran Brenda Powell, whose service photo is featured in one of the shadowboxes. "Without the people who work here at the VA, I wouldn't be here today. That's a fact."

Women are the fastest growing group within the Veteran population and VA North Texas offers a variety of services designed to meet their unique needs.

To reach the VA North Texas Women Veterans Program that advises and advocates for women Veterans and helps coordinate primary care and specialized care including reproductive health services, call 214-857-1938.

New fire station honors the fallen

Fire Station 27, the City of Dallas' first multi-story fire station in over 65 years, became fully operational on Dec. 3, 2015. A public grand opening celebration took place on Dec. 10.

The 23,600 square foot facility will have capacity for 15 fire personnel per shift, and represents the most advanced design of all the City of Dallas' new fire stations. The multi-level design, created in response to the challenges of a dense urban site, afforded the unique opportunity to develop a 2-story feature wall that high-

lights six individuals who were pioneers in the Dallas Fire Department between 1872 and 1977. These metal etchings, crafted by a local artist, include John Clark, the first firefighter to die in the line of duty in the City of Dallas; Captain Ralph T. Lack, the first member of Fire Station 27 to die in the line of duty; Chief W.C. Bud Connor, the first Chief of the Dallas Fire Department; Kenneth L. Parker, the Department's first African American firefighter; Andres

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bles when you live in a food desert. We must marshal our communities around the policies that affect our envi-

ronment's ability to support a culture of health and wellness.

Diabetes has been—and

will continue to be—a major public health issue in the U.S. We're making progress in the fight against the disease, but we need to do more to address the disparities felt

by the African-American population. With a focused effort from members of the Black community, policymakers, civic leaders and healthcare providers to create

a culture of health, deliver compassionate, personalized care and advance the policies that make healthy lifestyles viable, I am confident we can curb the diabetes epidemic

for good, for everyone.

Patricia A. Maryland, Dr.PH, is the President of Healthcare Operations and Chief Operating Officer for Ascension Health.

MY BEST IDEA CAME FROM MY BLOCK IN QUEENS.

Where We Come From

I'm proud of my contribution to music, but I didn't create hip-hop. My proudest achievement is much more personal, because it's something I did create and I believe it will help make the world a better place for my kids. It's what we've done at RushCard. I started RushCard for people who weren't able to participate in the banking system. When someone can't get serviced by a bank, they get shut out of the economy, they spend hours in line getting their checks cashed and paying bills. It means they can't do business online. As the world speeds up, they are forced to slow down, and I wanted to do something about it.

How It Works

RushCard helps folks overcome challenges by providing them with a prepaid Visa debit card and giving them their direct deposit check 2 days early. It allows me to transfer money to my kids while they're away at school and help save for the future. It means anyone can shop online. Access to financial services is absolutely needed to advance our community. And RushCard works. You can see how it's been adopted by all sorts of middle class Americans, because all of us can appreciate the value you get from using it.

What's Next?

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-Russell

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African American high school graduation rate up nearly 6 percent

Achievement gap continues to narrow for underserved students

U.S. students are graduating from high school at a higher rate than ever before, according to data released today by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics. The nation's high school graduation rate hit 82 percent in 2013-14, the highest level since states adopted a new uniform way of calculating graduation rates five years ago.

The rate of graduation for African American students has grown from only 67% in 2010-11 to 72.5 percent in 2013-14, this represents a three year increase of 5.5 percent. In Texas, the African American student population is graduating at a much higher rate of 84.2 percent.

What's more, the gap between white students and black and Hispanic students receiving high school diplomas continues to narrow,

Overall Changes in Graduation Rates	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	3-yr change
American Indian/Alaska Native	65	67	69.7	69.6	4.6
Asian/Pacific Islander	87	88	88.7	89.4	2.4
Hispanic	71	73	75.2	76.3	5.3
Black	67	69	70.7	72.5	5.5
White	84	86	86.6	87.2	3.2
Low Income	70	72	73.3	74.6	4.6
English Learners	57	59	61.1	62.6	5.6
Students with Disabilities	59	61	61.9	63.1	4.1
Total	79	80	81.4	82.3	3.3
Achievement Gap Changes	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	
Black-white gap	17	17	15.9	14.8	
Hispanic-white gap	13	13	11.4	11	

and traditionally underserved populations like English language learners and students with disabilities continue to make gains, the data show.

"America's students have achieved another record milestone by improving graduation rates for a fourth year," U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said. "The hard work of teachers, administrators, students and their families has made these gains possible and as a result many more students will have a better chance of going to college, getting a good job, owning their own home, and supporting a family. We can take pride as

a nation in knowing that we're seeing promising gains, including for students of color."

"A high school diploma is absolutely critical, absolutely attainable and key to future success in college, in the workforce and in life," said Delegated Deputy Secretary John King. "It is encouraging to see our graduation rate on the rise and I applaud the hard work we know it takes to see this increase. But too many students never get their diploma, never walk across the graduation stage and while our dropout numbers are also decreasing, we remain committed to ur-

gently closing the gaps that still exist in too many schools and in too many communities."

Since 2010, states, districts and schools have been using a new, common met-

See **RATES**, Page 7

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University of Texas argues for diversity before the Supreme Court

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The University of Texas at Austin argued before the United States Supreme Court today that all students — and the nation as a whole — benefit when colleges and universities are able to assemble truly diverse student bodies.

UT Austin defended its admissions process in the case of *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin*. That process considers an applicant's race and ethnicity as one of many factors in a limited manner that is consistent with Supreme Court precedents and necessary, the university argued, to meet the compelling interest in the educational benefits of diversity.

The case was argued for the university by former U.S. Solicitor General Greg Garre,

currently partner and global chair of Latham and Watkins Supreme Court and Appellate Group. The U.S. solicitor general also argued for the United States on the university's behalf.

To complement Texas' automatic admissions law, the university also admits a segment of the class through a holistic process. It considers applicants' academic performances as well as other diverse factors including extracurricular accomplishments, socioeconomic backgrounds, hardships overcome, special talents and race and ethnicity.

The plaintiff in the Fisher case, Abigail Fisher, claims she was denied undergraduate admission in 2008 because she is white. The uni-

versity argued that the record does not support her claim, that Fisher does not have standing to continue to pursue the case, and that the university's holistic admissions process considers race in a limited manner consistent with prior Supreme Court rulings.

During the past six years, multiple courts have upheld UT Austin's policy.

The Supreme Court first heard the Fisher case in 2012 and remanded it back to the appeals court to review evidence that the university's policy is narrowly tailored to obtain the educational benefits of diversity. The 5th Circuit Court of Appeals did so and, in 2014, again upheld the university's narrow use of race in admissions.



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Plano Democrat running for Justice of the Peace

Michael Messer, a resident of Plano, Texas, has filed to run for Collin County Justice of the Peace, Precinct 3-1 in the Democratic Primary. Messer is a patented inventor who earned a Bachelors degree in Accounting from the University of

North Texas, and he is an active member of Mensa, and an Eagle Scout.

Messer has served four years as DFW Regional Organizer for the non-partisan group, Save Texas Schools. He also co-founded the Collin County Young Democrats and

served as president for two years. He joined the Plano Sunrise Rotary Club in 2013, where he also served in various positions, including club bookkeeper, sergeant at arms, and secretary.

Messer and his family are members of Christ

United Methodist Church. An avid jogger, Messer can often be found running the Chisholm Trail. Recently he completed his 7th half-marathon in November.

Early voting kicks off on

Tuesday, February 16, 2016 with the Election Day scheduled for Tuesday, March 1.

For more info about Messer's campaign, visit www.democracy.com/Michael4CollinCounty.



Holiday celebration with Commissioner Daniel



Pictured above: Darryl Martin, Dr. Theresa Daniel, and Gordon Hikel. At right: Dr. Theresa Daniel, Antoinette B. (NDG/Frank Lott)

Commissioner Theresa Daniel recently hosted a holiday celebration with the community. Elected officials, community leaders and those they serve stopped by to enjoy refreshments and to look back on the accomplishments of 2015.



RATES,

continued from Page 6

ric—the adjusted cohort graduation rate—to promote greater accountability and develop strategies that will help reduce dropout rates and increase graduation rates in schools nationwide. For four consecutive years, graduation rates have continued to climb, which reflects continued progress among America's high school students.

To ensure the economic strength of our country, students must graduate high school ready for college, careers and life. The Department has invested more than \$1.5 billion in early learning; implemented strategies that improve achievement and close opportunity gaps, and awarded billions of dollars through such grant programs as Race to the Top, Investing in Innovation, and School Improvement Grants; and expanded college access and affordability for families.

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TeCo's Black Nativity is extraordinary and not a one-time experience

By Sonja Washington
NDG Contributor

TeCo's production of Black Nativity by Langston Hughes shines the light on the classic work which tells the story of the hope available through the birth of the newborn King Jesus Christ. The message of Christ's birth and its significance has been communicated in many different approaches throughout history.

TeCo's production of Black Nativity eloquently conveys the story in two facets. The circumstances of the humble conditions of Jesus's arrival and the impact his existence has on current day worship. There are touches of humor throughout the play that enlightens the concept that we can laugh at ourselves throughout life's journey. There is a message of perseverance, demonstrated through Joseph's struggle to find an adequate place for Jesus arrival. Many individual performances will leave you full of emotion that will cause you to drop a tear invoked by their amazing



ability to glorify Christ's gift to us.

The director, Jiles King did not hold back in selecting the best of the best for the musical and vocal talent to support the score of this production. Each voice held its own in order to convey the meekness a selection required or one that needed to hit the rafters. Another impressive aspect was collectively all their voices blended perfectly, of which I know is extremely hard to achieve with so much individual talent.

Two performances stood out to me, Patricia E. Hill can hit the rafters and cut the soul. Deon Q. Sanders

version of Changed is so powerful it causes you to reflect and want to praise how Christ has impacted your life.

TeCo's Black Nativity is extraordinary therefore it enthralls the audience into the production. Several members vocally and visually demonstrated their enjoyment of the performance. All age groups were engaged the entire time. This is definitely a family event that will not disappoint you.

Although this is a familiar story that most of us know well; this is not presented in a way that you have experienced before. My party that included ages of 8-66 agreed it is worth seeing a second time before the season is over. A profound statement for how busy this holiday season is for all of us to consider to go back to again.

Black Nativity is running now through Dec. 20 at the Bishop Arts Theatre Center. For available showing times and ticket sales please visit <http://www.tecotheater.org/index.php>.

DSO Christmas Pops is a treasure!

By Ruth Ferguson
NDG Editor

Dallas families know a highlight of the Christmas entertainment calendar every year is the Dallas Symphony Christmas Pops performance. Often you see families attend with everyone from grandparents to toddlers because it becomes such a family tradition everyone enjoys annually.

And don't be surprised to see Jolly O' Saint Nick himself passing out candy and taking photos not only with children – but also the young at heart.

This year's program features the Dallas-area favorite soprano Ava Pine with the Dallas Symphony Chorus bringing not only classic Christmas music to life but a new songs as well. Pine, a Grammy nominee, is a graduate of Texas Chris-



Gniyah Prescott, 8-years-old, received a hug from Santa Claus at the Dallas Symphony Orchestra's Christmas Pops performance on Dec. 12, 2015.

tian University and travels the world with her beautiful voice, but often returns home for special performances. Her singing was wonderful with O Holy Night being one of the audience favorites.

The stage is set to look like a winter wonderland which adds to the excitement from the moment you

enter the majestic auditorium.

You still have a final week to enjoy the beautiful sounds of Christmas at the Dallas Symphony Christmas Pops with shows running through Dec. 20. Single ticket prices range from \$19-\$240 and they are available at www.mydso.com or call 214-TIX-4DSO.

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NDG Book Review: Have a Merry Kiss-mass with *The Mistletoe Inn*

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

The issue you wrestle with is a thorny one.

It's been literally hanging over your head for days: does mistletoe require you to kiss someone, or is nose-rubbing permissible? Will a firm handshake be sufficient, or does protocol demand something more lip-stick-laden? And, as in the new novel "The Mistletoe Inn" by Richard Paul Evans, can the rules be re-written?

Ever since she was eleven years old, Kimberly Rossi hated Christmas. She hated it all: snow, the lights, the carols. They only reminded her of Christmas Day, 1995, the day her mother committed suicide.

Despite being abandoned (which is just how she perceived her mother's death),



Kimberly had a good childhood. Her father made sure of it; he was her biggest fan and her best friend. He supported her when her first fiancé left her for another woman, and when her second fiancé broke up with her via text, en route to an out-of-state job. Even after she'd left her childhood home in Las Vegas and moved to Denver, her fa-

ther helped her, long-distance, to get through a messy, scandalous divorce.

He was also the one who knew her deepest dream of becoming a romance writer, which is why he gave Kimberly the gift of a lifetime: an all-expenses-paid trip to Vermont, and a writer's conference. She hadn't wanted to attend; her father had just given her some bad news and the conference was scheduled right before the dreaded Christmas week but she didn't want to disappoint him. Besides, H.T. Caldwell, her favorite author ever, was scheduled to speak.

And so, with manuscript in hand, Kimberly checked into The Mistletoe Inn, a postcard-perfect hotel. There were workshops to attend, although they were

generally of no help. There were friends to be made, although most of the potential author-attendees were awfully cliquish. There were critiques to collect, although Kimberly learned the hard way that criticism was like a knife to her heart when her "writing buddy," Zeke, a handsome fellow attendee, promised to give her manuscript a truthful assessment.

Too truthful was more like it, and Kimberly was hurt. Her novel-in-the-making deserved better judgment.

And, as it turned out, so did Zeke...

I was quite amused at "The Mistletoe Inn," but not for the reasons you'd think.

There's a nice, very sweet but juicy romance inside the covers of this book; in that respect, author Richard Paul Evans, who's known for such things, keeps his fans very happy. This story of girl-meets-boy, girl-loses-boy, girl-gets-boy-anyhow with a twist of "dirt," as Evans says, might even jerk a few tears. It's sparkly-warm and "Christmasy,"

just as you like.

What I found so fascinating, though, was Evans' behind-the-scenes asides about the publishing industry! Romance fans who dream of writing within the genre, in fact, may miss parts of the story because those little extras are so absorbing.

And that's okay. You won't mind a second plunge into this book because it's perfect escapism fun. And if that's what you want, then "The Mistletoe Inn" will give you a very Merry Kiss-mas.



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Casino Tours Dallas focuses on customer service

NDG Staff

Yolanda Edwards certainly knows how to reinvent herself. She has actually retired three times – before her latest endeavor Casino Tours Dallas. Rather than just sitting back in her rocking chair she has built a business that focuses on provided guests something more than a trip from point a to point b. A lucky NDG



reader has an opportunity to discover how delightful the experience can be when they win tickets for a ride to

a casino this month. Visit our Facebook page – like and share our post for a chance to win.

Edwards is originally from Cattle Mills, Texas, but Dallas has been home most of her life. She is well known for establishing and operating Night Shift, the first 24 hour child care center in Dallas. She was introduced to running casino buses by Bruno Brice

Cyldesdale who was in running buses for over seven years, and she joined two years ago. Their key focus with Casino Tours Dallas is customer service!

“Customer service is our premiere goal to assure that our guests have an excellent traveling experience,” Edwards recently shared with NDG.

The Casino bus is a party on wheels! No need to wait

until you cross the stateline to let the fun begin.

Edwards stated goal of the tour is allow guests to enjoy themselves as soon as they step on board. On each bus, a hostesses is available to offer beverages and food while guests relax.

Parties of 40 or more can reserve a party bus and choose their pick-up and dropoff location. Otherwise,

there are several locations throughout the Metroplex for guests to board the Casino Tours Dallas buses headed to Durant or Grant Oklahoma; or Shreveport Louisiana. \$30 for a roundtrip ticket is affordable way to leave the driving to someone else.

For more details visit www.casinotoursdallas.simplesite.com.

VW, continued from Page 1

buying power that Latinos possess, according Carlos Santiago, president and chief strategist of Santiago Solutions Group, a leading growth strategy consultancy focused on Latino markets.

In the Volkswagen mea culpa ads, the company apologized for concealing the high-level of emissions in its diesel models with a sensor and software that conveyed phony data.

The transgression has raised doubts about the company’s credibility, and hearings in the United States Senate and elsewhere were convened to investigate the matter.

Along with the ads, Volkswagen said its offering affected car owners a \$500 Volkswagen Visa Prepaid Loyalty Card and a \$500 Volkswagen Dealership Card.

They’re also offering free, 24-hour Roadside Assistance for three years.

However, excluding minority-owned newspapers signaled that minority consumers, whose combined annual spending power is more than \$3 trillion, were not included in the offer.

“We placed the ad with papers in key markets that had the widest diverse readership possible,” said Machel D. Williams, general manager of diversity and CSR at Volkswagen.

“I know that VW values communities of color as is evidenced by our focused efforts over the past few years to implement a diversity and inclusion strategy that strengthens the communities where we live and

work,” she said, but even she noted that, “Of course, there is always room for improvement and we look forward to continuing our efforts.”

The company insisted that diversity and inclusion are top priorities for Volkswagen of America and officials said this commitment is part of the company’s goal of being recognized as a leader in diversity and inclusion practices by 2018 and includes partnerships with key national organizations such as the National Urban League, National Association of Minority Automobile Dealers, and Rainbow Push.

“Volkswagen also remains focused on efforts to rebuild trust and confidence in the brand, committed to work as quickly as possible to develop an approved remedy, and eager to reach as many customers as possible affected by the TDI issue in markets where their vehicles were purchased,” said Darryl Harrison Jr., a company spokesman. “The Volkswagen Goodwill Package is an important first step in our efforts to begin making things right with our customers and dealers.”

However, the company did not explain why they overlooked minority-owned media outlets.

“The only thing that Volkswagen has ever done as it pertains to ethnic marketing is just a couple of things with the Latino media,” said Ken Smikle of Target Market News. “They’ve always taken the African-American community for granted.”

And, it’s not just Volkswa-

gen who’s ignored that buying power.

A Nielsen Company consumer spending report released last year revealed that companies spend just three percent of their advertising budgets marketing to African-American consumers.

“The Black population is young, hip and highly influential,” said Cheryl Pearson McNeil, a vice president at Nielsen. “We are growing 64 percent faster than the general market.”

But, Volkswagen’s credibility appears to be shrinking.

The YouGov Brand Index, which tracks consumer perception, found that Volkswagen’s U.S. score plummeted to minus-24 as of Sept. 22 from a plus 12 just before the scandal broke.

Negative tweets about Volkswagen jumped to 99,900 during the week from Sept. 18 through 24, compared with 1,187 in the seven days before the crisis, according to Amobee Brand Intelligence.

Earlier this year, Jesse Jackson’s Rainbow Push Coalition its annual Auto Diversity Scorecard revealed that, when it comes to advertising, marketing and minority dealership development, Volkswagen did display some indication of diversity.

Dr. Ben Chavis, the president and CEO of the NNPA and civil rights leader, said that he’s appalled at Volkswagen’s deliberate exclusion of newspapers and individuals of color.

“The National Newspaper Publishers Association is singularly distinguished in the national marketplace as the sole trusted print and digital media voice of Black Amer-

ica,” Chavis said. “Volkswagen did the right thing by attempting to offer a public apology to its consumers, but Volkswagen did the wrong thing by failing to reach out to African-American-owned newspapers represented by the NNPA.”

Chavis continued: “So-called mainstream news media are not trusted by Black America because of the long history and contemporary manifestations of the publication and distribution of negative racial stereotypes and disrespectful news coverage concerning the overall quality of life in Black America. Yet, that missed opportunity by Volkswagen can be and should be corrected forthwith and expeditiously.”

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Attachment C

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Three books for your Christmas list!



A book I bought for myself this year was Humans of New York by Brandon Stanton - if you are not one of his 16 million Facebook fans, why not? President Barack Obama is and last week even posted a comment on his Syrian refugee series. The photos are beautiful, more importantly the stories are heartwarming and sometimes heartbreaking.

OK I am hooked on watching DariusCooks.com and could not miss out on his Stories from My Grandmother's Kitchen. Look for more things from Darius Williams in 2016.

As soon as I opened the box Pumpkinheads Peanut's Mistake was taken from me! The book is gorgeous and shines a spotlight on the importance of giving and getting forgiveness. Amazon



Workers benefit as they grow old

We've all heard the notion that it's best to keep busy as you grow older, but now a massive study conducted by the University of Miami offers proof, according to the Association of Mature American Citizens.

Researchers studied data on more than 83,000 seniors

over a period of 14 years and found that those who were idle in retirement were not as healthy as those who worked to one degree or another. In fact, those with demanding jobs were among the healthiest.

The research report concluded that: "Older adults

who continue working tend to be much healthier across multiple health outcomes, but perhaps providing better workplace accommodations for older adults with functional limitations would allow more of them to join the ranks of their healthier peers."

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STATION, continued from Page 5

Enriquez, the Department's first Hispanic firefighter; and Sherrie Clark Wilson, the first female in Fire and Rescue.

"The design intends to re-establish a proper civic presence for the firehouse," said Ron Stelmarski, Design Director for the Texas Practice of Perkins+Will. "Functionally, the story wall serves as a volumetric separation between the people-places and the machine-spaces of the station, but more importantly, it celebrates the history and legacy of firefighting in the service of community."

"The replacement Fire Station No. 27 for the City of Dallas is the most chal-

lenging new station for the City to date due to the site's small size and location at one of the busiest intersections in Dallas," said Zaida Basora, Assistant Director of Public Works with the City of Dallas. "We selected Perkins+Will to provide an innovative solution that would fit on the existing site which seemed much too small for Dallas' modern fire station program. Perkins+Will had previously worked successfully with the City of Dallas on Fire Station No. 50, another challenging station and site in Southwest Dallas. "The new facility is also one of the most sustainable Fire Stations in Dallas. This is a



proud moment for the City of Dallas."

The fire station is LEED Gold registered, employing sustainable design strategies such as solar panels, a storm

water collection cistern, and high performance glazing, lighting and HVAC system. Layout was carefully orchestrated to keep response times to under 60 seconds.

CHURCH HAPPENINGS

BETHEL BIBLE FELLOWSHIP CARROLLTON (A PLACE TO BE-LONG)

December 20, 9:45 a.m.
You're invited to our Sunday Morning "Prayer and Meditation" followed by Morning Worship Service at 10 a.m. See what God is doing through and with us; you will be blessed. Don't forget to come back at 5 p.m. for the Word of God in Spanish at our Iglesia de Cristo Services.

December 27, 12 Noon
How do you study the Bible? Join us for a new Sunday afternoon Bible Study; Senior Pastor Woodson, Pastor Brenda Patterson and others will teach a series on "How to Study the Bible God's way." Learn how to know Christ and make Him known to others; to help you know and grow in God's word; to give you clarity and direction; to help you worship, honor and praise God; to help you know and use God's word to lead others to Christ; and to encourage fellowship and build unity within the church. You don't want to miss this Bible Study Group.

December 30, 7 p.m.
Join us in Wednesday's Prayer and Bible Study Class with Senior Pastor Dr. Woodson and/or Pastor Brenda Patterson teaching on the subject of Spiritual Warfare. These are cool Topics in Winter months. Learn what God says about critical issues and topics through the study of His word.

Dr. Terrance Woodson, Senior Pastor
1944 E. Hebron Parkway
Carrollton, TX 75007
972-492-4300
www.bethelbiblefellowship.org

BIBLE WAY COMMUNITY BAPTIST CHURCH

December 31
You are invited to our Watch Night service it will surely start off your New Year right. Call the church for details.

Dr. Timothy Wilbert, Pastor
4215 North Greenview Dr.
Irving, TX 75062
972-257-3766
www.biblewayirving.org
CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH IN RICHARDSON

December 20, 8:45 a.m. and 11 a.m.
You're invited to our Morning Services as we worship, honor and praise God for His blessings.

December 23,
Join us at 12 Noon with Rev. Viveca Potter teaching on the Word of God; come back at 6:45 p.m. for Corporate Prayer and stay for Senior Pastor Autry at 7:30 p.m. teaching the Word of God. Our youth will come for Food and Fellowship at 7 p.m. followed by Bible Study at 7:30 p.m.

Dr. Terrence Autry, Senior Pastor
701 Centennial
972-991-0200
Richardson, TX 75081
www.Christcommunityrichardson.org

FELLOWSHIP CHRISTIAN CENTER CHURCH IN ALLEN "The Ship"

December 20, 8 a.m.
Join us as we praise and worship God in the Joycie Turner Fellowship Hall, 200 West Belmont Drive in Allen; followed by our Worship Services at Bolin

Elementary School in Allen, Texas 75002 and bring someone with you; you will be blessed.

December 23
You're invited to our Wednesday's 12 Noon-Day Live Prayer and Bible Study and/or our Wednesday Night Live Prayer and Bible Study at 7 p.m. to learn more about God's Word at the Joycie Turner Fellowship Hall, 200 West Belmont Drive in Allen. Be encouraged by God's plan for your maturity and His glory; and most of all, be prepared to grow.

December 27, 7 p.m.
Calling all youth! Every 4th Sunday, we host Hype Sunday Worship at our Administration Building, 200 W. Belmont Drive in Allen, TX 75013. Don't be guilty of missing out on the wonderful and exciting way we worship God and thank Him for His blessings.

Dr. W. L. Stafford, Sr., Ed. D. Senior Pastor
5705 Cheyenne Drive
at Bolin Elementary School in Allen 75002 for Sunday Morning Worship and the Admin. Building Address

See CHURCHES, Page 16



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CHURCHES, continued from Page 13

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Allen, TX 75013
972-359-9956
www.theship3c.org

INSPIRING BODY OF CHRIST CHURCH

**December 20, 7:30
and/or 11:30 a.m.**

You're invited this Sunday
as we praise, worship,
honor and magnify God's
Holy name.

December 21, 7 p.m.

Join us in Monday School
as we learn what God has to
say to us.

Pastor Rickie Rush
7701 S Westmoreland Road
Dallas, TX 75237
972-372-4262
www.lbcchurch.org

MT. OLIVE CHURCH OF PLANO (MOCOP)

December 20, 10 a.m.

Join us for Sunday Worship
Service as we praise and
worship God for His Honor
and His glory. Call the
church for details.

December 23, 7 p.m.

You're invited to our
Wednesday's Bible Study
class; you will learn what
God has to say to us. Come
to be encouraged by God's
plan for your spiritual
growth and His glory.

Pastor Sam Fenceroy
Senior Pastor and
Pastor Gloria Fenceroy
300 Chisholm Place
Plano, TX 75075
972-633-5511
www.mocop.org

MT. PISGAH MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

December 20, 9:45 a.m.
You are welcome to join us

for our Sunday morning
worship service as we
praise and worship God.

December 21, 9 p.m.

Join us for our Intercessory
Prayer Ministry and our
Monday's Conference calls.

R. W. Townsend, Senior
Pastor
11611 Webb Chapel Road
Dallas, TX 75229
972-241-6151
www.dallasmtpisgah.org

NEW MOUNT ZION BAPTIST CHURCH

December 20

You're invited to join us for
Early Morning Services at
7:30 a.m., followed by Sun-
day School at 9 a.m. and
Morning Worship at 10:30
a.m.

December 23, 7 p.m.

Join us in Wednesday's
Bible Study class; you will
learn what God has to say to
us for our growth.

Dr. Tommy L. Brown
Senior Pastor
9550 Shepherd Road
Dallas, Texas 75243
214-341-6459
www.nmzb.org

SHILOH MBC IN PLANO

**December 20, 8 a.m.
And/or 11 a.m.**

Join us as we praise and
worship God in our worship
services. You will be
blessed.

December 20, 6 p.m.

You're invited to our An-
nual Christmas Concert for
an evening of music, wor-
ship and the Word celebrat-
ing the birth of our Lord and
Savior, Jesus Christ.

December 23, 7 p.m.

You're invited to our
Wednesday's Bible Study to
learn more about God's
Word. Come and be en-
couraged by God's plan for

your maturity and growth;
and, it's all for His glory
and His honor.

Dr. Isaiah Joshua, Jr.
Senior Pastor
920 E. 14th Street
Plano, TX 75074
972-423-6695
www.smbcplano.org

WESTSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

**December 20
7:45 and 10:45 a.m.**

You're invited to join us for
Sunday Morning Worship
as we praise and worship
God for His many bless-
ings.

December 31, 10 p.m.
Start your New Year off
correctly, join us for our
New Year's Eve "White
Out." Attendees are asked
to wear white attire. After
service we will have a tail-
gate breakfast. Don't miss
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Mass and Notes of Hope
singing praises to God.

Minister Thomas Bessix
Senior Pastor
900 Bellaire Blvd.
Lewisville, TX 75067
972-221-5668
www.wbcchurch.org



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Watch Night services



Sister Tarpley

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December 31, 2015 will end with "Watch Night Services" at various churches in America. For more than 100 years my ancestors celebrated "Night Watch Services" every December 31st; and later, I did the same with my children not knowing the meaning of the annual celebration.

I later learned the history of Watch Night Service; a tradition that brings fond memories to me. Perhaps this story will educate and enlighten you, or at the very least bring back loving memories of your past.

Many of you who grew up in Black communities in America have probably heard of "Watch Night Services" (the gathering of Christians in churches on New Year's Eve.) Service usually begins anywhere from 9 or 10 pm, and ends at midnight with prayer into the New Year.

Some people go to church before going out to celebrate the New Year. For others, church is their only New Year's Eve celebration. I al-

ways assumed that Watch Night Service was a fairly standard Christian religious service – a bit more Afro centric because that's what happens when elements of Christianity become linked with the Black Church.

It seems that predominantly Anglo Christian churches did not include Watch Night Services on their calendars in the past, but focused on Christmas Eve programs.

In fact, there were instances where clergy in mainline denominations wondered aloud about the propriety of linking religious services with a secular holiday like New Year's Eve.

However, there is a reason for the importance of New Year's Eve Services in Black congregations; it can be traced back to gatherings on December 31, 1862, also known as "Freedom's Eve."

On that night, Blacks came together in churches and private homes all across the nation, anxiously await-

ing the news that the Emancipation Proclamation actually had become law.

Then, at the stroke of midnight, it was January 1, 1863; this meant that all slaves in the Confederate

States were declared legally FREE. When news was received, there were prayers, shouts and songs of joy as people fell to their knees and thanked God.

Some Black folks have

gathered in churches on New Year's Eve since then; and there are praises to God for bringing families safely through another year.

It's been 153 years since that First Freedom's Eve in Texas; many of us were never taught the Black's history of Watch Night, but custom still brings us together at this time every year to celebrate how God has blessed us.

For the New Year, may you find God to be: Your peace for every struggle; the supply for your every need; your solution for every problem; your escape for

every temptation.

Your release for every burden you may have and your balm for every pain. Your comfort for every sorrow; the victory for every battle you will have; your wisdom for every decision; your strength for every endeavor; your hope for every tomorrow and your song for every day.

Happy Birthday Jesus, He's my Lord, my Savior and my Redeemer, December 25 and Happy Birthday Jarrell, my son, December 30, 2015; I praise God for a wonderful and caring son.



Sister Tarpley praying for God's Peace, Joy, Hope and Blessings to you and your family in the New Year!

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