



North Dallas Gazette

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'Ashamed': Newspapers apologize for decades of negative coverage on Black communities

By Lauren Victoria Burke,
NNPA Contributor

In a stark reminder of the importance of the Black Press established in the U.S. in 1827 by Sam Cornish and John Russwurm, American papers are beginning to analyze their coverage of African Americans.

In at least two instances that historical analysis by the newspapers themselves has been followed by an apology. The papers in the predominantly Black cities of Baltimore, Philadelphia and Kansas City studied and confronted decades of negative news coverage on Black communities.

The efforts also highlight the lack of diversity that continues to persist even in newsrooms in cities with large Black populations.

The Kansas City Star, established in 1880, issued an apology to their readership for what they admitted was consistently negative coverage of the local Black community.

The Star's apology, published in Dec. 2020, entitled The Truth in Black and White; An Apology From the KC Star, stated, "Our reporters searched court documents, archival collections, congressional testimony, minutes of meetings and digital databases... Reporters were frequently sickened by what



The review of the historical coverage of Blacks by many large newspapers also highlights the lack of diversity that continues to persist even in newsrooms in cities with large Black populations. (iStock photo / NNPA)

they found — decades of coverage that depicted Black Kansas Citians as criminals living in a crime-laden world. They felt shame at what was missing: the achievements, aspirations and milestones of an entire population routinely overlooked, as if Black people were invisible."

The Star went on to verify that Black news in the community was consistently underplayed and ignored. Their apology, which arrived months after the May 25, 2020 murder of George Floyd, was part of the effort around the country resulting from Floyd's death that galvanized discussions on race

in America.

On February 18 of this year, the Baltimore Sun did the same as the Kansas City Star.

"The Baltimore Sun frequently employed prejudice as a tool of the times. It fed the fear and anxiety of white readers with stereotypes and caricatures that reinforced their erroneous beliefs about Black Americans. Through its news coverage and editorial opinions, The Sun sharpened, preserved and furthered the structural racism that still subjugates Black Marylanders in our

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Weigh the info source with COVID-19

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Jackson lee pushes bill on reparations

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People In The News ...



Ben Crump



Judge Ketanji Brown

NDG Quote of the Week: "If there is no struggle, there is no progress."

—Frederick Douglass

Ben Crump

Birmingham and Chicago, February 28, 2022 —Six nationally-renowned litigators today announced the launch of a first-of-its kind organization to combat the startling lack of diverse attorney leadership in lawsuits that disproportionately impact communities of color.

“Shades of Mass” was founded by nationally-renowned civil rights attorney Ben Crump (Co-Chair), of Ben Crump Law, PLLC, acclaimed product liability and civil rights lawyer Diandra “Fu” Debrosse



Zimmermann (Co-Chair), of DiCello Levitt Gutzler LLC, and Executive Board Members:

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LaRuby May, May

Lightfoot, PLLC

Larry Taylor, The Cochran Firm

Navan Ward, Beasley, Allen, Crow, Methvin, Portis & Miles, P.C., and President of the American Association for Justice

Shades of Mass intends to address the stark divide between corporate harm done to communities of color by product defects, device malfunctions, and environmental hazards, and the minuscule percentage of nonwhite attorneys selected to lead the litigation in such matters.

According to a Law.com analysis, between 2016 and 2019, only 5% of leader-

ship appointments in multi-district litigations (MDLs) went to non-white lawyers. Debrosse Zimmermann is one of the few attorneys of color who has been appointed to prominent leadership positions in several MDLs. Crump most prominently represented the family of George Floyd in its wrongful death suit against the City of Minneapolis and led litigation on behalf of the Black Farmers in the Roundup Mass Tort Litigation.

“No one is going to bring more passion to these causes than attorneys who resemble the communities they’re fighting for,”

Crump said. “And there are many, many non-white attorneys who have the expertise and experience to lead MDL cases. It’s high time for them to be seen and heard from.”

In addition to advocating for and facilitating the appointment of Black and Brown attorneys to leadership roles in federal and state-based centralized civil actions (including federal MDLs), Shades of Mass seeks to remedy the gap in representation through mentorship, advocacy, networking, and education. Crump and Debrosse Zimmermann share the ultimate goal of providing opportu-

nities and advantages to qualified attorneys of color and ensuring that judges know where to find them and understand the importance of placing them in leadership roles.

Debrosse Zimmermann added: “Although the judiciary has long espoused a commitment to increased diversity in the legal profession, people of color are still underrepresented in the profession overall, and especially in litigation leadership positions. We are going to be very intentional about overcoming each of the barriers that have stood

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Judge Ketanji Brown

By Lauren Victoria Burke
NNPA Contributor

For the first time in American history, a Black woman has been nominated to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court.

By selecting Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson on Feb. 25, President Joe Biden completed his pledge to select a Black woman for the court for the first time in history.

A Black woman has never served on the U.S. Supreme Court since it was created in 1789 — over 232 years ago. Since then, only two other Black persons have served



on the Supreme Court, Thurgood Marshall, who was appointed by President Lyndon Johnson in 1967, and Clarence Thomas, who was appointed by President George H. W. Bush in 1991 amid significant contro-

versy.

In over two centuries, 114 justices have served on the Supreme Court and 108 of them have been white men.

Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson, 51, currently serves on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. That federal court is seen as a feeder for nominees to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Judge Jackson was born in Washington, D.C., and raised in Miami, Florida. She attended Harvard University for college and law school and was the editor of the Harvard Law Review. She began her legal career as a clerk to U.S. Supreme

Court Associate Justice Stephen Breyer.

In what may have been a clue that Judge Jackson would be nominated, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia broke with tradition on Feb. 24 and issued an opinion on a Thursday. That scheduling change was noted by the media since the court typically only issues opinions on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Only one other woman of color has served on the Supreme Court, Associate

Justice Sonia Sotomayor of New York, who was appointed by President Barack Obama in 2009. Three other women have served on the Supreme Court: Sandra Day O’Connor, who was appointed by President Ronald Reagan in 1981; Ruth Bader Ginsberg, who was appointed by President Bill Clinton in 1993; Associate Justice Elena Kagan, who was appointed by President Obama in 2010; and Associate Justice Amy Barrett who was appointed by President

Donald Trump in 2020.

In 1958, just 3 percent of law school students were women. In 2020, women made up 54 percent of law students in the United States.

Lauren Victoria Burke is an independent journalist and the host of the podcast BURKEFILE. She is a political analyst who appears regularly on #RolandMartinUnfiltered. She may be contacted at LBurke007@gmail.com and on twitter at @LVBurke.

Lt. Ji Hong



PHILIPPINE SEA (Feb. 17, 2022) Lt. Ji Hong, from Allen, Texas, directs the launch of an F/A-18E Super Hornet assigned to the “Tophatters” of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 14 on the flight deck of the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) in support of exercise Jungle Warfare 2022 (JWX 22) across Okinawa, Japan. JWXX 22 is a large-scale field training exercise focused on leveraging the integrated capabilities of joint and allied partners to strengthen all-domain awareness, maneuver, and fires across a distributed maritime environment. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Javier Reyes)

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Congress should boost NLRB funding to protect workers' well-being

By Ihna Mangundayao
and Celine McNicholas
Economic Policy Institute

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) enforces the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), the nation's fundamental labor law that guarantees most private-sector workers the right to organize and the right to collective bargaining. Years of static funding has undermined the Board's ability to fulfill its statutory mission, to the detriment of workers and the economy. The chronic under-resourcing of the Board has created challenges in its enforcement capacity amid the surge of union interest—and unfair labor practices. As Congress debates upcoming budget and spending legislation, it is critical that lawmakers boost NLRB funding to protect workers' well-being.

NLRB funding has remained flat

The Board's staffing level has not kept up with the growth in the national private-sector workforce. The number of full-time employees at the NLRB dropped by nearly 31% from 1,789 to 1,320 between 2006 and 2019. During the same period, the number of covered workers per NLRB staff increased by 50%, from one full-time employee per 74,809 workers to one full-time employee per 112,201 workers, as shown in the figure below. Further, staffing levels at regional offices, which typically handle the intake of complaints filed by workers, dropped by 33% between 2010 and 2019.

These cuts have put a strain on the remaining staff, forcing them to stretch already-thin resources. Ac-

cording to the Government Accountability Office, only about one-third of employees agree that the Board has sufficient resources, while nearly half admit to having an unreasonable workload. Although Congress has mandated the Board to address this understaffing, it has failed to allocate adequate resources to do so and has instead allowed funding to remain flat since 2014. Congress's continued reliance on continuing resolutions in place of annual appropriations prevents the Board from backfilling staffing needs that predate the previous fiscal year. Further, funding levels have not kept up with inflation in the last decade, which translates to an effective 20% funding cut.

NLRB officials associate this decline in staffing with a decrease in case numbers; this decline in cases has been further attributed to "a hostile environment for organizing unions and filing unfair labor practice charges" created by the previous administration. In sharp contrast, the Biden administration has publicly supported collective bargaining efforts and touted the benefits of unions.

Collective action is crucial and must be protected

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the NLRB's mandate of protecting workers' fundamental right to collective action is as important as ever. We have seen a surge in protests by workers fighting for basic rights, better working conditions, personal protective equipment, and better pay. Where workers have been able to act collectively and through their union, they have been able to secure enhanced safety measures,

additional premium pay, and paid sick time.

Workers are recognizing the critical role that unions play in securing workplace rights, and they are banding together to establish unions in major employers like Starbucks and Amazon as well as independent bookstores and college campuses. NLRB petitions for union elections have shot up by more than 30% so far in 2022. This, in turn, requires the Board to allocate more resources toward addressing these petitions and ensuring fair and timely representation proceedings.

Still, there is a significant mismatch in the number of workers who want to join unions and those who are represented by one. A recent survey showed that a large and growing number of workers want union representation, with nearly 50% of workers polled saying they would vote to create a union in their workplace tomorrow if they could. However, the share of workers represented by unions has declined.

The decline in union membership comes amid sustained attacks on unionization efforts. Our research has shown that employers are charged with violating federal law in 41.5% of all union election campaigns, and one out of five union election campaigns involves a charge that a worker was illegally fired for union activity. Consequently, union elections today are characterized by employer intimidation and in no way reflect the democratic process guaranteed by the National Labor Relations Act.

For example, Starbucks organizers have accused the company of retaliation by firing workers for their

unionization efforts, and Amazon unlawfully interfered in a union vote in its Bessemer, Alabama warehouse. In both instances, the NLRB played a critical role in protecting workers' rights to collective action and in identifying employees' unlawful actions. However, many employers continue to pursue creative and heavy-handed tactics—both legal and illegal—to threaten and intimidate their workers in the hopes of stopping them from exercising their right to collective bargaining. More robust funding will be needed to remedy these attacks on the NLRA, combat illegal and unfair workplace practices, and strengthen the NLRB's investigative and enforcement abilities.

Despite challenges, the NLRB continues to deliver results

Despite limited resources, NLRB staff have worked to improve performance and deliver results. In 2021, the Board recovered \$56 million—or 44% more than the previous year—on behalf of workers whose rights were violated, and worked to increase reinstatement offers by 545%. The NLRB also reduced the median age of pending cases by 15%.

In order to build on this momentum and continue to protect the nation's fundamental labor law, it is critical that Congress allocate adequate resources to the NLRB. Congress must move beyond flat funding for the Board, which has undermined its enforcement capabilities. Instead, the Board requires greater funding in order to meet the challenges and complexities of today's workforce.

Keep up with the news

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When it comes to COVID-19, consider the messenger

By Khalil Thompson
Executive Director
Black Men Engaged

"I don't want to take the vaccine...it came out too fast."

"I'll drink ginger juice and rely on vitamins to increase my immune system naturally." "I heard the vaccine causes infertility."

These are just examples of what our organization, Black Men Engaged, is hearing from people in Jacksonville, Florida, and Albany, Georgia—two cities where the coronavirus pandemic has disproportionately impacted African Americans. Two cities where we're working towards combating covid misinformation.

Research shows that men are more likely to die of Covid-19 and, in particular, Black men aged 35 to 44 are dying at nine times the rate of white men in the same age range. The data suggests that social factors—like occupation, behavioral patterns, and underlying



health issues—may play an outsized role in these disparate outcomes.

Early in the pandemic, Albany was a hotspot for the virus in early 2020. A funeral became a super-spreader event leading to over 100 hospitalizations and likely 10 deaths. Comments like these beg the question: where do you get information about health and medicine?

While Covid-19 has killed one out of every 800 African Americans, some of our qualitative research and informal anecdotes indicate that there is still a segment of the Black population in Albany and

Jacksonville that remains disinterested in getting the Covid-19 vaccine. And the overarching theme from our work is that there's a lack of true understanding about the nature of the vaccine: how it works and why it works.

This Black History Month, the theme is Black Health and Wellness. Improving the health of the Black community is our core mission. And, it starts with educating our people on the facts.

Mis- and disinformation (false information that's mistakenly spread and false information that's spread deliberately to cause harm,

respectively) has become rampant in American culture since the rise of social media. It's up to us to be discerning and to take a hard look at the source of information being supplied.

While it's common practice to get your news from your social media feeds, as you're scrolling, I invite readers to look deeper than the headlines. Consider the messenger.

Ask yourself: What are the messenger's credentials? Does this news outlet report events with a particular spin or bias? We encourage everyone we interact with during the course of our outreach to have an informed conversation about the Covid-19 vaccine with healthcare providers in their community and think critically about the news that reaches them. Too many lives have been lost to this pandemic and we have to face the reality that co-morbidities in our community often leave us more vulnerable to this ill-

ness.

It will take us a generation to truly understand and quantify "Who and What's Been Lost" as a result of this pandemic, but we know the family member who was absent from the dinner table over the holidays or the loved one lost too soon. The birthdays, the life milestones, the anniversaries that will never be celebrated again. According to the National

Institutes of Health, over 140,000 U.S. children lost a caregiver to Covid-19. Disproportionately, this impacted children and families of color.

There's an old axiom in the Black community: "When America gets a cold, Black people get the flu." It means that because of the socio-economic challenges and health dispari-

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communities today," the Sun editorial board bluntly stated.

"African Americans systematically have been denied equal opportunity and access in every sector of life — including health care, employment, education, housing, personal wealth, the justice system and civic participation. They have been refused the freedom to simply be, without the weight of oppression on their backs," the Baltimore Sun editorial Board continued, adding that they were "ashamed" of past coverage of the Black Community.

The Philadelphia Inquirer published an article by Wesley Lowery analyzing the Philadelphia Inquirer's history on race and the

newsroom's lack of diversity.

"Mentions of Black Philadelphia appeared in the white papers primarily through the lens of crime. To read The Inquirer then would leave one wondering if Black people ever were born, ever died, if they lived lives in between — or if they simply sprouted, fully grown, in the city streets to call for civil rights, seek elected office, and commit various criminal infractions," Lowery, a former reporter for The Washington Post who is now with CBS, wrote.

"The paper, of course, is not alone in its history. Its story is that of the modern American newspaper: The last half-century began with begrudging efforts at

racial integration of both staff and coverage sparked by public pressure and protests; the decades to follow saw expanded efforts to recruit minority journalists before the industry cratered and many of those non-white journalists were the first to be shown the door," Lowery continued.

The recent analysis by large papers in predominantly Black cities is likely to continue. The articles highlight the importance of historic curation, community image and news narrative and the impact it has on historically marginalized communities.

Lauren Victoria Burke is an independent journalist and the host of the podcast BURKEFILE. She is a political analyst who appears regularly on #RolandMartinUnfiltered. She may be

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Jackson Lee: House has votes to pass reparations bill

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

For several years Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee has picked up the mantle to lead efforts to create a commission to study reparations for African Americans, and now the Democrat from Texas and others believe they finally have the votes for passage in the U.S. House of Representatives.

"This has been a 30-plus year journey," Congresswoman Jackson Lee declared.

"We had to take a different approach. We had to go one by one to members explaining this does not generate a check."

Congresswoman Jackson Lee said this week that there's now enough votes in the House for passage of the historic piece of legislation.

If the measure passes and ultimately becomes law, it will create a commission that would hold hearings with testimony from those who support and oppose the idea.

"Reparations is about re-



Photo via NNPA

pair and when you repair the damage that has been done, you do so much to move a society forward. This commission can be a healing process. Telling the truth can heal America," she said.

If the Senate doesn't join the House in passing the bill, the congresswoman said she and others would push President Biden to sign an executive order to create the commission.

The White House didn't immediately respond.

Congresswoman Jackson Lee added that there has never been another time in which she has garnered so much support and mo-

mentum for H.R. 40, the so-called reparations legislation that focuses on truth, racial healing, and transformation.

Congresswoman Jackson Lee recently reflected on the long-overdue redress to African descendants of slaves.

She also praised the resiliency of Black Americans.

"I want to give credit to the giants that were and are Black Americans. They are giants," Congresswoman Jackson Lee declared.

"I want to give credit to the everyday mom and dad who get up every day and get to work and provide for their family. I'm going to

give those who came up on the farms or stayed on the farm and raised nine and ten and twelve children," she reflected.

The Congresswoman continued, "I want to give them the honor that they deserve, and that is to recognize the insurmountable odds that some of them had and how they continue to plant seeds of respect and dignity in their children.

"Has anyone addressed the question of slavery and its comprehensive impact on Black Americans in this country? This is what H.R. 40 will do."

While the bill doesn't place a monetary value on reparations, it does focus on truth, racial healing, and transformation.

The bill would fund a commission to study and develop proposals for providing reparations to African Americans.

The commission's mission includes identifying the role of federal and state governments in supporting the institution of slavery, forms of discrimination in public and private sectors against freed slaves and their descendants, and lin-

gering adverse effects of slavery on living African Americans and society.

Congresswoman Jackson Lee, who sits on numerous House committees, including the Judiciary, Budget, and Homeland Security, has made the reparations legislation her top priority during the 117th Congress.

"I think if people begin to associate this legislation with what happened to the descendants of enslaved Africans as a human rights violation, the sordid past that violated the human rights of all of us who are descendants of enslaved Africans, I think that we can find common ground to pass this legislation," Congresswoman Jackson Lee pronounced.

"Can anyone imagine that we've never gotten a simple, effective, deeply-embedded, and well-respected apology?"

The Congresswoman is further encouraged by the support of the most co-sponsors (166) in the bill's history, which dates back decades to former Democratic Rep. John Conyers Jr., of Michigan, who first introduced the legislation

in 1989.

In an earlier NNPA interview, White House Senior Advisor to President Biden and Director of the Office of Public Engagement Cedric Richmond sounded an urgent tone about the administration's commitment to ensure racial justice, accessibility, and equity concerning Black America.

Richmond told the Black Press that the administration supports Congresswoman Jackson Lee's H.R. 40.

"We do support a commission and H.R. 40; we know we can't wait. We have to start acting now," Richmond declared. "We don't need a study to tell us that systemic racism is out there. We don't need a study to tell us that redlining in Black communities has been treated a lot differently."

Richmond continued: "We don't think the Black community should have to wait on a study, we need to deal with systemic racism right now and, yes, we support the commission, but it's not going to stop us from acting right now."

COVID, from Page 4

ties rooted in racism, Black people are more likely to experience worse health outcomes during a public health crisis than their white counterparts. Thinking about it through the lens of Covid-19, that fact is especially true. Covid-19 continues to disproportionately impact Black people, and in 2020, Covid-19 reduced the overall life ex-

pectancy of Black people by a staggering three years.

During this Black History Month, let us all pledge to be the generation to end that axiom, starting by protecting Black people from adverse health effects and death due to Covid-19. Through repeated, face-to-face interactions in the community, Black Men Engaged will continue to

be a source of reputable information about the virus as the science continues to evolve. The fight is not over. Let us march on until victory is won.

Khalil Thompson is Executive Director of Black Men Engaged. Black Men Engaged's sole mission is to meet Black men where they are with vital social programs that focus on issues that affect underserved communities of col-

or. Black Men Engaged has the unique ability to bridge the cultural divide with

outside stakeholders and grassroots as well as grass-stop leaders in the Black

male community. Black Men Engaged is a 501c3 organization.

CRUMP, from Page 2

in the way of lawyers of color being appointed to lead these cases, including the implicit bias that Black and Brown lawyers don't have what it takes to successfully lead."

"Far too often, people of color find themselves

victimized by rich, powerful corporations and must rely on the civil courts to receive justice. The lack of attorneys of color playing significant roles in high-stakes litigation that impacts communities of color is undeniable," said Der-

rick Johnson, President and CEO of the NAACP. "I applaud Mr. Crump and Ms. Debrosse Zimmerman for their efforts to raise awareness of and find remedies for this problem."

More information about Shades of Mass can be found at www.shadesofmass.org

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TEXAS LOTTERY

Trinity Basin Preparatory announces \$10M acquisition of former Tyler Street Christian Academy campus

The closing of a long-standing educational institution in Oak Cliff has opened the doors for another school to expand.

Parents, community members, and staff at Trinity Basin Preparatory's (TBP) 10th Street Campus in the Oak Cliff neighborhood of Dallas announced they are looking forward to a new home for their campus beginning sometime in the 2023-2024 school year. Following Dallas City Council approval in January of 2022, TBP closed on the \$10M acquisition of the existing 33,000 square foot Tyler Street Christian Academy (TSCA) campus located on five acres at 915 W. 9th Street in Dallas.

TBP has seven free public



Courtesy photo

schools throughout Dallas/Fort Worth/Mesquite, serving over 4,200 students. Located in a North Oak Cliff neighborhood, the 10th Street campus serves PK-3 through 4th grade students. All students from the existing TBP 10th Street campus in Oak Cliff, as well as fu-

ture students, will transition to the TSCA campus in the 2023-2024 school year following renovations and construction of a new facility to accommodate up to 900 students.

"We are thrilled to begin work on a fabulous new campus to replace the oldest

of TBP's campuses," Superintendent Randy Shaffer said. "With an expansion, renovation, and addition of state of the art facilities, we look forward to our staff and students thriving in the upgraded space designed to meet their academic and social needs, and provide space for outstanding after school programming as well."

As a district, 90% of TBP students come from economically disadvantaged families, 57% are English Language Learners, and 80% are classified by the Texas Education Agency as "at-risk." While an exact timeline of the renovation is still in progress, TBP leadership is eager to provide a quality learning environ-

ment to area students.

"Trinity Basin Preparatory is always looking for ways to do more for our students and the communities we serve," TBP's Chief Development Officer Brandon Duck said. "We are grateful to redevelop an existing school facility in Oak Cliff to provide a new, high impact learning environment that students and staff will love."

To support students, TBP partners with numerous non-profits through the DFW area to enhance student learning by providing services which include free after-school programming, music education, and athletic opportunities for its 4,200 students.

"We are excited about

how this move will allow us to continue providing educational choice and strong academic supports for our students and families," Chief Academic Officer Dr. Lesley Austin said. "This move will also allow TBP to grow our existing partnerships with Dallas Youth Sports and the Dallas Symphony Orchestra's Young Musician's Program at our 10th Street Campus. Our renovation plans for the new campus include creating the same high impact learning environments we've built at our newest campuses and we look forward to seeing our 10th Street students thrive in the new space."

See TSCA, Page 7

Dr. Justin Lonon takes the reins of Dallas College as eighth chancellor

Passionate advocate for equity in U.S. higher education and a champion of community college as a pathway to upward mobility, Dr. Justin H. Lonon today assumed the office of Dallas College chancellor, becoming the eighth chancellor of what is one of the largest community colleges in the country.

Already deeply ingrained in the fabric of the college, Dr. Lonon has been providing executive and strategic leadership for faculty, staff and students for over 16 years, helping to guide the institution most recently through a historic consolidation to better fulfill the Dallas College mission of "transforming lives and communities through higher education" — a cause to which he has dedicated his career.

Under a leadership transition plan approved by the Dallas College Board of Trustees in 2021, Dr. Lonon replaces outgoing Chancellor Joe May, who yesterday relinquished his day-to-day duties and responsibilities in his move to emeritus status.



DCCCD

"I am truly excited to see Dr. Lonon as our new chancellor because I know he shares the vision that has guided this institution in the past and is so important to its future," said Chancellor Emeritus May. "He cares about students, he cares about the community, and he has been instrumental in Dallas College's transformation, too. I look forward to seeing how he will continue the work that is so vital to the future of Dallas."

On his first day, Dr. Lonon takes the helm of a sprawling educational enterprise whose network of seven individual campuses has a footprint in every corner of Dallas County. In addition to making a \$204.1 million economic impact each year through payroll and operations spending in Dallas County, the col-

lege each year welcomes more than 125,000 students pursuing more than 300 degrees (including a new bachelor's in education) and certificates — with 90% of those students continuing to live in Texas post certificate or degree.

Prior to becoming chancellor, Dr. Lonon provided direction and vision for nearly every functional area across Dallas College while maintaining a singular focus on serving the needs of students, employees and the community.

"I might be sitting on the other side of a different desk now, but my focus remains the same," Dr. Lonon said. "Dallas College will continue to remove barriers to education and create job opportunities for students who want to 'enroll in a career.' By continuing to work with partners across the city, state and nation, Dallas College is uniquely positioned to provide a quality education and create a pipeline of talent for high-demand jobs and fulfill our mission. There is much work to be done, but Dallas College has already

created a culture of care, impact and innovation for our students and the community."

Lonon Brings Strong Record of Service to New Role

In his immediate-past role as executive vice chancellor, Dr. Lonon had operational responsibility for finance; governmental relations; legal affairs; board relations; diversity, equity and inclusion; facilities; human resources; innovation and technology; marketing and communications; safety and security; emergency management; institutional effectiveness; and strategic initiatives. He also previously led Dallas College's educational policy and workforce and economic development activities, and served as interim president of Brookhaven College in 2019, overseeing a campus of nearly 20,000 students prior to the consolidation of Dallas College.

Dr. Lonon's record of public service precedes his experience in higher education, having served in city government as press secretary to former Dallas Mayor

Ron Kirk. In that role, Dr. Lonon was involved in several significant development projects such as the Trinity River Project and other public works initiatives that fostered economic development in underserved areas of the city, leading to community restoration and major transportation corridors along the Trinity River, as well as the construction of the American Airlines Center at a former brownfield site.

At City Hall, Dr. Lonon gained experience solving civic issues through grassroots community work, honing coalition-building skills that made him an ideal candidate to begin leading Dallas College from the ground up. Prior to joining Dallas College in 2005, he worked in the private sector and represented civic and community organizations such as Parkland Hospital, YMCA of Metropolitan Dallas, the West Dallas Initiative, Central Dallas Association (now Downtown Dallas Inc.) and the Dallas City Retirees Association. Dr. Lonon continues to serve on several national

and local boards, including the Austin-based United Ways of Texas, the YMCA of Metropolitan Dallas' Advancement Committee, the Dallas Father of the Year Awards, Rebuilding America's Middle Class and COMBASE, a national consortium of leading community colleges.

The Arkansas native holds a bachelor's degree in public administration from Missouri State University, a master's degree in public administration from the University of North Texas and a doctorate in management from the University of Maryland - Global Campus.

Upon selecting Dr. Lonon as the sole finalist for chancellor in June, board chair Monica Lira Bravo said, "Our board is confident that Dr. Lonon has the right experience, skills and vision to continue bridging the educational gap in Dallas County, making Dallas College a valued resource for students, community partners and employers alike. We wish him well as he embarks on his first year as chancellor."

Cowboys celebrate 'National Share a Smile Day' at Hope Lodge

FRISCO – On Tuesday, March 1, the Dallas Cowboys will celebrate “National Share a Smile Day” with a visit to the American Cancer Society Gene and Jerry Jones Family Hope Lodge to engage with cancer patients currently staying at the care facility located near Baylor University Medical Center utilizing the team’s new telepresence robot.

Nicknamed “Cowboys Starbot,” the robot will allow Dallas Cowboys players, alumni, cheerleaders, executives and others to visit with patients remotely in an innovative and safe manner. Incorporating video conferencing technology into a remote-controlled platform,



American Cancer Society

the robot provides a tangible structure for virtual interfaces.

“The Dallas Cowboys are excited to add Cowboys Starbot to our team,” said Charlotte Jones, Dallas Cowboys Executive Vice

President and Chief Brand Officer. “He provides our players and so many others in our organization a fun and different way to interact with fans that may be immune-compromised or require distancing due to ongoing pan-

demic issues.”

During Tuesday’s launch visit, Jones will be joined by other Dallas Cowboys guests over the course of the one-hour video call. Hope Lodge guests will also be able take selfies with the special guests via Starbot and help themselves to “National Share a Smile Day” stickers and lip balm provided by Cowboys partner Jack Black.

The American Cancer Society Gene and Jerry Jones Family Hope Lodge officially welcomed its first guests in Fall 2021. The facility offers cancer patients and their caregivers a home away from home while traveling to receive care from any of North Texas’ premier medi-

cal centers.

The Hope Lodge is located on property donated by Baylor Scott & White Health adjacent to its Baylor University Medical Center campus. The American Cancer Society’s Hope Lodge capital campaign, conducted in collaboration with Baylor Scott & White Dallas Foundation, surpassed its fundraising goal with extraordinary support from generous individuals and organizations. As lead donors, the Gene and Jerry Jones Family understand the impact this disease can have within a family and community.

“Our Hope Lodge program offers a home away from home for cancer pa-

tients travelling to Dallas for treatment, providing more than 18,000 nights of free lodging a year,” said Jeff Fehlis, executive vice president for the American Cancer Society’s South Region. “The American Cancer Society is committed to breaking down access to care barriers like lodging and ensuring all people have a fair and just opportunity to prevent, find, treat, and survive cancer.”

Tuesday marks the first of many visits that Cowboys Starbot and the Dallas Cowboys plan to make to Hope Lodge. The team intends to virtually visit the facility on the first Tuesday of every month for the foreseeable future.

TSCA, from Page 6

Tyler Street Christian Academy has been a staple of the educational scene in Oak Cliff for nearly a half-century. However, its ongoing

operation, already facing headwinds, was pushed past the point of recovery by the pandemic.

A social media post on

March 29 informed the community of the decision to shutter the school.

“On Friday, March 26, our faculty and families were informed that TSCA will close at the end of the

2020-2021 school year. Enrollment decline, the need for major capital repairs, the cancellation of all our fundraising events, and the pandemic have combined to make continuing into our

50th year a financial impossibility.

“We are sad beyond our ability to express. We covet your prayers for our scholars, their families, and our faculty and staff, as they

each must make the transition to a new school or place of employment. Thank you for the many ways you have partnered with us in serving our community over the last 49 years.”

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A.I.M

by KYLE ABRAHAM



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STUDIO THEATRE

Russia and inflation take centerstage at SOTU as president briefly mentions voting rights

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

When President Joe Biden took the podium for the annual State of the Union Address, it marked the first time two women – Vice President Kamala Harris and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi – sat on the dais for the official address.

The President began by addressing the elephant in the room – or at least Eastern Europe.

He declared that the West had united in tackling Russia's invasion of Ukraine, noting that America would join a host of nations in banning Russian aircraft from its airspace.

"[Russian President] Putin's war was premeditated and unprovoked. He rejected efforts at diplomacy,"



Photo via NNPA

President Biden declared.

"He thought the West and NATO wouldn't respond. And he thought he could divide us here at home. Putin was wrong. We were ready."

In both a symbolic move and a show of solidarity, the President entered the Joint Session of Congress escorted by Congresswoman Victoria Spartz (R-Indiana), a Ukrainian-American.

Outside the Capitol, a host of National Guard soldiers on high alert were stationed to provide extra security.

Domestically and briefly, President Biden called on the Senate to pass voting rights legislation.

"Tonight, I call on the Senate to pass the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Act," President Biden insisted.

"And while you're at it, pass the Disclose Act so Americans can know who is funding our elections."

He also spelled out his goal of putting a lid on inflation.

He proposed cutting the cost of childcare, noting that those living in major cities pay as much as \$14,000 per child each year.

"Middle-class and working folks shouldn't have to pay more than 7 percent of their income to care for their young children," President Biden asserted.

"My plan would cut the cost of childcare in half for most families and help parents, including millions of

women who left the workforce during the pandemic because they couldn't afford childcare," he continued.

"[My plan] also includes home-and-long-term care. More affordable housing, Pre-K for 3 and 4-year-olds. All these will lower costs for families. Nobody earning less than \$400,000 a year will pay an additional penny in taxes."

The President also addressed his historic Supreme Court nominee, D.C. Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson, urging swift confirmation.

"No matter whatever your ideology, we all know one of the most seri-

ous constitutional duties a president has is nominating someone to serve on the United States Supreme Court," the President declared.

"I've nominated Circuit Court of Appeals Ketanji Brown Jackson, one of our nation's top legal minds who will continue in Justice [Stephen] Breyer's legacy of excellence," he stated.

"The former top litigator in private practice, a former federal public defender, from a family of public school educators and police officers. She is a consensus builder.

See SOTU, Page 10

Film Review: 'The Batman' lives up to the legend

By Dwight Brown
NNPA Film Critic

(**1/2) Crime is rampant in Gotham City. Murders. Manslaughter. Blood soaks the streets. Citizens live in terror and the police are stumped. On desperate nights a Batman signal lights up the sky and the caped man jumps into action, but even he can't stem the tide: "It's a big city. I can't be everywhere."

The Dark Night is the pinnacle of superhero movies. That Batman saga set a very high standard for style, content, acting and production values. It drew you into its dark world with strong visuals and plenty of balletic action that pulled you into Batman's orb, from spectacular fight scenes to gliding magically in air. Arguably, this new chapter is the only other Batman close to that caliber, a stature set by actors Christian Bale and Heath Ledger, director/writer Christopher Nolan and an incomparable cast and crew.

In this incarnation, The Batman, a string of high-profile and sadistic slayings confounds the police. Lt. James Gordon (Jeffrey Wright, *Angels in America*) works tirelessly with his ally Batman (Robert Pattinson) to solve the homicides. As the killings ensnare mayoral candidates and city officials, pressure grows to find the serial killer (Paul Dano, *12 Years a Slave*) who leaves behind cryptic riddles. A trail of clues leads to an underworld club and key figures: Selina Kyle (Zoë Kravitz) a cocktail waitress, Oswald "Oz" Cobblepot (Colin Farrell) the nightclub owner and Carmine Falcone (John Turturro) a crimelord. All know more than they'll admit. A clandestine world of payoffs, informants and corruption is revealed.

The primary characters are courtesy of DC Comics. Director/writer Matt Reeves (*Planet of the Apes*) and screenwriter Peter Craig (*The Town*) add in additional people who are vital to the central crime



Zoë Kravitz and Robert Pattinson in *The Batman*.
(Jonathan Olley / Courtesy photo)

plotline. They are well developed, three-dimensional and indelible. All spew tone-setting dialogue. The kind that resonates from scene to scene. E.g., as the enigmatic Batman assesses how others perceive him, he defines his own persona: "They think I'm hiding in the shadows. But I am the shadow." Add in a very timely premise about out-of-control big city crime-waves and viewers will be hooked for the duration.

Reeves's directorial style emphasizes pageantry over motion. A series of stunning set pieces are peppered with movement, though genre fans may prefer movement seasoned with drama. Which is why, as this whodunit nears the three-hour mark, younger audiences may get a bit rambunctious. But if they wait, and they'll have to, Reeves rewards them with bursts of kinetic energy (car chases, fistfights, aerial displays). It's almost enough to make up for any lapses in pacing (editors William Hoy, Dawn of the Planet of the Apes and Tyler Nelson; *Mindhunter*). The filmmaker's other blemishes include an inability to bring the footage to an evocative ending. The climax swells perfectly, the final moments do not. Also, when Batman glides through the air, he fails to compellingly show Batman's viewpoint. A perspective that would make audiences gravitate even further into the masked vigilante's aura and make an IMAX viewing mandatory.

The footage's very dark

look (color palette by art director Grant Armstrong, Gravity) sets an ominous mood. Elaborate sets—from Bruce Wayne's mansion to Oz's glamorous club scene—draw you into a netherworld. Batman's armor, Catwoman's skin-tight outfits and The Penguin's suits fit like a glove (costumes designer David Crossman, Glyn Dillon and Jacqueline Durrant). Props, clothes, locations and people are all well-lit and lensed (cinematographer Greig Fraser (*Dune: Part One*)). And, if the visuals won't astound viewers, the eerie audio track will. Michael Giacchino's musical score intensifies the gloomy, soul searching and fearful atmosphere. Creepy sounds (adr editor Bobbi Banks, *When They See Us*) fray nerves. This is the kind of tech team directors/producers gleefully take into battle. The kind that wins Oscars.

Actor Robert Pattinson has been prepping for this iconic role for 14 years. First, he built a fan base with the teen heartthrob *Twilight* franchise, which started in 2008. His gritty performance in the cri/thr *Good Time*, mysterious turn in the adv/bio *The Lost City of Z* and gravitas in the art film *The Lighthouse* have primed him. The dual role of furtive Bruce Wayne and brooding Batman is his destiny. He commands attention. Supporting cast members work their spells too. A scene in which Batman and Lt. Gordon furiously interrogate Oz features acting so fiery and

accomplished it underlines Pattison, Wright and Farrell's brilliance. That heaviness is nicely balanced by Kravitz's lighter, coquettish, downtown vibe that she displays as the plucky young lady who becomes a feline crusader. FYI, Bat and Cat have chemistry.

Andy Serkis as Batman's valet Alfred is stately. Barry Keogan's interpretation of Officer Stanley Merkel exhibits an in-your-face, badass New Yorker attitude that's so apropos. Colin Farrell hides within the Oz/The Penguin character, shielded by makeup (Kat Ali), a fat suit and prosthet-

ics that make him invisible.

Dano, as the film's chief villain, lacks the screen time it takes to build a lasting impression. Ledger as Joker had more scenes, which helped him sear that villain's image into pop culture history. While Turturro's sociopathic Carmine Falcone works the screen in a way only DeNiro or Brando could duplicate.

Expect The Batman to stun mature audiences. It's not so easy to judge whether this very adult approach, complex storyline and lack of moment-to-moment action scenes will hook teens

and twentysomethings enough to make repeated screenings an addiction—a prerequisite for boosting box office grosses into the billion-dollar stratosphere. TBD.

Reeves, Pattison and the talented cast and crew have created a crime/action/drama extraordinaire. A close to perfect superhero film that nips at the heels of the untouchable *The Dark Night*.

In theaters March 4th.

Visit NNPA News Wire Film Critic Dwight Brown at DwightBrownInk.com and BlackPressUSA.com.

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NDG Book Review: 'Star Child: A Biographical Constellation of Octavia Estelle Butler'

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

Twinkle, twinkle, little... What? Natural elements, space dust, and turbulence that makes it all look sparkly? Or maybe other creatures, planets, or whole other worlds with new ideas and inventions? In the new book "Star Child" by Ibi Zoboi, you'll read about one author who came from stars, wondered what was beyond them, and dared to dream about it.

Laurice James Butler and his wife, Octavia Margaret, tried and tried.

Oh, how they tried to have a child together but the stars weren't ready



to let that happen. It took nearly sixteen years after they were married before the universe said they were ready, and little Octavia Estelle Butler was born in June of 1947. Just days

later, a UFO crashed in the desert near Roswell, New Mexico; a year after that, the big bang theory was formulated.

Three years after her birth, little "Junie" lost her father and from then on, she was raised by strong women: her grandmother, and her mother, who was "the greatest constant in her life." Her mother protected her, and Junie wasn't often allowed out of the house alone. Perhaps that was why she was a bit of a loner, preferring her books to almost anything else. Or she might have been an introverted child because she was very tall for her age, or

because she was not a good student. Segregation might have had something to do with it, too. At any rate, she was quiet, observant, and bookish.

At some point shedding the nickname, young Octavia began to devour books on horses and fairy tales, and she jotted down stories of her own that never ended. She wrote tales about traveling to Mars and exploring space. She created other worlds and universes that pleased her. She "copied boys' books" and the plots that she made into a book series later.

At age thirteen, Octavia discovered an aban-

doned writer's magazine that someone had left on a bus seat. Curious, she read it all. It was then that she learned that it was possible to make money from the stories she told...

In latter chapters of "Star Child," author Ibi Zoboi explains how she formed a friendship with Octavia Butler, and why she felt that she and the author were "kindred." It's a story that kids will love – what child hasn't dreamed of meeting the person who wrote their favorite tales? – and it absolutely adds to this book. What may fall flat, however, is its poetry.

Zoboi says that Butler

told her "Poetry simplifies" things but here, the "biographical speculative poems" seem to be too full of imagery to be helpful – particularly for kids on the lower end of the targeted age group for this book, some whom may not grasp the meanings of the fantasy-filled stanzas.

Think twice, then, before handing this book to a kid ages 10-13 unless you intend to help them understand it. Older kids and adults will appreciate it more, especially if they're fans of poetry. For them alone, "Star Child" will shine.



RCA

Flo Milli unleashes new single 'PBC' via RCA records

To cap off Black History Month, Alabama's very own princess of rap, Flo Milli releases her new track "PBC" (Pretty Black Cute) via RCA Records. The track, which follows suit with Flo's previous releases

focuses on confidence and

black female empowerment. Flo Milli first premiered the YoungFyre-produced track (Lil Wayne, T-Pain, Jaden) while walking the runway at Tia Adeola's NYFW show on February 10th. Watch HERE.

The accompanying track

artwork draws inspiration from iconic black magazines that became popular over the course of many decades.

The release of "PBC" comes fresh of the heels of her fall 2021 release "Ice Baby." The fiery track was

unveiled via aCOLORS performance and received critical acclaim from NME, PAPER, and many more as well as Consequence who hailed the record "...a searing banger that's sure to make you feel like a million bucks."

SOTU, from Page 8

"Since she has been nominated, she has received a broad range of support including the Fraternal Order of Police and former judges supported by Democrats and Republicans."

He also honored Justice Breyer, urging him to stand up and "let them see you."

Turning his attention to the pandemic, the President said cases of Covid-19 finally are falling.

"Thanks to the progress we have made this past year, Covid-19 need no longer control our lives," President Biden offered.

"I know some are talking about 'living with Covid-19.' But tonight, I say that we will never just accept living with Covid-19."

He continued:

"We're launching the 'Test to Treat' initiative so people can get tested at a pharmacy, and if they're positive, receive antiviral pills on the spot at no cost."

While Republicans will undoubtedly push back

against the President's address, several civil rights groups applauded him.

"As we assess the state of the union, without question, President Biden gets high marks for supporting legislation on childcare, voting rights, maternal health, abortion access, and worker's rights," said Marcela Howell, the President, and CEO of In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda.

"But the same senators who consistently block voting rights protections also block reproductive rights protections and safety nets for working-class families. Make no mistake, the enemies of equality are determined to shut down progress at every turn," Howell stated.

She said it's time to pass the President's Build Back Better bill and protect the lives of all who live in the United States.

"It is time to protect

bodily autonomy and ensure all people have access to abortion services. It is time to pass a comprehensive voting rights bill that rejects the voter suppression tactics of the far right," Howell demanded.

"Black women are even more determined to fight for our human and civil rights. We demand the right to exercise bodily autonomy, to have the resources to raise our families with dignity and to exercise our constitutional right to vote. And nothing will stop us."

Howell continued:

"Black women are putting politicians on notice; we are holding them accountable to their oath to uphold the U.S. Constitution. It is not an easy task. We invite the country to stand and fight with us to defend human and civil rights. Join us in demanding that elected officials uphold and abide by the Constitution. We will not stop until America's promise of liberty and justice for all is our lived reality."



Check us out on Youtube!

In case you've missed it, the *North Dallas Gazette* has begun producing videos. Our latest series, "Close Up" takes a deep dive into issues affecting the local DFW community. Episodes I and II are up now, with Jackie Hardy taking a look at criticisms surrounding the North Texas Tollway Authority's compliance with its stated goals of inclusion for Minority and Women in Business Enterprise firms. The first episode is a conversation with two accomplished professionals in the field, and the second features the NTTA's response to questions about its past performance. Check it out, subscribe to our Youtube channel and stay informed.



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Mayor kicks off ninth year of Plano Mayor's Summer Internship Program with call for businesses of all sizes to invest in youth

Since 2014, approximately 700 teens have worked at some of the area's most prominent companies, nonprofits and government agencies; Mayor Muns encourages businesses to sign up by April 15 to hire at least two interns

With a call for businesses and nonprofits of all sizes to hire at least two teens, Plano Mayor John Muns today kicked off the ninth-annual Plano Mayor's Summer Internship Program (PMSIP). The deadline for businesses to sign up is April 15.

Presented by Capital One, the competitive "learn-and-earn" program connects students from Plano's award-winning and nationally recognized school district with some of the area's top corporations, nonprofits and government agencies. The eight-week paid internship program – offering remote and on-site placements, or a combination of both – runs June 6-July 29 (although start dates are flexible). Students earn a minimum of \$10 per hour working 20-40 hours per week.

During a "Coffee with the Mayor" event at the Plano Chamber of Com-

merce, Mayor Muns discussed his hopes for the continued growth of the program. Four business representatives and an intern alum participated in a panel discuss to share their experiences, success stories, advice and more. Mayor Muns also praised the business and nonprofit organizations who have continued to participate in the program, despite the hardships of the pandemic.

"During a time when organizations, large and small, are often understaffed, this program offer a unique way to connect with very bright and talented young people who will soon be part of our future workforce," said Mayor Muns. "Not only are these smart and determined teens learning invaluable lessons from being immersed in a professional setting, but companies are making timely connections with

these promising young people as they transition to college and careers in marketing, health, hospitality, engineering, cyber security and more."

Since the program's launch in 2014, approximately 700 students have received eight-week internships. Additionally, thousands of students have applied for the program and benefited from attending the internship prep training and Job Fair each year.

Highlights of today's program included a Q&A with Mayor Muns, representatives from the Plano Chamber and four businesses, plus PMSIP alum Julian Coleman who interned at Susan G. Komen in 2021.

Sharing their insights were Plano ISD Superintendent Sara Bonser; Kelle Marsalis, president and CEO, Plano Chamber; Michael Lawson, senior man-

ager, global engagement at Boeing, who served as emcee; Steven Webb, Vice President (Technology), Public Cloud Product Adoption, JPMorgan Chase; and Alison Hansard, Senior HR Generalist, Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas. They discussed the caliber of students involved in the program and the robust mandatory training the interns undergo to prepare them for their transition into the professional work environment. They expressed the rewards and many tangible benefits of having the young people involved and encouraged other companies to join the cause. Also on hand was 2021 intern alum Julian Coleman, who worked at Susan G. Komen, to talk about his positive experiences.

Mayor Muns also recognized the longtime support of presenting sponsor Capital One, along with Plano ISD and JPMorgan Chase (Job Fair sponsor), which underwrites 20 interns in the technology and health-care industries and the nonprofit sector every summer.

"For many years, the Plano Mayor's Summer Internship Program has given hundreds of students the unique opportunity to take their education beyond the classroom and learn from some of the top businesses and nonprofits in DFW," said Sanjiv Yajnik, President, Financial Services at Capital One. "We are proud to build on the Capital One Impact Initiative by investing in the future leaders of our region to help make Plano a vibrant community to live and work."

Other program sponsors are Atmos Energy, Bank of America, Boeing, City of Plano, FedEx Office, Liberty Mutual, NTT DATA Services and Oncor.

Businesses and nonprofits are encouraged to sign up and hire at least two interns. Businesses may also underwrite an intern at a nonprofit or government agency, or become a program sponsor. Companies pay a \$500 program fee for each intern that covers training and enrichment activities, the Job Fair and onboarding and administrative costs.

Details and the online application are available at planomayorsinterns.org. Companies interested in signing up may contact Vicki Wait at vicki@vwait-group.com.

Target to set new starting wage range and expand access to health care benefits to more team members

Target Corporation (NYSE: TGT) recently announced another milestone in its long-standing commitment to its team: plans to set a new starting wage range and expand access to health care benefits for its team members and their families. These expanded offerings help advance key portions of the company's Target Forward strategy that aim to create equity and opportunity for Target's team, partners and communities.

"Our team is at the heart of our strategy and success, and their energy and resilience keep us at the forefront of meeting the changing needs of our guests year after year. We continuously listen to our team members to understand what's most important to them, then use the feedback to make invest-

ments that meet their needs across different career and life stages," said Melissa Kremer, chief human resources officer, Target. "We want all team members to be better off for working at Target, and years of investments in our culture of care, meaningful pay, expanded health care benefits and opportunities for growth have been essential to helping our team members build rewarding careers."

With these enhancements to Target's robust pay and benefits package, the retailer will invest up to \$300 million more in its team in the year ahead.

Target led the retail industry by announcing in 2017 that it would raise its starting wage to \$15 per hour, hitting the milestone nearly two years ago. The

company is now taking its next meaningful step by setting a new starting wage range from \$15 to \$24. The new approach will apply to hourly team members working in Target stores, supply chain facilities and headquarters locations, positioning Target as a wage leader in every market where it operates. The exact starting wage within the range will depend on the job and the local market, with market-level wages set by the retailer based on industry benchmarking, local wage data and more.

Beginning in April with its new benefits cycle, Target also will roll out broader, faster access to health care coverage for its hourly team members, in addition to new and enhanced benefits.



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OP-ED: A Legacy Worth Leaving

By Avery Ross

We are hardwired to deal with grief, but everyone grieves differently. Acknowledging the complexities and simplicity of grief allow me to live a full life. Sometimes my grief manifests itself as gratitude for another day, sometimes it moves me to help others. As a grief counselor, I encourage others to acknowledge and move forward in grief. When we engage in open and honest conversa-



Courtesy photo

tions about death, we are giving ourselves the tools to manage grief.

My mother never minced words when it came to

death. We had conversations over the dinner table throughout my life about it. When we knew she had congestive heart failure, we decided to celebrate her life while she was still here. She chose hospice, an end-of-life care option for terminally ill people and died peacefully in her sleep. She encouraged me to think about death in a positive light, rather than as a negative and frightening thing.

I was in my mother's favorite place when I found

out that she died: Las Vegas. So, I went to her favorite hotel and lost \$20 in her honor. Because I would go with her, and she would win, and I would take her money and lose it. I said, "I'm just being consistent."

My mother had her affairs in order before she died: from her funeral to where her belongings would go. It made our grieving process smoother to not focus on those things. I want the same for my son, so I've made my wishes clear to

him. Instead of looking at it as a daunting task, I look at it as a gift to him. When you prepare your loved ones for what you want if you get sick and when you die, you are showing them just how much you love them.

Start by having a conversation with your loved ones about your wishes and the legacy you want to leave. What matters most to you? How do you want to be remembered? Do your spiritual or religious beliefs inform your values?

Is there someone you want involved in your healthcare decisions?

There are many tools and resources to prepare you to have these conversations and get your affairs in order. Compassion & Choices offers an End of Life Decisions Guide & Toolkit that provides helpful information on end-of-life decisions.

Avery Ross is a grief counselor and bereavement facilitator based in New York.

New collaborative seeks investment in media organizations as critical civic infrastructure

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

David Morgan, Founder & President of the Multicultural Media & Correspondents Association (MMCA), and Linda Miller, the manager of the Donald Reynolds Journalism Institute (RJ), have each declared that a robust, resilient, and diverse media ecosystem count as essential to a community's well-being.

The duo said making financing available for multicultural and local news publishers is as important as affordable housing, reliable transportation, and access to capital.

That's why they've announced a new partnership that targets the needs of local publishers.

As part of RJ's Inclusive Media and Economies Project, RJ, MMCA, and Dynasty Consulting have teamed up to help publishers of color tap into community development, revitalization, and reinvestment funds.

They have pledged that the organizations use those investments to test new revenue strategies and build more sustainable business models.



Photo via NNPA

RJ will provide seed money and administrative support to the partnership, and MMCA and Dynasty will develop the engagement strategies and facilitate pilot projects with individual publishers.

"Multicultural media have long played a critical role in the civic, social and economic health of communities," Morgan noted.

"They are connectors and convenors. They create jobs. They are trusted sources of relevant, actionable, and often life-saving information for the very populations that community-centered financing was created to serve."

He added that by connecting the dots between community media and community development, the groups hope to create an entirely new funding

source for media outlets serving communities of color, positioning them to advance a more inclusive narrative of the economy — and to compete in that economy.

Miller said the institution many often turn to for funding critical community infrastructure, like banks, community development finance institutions, and government agencies, largely ignore community media as an essential building block.

"Back in April 2020, I was really thinking and having conversations about the need to come out of Covid with a more equitable economy and a more equitable media," Miller remarked.

"I wanted to explore the intersection of those two things, and it came down

to the question of if robust, diverse media ecosystem is so important and essential to a healthy economy, then why isn't BIPOC media and community media, in particular, a bigger part of the conversation having to do with economic development and community development strategies?"

She said she considered what it would take to make a change.

"It's clear that there's a blind spot where people who work in the community development space and where they are coming

from and really not viewing and funding community media as part of the overall community development strategy," Miller continued.

"When I connected with David Morgan, we had a meeting of the minds, and we knew that we had to change that system and address that blind spot."

The duo pointed to an October 2019 report that found that of the \$1.1 billion journalism grants in the United States between 2013 and 2017, only 8.1 percent went to journalism efforts specifically de-

signed to serve populations that included racial and ethnic groups, women and girls, and LGBTQ+ communities.

Morgan called an investment in community media an economic development strategy a force multiplier.

"More diverse media ownership gives communities power and resources to control their own narrative, and part of that narrative is the transformational impact that community development and revitalization can

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MEDIA, from Page 12

have on closing the racial wealth gap — and boosting the economy overall,” he said.

Officials said the partnership expands the reach and impact of RJJ's “Inclusive Media and Economies” project.

It integrates it into MMCA's ongoing efforts to increase BIPOC media ownership through advocacy, coalition building, galvanizing public, private

and philanthropic resources, and its BIPOC Media Incubator.

“BIPOC media is facing a dire situation on the revenue side and audience engagement because of the drying of advertising, their business model isn't working well, and most are underwater, and all will need a business transformation that will take them from where they are to being sustainable in the future,”

Morgan stated.

He pointed out that future sustainability is critical.

“That will take a level of intentionality and the alignment of resources and strategy that the average media company can't take on by themselves,” Morgan asserted.

“But, because they are vital, we felt the need for a dedicated infrastructure system in which to take them through that process, and that is what our business incubator is all about.”

Morgan continued:

“Just having a system isn't enough. We know that there's a need for new revenue sources from investing to building infrastructure and a sustainable revenue base to replace advertising. Once, we reached out to public and private entities and said, ‘you are trying to invest in our community, and you haven't tapped into one of the strongest potential partners.’ As a result, we've had very little push back.”



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- Shall work with other members of the Executive Committee to develop a program agenda for a defined fiscal year.
- Acknowledges he/she is the primary force within the Chapter in establishing a working relationship and communication with the National and Regional Office(s); ensures that these offices receive all reports, including quarterly reports, and reports of elections.
- Is familiar with pertinent governing documents including: The NAN by-laws and Chapter rules.

Interested parties should contact Robert D. Bush, president of the Las Vegas Chapter, at (702) 626-0158.

Navigating the Seas of Ministry

By Pastor Bernadette Moore

As we celebrate Women's History Month, we reflect on the roles women have played in our society and in the world. It must be noted that those roles and the accompanying opportunities have largely been defined for us. A clear example of this is in the vocation of ministry. For decades, the "Egalitarian vs. Complementarian" debate has raged on. For even longer, women have realized that God calls and gifts whoever



Courtesy photo

he chooses, included them. Devout women have and continue today to navigate the choppy waters of vocational, bi-vocational, and

para-church ministries to fulfill their calling and exercise their gifting for the good of mankind and the kingdom of God. If you are one of those women, or if you are a woman currently acknowledging the call and gifting of God for ministry, I have two words of encouragement for you.

First word – Be "fully convinced in [your] own mind." (Rom. 14:5b, NASB) Whether sailing over placid seas to welcoming, open doors or tirelessly paddling upstream against

waves of resistance and rejection – stay convinced in your own heart and mind of your calling and gifting from your faithful and loving heavenly Father.

Second word – Equip yourself! Load up your boat with all the biblical and theological education and vocational, organizational, and leadership training you can get. We are commanded, like Timothy in the Bible, to "study to show ourselves approved to God as workers rightly dividing the word of truth." (2

Tim. 2:15, KJV paraphrase) Remember: the Holy Spirit can use you to captain a ship that has engines, radar, and sonar just like he can use you to paddle a canoe. Seize every opportunity to prepare yourself to successfully go through the doors of ministry that God opens for you.

These two words are not just for women. Men would do well to apply them also. But in a world where the women in ministry may find the soft winds of encouragement scarce and

pounding waves denying and refuting their calling frequent, I offer these words as compass. Embrace them, my sisters in the Gospel! Wrap them in prayer and worship of the true and living God as you navigate the seas of ministry.

Bernadette Moore is Executive Pastor of Bethel Bible Fellowship, Carrollton, TX. She holds a Master of Theology degree from Dallas Theological Seminary and is scheduled to be ordained in the Evangelical Covenant Church June 2022.

What a Crazy World We Live in

By Dr. James L. Snyder

Driving home from an appointment across town, my wife and I encountered some crazy driver weaving in and out on the road in front of us. The fact that there was not an accident was somewhat surprising.

"What," The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage exclaimed, "is wrong with people?"

Looking at her and laughing, I said, "People today are crazy!"

Together we laughed, knowing it was true. If there ever has been a time that people were crazy, it is today.

What a crazy world we live in these days. Just when you think it can't get any crazier, it does.

We went shopping at the grocery store one day, and when we came out and got into our vehicle, I was laughing. My wife looked at me and said, "What are you laughing about?"

"That lady in there," I said, still laughing, "was wearing the craziest dress that I've ever seen. She sure was crazy." And I laughed some more.

She looked at me, smiled and said, "You do know that was not a woman, don't you?"

The smile disappeared from my face, and I just stared at her and said, "You got to be kidding?"

I agree that people aren't what they seem to be in real

life. There appears to be a crazy virus, and it comes out just a little different for each individual.

It's hard to comprehend the level of craziness that is in our world today. A mask cannot control this crazy virus, but it's a start to cover up that crazy face.

There was some Hollywood celebrity; I don't know who, but when they had their baby said that they would wait until the baby was old enough to make its own decision as to its gender. When I first heard that, I thought they were making a joke, but then I found out they were very serious about it.

When I heard that, I felt sorry for the baby that had to grow up in such a crazy family. If they are crazy about this, what else are they crazy about?

It seems to me that each generation has its own definition of crazy. Each generation gets crazier with their definition probably to out-crazy the former generation.

Of course, as The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage reminds me, nobody could handle me if there were not so many crazy people out there to compare. So, I think by that "nobody," she was referring to herself.

I admit that in certain areas, I am crazy. But, of course, some think I'm crazy all the way through, which may be entirely accurate.

Someone told me, "One's

crazy is another person's laughter." The crazy people out there in the world cause so much laughter.

I'm not sure how you would define crazy. Each person has a different strain of craziness. The best way to define crazy is something that looks and sounds odd to the person watching and listening.

Someone may be looking at me, thinking I'm crazy. But, of course, to a certain degree, they are correct. Everybody is crazy in their own right. So we have a right to be crazy.

As long as my crazy doesn't adversely affect someone else, what's the harm?

I learned a long time ago not to be offended when someone refers to me as crazy. Most of my relatives refer to me as crazy, but I'm never offended.

Just the other day, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage suggested that crazy was inherited. Therefore, it's not my fault that I'm crazy. I can think of several uncles and cousins that are as crazy as crazy can be.

Growing up with these relatives around me, I did not know or understand that their craziness would rub off on me. I just laughed at them and walked away, thinking I was okay.

As I studied my family heritage, I realized that although crazy is inherited through family links, I have an opportunity to choose my

crazy. I never thought about that before. But, I am as crazy as I choose to be.

The only challenge I see, at least for me, is the ability to control me and my crazy. I don't want my crazy to control me and get me into trouble I can't handle. But I want to understand my crazy and then use it for profitable purposes.

There is somebody out there in the world who needs to experience me and my crazy to feel good about themselves. They can look

at me and think, "I may be crazy, but at least I'm not that crazy." If I can do that each day, I'm doing an incredible amount of work for the human population.

So, the last few years, I've been trying to hone my crazy to have at least some positive results with the people around me.

Thinking about this and looking back over the last few years some of my encouragement has come from people who I first thought were just being crazy.

Sometimes crazy does have a purpose.

I thought about a special versus Scripture that addresses this. "Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do" (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

I don't have to know who I'm encouraging but sometimes my crazy activities do in fact encourage somebody along the way. Only in heaven will I realize how many people I have encouraged this way.

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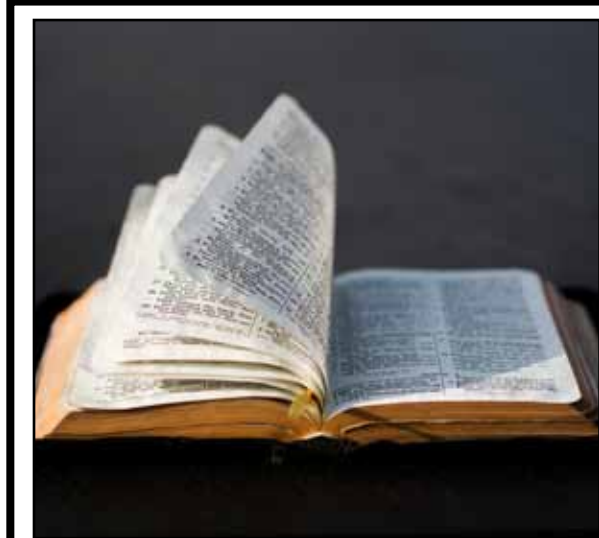


Sister Tarpley
NDG
Religion
Editor

An author, Henry Blackaby wrote in his book, *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing His Will*, "You cannot go with God and stay where you are."

Think about this, if you want to experience something you've never done, you must do something you've never done before. Strive for a new paradigm (this paradigm is an example that serves as a pattern or model for faith in God.)

God often has to radically change us if we are going to fulfill His purposes in our lives. In the book of Samuel, Saul was about to be anointed by Samuel as the first king of Israel. Samuel said to Saul, "And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and be turned into another man."



1 Samuel 10:6 (KJV).

Samuel told Saul that he would be a different person, that he would have God's power.

Up to this point, Saul had never prophesied or led a group of people. He had also never had to be accountable to a prophet and to God for his every action. Saul took a big step of faith right away and prophesied with the prophets just as Samuel said he would. How exciting that must have been. Yet, when

Samuel called the entire nation of Israel together to announce Saul as Israel's first king in history, Saul was nowhere to be found. Excitement was in the air, but when they call Saul's name, he didn't come forward. "Therefore they (the people) inquired of the Lord further, if the man should yet come thither. And the Lord answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff." **1 Samuel 10:22 (KJV).**

The story of King Saul

should be an encouragement to us all. God continues to pick the foolish things of this world to confound the wise. Your greatest setback can be thinking that there's no way that God can use "little me." However, the reality is that He can and will use us, if we respond to the new places He takes us.

Ask God to use you to ripen the fruit of the Spirit. Ask Him for help to bear this fruit in your life to show and share love, joy and peace. Ask God for help to be long-suffering, gentle and good; to have strong faith; to be meek and temperate, you should be slow to speak and quick to listen. Remember God gave us only on mouth but two ears.

If you ask God, He will help you walk in the Spirit so that your life will be

pleasing to Him and you will be a light in the darkness for others, so that the world may know that He is God and that He can do anything but fail.

Believe that God is faithful, good and just. Believe with your mind, body and soul. Let God be your anchor and He will keep you from drifting out to sea in the currents of unbelief.

Psalms 100:5 says, "For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth to all generations." And **Isaiah**

45:21b says, "... who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the Lord? and there is no God else besides Me; a just God and a savior; there is none besides me." God is good and He will never do anything bad. He will never make a mistake, mislead or be unfair because He wants us to live in the beauty of His holiness.

(Editorial Note: This column originally appeared in April 2011)

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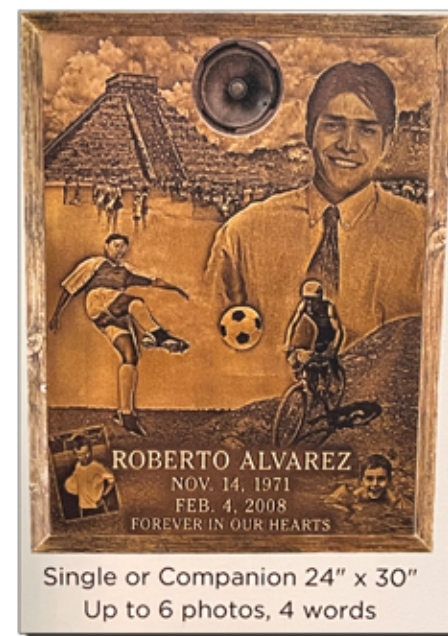
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