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Study: Race is central to identity for Black Americans and affects how they connect

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior
National Correspondent

No matter where they are from, who they are, their economic circumstances or educational backgrounds, significant majorities of Black Americans say being Black is extremely or very important to how they think about themselves.

A new Pew Research poll revealed that a significant share of Black Americans also says that when something happens to Black people in their local communities, across the nation or around the globe, it affects what happens in their own lives, highlighting a sense of connectedness.

"Black Americans say this even as they have diverse experiences and come from an array of backgrounds," the authors of the poll noted.

"Even so, Black adults who say being Black is important to their sense of self are more likely than other Black adults to feel connected to other groups of Black people," the authors discovered.

"They are also more likely to feel that what happens to Black people inside and outside the United States affects what happens in



The Pew Research Center conducted an analysis online between Oct. 4, 2021, and Oct. 17, 2021, surveying 3,912 Black U.S. adults and explored differences among Black Americans in views of identity such as between U.S.-born Black people and Black immigrants; Black people living in different regions of the country; and between Black people of different ethnicities, political party affiliations, ages, and income levels.
(Photo: Vonecia Carswell / Unsplash)

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party affiliations, ages, and income levels.

Most non-Hispanic Black Americans (78 percent) reported that being Black is very or extremely important to how they think about themselves.

This racial group counted as the largest among Black adults, accounting for 87 percent of the adult population, according to 2019 Cen-

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Tackling the cost of insulin treatments

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People In The News ...



Viola Davis



Pamela Moses

NDG Quote of the Week: "During Black History Month, I'm reminded yet again of the ways that the struggle for civil rights is interwoven with the struggle for workers' rights."

—Tom Perez

Viola Davis

When Viola Davis sported Matturi Fine Jewelry earrings at the premiere of Showtime Television's hit show "The First Lady," she paid more than a tribute to designer Satta Matturi.

She wore the jaw-dropping pieces, ethically and sustainably sourced natural diamonds from Botswana, for RAD x De Beers Group's #BlackIsBrilliant campaign.

Officials said giving back is the goal of #BlackIsBrilliant, a partnership between the De Beers Group and RAD Red Carpet Advocacy



to bring together exceptional Black jewelry designers with top celebrity stylists.

With #BlackIsBrilliant, De Beers Group provides a platform for Black designers to create one-of-a-kind pieces with natural dia-

monds from Botswana, emphasizing the Red Carpet as a powerful forum for communication and visibility in amplifying Black voices and talent.

De Beers Group and RAD have taken the latter organization's established, purpose-driven approach of pairing talent and brands to use their platforms in advocating for causes at global events to promote social progress and positive shifts in culture.

De Beers Group officials maintain that they are deeply committed to creating a positive, lasting impact that will endure well beyond discovering its last

diamond.

"In support of Viola Davis' advocacy of Black creative talent, a \$25,000 donation will be made to a charity of her choice," officials wrote in a news release.

Satta, the founder, and creative lead for Matturi Fine Jewelry, noted that Kwe counts as a diverse group of people who historically lived through a hunter-gatherer lifestyle.

"Their traditions, dance, and distinct rock art depict and interpret their views and beliefs regarding landscapes, flora, fauna, and living within a sustainable ecosystem, which have

been passed through the generations," Satta noted in the news release.

Satta added that contemporary San artists continue to draw on those same ancestral beliefs and traditions using bold interpretations and vibrant colors.

"The Kwe earrings are a tribute to a people who continue to live selflessly with nature," Satta continued.

"The design in particular picks on the beautiful landscapes of Botswana, a country that is blessed not just with diamonds but with the natural beauty of the delta, rivers, and an abundance of wildlife.

"Forty natural diamonds,

created deep under Botswana's soil millions of years ago, were selected by De Beers Group for their unique attributes, which were cut and polished in Gaborone by Botswana artisans.

"Surrounding and connecting the natural diamonds, 18 karat gold has been left unpolished to achieve a raw yet contemporary, natural look and feel."

Satta concluded that "every aspect of these earrings and design pays homage to a country, its people, natural resource, and astonishing ecosystem."

Pamela Moses

Pamela Moses spent 82 days in custody after a Tennessee judge handed down a six-year prison sentence against the 44-year-old Black woman for trying to register to vote.

On April 22, prosecutors declared that they'd gotten their pound of flesh.

Charges were dropped against Moses after another judge granted her a new trial.

"Our original offer to the defendant Pamela Moses was a guilty plea to a misdemeanor and no time to serve," Shelby County District Attorney Amy Weirich



declared.

"She rejected that offer and asked for a jury trial. At the conclusion of the week-long trial, the jury convicted her on the felony charge of false entry on permanent voter registration."

Weirich continued:

"She was taken into custody and spent 75 days in jail before Judge Mark Ward granted her motion for a new trial. In total, she has spent 82 days in custody in this case, which is sufficient. She is also permanently barred from registering to vote or voting in Tennessee as a result of her 2015 conviction for Tampering with Evidence. In the interest of judicial econ-

omy, we are dismissing her illegal registration case and her violation of probation."

The vital issue had always centered on whether Moses knew she lost her voting eligibility.

A probation officer filled out and signed a form indicating the end of her supervision stemming from a 2015 felony conviction.

The officer admitted the mistake but left Moses wondering whether she

could vote.

Prosecutors alleged that she deceived the officer and knew of her ineligible status.

However, following her conviction, The Guardian newspaper uncovered evidence through public records that undercut Weirich's false claim that Moses duped the probation officer.

"In September 2019, just two days after a probation

officer mistakenly signed a certificate telling Moses her probation was complete, officials at the Tennessee department of corrections investigated how exactly their employee made the error," The British daily newspaper reported.

"Their investigation didn't find that Moses had deceived a probation officer, but rather that the of-

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AOA Cortny Pruitt



IONIAN SEA (April 7, 2022) Aviation Ordnanceman Airman Cortny Pruitt, from Dallas, assigned to the "Red Rippers" of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 11, applies a stencil to an F/A-18F Super Hornet in the hangar bay the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75), April 7, 2022. The Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group is on a scheduled deployment in the U.S. Sixth Fleet area of operations in support of U.S., allied and partner interests in Europe and Africa. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Jibreel Uddin)

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Sales Department:marketing@northdallasgazette.com
972-509-9049**Editorial Department:**

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Online:

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Published by

Minority Opportunity News, Inc.

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North Dallas Gazette assumes no responsibility for unsolicited material and reserves the right to edit and make appropriate revisions.

The North Dallas Gazette, formerly Minority Opportunity News, was founded in July 1991, by Mr. Jim Bochum and Mr. Thurman R. Jones. North Dallas Gazette is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Minority Opportunity News, Inc.

Why we need to lower the cost of insulin to \$35

By Colin Allred
U.S. House of
Representatives (TX-32)

One of the issues I hear most about from North Texans is the high cost of prescription drugs, and specifically the high cost of insulin. This drug is not optional for folks living with diabetes – they need it to survive.

One in four people with diabetes ration their insulin, and in the richest and most powerful nation on Earth, this is unacceptable. Congress must take action to deliver relief.

The House took a step to do just that with the passage of the Affordable Insulin Now Act. I was proud to support this important legislation, which caps co-pays at \$35 per month for insulin for those with private insurance or those who have Medicare Part D coverage. This will de-

liver critical relief to North Texans who often have to choose between paying for this life-saving medication or their groceries and other bills.

This legislation, if signed into law, would be a good first step forward in lowering the costs of insulin and other prescription drugs. In 2019, I released a report that found that the 13,000 Medicare enrollees in my district with diabetes pay 4.5 times the cost for diabetes medication compared to Australia, 3.5 times compared to the United Kingdom and 2.8 times the cost compared to Canada.

This legislation would cut those costs. Half of the folks with private insurance would save around \$228 per year and another 25 percent of the folks with private insurance would save about \$504 per year. With more than 30 million people in the U.S. living with diabe-

tes, legislation like the Affordable Insulin Now Act is critical.

There are countless examples of Black Americans being disproportionately impacted by illness due to lack of access to treatment and preventative care – and diabetes is no different. The costs that are associated with insulin and other forms of diabetes care make this illness more than twice as deadly for Black Americans as it is for white Americans. Reducing insulin costs will help save lives as we work to ensure that every American has accessible and affordable health care.

Throughout my time in Congress, I've heard from North Texans about what the high cost of prescription drugs means for them. My first State of the Union guest, Shane Thompson from Garland, shared with me that despite having a good job, she still struggles

to afford the medication she needs to survive. Her story is unfortunately all too common. I recently convened a roundtable with Speaker Nancy Pelosi where Shane and other North Texans shared their stories about the high cost of health care directly with the Speaker.

My mother is a breast cancer survivor, so I know first-hand the hardships that working families face when trying to access the health care and medication they need. Nobody should have to choose between buying the medicine they need to live a healthy life or putting food on the table, and this bill is a great first step in our efforts to lower health care costs.

As long as I'm in Congress, I'll keep fighting until this bill gets signed into law and to make health care more accessible and affordable for every North Texan.

Prostate cancer rising in Black America

By Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.
President and CEO, NNPA

As the United States continues to grapple with its legacy of systemic racism, debates on issues such as police brutality and racial profiling, the economic gulf between Blacks and Whites, and the dearth of access to affordable educational opportunities, there is one area that has received far less attention: The gap in positive health outcomes that African Americans – and particularly Black men – face.

While the COVID-19 pandemic shined a light on these fissures, its beam barely touched the edges of the problem. Yet according to government data, Black Americans are generally at higher risk for heart diseases, stroke, cancer, asthma, influenza and pneumonia, diabetes and HIV/AIDS than their white counterparts. Black people also have the high-

est death rate and shortest survival of any racial/ethnic group in the United States for most cancers.

These are abhorrent figures anyway you look at them, but especially when considering that many of these deadly diseases – at least when detected early – are treatable and survivable. Prostate cancer, for example, has a five-year survival rate for men diagnosed with it of greater than 99 percent if the cancer is detected during the early stage.

Yet, Black men have a 70 percent higher rate of developing prostate cancer than white men, and research from the American Cancer Society found that Black men are more than twice as likely to die from prostate cancer than their White counterparts.

One of the key reasons for these staggering disparities is the fact that Black men are overall less aware of the threat this form of cancer poses

to them and have less resources available to them to receive testing and monitoring for the disease. Thankfully there are members of the Black community like billionaire investor Robert F. Smith, The Today Show Co-host Al Roker, and activist comedians such as Chris Tucker and Steve Harvey who are raising their voices – and contributing their dollars – to combat this affliction.

Whether it is other philanthropists, local or regional health centers, or state and federal officials, there is a desperate need for creative solutions to getting more people screened and saving more lives. Smith's initiative is an innovative approach, but there are other ways to spread awareness and boost screenings in the Black community.

Whether it be through an advertising and outreach campaign to pop-up health centers and tents, the COVID-19 vaccine push in

the Black and other minority communities can serve as a good example of how to quickly and efficiently get more Black men screened for the disease.

For too long, prostate cancer among Black men – and the disparity in health outcomes within the community overall – has remained relatively low profile, but now we have a way to resolve this issue. The pioneering Black journalist and one of the effective voices and leaders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Ida B. Wells said it best, "The way to right wrong is to turn the light of truth on them." It is long overdue to turn on a brighter national light on prostate cancer and Black America.

Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr is President and CEO of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) who can be reached at dr.bchavis@nnpa.org.

Keep up with the news

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Local non-profit helps Parkland patients with child care needs

On this Mother's Day, Mommies in Need is caring for the community with their variety of free childcare services available while families access the medical care they need.

Founded in 2014 by Natalie Boyle, the organization supports families by providing safe, loving childcare from expert staff both in the homes of families and at Annie's Place, their state of the art facility named after Natalie's friend who needed childcare while receiving chemo treatments. The only nonprofit of its type in the



Aaron Burden / Unsplash

nation, Mommies in Need hopes to improve access to healthcare by removing lack of childcare as a reason to miss preventative, general, and emergency appointments.

Annie's Place cares for children five days a week, offering age appropriate play, meals, and a mini town center that includes a Parkland Hospital playhouse so children can em-

ulate the treatments their families attend. Parents may leave their children to attend chemo treatments, diagnostic appointments, wellness exams, and more. Mommies in Need also offers emergency care for patients of Parkland Hospital's Emergency Room.

Recent studies have shown that women are leaving the workforce in droves in part because of a lack of access to affordable childcare. This lack of childcare, in tandem with a major lack of access to healthcare in general because of poverty, creates a crisis in women's

health, in children's development, and in the ability of women to contribute to the workforce, providing financial support for their families.

In addition to in person care, the organization offers play therapy, helping children express themselves and process their concerns, via an on-staff licensed child therapist and play therapy specialist. The organization is particu-

larly proud of this service as play therapy can be difficult to access with or without insurance.

Support Mommies in Need at mommiesinneed.org or with purchase of a gift for you or mom at Kendra Scott's West Village location at 3699 McKinney Ave #105-b in Dallas, Texas with code 'GIVEBACK-BQXPO' or by mentioning Mommies in Need at checkout.

Prism Health North Texas and Community Dental Care joining together to meet needs

Prism Health North Texas (PHNTX) announced their intent to acquire the assets of Community Dental Care of Texas in an effort to expand their missions to create access to affordable healthcare for people living in the greater Dallas area. By integrating dental and medical care under a single community health organization, both important needs can be better resourced and managed. The organization will operate under the Prism Health North Texas brand, and the PHNTX Board of Directors will become the single managing board. The change will build PHNTX's strategic vision towards improving health for more people throughout North Texas.

All services, locations, and staff currently operating with CDC will migrate to PHNTX. Both organizations receive major funding from Ryan White grants, but both also receive unique funding which synergistically will form even greater support and resources for a wider variety of individuals in the greater Dallas area.

"CDC has an incredible



Quang Tri Nguyen / Unsplash

legacy of providing critical dental care for so many people here in Dallas," says Dr. John Carlo, CEO of PHNTX. "We look forward to continuing this important work and build together an even bigger safety net of healthcare services."

The dental offices will continue to be located at: 13551 Dennis Lane, Farmers Branch, TX; 8224 Park Lane, Dallas, TX; and 3910 Gaston Avenue, in Dallas, TX. The Gaston Ave location is located close to both the PHNTX Worth Street Health Center at 4004 Worth Street, and the PHNTX Administrative Offices at 3900 Junius Street.

"We are excited about

the opportunity to continue our mission in the Dallas area," said Dorothy Jones, Director of Operations for the Community Dental Care of Texas practices. "Joining Prism and pairing our unique goals and missions will result in a great benefit for our many shared patients and allow us to integrate dental and medical care in a unique care setting."

According to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, more people are unable to afford dental care than any other type of healthcare. In 2015, the percentage of people in the United States with no dental insurance was 29 percent and 62 percent for

older adults. Over 40 percent of low-income and non-Hispanic Black adults have untreated tooth decay. Among PHNTX's current patients receiving medical care at one of its health centers, only 16 percent have evidence of at least an annual dental examination in the past year.

For more information about Prism Health North Texas, visit phntx.org.

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The history of 'Soul Patrol' and its Juneteenth plans

Soul Patrol started as a result of several African American cyclists coming together on Saturday mornings to ride and fellowship together. During the rides, a compact speaker would be placed on one of the bikes for the cyclists to jam to old school R&B.

It wasn't long before we decided we should design a cycling jersey for our group of cyclists, but first we needed a name. In 2018, one of the cyclists in the group came up with the name Soul Patrol since we patrolled the bike routes in Frisco, as well as the north Texas area, while listening to old school R&B music.

We also created a Facebook site which enabled us



to provide a platform for others to share valuable information about the sport, thus transforming Soul Patrol into a community of cyclists who are committed to educating, motivating, and collaborating with members of various cycling

groups.

We learned through our social platform that many cyclists are interested in learning more about the sport as well as improving their health.

In the spring of 2020, during the pandemic, one



Courtesy Images

of the Soul Patrol's cyclists decided to send out a message on social media inviting cyclists to "social distance" together while cycling together and almost one hundred cyclists came out to ride together. In 2021, Soul Patrol orga-

nized our first official Juneteenth celebration ride in Frisco, TX and almost two hundred cyclists were in attendance.

This year, Soul Patrol is hosting another Juneteenth cycling rally on June 18, 2022, in Frisco, Texas from

7 a.m. until 2 p.m. The cyclists will convene at Life Changing Faith Church located on 7185 Main Street, Frisco, TX.

Four routes have been created to allow cyclists of all skill levels an opportunity to challenge themselves while enjoying a nice ride followed by fellowshiping and viewing vendors' merchandise.

Participants are registering for the event via the Soul Patrol's website and the funds collected will provide scholarships to impact high school seniors in the Collin County area.

For more information go the website: SoulPatrol.club

Nationwide coalition of animal organizations push to 'Empty the Shelters'

As shelters across the country face overcrowding and increased length of stay, Bissell Pet Foundation is aiming to "Empty the Shelters" by sponsoring reduced adoption fees from May 2-8. This event will be hosted in more than 275 shelters in 40 states, including at the SPCA of Texas' two shelters in Dallas, TX and Waxahachie, TX.

The SPCA of Texas will participate May 2-8, offering adopters an opportunity to draw for their adoption fees, which will range from \$0 to \$25. Participating shelters include the Jan Rees-Jones Animal Care Center in Dallas and the Ellis County Animal Care Center in Waxahachie.

Then, from May 6-8, from noon to 6 p.m., the organization will host a special event during which animals available at the Russell E. Dealey Animal Rescue



SPCA of Texas

Center and animals available in foster homes will be featured at the Jan Rees-Jones Animal Care Center at 2400 Lone Star Drive in Dallas. Adopters will have the opportunity to draw for their adoption fee at this event as well.

"Shelters across the country are over capacity, and highly adoptable pets are at risk as we face one of the largest crises in recent

years," said Cathy Bissell, Founder of Bissell Pet Foundation. "Bissell Pet Foundation is calling on people to visit their community shelters during 'Empty the Shelters' to save a life through adoption. Without you, there is no tomorrow for these deserving pets."

According to a January release from Best Friends Animal Society, nationwide shelter populations at the

beginning of 2022 stood at approximately 100,000 more than in January 2021. There have been slightly fewer animals coming into shelters, but their time of stay has increased significantly. Effectively, this has put a strain on shelters across the country.

Last year during Bissell Pet Foundation's "Empty the Shelters" events, in the Fall and Winter of 2021, the SPCA of Texas adopted out 64 animals total. This year's goal is to find homes for 100 animals.

"Right now is a pivotal moment for shelters across the entire country," said SPCA of Texas President and CEO Karen Froehlich. "The disruptions the pandemic caused in staffing has gotten a lot of attention, however, the backlog of animals that occurred in the last two years has caused the crisis we currently find

ourselves in.

"We know there are people out there who need the love a pet can offer, especially during these trying times. Our pets also need the stability and emotional bonding only a forever home can offer. There's an unmistakable sense of gratitude that comes from a shelter pet that cannot be found anywhere else. It lifts your spirit each and every day and is one of the fastest ways to improve your quality of life.

"We need more help in relieving the pressure on our people and pets. Please volunteer, foster, adopt and give. That is what will lead us out of the current crisis animal welfare organizations are experiencing here in North Texas and nationwide."

While 2022 has marked a significant challenge for shelters, "Empty the Shel-

ters," has been happening since 2016 and is now Bissell Pet Foundation's largest program. More than 83,000 pets have found adoptive homes through this reduced-fee adoption event. Since its inception, this event has expanded to organizations in 45 states and Canada, partnering with a total of 443 animal welfare organizations.

All interested adopters can find more details about adoptable pets and how to adopt from the SPCA of Texas online at spca.org. Bissell Pet Foundation and the SPCA of Texas urge families to do their research about the pet they are interested in adopting, as well as adoption requirements. For more information on adopting or donating to "Empty the Shelters," visit www.Bissellpetfoundation.org/empty-the-shelters as well as www.spca.org.

Fashion designer to teach sewing basics at next ZWHJCOC Lunch & Learn

Repurpose Fashion Designer Keisha Tucker will teach sewing basics at the May 4 Lunch & Learn offered by the Zan Wesley Holmes Jr. Community Outreach Center. Tucker is owner of Aw-KinaSew'N'. The session is scheduled from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at

Frazier House, 4600 Spring Avenue.

The Basic Sewing and Tote Bag session will teach the basics of sewing such as how to thread your machine, wind the bobbin and sew basic stitches. Participants will also make a tote bag. Please note, par-

ticipants will need to bring their own sewing machine for the class.

Keisha Tucker was born and raised in Compton, Ca. She is married and has seven children. Her love for sewing began at the very young age of 12 and has grown to a passion for

repurposed fashion. Keisha likes to call herself the Repurpose Queen because she has been repurposing her clothes since she learned to sew. She took sewing classes all 4 years of high school and took what she learned and built upon her skills!

Tucker has been an en-

trepreneur since 2009. Her fields of experience span from simple seamstress work to making sophisticated and elaborate repurposed fashions. She has produced an annual Fundraiser Fashion Show in September since 2015. She uses the fashion shows as her way to

give back to the community by donating a portion of the proceeds to a local non-profit organization.

To register, go to www.zwhjcoc.org and click on Events > Classes.

For more information, contact Erica Lloyd at erica.lloyd@zwhjcoc.org.

Allen-Jones Scholarship boosts support for 1st-generation students

By Eric Olson

In 2012, Vara Allen Jones' colleagues surprised her by creating the Vara Allen-Jones Scholarship for Academic Excellence to support first-generation students and honor her service to the Anchorage community. Vara is a 2019 retired University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) tenured faculty member and past Vice Chancellor for Academic and Multicultural Services. She remembered that moment.

Today, Vara is striving to make the scholarship a permanently endowed fund. She's enlisting the help of friends and colleagues she met in her 28 years at UAA, and a nationwide network to help raise her goal of \$28,000 by this summer to enable the fund to provide at least \$1,000 in scholarship support annually to students. "Everyone who really knows me knows how passionate I am about



Vara Allen Jones

providing opportunities for that particular cohort of students to have financial, academic and social support — to be successful in an environment they may know nothing about."

"I'm a first-generation college student," said Vara. Her amazing story started as a first-year student at Savannah State College, now University (SSU), Georgia's oldest historically Black public university. She worried that she was not prepared for the journey being the first in her family to go to college. "I know

what it's like to walk on a college campus and have no idea what's expected of you. You don't know what you don't know. My exposure to academic advising, intentional mentoring and a clear expectation of excellence undergirded by support solidified my awareness of the impact these areas could have on student success. That awareness and passion began at Savannah State and continued throughout my career."

After earning her bachelor's at Savannah State, she completed a master's degree in counseling with an emphasis in higher education counseling at Georgia Southern University. Vara accepted a job at her alma mater, SSU, where she honed her counseling and leadership skills and experiences with high-impact student success programs. Vara had a career plan that led her to UAA, and she moved to Alaska at the age of 29. "I wanted

to do something different," she said.

After joining UAA in 1991 as a tenure track counseling faculty member in the Advising and Counseling Center, she began building programs to yield academic success such as increasing students' connections and inclusivity, mentoring, advising, and community engagement. She collaborated with colleagues, and revamped the Career Services Center, serving as its director. In 1994, she became the director of Minority Student Services and advocated a name change to better identify its purpose and positively reflect students' identities. She founded AHAINA Student Programs (African American, Hispanic, Asian/ Pacific Islander, International and Native American) and the UAA Multicultural Center. She was also awarded tenure (1994) as an assistant professor of counseling.

Vara's contributions to UAA include successfully authoring multimillion-dollar grants to grow programs like Academic Advising Coordinators, TRiO programs, Educational Opportunity Centers, Educational Talent Search, Upward Bound and Student Support Services. She expanded New Student Orientation, broadened the focus of AHAINA and the Multicultural Center, developed the UA Scholars and the UAA retention program, and advocated for improved learning environments and conditions for students with disabilities.

Awards received included a Noel-Levitz National Award for Student Retention and the Chancellor's Award for Excellence for outstanding contributions to students. Her leadership led to TRiO services being available in targeted middle and high schools in the Anchorage School District.

"From her earliest years

at UAA, I admired how Vara brought diverse perspectives together and created a shared vision for supporting students to achieve personal and academic success," said UAA Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Bruce Schultz. "As she drew from her past personal and professional experiences in the South, Vara showed us how to serve students with grace and a never wavering commitment to excellence."

She credits the generations of tenacious women, such as her mother, as the impetus to move to Alaska.

Interested in supporting Vara's vision? Make a gift to the Vara Allen-Jones Scholarship for Academic Excellence at the University of Alaska Anchorage (<http://bit.ly/uaaallen-jones>).

The post Allen-Jones Scholarship Boosts Support For 1st-Generation Students first appeared on The Savannah Tribune.

Commentary: An extraordinary life, linking past and present

By Ben Jealous,
resident of People For
the American Way

I was trained to fight by my grandmother, Mamie Bland Todd. She would often remind me, "Pessimists are right more often, but optimists win more often." "In this life you have to decide what's more important to you." Then she would add, "As for me, I'll take winning." My favorite optimist died recently at 105. For our family, she was the last living link to our story of origin in antebellum Southern Virginia.

Three of her grandparents were Black and born into slavery. The fourth was white and helped run a plantation. She and my grandfather made the great migration north to the Up South that is Baltimore. Their love story was the bridge to our family's life in modern America. She carried lessons from the old

world with her. She learned to fight from her paternal grandfather, Edward David Bland. He was born into slavery in his white uncle's house.

He would defeat one of his white cousins to become one of the last Black Reconstruction statesmen in Virginia. He was also the Black leader of a multiracial populist movement made up of former slaves and former Confederate soldiers.

His white counterpart was former Confederate General William Mahone. Theirs was a coalition of working men, Black and white. Most of them were farmers with rough hands and dirty fingernails. Together they built a movement in the early 1880s that created Virginia State University, expanded Virginia Tech, and secured the future of free public education for every child in the commonwealth.

Their common enemy was the far right-wing poli-

ticians who said Virginia could not afford the universal free public education that had been created during Reconstruction. Publicly, these wealthy conservatives said the state could not afford both free public education and paying off Civil War debt.

Privately, they feared free universal public education would render both poor whites and poor Blacks ungovernable. Bland and Mahone's multiracial movement also attacked voter suppression, outlawing the poll tax and several other measures meant to make it harder for Blacks and low-income whites to vote. When they took control of the state legislature, they made Mahone a U.S. Senator.

Without forgetting the sins of the past, the men they led each chose to invest in new-found unity rather than renew old hurts and divisions. What united

those men was their commitment to providing a better future for their children. They recognized that what the children of working families — Black and white — needed more than anything was access to a free high-quality education.

In short, they needed what the children of plantation owners took for granted. My grandmother was born in 1916. She was a third-generation NAACP member who rebelled against Jim Crow without hesitation. As a young teacher, she confronted the white man who was the local superintendent of schools. She convinced him that just like white teachers, Black teachers could not teach without adequate supplies.

He rectified the problem at her segregated all-Black school the next day. Two decades later, she would support my mom when at age 12 she signed on as a

named plaintiff in one of the feeder cases to Brown v Board of Education. When my mom desegregated her local high school at 15, my grandmother was with her every step of the way.

Ultimately, however, my grandmother, like her grandfather, could not escape the moral imperative that children of every color who are struggling need the same protections and supports. She would go on to found Child Protective Services for the city of Baltimore and lead Maryland's effort to replicate the program statewide.

Like Bland, she built an army of warriors for social change. In her case, it was an army of social workers, who were mostly women. Among them was a young white woman and future U.S. senator named Barbara Mikulski.

Four years ago, when I was the Democratic nominee for governor of Mary-

land, I bumped into Sen. Mikulski at a women's political event. She looked at me and said, "You're Mamie Todd's grandson." I said, "I am," and I watched a tear roll down her face.

As I close this week's column, tears are running down mine.

Ben Jealous serves as president of People For the American Way and Professor of the Practice in the Africana Studies Department at the University of Pennsylvania where he teaches leadership. Jealous has decades of experience as a leader, coalition builder, campaigner for social justice and seasoned nonprofit executive. In 2008, he was chosen as the youngest-ever president and CEO of the NAACP. He is a graduate of Columbia University and Oxford, where he was a Rhodes Scholar, and he has taught at Princeton and the University of Pennsylvania.

Irving public hearings slated on future of Loop 12

The road system in Irving will be changing, and residents have an opportunity to voice their opinions on just how those changes will be implemented.

TxDOT will host an in-person public meeting on Tuesday, May 3 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at the Jack D. Huffman Community Building, 801 W. Irving Blvd., to discuss proposed improvements to Loop 12 running from Spur 408 to State Highway 183. A second public meeting will be



City of Irving

held Thursday, May 5 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Lighthouse Church, 5525 W. Illinois Ave, Dallas. A

virtual option will be available May 3-20 for those unable to attend in-person.

Participants will be able

to view the proposals for this 10-mile corridor:

- Widen Loop 12
- Reconstruct frontage roads
- Construct two reversible managed lanes
- Improve sidewalks and other safety factors for pedestrians and bicyclists

Comments are encouraged for both in-person and virtual attendees. All comments must be submitted and postmarked by Friday, May 20, 2022, to be included in the public record. Submit

feedback to: TxDOT Dallas District Office, Attn: Jordan Mrayyan, P.E., 4777 East US Highway 80, Mesquite, TX 75150-6643. Email may also be sent to Jordan.Mrayyan@txdot.gov, and phone calls may be directed to (833) 933-0437. More information is available online at [KeepItMovingDallas.com/Loop12](https://www.txdot.gov/loop12).

Those without internet access can call (214) 320-6625 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to ask questions and access project

materials during the project development process.

For in-person and virtual attendees needing interpretation or translation services, or requires an accommodation to attend and participate, contact Kenna Mitchell, TxDOT Dallas District Public Information Officer at (214) 320-4404 no later than 4 p.m., Thursday, April 28. Advance notice is required for accommodation services to be scheduled.

Commentary: Ageism behind smear of Sen. Dianne Feinstein

By Emil Guillermo
The Oakland Post

So how would you like the idea of Barbara Lee, Oakland's member of Congress, getting a bump up to the big house, the U.S. Senate?

Lee's name has risen to the top of the list after some sitting members of Congress went to the San Francisco Chronicle to air concerns that Senator Dianne Feinstein is "mentally unfit" to do the job.

This is nothing less than a blatant smear of Feinstein by cowardly anonymous sources. Rumors about



Dianne Feinstein. Facebook photo.

Feinstein's memory lapses have been around for at least three years. That's when I first heard them. But for some reason everyone has been civil about things until now.

The Chronicle didn't have to publish the story. But knowing it would create a splash, it readily agreed to protect all involved. Except Feinstein.

The paper cited a Dem-

ocratic member of the House, and four U.S. senators (three Democrats, one Republican). One of the Democratic senators said Feinstein's memory is "rapidly deteriorating," and that "it appears she can no longer fulfill her job duties without her staff doing much of the work required."

This is serious stuff. But it was a mistake to not name all the sources. Every last one.

The Chronicle said the sources "who expressed concerns about Feinstein's acuity said that doing so was painful because of

their respect for the senator and her groundbreaking career. Each spoke on condition of anonymity, because they said they did not want to jeopardize their relationship with her and their mutual friends and colleagues."

Those are backstabbing friends Feinstein doesn't need.

Indeed, it would help to know who is sharing this information because one of them may be interested in running for Feinstein's seat should this story generate the push that forces Feinstein's resignation.

Think about this. The

Chronicle is protecting those using innuendo of the possible medical condition of a sitting U.S. Senator. And then casting aspersions on her ability to govern.

That's the cover. It's a governance thing.

No. It's a cheap shot, enabled by journalism's use of the "anonymous source."

The paper editorialized: "If Feinstein is mentally unfit, Democrats need to tell her openly. And she should resign."

The conditional "if" is intended to make everything

See AGEISM, Page 12

STUDY, from Page 1

sus Bureau estimates.

But among other Black Americans, roughly six-in-ten multiracial (57 percent) and Hispanic (58 percent) Black adults reported the same.

According to the 2020 U.S. Census, the nation's Black population stands at 47 million, or 14 percent of the country's population.

The survey authors reported that while the vast majority of Black Americans said their racial background is Black alone (88 percent in 2020), growing numbers are also multiracial or Hispanic.

Most were born in the U.S. and trace their roots back several generations in the country, but a growing share are immigrants (12

percent) or the U.S.-born children of immigrant parents (9 percent).

Geographically, while 56 percent of Black Americans live in the nation's South, the national Black population has also dispersed widely across the country, researchers reported.

The report noted that Black Americans also differ in significant ways in their views about the importance of being Black to personal identity.

While majorities of all age groups of Black people say being Black shapes how they think about themselves, younger Black Americans are less likely to respond the same.

Black adults ages 50 and older are more likely than

Black adults ages 18 to 29 to say that being Black is very or extremely important to how they think of themselves.

Specifically, 76 percent of Black adults ages 30 to 49, 80 percent of those 50 to 64 and 83 percent of those 65 and older hold this view, while only 63 percent of those under 30 reported that belief.

Black adults who identify with or lean toward the Democratic Party are more likely than those who identify with or lean toward the Republican Party to say being Black is important to how they see themselves — 86 percent vs. 58 percent.

And Black women (80 percent) are more likely than Black men (72 percent) to say being Black is important to how they see

themselves.

The report found that some subgroups of Black Americans are about as likely as others to say that being Black is very or extremely important to how they think about themselves.

According to the survey, U.S.-born and immigrant Black adults are about as likely to say being Black is important to how they see their identity.

However, not all Black Americans feel the same about the importance of being Black to their identity — 14 percent say it is only somewhat important to how they see themselves while 9 percent say it has little or no impact on their personal identity, reflecting the diversity of views about identity among Black

Americans.

Among the main highlights from the report include:

- About half of Black adults say their fates are strongly linked with other Black people in the U.S.

- Most Black adults say being Black is very important to how they see themselves

- Black Americans who say being Black is important to them are more likely to feel connected to other Black people.

- Black adults who say being Black is important to them are more likely to learn about their ancestors from relatives.

- Black adults under 30 years old differ significantly from older Black adults in their views on the importance of Blackness to their

personal identity.

- However, Black adults also differ by age in how they pursue knowledge of family history, how informed they feel about U.S. Black history, and their sense of connectedness to other Black people.

- Black Democrats more likely than Republicans to say what happens to other Black people in the U.S. will affect their own lives.

- Half of Black adults say where they currently live is an important part of their identity.

- Majorities of Black adults say their gender and sexuality are very important to them.

- Black women are more likely than Black men to say their gender is very important to them.

Dallas CASA's Cherish the Children honors news anchor Cynthia Izaguirre

Dallas CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) will honor WFAA-TV news anchor and Wednesday's Child host Cynthia Izaguirre with the 2022 Caroline Rose Hunt Cherish the Children Award.

The award will be presented at the Cherish the Children luncheon, hosted by Dallas CASA's Children's Council, at noon Friday, May 6 at the Omni Dallas Hotel. Dallas CASA recruits, trains and supervises community members to be volunteer advocates court-appointed to child victims of abuse and neglect living in the protective care of the state. All proceeds from the luncheon will benefit the children served by Dallas CASA.

As a WFAA-TV anchor and reporter, Izaguirre has long used her public platform to advocate for the needs of children who have experienced abuse or neglect and are living in foster care. The Caroline Rose Hunt Cherish the Children Award recognizes an individual or organization for outstanding contributions to helping children who



Cynthia Izaguirre (Courtesy Photo)

have been removed from unsafe homes. Mrs. Hunt inspired the award through her legacy of dedication to the most vulnerable in the Dallas community.

"Through her work and her life, Cynthia shines a light on the need every child has for a forever home where they will be loved and cared for," said Kathleen M. LaValle, president and CEO of Dallas CASA. "It's easy to think of children in foster care as the sum of their difficult circumstances. Cynthia instead focuses on children's promises, their dreams and their abundant and unique worth. Her Wednesday's Child segment reminds us each week of our common

desire to be loved and accepted and to belong."

Each broadcast segment of Wednesday's Child features a child or sibling group available for adoption. Izaguirre tells the child's story and shares what makes them unique and what they want in a forever family. She personally produces and anchors each segment, which ends with how to contact Child Protective Services if a viewer is interested in adoption.

"Cynthia is so radiant and something of a kid at heart herself, so children gravitate to her during filming," said LaQueena Warren, foster and adoption recruitment supervisor for the Department of Family and



Dallas CASA Board Chair Cynt Marshall (Courtesy photo)

Protective Services. "She knows in her heart that all these children want is to have parents and normalcy, something most of us take for granted. She allows the

children to shine."

At the luncheon, Izaguirre and Dallas CASA Board Chair Cynt Marshall will engage in an interview for the audience. Marshall,

who is CEO of the Dallas Mavericks, and Izaguirre will discuss their personal stories of fostering and adopting.

"Cynthia brings vulnerable children into our homes and hearts through television and makes the children real to us," LaValle said. "Her dedication to the needs of children in foster care aligns completely with Dallas CASA's mission."

The luncheon will feature a silent auction with hand-painted and personalized children's chairs and furniture as well as items such as sports tickets, a spa package and a jazz concert. A VIP reception for sponsors precedes the event. The Dallas Symphony Orchestra Young Strings will also perform at the opening reception.

Luncheon co-chairs are Beth Cholerton and Hannah May, both longtime members and former presidents of the Dallas CASA Children's Council.

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Early
Learning

Film Review: 'The Northman' is an intense onscreen ride

By Dwight Brown
NNPA Film Critic

(***1/2) Hell hath no fury like a Nordic prince wronged. That's the premise of this 10th century Scandinavian revenge allegory. Deceit, murder and vengeance rain down in torrents.

Once upon a time, King Rørik of Denmark appointed two brothers, Horwedil and Fengo, as the rulers of the peninsula of Jutland. Horwedil slayed the King of Norway, he married Rørik's daughter Gerthua and the couple had a son named Amleth. That's according to the Icelandic legend of Prince Amleth, an old Norse tale that inspired Shakespeare's Hamlet. That folklore inspired the very well researched and written script by director/writer Robert Eggers (The Lighthouse) and Icelandic



Alexander Skarsgård stars in *The Northman*. (Courtesy photo)

poet, novelist, lyricist and screenwriter Sjón (Lamb, *Dancer in the Dark*). Their saga starts as two brothers reunite...

King Aurvandil War-Raven (Ethan Hawke, *Training Day*) has just returned from war to his wife Queen Gudrún (Nicole Kidman, *Being the Ricardos*) and tween son Amleth (Oscar

Novak). As the father prepares his son the prince to transition into adulthood, the king's sibling Fjölur The Brotherless (Claes Bang, *The Square*) comes home too. In short order, the jealous Fjölur kills Aurvandil, steals his wife and tries to murder the son, who escapes.

Years later, in exile, the

adult Amleth (Alexander Skarsgård, *Passing*) is a Viking warrior, and alongside his lover Olga (Anya Taylor-Joy, *The Queen's Gambit*), he hunts down his venomous uncle, who now lives in Iceland. The boy turned man seethes: "I will avenge you, father. I will save you, mother. I will kill you, Fjölur." His lover Olga pledges her allegiance: "Your strength breaks men's bones. I have the cunning to break their minds."

This ultra-cruel parable is of biblical proportions. Hard not to want to see Amleth complete his mission. Tough to watch a young man waste his life filled with so much hate. Yet that is the fuel he and the narrative burns. In-between heads getting chopped off (an over-used device), men being speared, women abused and enough de-

bauchery to shame Game of Thrones, some viewers may wonder who the hell directed this. There is nothing cheesy, generic, B-movie or lackluster in the entire production, from a technical or artistic standpoint. How did a Viking story become a work of art?

Director Eggers evidenced his exquisite style in the gorgeous, haunting B&W film *The Lighthouse*. So, no wonder his take on an historic medieval ode is an amazing spectacle. Cinematographer Jarin Blaschke's fluid camera-work captures battle scenes, assassinations, brawls, lovemaking and sea voyages in perfectly composed shots with impeccable lighting. Craig Lathrop's production design, Robert Cowper's art direction and Pancho Chamorro's set decoration recreate the period and places as if they'd

lived through the times. Dark chambers, dingy colors, worn furniture and tarnished jewelry.

Costume designer Linda Muir should applaud herself for making the clothes look filthy dirty. The score (Robin Carolan and Sebastian Gainsborough), with loud pounding drums, crescendos at the right times and the only musical hiccup are two eccentric Björk performances. For 2h and 16m, scenes are cut with exacting precision (editor Louise Ford). Lots of Egger's tech crew worked on *The Lighthouse*, and he should keep them in his employ indefinitely—even if he has to give them pension plans to do so.

Egger forgoes a completely literal adaptation, and instead adds supernatural images of mythology,

See Northman, Page 10

Christopher Martin Gallery hosts showcase by artist Melissa Herrington

As part of the Dallas Grand Spring Exhibition, contemporary abstract artist Melissa Herrington will showcase her Four Seasons paintings on exhibition at Christopher Martin Gallery (1533 Dragon St, Dallas, TX 75207).

Running today through May, each painting in the series represents a different stage of life rendered as the four seasons of the year. The mixed media paintings, titled Form, Flight,

Freedom, and Joy, relate to a longstanding artistic and literary tradition of works about the four seasons, each figure and symbol connecting with one of the four elements: spring with air, summer with fire, autumn with earth and winter with water.

This new series of abstract works explores the complexities of transformation. Each work functions as both an individual entity and as a part

of a larger theme of Herrington's practice. She explores spontaneous marks and subtle forms through abstraction, powerful brush stroke, large-scale canvases, and especially, use of color. Objects and images are never too explicit, this "unfinished" fluidity, represents an unfolding of new possibilities. Her process based, gestural paintings are created through layers of drawing and pigment on canvas. She over-

lays mark-making using pencil, paint, charcoal, and ink. Luminous details, active brushwork and visible gestures float as light into

the mind, like a messenger of joy.

Herrington has most recently exhibited with CONTEXT Art Miami and

the world's largest public art fair, Cube Art Fair, along with galleries in Palm Beach, FL, Los Angeles, CA, and more.



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DSO announces 2022 Lynn Harrell Concerto Competition winners

The Dallas Symphony Orchestra (DSO) announces the winners of the twenty-first annual Lynn Harrell Concerto Competition, which took place on Saturday, April 16, 2022, at the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center. Victoria Han, 11, from Frisco, Texas, took home first prize and an award of \$5,000 with her performance of Schumann's Piano Concerto. Han will perform the work with the Dallas Symphony as part of the annual Teen Concert on June 10, 2022.

Victoria Lahee Han, 11, was born in New York in September 2010. She started her piano journey at age four, taking lessons through her church in Hawai'i. By age seven, under the tutelage of Dr. Thomas Yee, Victoria made her competitive debut. Her move to Texas broadened her musical horizons under Mr. Konstantyn Travinsky. She currently studies under Alex McDonald and Marcy McDonald in Dallas. Ms. Han's accomplishments include: 2022 Piano concerto debut with the Lewisville Lake Symphony Orchestra, 2022 Grand Prize winner of the Lewisville Lake Symphony Vernell Gregg Young Artist Competition, 2021 recital at the John F. Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., finalist and honorable mention at the 2020 Kirov International Piano Competition, gold medalist at the 2019 Seattle International Piano Competition, first place at the 2018 Steinway Piano Competition Hawai'i, first place at the 2018 Aloha International Piano Competition and second place at the



Victoria Han, 11, took first prize performing Schumann's Piano Concerto. (Dallas Symphony Orchestra)

2017 Aloha International Piano Competition. Victoria enjoys being a normal sixth grader at Pioneer Heritage Middle School in Frisco. She loves her classes, friends, ballet, school choir and track. She may be terrible at push-ups, but she can run like the wind. Though most of her time is spent at the piano, Victoria makes time for her family, pets and reading her countless books. She also longs for the beaches and the Aloha of her hometown.

Second Prize and \$3,500 was awarded to Steven Lu, 16, from Plano, Texas. Lu played Conus's Violin Concerto in E minor. Steven Lu began studying violin at the age of five and a half, and has since developed a passion and love for the violin and classical music. Steven is the first prize winner of the 2017 and 2020 Collin County Young Artists Competition and the second prize winner of the 2019 National American Protégé Concerto Competition. In 2018, he was invited to perform at the Suzuki Association of the Americas Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Recently, he was awarded the

first prize and grand prize of the 2022 Collin County Young Artists Competition and the second prize of the 2022 Juanita Miller Concerto Competition. Steven has performed as a soloist in various concert venues such as Carnegie Hall, the Charles W. Eisemann Center for Performing Arts and the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center. He has had the opportunities to play and participate in masterclasses for esteemed violinists such as Martin Beaver, Bion Tsang, Stefan Jackiw, Richard Lin, YooJin Jang and Augustin Hadelich. His past teachers include Charles Krigbaum, and he currently studies under the tutelage of world-renowned pedagogue and violinist Jan Mark Sloman. He is also mentored by violinist Diane Kitzman of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. In addition to playing the violin, Steven formally studies composition and is currently actively composing and orchestrating original works of classical music. In his free time, Steven likes to listen and discover new works of classical music, talk to his friends and play video games.

Third Prize and \$2,000 was awarded to Christian Luevano, 18, from Corinth, Texas. Luevano performed Andrés Martín's Concerto for Double Bass. Christian Luevano started studying bass at the age of five with Derek Weller in Ann Arbor, Michigan. In 2009, he moved to Texas where he studied with Gudrun Raschen until 2018. Christian currently studies with Jeff Bradetich. He has been a member of the noted Texas All-State Symphony Orchestra for all four years of his high school career and was selected twice as the #1 high school bass player in Texas. Christian participated in the Perlman Music Program in 2019, was scheduled to attend the Boston University Tanglewood Institute in 2020, was a member of the National Youth Orchestra in 2021 and is a fellow with NPR's From the Top where he will record and air in April 2022. Christian was a finalist in the International Society of Bassists Age 15-18 Division, was named a National YoungArts Honorable Mention laureate, won third prize in the Eismann Competition in Richardson, third prize in the Philadelphia International Music Festival Concerto Competition, first prize in the Rising Talents of America competition and second prize in the Greater Dallas Youth Orchestra Concerto Competition. Since 2019, Christian has been principal bassist in the Greater Dallas Youth Orchestra (GDYO) and has been a part of the GDYO program since 2013. Christian also performs in the lab orchestra for Miguel

Harth-Bedoya's Conducting Institute. When not playing bass, Christian enjoys working out, playing sports, hanging out with friends, playing Xbox or watching anime.

Honorable Mention and \$500 was awarded to Ella Tran, 16, from Arlington, Texas. Tran played Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3. Ella Tran began taking piano lessons at the age of five and has been a student of Mrs. Marcy McDonald and Dr. Alex McDonald for nine years. She consistently received top prizes at the Dallas Symphonic Festival, the Dallas Piano Solo Competition, Baylor/Waco Piano Competition and the Texas Music Teachers Association state-level division. Ella also won awards for six consecutive years at the Collin County Young Artist Competition, including first prize in the Junior division in 2019 and a grand prize with the opportunity to perform with the Plano Symphony Orchestra in 2022. Equally comfortable as a chamber musician, she was featured as a Rising Star in the 2019 Basically Beethoven Festival at Moody Performance Hall. In 2020, she had a privilege to perform the Beethoven Triple Concerto with the Las Colinas Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Maestro Robert Carter Austin. Ella is currently a junior in the STEM Academy at James Martin High School in Arlington, Texas, and also plays violin in her school symphony orchestra.

Finalists Jacob Choi, viola; Lindsey Kim, violin; Austin Topper, cello and

Danielle Yoon, cello were awarded \$250.

Finalists at the Dallas Symphony's 2022 Lynn Harrell Concerto Competition were selected through recorded submissions that were screened by a committee of DSO musicians and music faculty from area universities. The winners were determined by a panel of judges that included Jun Märkl, world-renowned conductor; Aleksandr Snytkin, DSO Violin I & II; Jolyon Pegis, DSO Associate Principal Cello, Joe Hubach Chair; and Giyeon Yoon, DSO Violin.

Established in 2001 by Harrell, the Lynn Harrell Concerto Competition is open to students ages 8-18 who live or go to school in Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico or Louisiana. The purpose of the competition is to identify and encourage the highest level of musical talent in the South Central United States. Past winners have gone on to study music at such prominent institutions as the Cleveland Institute of Music, the Eastman School of Music, The Juilliard School and the Peabody Institute in Baltimore.

The Dallas Symphony Orchestra gratefully acknowledges Rita Sue & Alan Gold and Itske & Anthony Stern for their endowed gifts in support of the Lynn Harrell Concerto Competition.

Further support for the 2022 Lynn Harrell Competition was provided by the Dallas Symphony Orchestra League, Rebecca Vanyo, Roberta Corbett and Tom Corbett (in memoriam).

NORTHMAN, from Page 9

sorcery and witchery. Bodies float in air, a mysterious seeress foretells the future and wild dogs howl in unison. Yet you never question this extra dimension, even with its Native American-like overtones, because it elevates the storytelling.

This ethereal, spiritual realm counteracts the dark realistic savagery on earth. Violence is power. Instincts are primal. The language is gruff. All that comes across in the battles, interactions, threats, perils and animalistic behavior. Through it all,

Egger pulls excellent performances from his cast, maintains a steady forceful tone and drives the storylines to a cataclysmic ending. Try as you may, you can't take your eyes off the screen.

It's like Hawke, Kidman, Bang, Skarsgård and Taylor-Joy showed up to do

Hamlet at the Old Vic and were kidnapped and cast into this movie instead. Their acting is very theatrical, of the highest standards and permeates their characters, making this searing act/ad/dra epic stick to your gut. But even this impressive quintet must render star billing to Iceland's

beautiful scene-stealing geography. Panoramas of verdant valleys, ash gray volcanos, bright orange lava and white glaciers are so photogenic, it's like they're movie stars.

The brutal, aggressive rage is real. It's a wrath that will propel the aggrieved prince and conniving uncle

to the fiery gates of hell. A futile place where audiences will do the postmortem. Was the legend that spawned Hamlet worthy? Hell yes.

In theaters now.

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

Blacks in Virginia Beach are closing the wealth gap

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

Virginia Beach landed on the top spot of cities where African Americans fare best economically and where Black businesses thrive.

According to the personal finance website Smart Asset, Virginia Beach also has the seventh-highest median Black household income, at roughly \$65,600, and the sixth-highest Black labor force participation rate, at 78.7 percent.

The statistics reflect 2019, the most recent data available.

Grand Prairie, Texas; Aurora, Illinois; Pembroke Pines, Florida; and Mira-



iStockphoto / NNPA

mar, Florida, comprised the other cities in the top 5.

Charlotte, North Carolina; Garland, Texas; Durham, North Carolina; Enterprise, Nevada, and Elk Grove, California, rounded out the top 10.

The report noted the struggles of African Ameri-

cans in homeownership and the overall wealth gap.

"Census data from 2019 shows that the median Black household income is 33 percent lower than the overall median household income.

Stephanie Horan wrote for Smart Asset that the

Black homeownership rate is 22 percentage points lower than the general homeownership rate."

She noted the Federal Reserve's 2019 Survey of Consumer Finances data on wealth accumulation, depicting even starker disparities.

That data places Black families' net worth at 87 percent lower than white families and 33 percent lower than Hispanic families.

For Virginia Beach, Census Bureau data revealed that the 2019 poverty rate for Black residents stood at 10 percent, the fourth-lowest in Smart Asset's study.

More than 5 percent of businesses are Black-owned in the Virginia Beach-Nor-

folk-Newport News metro area, the seventh-highest percentage overall for that metric.

Smart Asset officials reported that preliminary 2020 estimates show that Black Americans have been disproportionately affected by the health impacts of COVID-19 and its corresponding economic effects.

The authors wrote: "The regional economic effects of COVID-19 on Black Americans are difficult to determine due to insufficient localized data, but the available national data paints a grim picture: Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data shows that as of December 2020, the Black unemployment rate was 3.9 and 3.2

percentage points higher than the white and overall unemployment rates, respectively."

The Black labor force participation rate was about 2.0 percentage points lower than both white and overall participation rates.

Horan offered three financial tips for African Americans, including checking if homeownership made sense, opening a retirement account, and considering a financial advisor.

"A financial advisor can help you make smarter financial decisions to control your money better," Horan wrote. "SmartAsset's free tool matches you with financial advisors in your area in five minutes."

Thousands of UAW workers at UC will take to the streets on Tuesday to protest untenable working conditions

(UAW) Academic union organizing is heating up on the West Coast as thousands of UAW-represented workers at the University of California plan to take to the streets to protest rampant workplace abuse, discrimination, insufficient compensation and extreme rent burden. This action will demonstrate the extreme discontent felt across a workforce of 48,000 academic workers who are currently bargaining with the University and demanding union contracts that guarantee a fair workplace. Press is welcome to attend.

"Until recently, I had to live out of my car while

working at UCLA because I couldn't find affordable housing on my Teaching Assistant salary," said Bernard Remollino, a Researcher and Teaching Assistant at UCLA. "More and more academic workers are finding themselves in this situation. I'm taking action with my coworkers because I believe UC has the responsibility to ensure the workers who power its education and research mission aren't struggling to afford basic necessities."

In recent bargaining sessions, UC administrators have attempted to claw back important rights and benefits – and have been intransigent on important

equity measures, including support for fair housing, paid family leave and decent compensation. Even in the face of generationally high inflation, UC is failing to adjust workers' compensation to better align with the cost of living.

In response, UAW workers across the UC system will engage in statewide protests on Tuesday, April 26.

Teaching Assistants, Postdocs, Academic Researchers, and as of last year, Student Researchers, are all represented by UAW, making it the single largest union at the University of California. For Student Researchers, this will

be their first-ever contract, and it comes on the heels of successful campaigns, and long strikes, by graduate workers also organizing with UAW at Harvard and Columbia universities. However, as a ten-campus system plus Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory, the UC campaign is the largest current effort of academic organizing nationwide, and what happens here will be a watershed for all subsequent academic labor organizing.

"UC's hypocrisy and bad policies are holding too many people back," said Tyler Bell, a Postdoc in the Department of Psychiatry at UC San Diego. "Not

only are they refusing to address serious issues, like the fact the vast majority of us are already rent-burdened in the face of record inflation – they are actually trying to go backwards on many hard-fought protections they had previously agreed to. For example, they have proposed sharply increasing our health care costs and they are refusing to make good on a promise to implement childcare subsidies. We have had enough."

On Tuesday, workers at every UC campus will hold actions to protest the University's backwards movement. Click here for times and locations for every ac-

tion.

"We teach classes, grade papers and perform the cutting-edge research that has earned UC its reputation as the best public university in the world and an R1 research institution," said Frantzeska Giginis, a Student Researcher in the Molecular, Cell and Systems Biology Department at UC Riverside. "We are fighting for fairness, for a UC where first-generation scholars do not have to go into extreme debt so that highly-paid administrators can live in publicly-funded mansions."

For more information visit us online at www.FairUCNow.org.

MOSES, from Page 2

ficer had made a good-faith mistake.

"The review found that the probation officer – referred to as Manager Billington – spent about an hour investigating whether Moses was still on probation. Billington came across a note in Moses' file noting that in 2016, she had been placed on supervised pro-

bation for two years. Even though the system said that Moses remained on unsupervised probation, Billington thought this was a mistake. The person who handled the file, he believed, forgot to close out the case when the supervised probation ran out. That's why he ultimately signed Moses' voting cer-

tificate saying her probation had expired in 2018 and she was eligible to vote."

Joe Williams, an administrator in the department of corrections, wrote a letter to a top department official stating that Billington failed to investigate the status of the case adequately.

"He failed to review all of the official documents available through the Shelby county justice portal and

negligently relied on a contact note from a court specialist in 2016," Williams stated, according to The Guardian.

Williams noted that if Billington had looked more thoroughly, he would have found additional documents issued in 2019 that said Moses was on probation.

Williams conceded that it was "tedious" to find some of that information.

"The information that Manager Billington had at the time he signed the Voters Restoration was insufficient to reasonably affirm that an offender was off supervision."

Meanwhile, Moses waited in the lobby of the probation office and "seemed impatient while Billington investigated. However, it does not suggest that Moses bore responsibility for

the mistake," The Guardian reported.

"This really runs contrary to the prosecution's characterization of the incident as Ms. Moses tricking the probation officer," Blair Bowie, an attorney at the Campaign Legal Center.

Moses has declined to speak with reporters but has maintained she believed she had a right to try and register to vote.

New report measures wages in the pandemic labor market

(Economic Policy Institute) A new EPI report finds that the average wage grew 4.4% in the first year of the pandemic and fell 1.7% in the second year.

While the shift may seem dramatic, the numbers are part and parcel of the pandemic labor market that has distorted our picture of wage growth. And one key takeaway from the report is that wage levels remain vastly unequal across the U.S. labor market with disparities among workers

by wage level, gender, and race/ethnicity remaining stark.

The distortion in wages reflects the types of jobs and wages that were lost initially during the pandemic. Because low-wage workers lost their jobs in disproportionate numbers in 2020, the average wage shot up—making it look like we were experiencing historically high wage growth. When many of these workers reentered the workforce in 2021, the av-

erage wage fell.

Over the last year, low-wage workers experienced real wage growth while middle- and high-wage workers did not. But low-wage workers still suffer from grossly inadequate wages.

“Even with the faster wage growth among lower-wage workers in the last year, wage levels remain vastly unequal across the U.S. labor market,” said Elise Gould, senior economist at EPI and co-author of

the report. “Nearly 30 million workers were paid less than \$15 an hour last year. Further, the regression-adjusted gender wage gap hasn’t seen much improvement in 25 years, while the Black-white wage gap has worsened over that time.”

Younger workers, women workers, workers with lower levels of educational attainment, and Black, Hispanic, and Asian American and Pacific Islander workers faced far greater job losses than other groups

during the economy’s pandemic-driven contraction, according to the report. Part-time and nonunion workers, as well as workers in leisure and hospitality industries and service occupations, also faced disproportionately higher job losses.

“While the economy is on track for a return to pre-pandemic labor market conditions by the end of 2022, the pre-pandemic labor market was far from perfect. More needs to be

done to repair the inequalities and disparities that persist in the U.S. labor market,” said Jori Kandra, research assistant at EPI and co-author of the report.

Policymakers should enact labor market policies—such as raising the federal minimum wage and protecting and strengthening workers’ rights to bargain collectively for higher wages and benefits—so that low-wage workers can sustain and build on their recent gains.

Wells Fargo accused of discrimination in lending

By Lauren Victoria Burke
NNPA Contributor

“Last month, it was reported that Wells Fargo approved ONLY 47% of Black homeowners’ mortgage applications compared to 72% of white applicants! We are suing Wells Fargo to demand they CHANGE their practices that are killing Black homeowners opportunities!” Attorney Ben Crump wrote on social media on April 14.

Wells Fargo is the largest bank mortgage lender in the U.S.

Ben Crump, who is mostly known for representing families of victims of police brutality, has now joined a lawsuit against Wells Fargo. The suit alleged the bank has engaged in racial discrimination in their home-lending practices.

Crump has now joined an existing lawsuit filed in February 2022 by Chris Williams. Williams is

claiming that Wells Fargo sought to charge him a higher interest rate than his credit score called for. He is a Black homeowner living in Georgia. He refinanced with another mortgage company in 2019. Two other new plaintiffs also joined the suit.

“My credit score was just under 800 before I applied. They told me my credit score was 100 points less.” Williams told the media regarding his credit history.

“We are deeply disturbed by allegations of discrimination that we believe do not stand up to scrutiny,” Wells Fargo said in a news release on the matter. “These unfounded attacks on Wells Fargo stand in stark contrast to the company’s significant and long-term commitment to closing the minority homeownership gap.”

The lawsuit also alleges that Wells Fargo denies home loans to Black borrowers at a higher rate and

charges higher interest rates to Black borrowers.

On April 11, New York City Mayor Eric Adams and Comptroller Brad Lander announced that the City will no longer deposit money with Wells Fargo and cited the alleged disproportionate denials of mortgages to Black loan

applicants.

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](https://twitter.com/LVBurke).

AGEISM, from Page 7

seem fair. But how fair is it after the Chronicle puts out a sensationalistic story and protects all the naysayers?

That’s just dirty. In the meantime, the scuttlebutt has already begun as to who will replace Feinstein. For what?

There is nothing in the Constitution that makes memory lapses illegal.

What you are seeing is unmistakable, unabashed AGEISM.

Ageism is a form of unfair discrimination and oppression toward older people based on stereotypical views.

It is a form of othering no less virulent than racism or sexism.

Yet society hasn’t quite come to terms with ageism, and it remains a disgust-

ing form of discrimination that we allow to go unchallenged.

In response to the story, Feinstein issued a statement, but declined an interview:

“The last year has been extremely painful and distracting for me, flying back and forth to visit my dying husband who passed just a few weeks ago,” she said. “But there’s no question I’m still serving and delivering for the people of California, and I’ll put my record up against anyone’s.”

The fact is some impatient Democrats want Feinstein’s job, and they’re not ashamed of attempting to push her out this very minute and resorting to ageism.

This, unfortunately, has become standard practice.

I saw it happen before when Rep. Mike Honda, who succeeded Norman Y. Mineta in Congress and served from 2001 to 2017, was pushed out by Ro Khanna.

It’s a pure power grab by the upstarts. But no one ever stops to consider how the Senate actually works.

The more senior you are, the more power your state has. In the Senate, where every state, regardless of size, has two votes each, those two votes backed by seniority are magnified.

Feinstein, who has been in the Senate since 1992, is more powerful for all Californians and its 6 million Asian Americans than a rookie senator with blind ambition.

If there’s a problem with Feinstein, these things should be discussed in

private among party leaders. We are talking about a health issue after all.

Ultimately, Feinstein, who has been a dedicated public servant from the time she was a San Francisco supervisor in the 1970s, deserves the right to decide when she steps down.

Feinstein is owed at least that. If she can do the job and deliver for the people of California, her seniority is a benefit.

Besides, ageism is not a good look in a democracy.

NOTE: I’ve known Feinstein since the 1970s and will talk about this column and other matters on my “Emil Amok’s Takeout” at 2 p. m. PDT. Livestream on Facebook; my YouTube channel; and Twitter. Catch the recordings on www.amok.com.

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U.S. Department of Commerce launches \$45 million 'Build to Scale' funding to strengthen regional innovation hubs and invest in local business startups

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Commerce Department recently announced the opening of the Economic Development Administration's (EDA) FY22 Build to Scale (B2S) program, which is designed to invest in regional economies through scalable business startups.

The Build to Scale program's national competitions will deploy \$45 million to further technology-based economic development initiatives that accelerate high-quality job growth, create more economic opportunities, and support the next generation of industry leading companies. The B2S Notice of Funding Opportunity

(NOFO) was published today, and the deadline to apply for the program is 11:59 p.m. EDT June 13, 2022.

"The 'Build to Scale' program has a proven track record of fueling innovation and tech-based economic development by building strong entrepreneurial ecosystems and providing startups with access to capital," said Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development Alejandra Y. Castillo. "EDA looks forward to reviewing this year's applications and learning more about regional strategies to build equitable economic opportunities that will lead to tomorrow's industry-leading companies."

The FY22 Build to Scale program is comprised of two competitions—the Venture Challenge and the Capital Challenge. The Venture Challenge seeks to support high-growth, technology-centric entrepreneurship to stimulate innovation, increase economic prosperity, and create high-skill, high-wage jobs. The Capital Challenge increases access to entrepreneur-ready, equity-based capital

by providing operational support for early-stage investment funds, angel networks, and investor training programs.

Eligibility is open to cities, counties, states, other political subdivisions of states, and Indian tribes; or entities supported by a state or political subdivision of a state that is one of the following: a nonprofit organization, institution of higher education, public-

private partnership, science or research park, federal lab, venture development organization, economic development organization, or a consortium of any of the aforementioned.

Each challenge has two funding tiers. For the Venture Challenge, grants of up to \$750,000 are available to pilot or adapt new programs, and grants of up to \$2 million are available to scale proven programs.

For the Capital Challenge, grants of up to \$300,000 are available to educate and connect investors, and grants of up to \$750,000 are available to create, scale, and operate equity-based investment funds.

EDA's Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship administers the Build to Scale program, which is authorized under Section 27 of the Stevenson-Wydler Technology Act.

World Bank Group launches new country partnership framework to assist in Ghana

The World Bank Group's (WBG) Board of Executive Directors today discussed a new five-year Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for Ghana for 2022 to 2026. The CPF prioritizes investments in human capital, job creation, economic diversification, building a resilient health system, and fostering a greener and more inclusive society.

Ghana has achieved considerable economic and social progress in the past 30 years. It achieved middle-income status in 2011 because of strong, sustained economic growth, averaging over 5 percent since the early 1990s. This was supported by a stable democracy and driven largely by gold and cocoa exports and the development of substantial oil and gas reserves. It achieved the first Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of halving poverty from 52.7 percent (1993) to 23.4 per-

cent (2016). However, the pace of poverty reduction has slowed in recent years, and inequalities in some areas continue, particularly in some northern areas of the country.

The CPF will support Ghana in its COVID-19 and medium-term development agenda. It is designed around three mutually reinforcing focus areas, namely: Enhancing Conditions for Private Sector Development and Quality Job Creation; Improving Inclusive Service Delivery; and Promoting Resilient and Sustainable Development. Exploiting the opportunities of digital transformation will be a cross-cutting theme. The \$4.5 bn CPF was prepared jointly by the World Bank, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA).

See GHANA, Page 14



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NAN Chapter President

The National Action Network is looking for a President for its upcoming Dallas chapter. This is a volunteer position that requires an activist heart and an interest in civil rights.

The President:

- Presides at meetings and acts as Chairman/Chairwoman of the Executive Committee.
- Appoints all committees not directly elected by the Chapter.
- Between meetings of the Executive Committee and subject to the approval thereof, exercises executive authority on behalf of the Chapter.
- The President shall be an ex-officio member of all committees.
- 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.

The Good, the Bad, and the Grouchy

By James L. Snyder

Have you ever had a week where everything went just perfect? Neither have I.

Every Monday morning, I plan a perfect week, and I try my best to stick to that plan.

My problem is simply, I do not know the meaning of the word "perfect." So I asked The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage once, she looked at me and said with a smile, "Just watch me."

I flashed a smile back at her, knowing exactly what she was saying. I also knew that if I were as perfect as she was, she would not know how perfect she really was. I believe it's part of my responsibility as a husband to show her how perfect she is every day. I hope someday to get a Nobel Peace Prize for this.

My plans are quite simple, I just want to have somewhat of a perfect week. To have a perfect

week, I need to have a perfect plan. To have a perfect plan, I need to have perfect ideas. Thus, I have a great challenge before me.

Recently my week wasn't going very well, and I was getting a little, well, what should I say, grouchy.

Normally I'm never grouchy, so I did not know how to be grouchy until I was at the grocery store and saw the epitome of Mr. Grouchy.

I'm not sure the basis of this guy's grouchiness, but from my point of view, he has practiced this all his life. If there ever was a Mr. Grouchy, it was this guy. At the time, I had a little bit of pity for his wife. But, of course, I didn't know if he was married or not. If he was, she deserves my pity.

Not only could you see his grouchy demeanor, but he followed that up and supported it with words that I cannot repeat in public. Let me just say he was well-versed in French.

My curiosity got the best

of me, and I just wanted to know more about him. I couldn't go up and talk to him, I knew how that would turn out. So, I followed him throughout the store from a distance and watched and listened. That afternoon, I got a Ph.D. in Grouchology.

During these times, stores are not as well-stocked as they used to be. For example, I can't find the cans of cat food I used to get for my cats. They're just not there. And, many other things aren't on the shelves anymore.

Obviously, Mr. Grouchy did not know that the rough times we were going through were affecting our stores.

I didn't know all of the things he was looking for because his French got in the way of understanding what he was saying. Obviously, he couldn't find what he wanted, which fueled his grouchiness.

Soon one of the employees walked by, and Mr. Grouchy caught him and

angrily told him a thing or two, No, make that a dozen, but then I stopped counting. Obviously, Mr. Grouchy knew more about the store than this poor employee. So I would say he was giving the employee a piece of his mind, but he's a sorry person if that was his mind he was giving.

"Is there anything I can do to help you?" The employee asked. After he asked that I'm sure he wished that he had never asked that question.

For the next 10 minutes, Mr. Grouchy lectured the store employee on what he should be doing. I couldn't help but stand in the aisle next to him and just listen to his lecture. I'm sure the store employee learned quite a bit from Mr. Grouchy's lecture.

I want to go back someday and meet up with the store employee and ask him how much he learned from those lectures.

When Mr. Grouchy paused to catch his breath

the store employee said, "Please forgive me, but I have an appointment to go to, and I'm late for it." With that, he hurried away as fast as ever. I think I know what appointment he had and I'll ask him when I see him.

Even after the store employee had departed for his "appointment," Mr. Grouchy continued the lecturing in his outdoor voice.

Then Mr. Grouchy realized that the store employee wasn't there. So he looked around and yelled, "Hey, where are you? Get back here."

I was so tempted to answer that question, and it took every resource I had available to keep from answering.

Finally, he went to the checkout counter and told the cashier how miserable his visit was in the store, while she rang up his purchases.

I wasn't too far behind, and I slowly came up to the same cashier to check out my things. I looked at her,

smiled, and said, "Aren't you glad there are customers like me?" Then she laughed.

As I got in my vehicle to drive home, I realized that my week wasn't quite as crazy as Mr. Grouchy.

Driving home I was reminded of a verse of Scripture. "This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger;" (James 1:19).

Everybody faces moments of anger. The key is not to let those anger moments control your attitude at the time. When I control my tongue everything else is under control,

Dr. James L. Snyder is pastor of the Family of God Fellowship, 1471 Pine Road, Ocala, FL 34472. He lives with his wife in Silver Springs Shores. Call him at 352-687-4240 or e-mail jamesnyder2@att.net. The church web site is www.whatafellowship.com.

GHANA, from Page 13

"The World Bank Group is happy to support Ghana's economic recovery plan. The CPF is aligned with Ghana's Coordinated Program of Economic and Social Development Policies and will support the Government of Ghana in creating a competitive environment for the private sector to flourish and play a greater role in job creation particularly for youth," said Pierre Laporte, World Bank Country Director for Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone. "The World Bank Group, through the CPF, will also support policies and programs that aim to strengthen digital transformation for improved service delivery and productivity, improve governance, and promote greater inclusion, including strengthening women's economic empowerment."

The social and economic

impact of the COVID-19 crisis has been significant. Ghana was one of the earliest countries in Africa to announce social distancing measures, including school closures and cancelling of mass gatherings, complemented by aggressive testing and recently a strong vaccination program. These measures - while saving lives - came at a heavy economic cost in the immediate term. The CPF will address the immediate as well as medium-term implications of the COVID-19 crisis in line with the Ghana Coronavirus Alleviation and Revitalization of Enterprises Support program and lay a path on how the World Bank, IFC, and MIGA, will leverage their relative strengths to partner with Ghana for stronger development outcomes.

"IFC will continue to work closely with the Gov-

ernment of Ghana and the private sector to provide investment and advisory services for expanding access to finance for micro, small, and medium enterprises, enhancing agribusiness growth and productivity, and supporting Ghana's sustainable industrialization for secure jobs," said Kyle Kelhofer, IFC Senior Country Manager for Benin, Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Togo.

"The CPF focuses on improving the investment climate and enacting regulatory reforms. Succeeding in these reforms would be critical for accelerating private sector development," said Merli Baroudi, MIGA's Director of Economics and Sustainability.

The CPF will move towards larger and more cohesive and transformational interventions, potentially across multiple sectors, that align closely to strong government programs and with

greater use of results-based financing, where appropriate. It is designed to be

flexible, especially during its early years of implementation, with an early re-

view of progress to accommodate needed changes for a post COVID-19 recovery.

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A New Model



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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



Samuel McGarrigle / Unsplash

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 proph-

ets just as Samuel said he would. How exciting that must have been. Yet, when Samuel called the entire nation of Israel together to anoint 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.

(Editor's Note: This column originally ran on April 26, 2018.)

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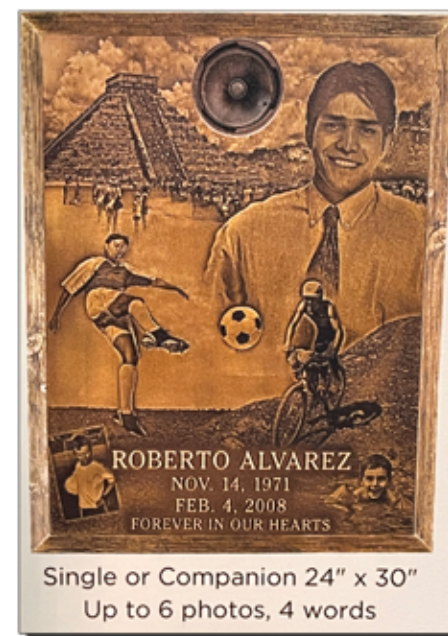
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NDG Book Review: 'Things Past Telling' is a book well-read

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

A life well-lived.

That's what you want them to say when you're gone: that you used up every shred of the time on Earth you were given, that you seized it from corner to corner and never wasted a minute. It's an envious thing, to take advantage of your moments but in "Things Past Telling" by Sheila Williams, it's not an easy thing, either.

When she stayed silent, they thought she couldn't hear, or was addled. But that wasn't so. In her silence, one-hundred-twelve-year-



old Maryam Priscilla Grace was remembering...

As the middle child of her father's second wife, with brothers first and last, she was allowed to go to market with her father, as a son

would. There, she listened to the languages of sellers and buyers, repeated them, and she learned. Her self-taught lessons helped her survive when, at four years old, she was captured by Portuguese men and sold to slavers.

She could smell the island of Jamaica when the ship got near – but before it could arrive, a rogue pirate vessel captained by a regal man the color of night captured the slaver and freed its cargo. She was small and alone and the pirate kept her by his side, making her his multi-tongued helper and a beloved and honorary sister.

The day that he left her with his healer was the day she began to learn how to soothe stomachs, set bones, and birth babies. The Auntie who taught her said that helpful plants were everywhere – knowledge that Maryam needed when the island was raided and she was sent to Savannah, and to a slave market.

As a healer and midwife, Maryam drew a high price and was given her own cabin. She toiled, and was allowed to marry the man she loved but when her first owner's finances fell, he sold her family away south and left her with nothing.

She barely noticed when she, too, was sold.

Until her second owner finally gave her what she wanted.

It may seem, at first, like "Things Past Telling" is a little far-fetched. Pirates? A hundred-twelve-year-old woman?? Ah, but sit a minute with this book and wait until it pulls you in.

Once you let go and allow the story to sweep you away, you'll see how absolutely dazzling it really is. Author Sheila Williams takes readers on a sort of adventure in the beginning, before plunging us into a horror story that's told with

a voice that's mournful but calm and proud. Yes, the things that happen to Maryam are too-tightly packed in a novel of this size, but to remember that they are not entirely implausible is to enjoy a story that takes you from noisy markets in Africa to a roiling ocean to sandy islands to an austere cabin to a sunny back yard. And you never even leave your chair.

This is one of those novels that, once you're used to the storytelling, makes your surroundings melt away. Start it, and "Things Past Telling" will be a book well-read.

California AG joins coalition pushing back on 'pay to pay' mortgage fees

By Antonio Ray Harvey,
California Black Media

Last week, California Attorney General Rob Bonta called on the federal government to outlaw additional fees companies charge homeowners for paying their mortgages.

California is joining 20 other states and the District of Columbia in the effort.

"Some financial service providers charge fees if a consumer decides to use a certain type of payment method, such as making a payment over the telephone, through a website, or through a third-party service," Bonta and other attorneys general wrote in a letter they co-signed addressed to Rohit Chopra, Director, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). The Hawaii Office of Consumer Protection also signed the letter.

"While these type of 'pay to pay' fees are charged by service providers in several different markets, the issues raised by these fees are particularly insidious in the mortgage industry because, unlike most marketplaces, homeowners have no choice in their mortgage servicer," the letter continued.

When homeowners decide to take out a mortgage,

many believe that they are entering into a long-term relationship with a specific financial institution. That is not always the case, according to the California Department of Justice (DOJ).

After origination "many mortgage loans and their servicing rights are sold in secondary markets," and could be "sold many times over the course of the loan," the DOJ states.

"This means that homeowners don't and can't know who will service their mortgage loan and are therefore unable to avoid 'pay to pay' fees by taking their business elsewhere," The DOJ explained.

Bonta said the problem is critical in California because the state is already facing a housing affordability problem.

"As costs of living continue to rise, the last thing Californians need is mortgage servicers taking advantage of this captive market in order to pad their bottom lines," Bonta said. "I urge CFPB to put a stop to these abusive junk fees."

Homeowners and renters in California struggle with the costs of housing costs and taxes. Additional fees companies tack onto payments increase those burdens on consumers in the Golden State, where only

about 31% of households can afford to buy a median-priced home, according to the Public Policy Institute of California.

African American homeowners in California also potentially face increased costs due to documented discriminatory practices common in the homebuying and selling processes.

Last year, Gov. Gavin Newsom signed Assembly Bill (AB) 948 after several reports revealed home appraisers valued homes owned by Blacks and other minorities at much lower prices than ones owned by Whites.

Wells Fargo has come under fire more than once for its discriminatory lending and banking services. According to findings of a Bloomberg News analysis released last month, the global San Francisco-based financial services company rejected 53% of Black homeowners who applied for refinancing loans during the pandemic in 2020. It only rejected 28% of white applicants.

The board of the California-Hawaii State Conference of the NAACP met this weekend to discuss Wells Fargo's record on providing its services to African American customers.

Among the country's ma-

jor lenders, Wells Fargo's gap between Whites and Blacks the company approved for loans was the widest.

According to Zillow's Consumer Housing Trends Report released last year,

Black and other minority renters pay more in application fees and security deposits when renting apartments. They also fill out more rental applications, on average, before finding a place to live than white

renters.

The multi-state coalition's letter says, "There is no uniformity in convenience fees among mortgage servicers. Some charge them and some don't."



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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