



North Dallas Gazette

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Tennessee DA drops multiple cases involving former officers charged in Tyre Nichols' death

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National Correspondent

The district attorney's office in Tennessee has dismissed between 30% and 40% cases linked to the five former officers facing second-degree murder charges in the death of Tyre Nichols.

Shelby County District Attorney Steven Mulroy said his team had examined approximately 100 cases involving the accused officers, while noting the team discovered numerous decisions that could face reversal.

Mulroy's spokesperson, Erica Williams, said charges have already been reduced in approximately 12 other cases involving the ex-Memphis Police officers, in addition to the dismissed cases.

The district attorney forwarded four cases to the U.S. attorney's office for alleged excessive force.

According to Mulroy, the five officers' blatant lack of credibility throughout the charges also were considered in making these decisions.

The brutal beating of Nichols, 29, captured national attention with civil rights advocates and others quickly denouncing the officers' actions.



Tadarrius Bean, Desmond Mills, Emmitt Martin, Justin Smith, and Demetrius Haley are the five officers, who were almost immediately arrested. (Photo via NNPA)

After the release of video of the beating taken from officers' body cameras, national outcry grew louder.

The episode added to an ongoing series of incidents between the police and the Black community, sparking protests and renewing discussions about police brutality and the need for police reform in the United States.

Tadarrius Bean, Desmond Mills, Emmitt Martin, Justin Smith and Demetrius Haley, are the five officers, who were almost immediately arrested.

They have pleaded not guilty to an array of criminal charges, includ-

ing second-degree murder.

Authorities said the officers fatally assaulted Nichols after a routine traffic stop.

The officers were part of the Scorpion crime suppression team, a unit now disbanded since Nichols' death.

While Memphis Police Chief Cerelyn "CJ" Davis dissolved the unit, some members joined other divisions within the department.

The Department of Justice recently launched an investigation into the use of force and arrest practices within the Memphis Police Department.

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People In The News ...



Sha'Carri Richardson



Tyler Perry

NDG Quote of the Week: "If you have no confidence in self, you are twice defeated in the race of life."
— Marcus Garvey

Sha'Carri Richardson

Likely erasing all doubt about her commitment and ability, Sha'Carri Richardson exploded on the outside lane 9 and overcame an early deficit to complete one of the most amazing comebacks in sports.

The flamboyant sprinter won the world championships during an electric 100-meter race in Hungary on Monday, Aug. 21.

The 23-year-old blazed through 100 meters at a career-best 10.65 seconds at the 2023 World Athletic Championships.

She defeated a field that



included star Jamaican sprinters Shericka Jackson and Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, who finished second and third, respectively.

The Associated Press noted that the race featured

four of the eight fastest runners of all time, including Marie-Josée Ta Lou, who finished fourth.

Richardson, an underdog coming in, became the first American since Tori Bowie in 2017, to win the women's 100-meter world championship.

Even more remarkable, Richardson became the first athlete in the event -- on either the mens or womens side -- to win the world championship title after qualifying for the final race on the basis of prelim time. This is why she was forced to race from the unenviable outside lane.

The victory was as satisfying as any athlete could experience, as it comes two years after officials booted Richardson from the Tokyo Olympics for testing positive for marijuana.

After that experience, Richardson vowed to her fans on social media that she would be back in the mix. Her arrival at the international level took slightly longer, but if the reaction of her fans are any indicator, there were no disappointments from her corner.

Immediately after crossing the finish line, Richardson reportedly blew a kiss toward the sky, "cast

her eyes on that beautiful scoreboard, and walked toward the stands in a daze to accept the American flag and congratulations from Fraser-Pryce, Dina Asher-Smith of Britain and others."

"My goal this year is to do what I should have done in these last two years already," Richardson said before the race.

Immediately after winning, Richardson dropped an exclamation point.

"I'm here, I told y'all," she declared. "I'm not back, I'm better."

It has been a few years Sha'Carri Richardson

burned up the high school tracks around the DFW area competing for Dallas Carter. From here she went on to stand out among the runners at LSU.

In a press conference following the competition Richardson was asked what advice she would give to her younger fans who are now following her every move on social media.

"Never give up," Richardson said. "Never allow the media, never allow outsiders, never allow anything but yourself and your faith to define who you are. I would say always fight, no matter what ... fight."

Tyler Perry

Paramount Global has pulled out of a deal to sell BET Media Group to renowned filmmaker Tyler Perry.

According to The Wall Street Journal, Paramount announced that they had ended the bidding process, which would have included VH1 and BET Studios, streamer BET+ and the BET channel —because "a sale wouldn't result in any meaningful deleveraging of its balance sheet."

Paramount Global had received bids ranging from approximately \$2 billion to \$3 billion.



Perry's potential ownership would have made BET Black-owned again after 21 years, while VH1, for the first time, would have boasted an African American owner for the first time.

Earlier this year, Perry's longtime friend Rolanda Watts, proclaimed that he cemented his place in history by acquiring the two major television networks, making him the first African American to do so.

However, others including Roland Martin said the story wasn't true, that a deal had not been reached.

The renowned actor and filmmaker previously expressed optimism about purchasing BET, stating his keen interest if it were a possibility.

Perry, who had already enjoyed tremendous success in collaboration with BET, partnering with his

Tyler Perry Studios banner to create the popular streaming service BET+, was no stranger to the network.

He acknowledged the unexpected nature of the potential acquisition, stating, "I've been there for four years now and had tremendous success... If that is possible, I'm very,

very interested in taking as much of it as I can."

The exact financial details of the deal have not been disclosed, but experts on this sort of transaction have placed a significant value on the acquisition of the two networks.

Since its launch, the BET+ streaming service has experienced remark-

able success.

In 2021 alone, BET+ was responsible for half of the subscribers and nearly all revenue growth for the channel.

The platform features a wide range of original films and series from the extensive BET program

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Tyesha Andrews

WASHINGTON (24-7PressRelease) -- Passionate about helping others, Tyesha Andrews aspired to become involved in law and is today, a family law facilitator for the family division at D.C. Superior Court.

In her role, she assists pro se litigants so they can receive assistance in navigating the D.C. family court process.

Andrews also provides legal information and resources to those in need. Previously, Andrews garnered experience with the D.C. Courts as a courtroom clerk for the probate division from 2013 to 2020



and as a deputy clerk for the family division in the domestic relations branch between 2009 and 2013.

Looking toward the future, Mrs. Andrews aspires to continue elevating her career, as an advocate and possibly a management position. She also aims to

become more involved in real estate and investments to build a wealthy family legacy.

During an earlier stage of her career, Mrs. Andrews was a program assistant for the Mayor's Youth Leadership Institute from 2004 to 2008 and as a correctional officer at the D.C. Department of Corrections between 2008 and 2009.

Mrs. Andrews has been active with numerous organizations, including The Salvation Army Red Shield Center and the Beacon House, in Philadelphia, P.A. as a tutor and in her Advisory Neighborhood

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Sixty years since the March on Washington, economic justice remains a dream

By Charlene Crowell

While the 1963 March on Washington brought more than 200,000 Americans to the nation's capital in a historic call for jobs and economic justice, an event billed as a 'continuation' - not a commemoration will take place August 26 at the Lincoln Memorial. Co-sponsored by the National Action Network and the Drum Major Institute, organizers will focus on continuing the age-old fight for democracy, social justice, and civil rights.

New research released this August shows that despite brief periods of progress, the goals of economic opportunity remain out of reach for much of Black America. The research author argues that the nation needs race-conscious policies that explicitly target the historical and systemic economic inequality that denies many people of color the opportunity to build wealth and economic stability.

Chasing the dream of equity: How policy has shaped economic racial disparities, delves into how public policy and economic conditions have failed to heed the 1963 call for justice. Published by the non-partisan Economic Policy Institute (EPI), the report reveals a disturbing economic landscape despite the enactment of a series of laws intended to bring economic parity for all.

"Many associate the March on Washington with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s iconic 'I Have a Dream' speech," said Adewale A. Maye, policy and research analyst at EPI and author of the report. "What is often forgotten, however, are the marchers' urgent calls

to raise the minimum wage, build affordable housing, and strengthen voters' rights—sweeping reforms that could transform American lives. Although we have made strides in racial equity, there are miles to go before King's dream is a reality."

Among its key findings:

- The typical white family has eight times as much wealth as the typical Black family.

- A typical Black worker is paid 23.4 percent less per hour than a typical white worker, a wider gap than it was in 1973 (22.3 percent).

- Black workers' wages grew only 18.9 percent from 1979 to 2020, when productivity broadly increased 61.7 percent.

- In 2020, 45 percent of Blacks owned their homes, down from 49.7 percent in 1970.

- During the past 50 years, the annual Black unemployment rate has often exceeded 10 percent, while white workers have never seen an annual unemployment rate above that level - even during economic downturns.

These nagging racial economic disparities persist, according to EPI's report, due to a combination of factors including a stagnant minimum wage (last raised in 2009), and systemic factors such as occupational segregation, discrimination in hiring and pay, and inequitable pathways to promotion. In 2022, 14.3 million people - only 10 percent of wage and salary workers - belonged to a union, the lowest percentage on record according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

In particular, the report points out the failures of a trio of federal bills enacted between 1972 and 2014

that were intended to foster diverse and inclusive labor standards; but each fell far short of that goal.

The Equal Opportunity Act of 1972 amended Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to address employment discrimination against Black Americans and other racial minorities. Within its provisions, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) was authorized to take enforcement action against individuals, employers, and labor unions that violated the employment provisions in law. But decades of inadequate funding and resources, along with a shift in the agency's focus away from class action racial discrimination litigation to more narrowly tailored bias cases against individuals, restricted the agency's capacity to pursue valid charges or proactively challenge discriminatory practices.

In 1982, the Job Training Partnership Act was enacted to provide job training and other services to economically marginalized groups to improve employment and earnings, increase educational and occupational skills, and decrease welfare dependency. But even the federal Government Accountability Office documented racial disparities in its implementation. While white participants received both classroom and on-the-job training, Black participants were either given job search assistance or trained for low-wage jobs.

In 2014, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act became an attempt to improve the lives of unemployed and underemployed workers. By targeting education - largely by encouraging completion of

secondary and beginning post-secondary education - participants would gain long-sought economic opportunity and the chance to live free from government assistance. Even so, the Department of Labor reported that Black Americans had the highest participation rates but the lowest earnings of all persons completing the training.

"Think what that means for someone who's trying to afford rent, or a car payment, or student loans or whatever it may be," David Cooper, director of EPI's Economic Analysis and Research Network, noted in a CNBC interview. "That's an enormous difference in that person's quality of life."

To remedy these and other economic ills, the report calls for lawmakers to stop relying solely on race-neutral policies that fail to effectively address problems rooted in racism. Instead, EPI urges race-conscious policies with equity as a clearly defined and measurable policy goal.

"Many of the pressing issues that motivated the March on Washington have yet to be resolved. Most policies enacted since then have offered race-neutral solutions that cannot tackle the enormity of structural racism," states the report. "Policymakers need both targeted and race-conscious policies to address the root issue of racism within U.S. institutions, make scalable investments in eliminating racial inequality, and achieve genuine racial equity."

Charlene Crowell is a senior fellow with the Center for Responsible Lending. She can be reached at Charlene.crowell@responsiblelending.org.

Keep up with the news

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Study highlights a robust coping mechanism for young Black adults

HOUSTON (Newsweek) — Over the past decade, suicide rates have increased by 30% for Black Americans. By contrast, in a similar time frame, data reveals a decrease in suicide trends for white Americans. A new study, led by University of Houston psychology doctoral student Jasmin Brooks and directed by professor of psychology Rheeda Walker, examines the role of mindfulness, a robust coping mechanism and the association between impulsivity and suicidal risk for a sample of emerging Black adults.

Mindfulness, or living in the present, means directing your attention to fully experience the current moment,



Mindfulness, or living in the present, means directing your attention to fully experience the current moment, free from judgments based on the past or anxiety about the future. (Tim Wilson / Unsplash)

free from judgments based on the past or anxiety about the future. It involves training your brain to simply concentrate on your senses and physical actions as you encounter them. In psychological terms, impulsivity is

a predisposition toward rapid, unplanned reactions to internal or external stimuli without regard to the negative consequences of these reactions.

Walker directs the “Culture, Risk, and Resilience

Lab” at the university. She indicated that her research over the last two decades consistently reveals that important psychological buffers can diffuse potential vulnerability to mental health crisis.

“Our current findings support the clinical utility of mindfulness as a potential buffer to the negative consequences of impulsivity for Black Americans,” the researchers report in the journal *Mindfulness*. “Suicide among Black Americans is a complex phenomenon that may be best understood via an analysis of risk factors in tandem with protective factors.”

“Mediation analyses revealed that impulsivity was

directly and indirectly associated with suicide ideation and elevated suicide risk via lower levels of mindfulness,” said Brooks.

Among Black Americans, mindfulness is also associated with a host of favorable health outcomes, including decreased suicidal ideation and depressive symptomatology, lower levels of substance use, lower levels of psychological distress, increased psychological well-being, and adaptive coping strategy selection.

“Ideally, we would live in a society that doesn’t create unnecessary stress or incite mistreatment,” said Walker. “Until that is a reality, a mindful disposition is an important source of resilience.”

While impulsivity is a factor that tends to be associated with suicidal risk, few studies have examined this association or clinically relevant protective factors for Black Americans. Similarly, few studies have examined the role of mindfulness in the context of impulsivity and suicidal risk for Black Americans.

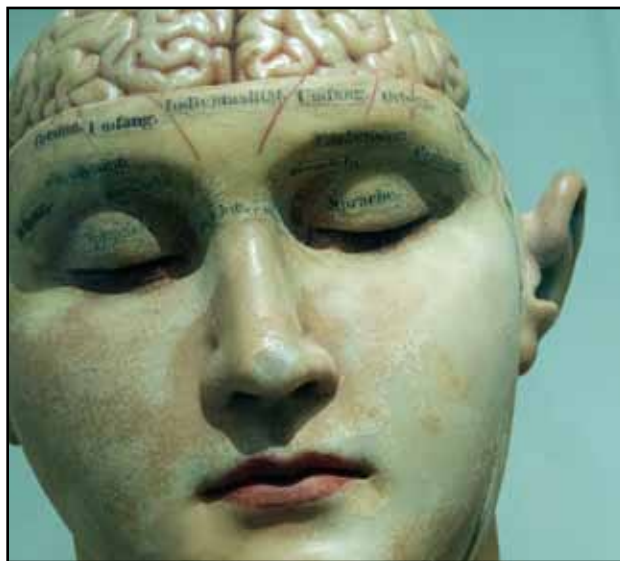
For this research, the first of its kind, the UH team examined data from 332 Black emerging adults with an average age of 22 years. Participants completed an online questionnaire battery that included measures of impulsivity, mindfulness, suicide ideation and elevated suicide risk.

Social isolation linked to lower brain volume in recent study

MINNEAPOLIS (Newsweek) — Older people who have little social contact with others may be more likely to have loss of overall brain volume and in areas of the brain affected by dementia, than people with more frequent social contact, according to a study published in the July 12, 2023, online issue of *Neurology®*, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology.

According to the National Institutes of Health, people need social connection to thrive. As people age, they often spend more time alone, making them potentially more vulnerable to loneliness or isolation, which are associated with health risks, like heart disease, depression, and cognitive decline.

“Social isolation is a growing problem for older adults,” said study author Toshiharu Ninomiya, MD, PhD, of Kyushu University in Fukuoka, Japan. “These results suggest that providing support for people to



David Matos / Unsplash

help them start and maintain their connections to others may be beneficial for preventing brain atrophy and the development of dementia.”

The study involved 8,896 people with an average age of 73 who did not have dementia. They had MRI brain scans and health exams. To determine social contact, people were asked one question: How often are you in contact with relatives or friends who do not live with you (e.g., meeting or talking on the phone)?

The choices for answering were every day, several times a week, several times a month and seldom.

The people with the lowest amount of social contact had overall brain volume that was significantly lower than those with the most social contact. The total brain volume, or the sum of white and grey matter, as a percentage of the total intracranial volume, or the volume within the cranium, including the brain, meninges, and cerebrospinal fluid, was 67.3% in the lowest

contact group compared to 67.8% in the highest contact group. They also had lower volumes in areas of the brain such as the hippocampus and amygdala that play a role in memory and are affected by dementia.

The researchers took into account other factors that could affect brain volume, such as age, diabetes, smoking and exercise.

The socially isolated people also had more small areas of damage in the brain, called white matter lesions, than the people with frequent social contact. The percentage of intracranial volume made up of white matter lesions was 0.30 for the socially isolated group, compared to 0.26 for the most socially connected group.

The researchers found that symptoms of depression partly explained the relationship between social isolation and brain volumes. However, symptoms of depression accounted for only 15% to 29% of the association.

“While this study is a snapshot in time and does not determine that social isolation causes brain atrophy, some studies have shown that exposing older people to socially stimulating groups stopped or even reversed declines in brain volume and improved thinking and memory skills, so it’s possible that interventions to improve people’s social isolation could prevent brain volume loss and the dementia that often follows,” Ninomiya said.

Since the study involved only older Japanese people, the findings may not be generalizable to people of other ethnicities and younger people, and the study does not prove that social isolation causes brain shrinkage; it only shows an association.

The study was supported by the Japan Agency for Medical Research and Development and Suntory Holdings Limited.

Learn more about brain health at BrainandLife.org.

org, home of the American Academy of Neurology’s free patient and caregiver magazine focused on the intersection of neurologic disease and brain health. Follow *Brain & Life®* on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

The American Academy of Neurology is the world’s largest association of neurologists and neuroscience professionals, with over 40,000 members. The AAN is dedicated to promoting the highest quality patient-centered neurologic care. A neurologist is a doctor with specialized training in diagnosing, treating and managing disorders of the brain and nervous system such as Alzheimer’s disease, stroke, migraine, multiple sclerosis, concussion, Parkinson’s disease and epilepsy.

For more information about the American Academy of Neurology, visit AAN.com or find us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube.



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Oklahoma court revives Tulsa lawsuit to benefit race massacre survivors

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

The Oklahoma Supreme Court has agreed to hear an appeal challenging the dismissal of a lawsuit to secure reparations for the last three remaining survivors of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre.

The decision comes after the lower state court dismissed the case in July, prompting the survivors to take the matter to the state's highest judicial authority.

The attorney representing the survivors said his clients are pleased with the Oklahoma Supreme Court's decision.

Lessie Benningfield Randle (108 years old), Viola Fletcher (109 years old), and her brother Hughes Van Ellis (102 years old) have filed a lawsuit against the city of Tulsa. (Photo via NNPA)



Lessie Benningfield Randle (108 years old), Viola Fletcher (109 years old), and her brother Hughes Van Ellis (102 years old) have filed a lawsuit against the city of Tulsa. (Photo via NNPA)

and her brother Hughes Van Ellis (102 years old) have filed a lawsuit against the city of Tulsa.

The lone survivors are seeking reparations for the ongoing difficulties their families experienced after the tragic 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre.

The trio resided in Tulsa's Greenwood neighborhood, which was decimated during the racially motivated massacre.

Their lawsuit seeks relief for the damage inflicted during the massacre, labeling it a "public nuisance." The survivors also seek to

recover unjust enrichment gained through the exploitation of the tragic event.

Last month, Judge Caroline Wall dismissed the case with prejudice based on the city's argument that it should not be held liable. City officials contended that a mere historical association does not grant the right to seek compensation from any project connected to the Tulsa Race Massacre.

The survivors' legal team argued that Judge Wall's ruling imposed an unjust and impractical requirement on parties alleging public nuisance claims.

"If this truly is a nation of laws and a state based on the law, then my clients, the last known survivors of the massacre should be able to go to court and have a court

of law determine what occurred," asserted Damario Solomon-Simmons, a national civil rights attorney and founder of Justice for Greenwood.

Solomon-Simmons stressed the importance of survivors being able to bring their case to court to evaluate the harm and address the problems caused by the widespread destruction.

The survivors' lawyers argued that the District Court's ruling requires too much detail in requesting solutions for public nuisance claims, even before the legal proceedings are complete. This requirement, they argued, is unsupported by Oklahoma's notice pleading code or legal precedent.

The lawyers also said that the District Court allowed the city to break a promise made in open court. In that promise, city officials agreed not to file new motions to dismiss the survivors' claims about unjust enrichment. However, the city filed another motion to dismiss, which the District Court erroneously granted.

"This is a fight for righteous justice and redress. It's not about anything other than advancing this case according to the law as it is written," Solomon-Simmons emphasized.

He called upon the Supreme Court to meticulously review the law and swiftly overturn Wall's erroneous decision to dismiss the case.

Dallas selected to partner with Guatemala City in Cities Forward program

The City of Dallas is thrilled to announce that our community is one of the 24 cities selected to participate in the Cities Forward program. Launched at the Cities Summit of the Americas, this program is dedicated to assisting Latin America, the Caribbean, and U.S. cities, to create sustainable, inclusive, and resilient futures through project consultation, co-design, and knowledge sharing. In the initiative, Dallas will be paired with Guatemala City in Guatemala.

A Dallas spokesperson expressed excitement about the project and the opportunity to connect with the other cities involved in the initiative. With 129 applications from cities across the country competing for just 24 spots, the City is proud to participate in the program focused on urban sustainability and inclusion and to share its experiences

and solutions with other cities at the final phase of the program in 2025 during the Cities Forward Academy. The City looks forward to working closely with Guatemala City to build equitable and inclusive economic opportunities, to strengthen sustainability, and to promote a healthy environment for all.

"We recognize that a key element of successful plan implementation relies on peer-to-peer learning, technical assistance and strengthened connections with cities across the globe," said, T.C. Broadnax, Dallas City Manager. "Being paired with Guatemala City, Guatemala is a unique opportunity to dive deep into the critical challenges we face and find solutions together."

ICLEI USA Executive Director Angie Fyfe stated, "We are thrilled to collaborate with these cities and

tap into their ingenuity and creativity. By bringing together local expertise and global perspectives, we can craft innovative, inclusive sustainable solutions that will have a lasting impact across the world."

The overwhelming level of interest serves as a powerful testament to joint efforts to foster equitable and inclusive sustainable urban development, shared Fyfe. Yet, the collaborative journey has only just begun, she said.

Other cities honored in this progressive initiative include Austin, who will be working with Mérida, México, Philadelphia, who is to partner with Ambato, Ecuador, and Baltimore, who will collaborate with Cali, Colombia. At the same time Denver is paired with Cartagena, Colombia, Hawaii County will work with Fortaleza, Brazil, and Coral Springs will partner

with Freeport, Bahamas. Meanwhile, Dubuque, Iowa will work with Hermosillo, México, and Stockton, California will collaborate with Manaus, Brazil. Concurrently, Hoboken, New Jersey will be paired with Montego Bay, as Evanston, Illinois works together with Renca Chile, and Chataanooga joins forces with Rosario Argentina. These cities will work together across the globe to come up with worldwide solutions

that are sustainable, inclusive, and resilient.

U.S., Latin American and Caribbean cities will be grouped thematically for efficient collaboration on systemic change approaches, sharing expertise and efforts, guided by subject matter experts under the following thematic groups (subject to change), which include Implementation of District or Neighborhood Level Plans 2; Water Corridor based Green In-

frastructure with Climate Adaptation; Land Based Green Infrastructure, and Prioritizing Low-Income Populations and Areas.

The Cities Forward project is a collaborative work involving the U.S. Department of State, ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability, Resilient Cities Catalyst, and the Institute of the Americas.

For more information, visit <https://icleiusa.org/cities-forward>

PERRY, from Page 2

library, captivating audiences with diverse and engaging content.

The acquisition of BET and VH1 would have marked a significant milestone in the representation

and ownership of the entertainment industry.

Perry's success as an African American entrepreneur and his commitment to showcasing diverse stories and voices have paved

the way for increased opportunities and inclusivity in the media landscape.

The Madea star currently owns a minority stake in BET and also produces a large portion of the programming available on BET and BET+.

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Arkansas Education Dept. withdraws credit for AP African American studies

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

The Arkansas Education Department has opted to strip course credit from the Advanced Placement (AP) African American Studies course, just a few months after Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders inked legislative measures curbing the scope of public-school educators' pedagogical offerings.

The AP African American Studies course, a beacon of educational diversity and cultural enlightenment, will not be eligible for early college credit during the upcoming school year.

"The department encourages the teaching of all American history and supports rigorous courses not based on opinions or indoctrination," Kimberly Mundell, the Education Department's communications



As several states undertake concerted efforts to circumscribe boundaries of what educators can impart concerning race, gender, and sexuality, Arkansas emerges as a new focal point in the ongoing dialogue. (Giammarco Boscaro / Unsplash)

director, said in a statement.

"Arkansas law contains provisions regarding prohibited topics," Mundell told local station KHBS, referring to state education restrictions.

"Without clarity, we cannot approve a pilot that may unintentionally put a teacher at risk of violating Arkansas law."

As several states under-

take concerted efforts to circumscribe the boundaries of what educators can impart concerning race, gender, and sexuality, Arkansas has emerged as a new focal point in this ongoing dialogue.

NBC News reported that Sanders had earlier championed limits on education in the state.

The outlet noted that she

signed the LEARNS Act into law in March, restricting classroom lessons about gender identity and sexual orientation.

In January, the Republican governor signed an executive order banning "indoctrination and critical race theory" in schools.

The assault on critical race theory, which isn't taught in grade schools, has been among the most controversial GOP initiatives across the country.

In Florida, Gov. Ron DeSantis spearheaded initiatives to exert an overarching influence over academic viewpoints and curricula.

His HB 999, says that all colleges and universities must not spend money on education programs or other things that support diversity, equity, and inclusion, has caused consternation throughout the academic community, epitomizing

an audacious stride toward dictating the contours of education.

"This bill is a road map for wrecking one of our great state systems of higher education," University of Michigan Law Professor Julian Davis Mortenson tweeted.

The bill eliminates Women's and Gender Studies as a major or minor at state colleges and universities.

It dictates that there can't be a major or minor "based on the Critical Race Theory belief system."

According to the bill's text, the university president or board would do all faculty hiring. It asserts that they "may not delegate" any aspect of any hiring decision or hiring authority to any group or faculty, however constituted.

Further, the bill asserts that they are "not required to consider the recommen-

dations or opinions of faculty."

Jeremy C. Young, Pen America's senior manager of Free Expression and Education, called the bill "terrifying."

Pen America is a non-profit group that protects and promotes free speech worldwide by promoting literature and human rights.

"Florida HB 999 would enact the most Draconian and censorious restrictions on higher education in the history of this country," Young stated.

"The bill would make tenure and faculty hiring committees meaningless, ban diversity statements, and centralize control of core curricula and mission statements in the hands of political appointees," Young said.

"Unexpectedly, it would also ban gender studies majors."

How to navigate AI and social media in education

By Christine Greenhow

Aug. 14, 2023, EAST LANSING, (Newswire) – With AI-powered technologies like ChatGPT and social media increasingly making their way into our education, workplaces, and personal lives, many teachers, parents and other stakeholders have questions. These technologies pose both possibilities and pitfalls for teaching and learning, and it is important to evaluate their value as teaching aides as well as their risks. Here are some things to consider for the upcoming school year.

What are some examples of how AI and social media can assist education and learning? AI, like ChatGPT, can help teachers personalize learning by producing multiple examples of concepts to help individualize explanations for different learning styles or students at various levels. It can also assist with evaluation by generating short formative assessments, like a quiz on a news article or help evaluate students' writing. Students can use AI to tackle writer's block and get con-

structive feedback on their writing, based on elements of style.

Over a decade of research revealed that social media can enhance interactions between students, amongst students and teachers, and with people and resources outside the classroom. TikTok, YouTube and other social media can be a boon for teachers looking for just-in-time lessons, resources, emotional support, and gateways to professional learning opportunities beyond their local school community.

What are some pitfalls associated with AI in educational spaces? To generate quality outputs, AI requires a human collaborator with enough expertise to check for inaccuracies, hallucinations, or made-up information. This, or direct the AI to use information from trusted sources like published, peer-reviewed research, specific data and credible websites.

Perhaps most importantly, technologies like ChatGPT and social media are powered by algorithms and machine learning that introduce ethical challenges

in educational settings. The researchers identified four key areas that teachers and parents need to consider when using these technologies in the classroom: data privacy, surveillance, autonomy, and algorithmic bias and discrimination.

In short, it is critical to figure out the best ways

to use these teaching and learning tools, lest they use us.

Christine Greenhow is a professor of educational psychology and educational technology in Michigan State University's College of Education. Greenhow is an expert on learning in social media contexts

with the goal of improving theory, practice and policy. She shares insights on how artificial intelligence, or AI, is impacting social media in the education space.

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The chapter understands

the importance of supporting St. Jude Research Hospital, for it helps with research to cure cancer and other debilitating illnesses for our children. Our donations also go to support the families, for they never receive a bill for treatment, travel, housing, or food.

St. Jude also shares its discoveries with the world.

So, supporting St. Jude is a win-win-win for everyone!

We look forward to participating in the 2024 Campaign!

Bro. Horace M. Satisfield, St. Jude Committee Chair.

Please consider getting involved. Donations of any amount would be appreciated.



Alpha Iota Iota Retreat, 2023 (Courtesy photo)

Mesquite, MISD, and Balch Springs create leadership program for residents

MESQUITE – The City of Mesquite and Mesquite Independent School District have collaborated with the City of Balch Springs to form a leadership development program for citizens called Project LEAD.

Program organizers are

looking for motivated residents who are interested in learning about leadership or growing as a civic leader, while contributing to the growth of their cities and their school districts.

"The health of our communities and schools depends on residents being

informed and engaged," said Cliff Keheley, Mesquite City Manager. "Through Project LEAD, participants will develop personal leadership skills as well as build connections with civic leaders."

Those selected to participate in Project LEAD

will commit to attending four sessions. Classes will meet 6:30 - 8 p.m. Oct. 17, 2023, Nov. 7, 2023, Dec. 5, 2023, and Jan. 16, 2024.

Cohort members will learn leadership skills and keys to working with City and school district officials. Project LEAD

is designed to encourage attendees to serve on boards, commissions and organizations within their city and school districts, as well as to develop future elected officials.

More specific information about the required sessions, including meeting

locations, will be shared with cohort members after the group is set.

Interested citizens can apply from Aug. 28, 2023, to Sep. 15, 2023. Space is limited. To apply and learn more, visit www.cityofmesquite.com/projectlead.

Butterfly Ball to celebrate Keep Mesquite Beautiful's 35th anniversary

MESQUITE – This fall, Keep Mesquite Beautiful (KMB) is marking 35 years of inspiring residents to beautify the City of Mesquite. To celebrate, KMB is hosting its Butterfly Ball, a fund-raising gala, to be held at 6 p.m. on Saturday, September 16, at the Mesquite Convention Center.

The event will feature a reception, dinner and auction with live music and dancing.

KMB Executive Director Jonathan Chitty said the gala was so named due to Mesquite's relationship with the iconic, winged creatures. Home to the Paschall Park Butterfly Trail,

a certified Monarch Waystation named by Monarchwatch.org and a Certified Wildlife Habitat named by the National Wildlife Federation. Mesquite also participates in the Mayor's Monarch Pledge program and recently hosted its first Monarch Fest, held in July.

"The butterfly is an inspi-

ration symbol for KMB," he said. "Butterflies teach us that beauty evolves and

has to be nurtured. It's a process. KMB is proud to have been making Mesquite

a more beautiful place for

See BALL, Page 13



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Mayor's Working Group for Federal Infrastructure Investment formed

DALLAS — Dallas Mayor Eric L. Johnson recently announced he is creating the Mayor's Working Group for Federal Infrastructure Investment, and he appointed Alan Cohen, CEO of the Child Poverty Action Lab (CPAL), to lead it.

The federal government allocated nearly \$2 trillion for infrastructure investment via the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the CHIPS and Science Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act. Through this federal legislation, approximately \$40 billion in formula funds is allocated for Texas communities and \$980 billion in competitive grants is allocated for local and state governments, for-profit entities, and non-profit entities.

"The Mayor's Working Group for Federal Infrastructure will position Dallas to win an unprecedented number of competitive federal grants and transform the future of our city," Mayor Johnson said. "Dallas must



The mayor said the working group will equip Dallas with a 'competitive advantage to win' nearly \$2 trillion in available federal funding. (Koushik Beeram / Unsplash)

capitalize on this once-in-a-generation opportunity to make significant investments in our city's infrastructure, create high-wage jobs, upskill our workforce, and catalyze economic growth."

As part of the 2023 Community Survey conducted by the ETC Institute, the majority of Dallas residents surveyed ranked infrastructure maintenance among their top concerns. Mayor Johnson emphasized that the working group's mission addresses this concern and

also complements his Administration's efforts to provide meaningful tax relief to Dallas residents.

"Maximizing the amount of federal dollars that we bring home to Dallas will allow us to invest more in our city's infrastructure and relieve the burden on our local taxpayers," he added. "This opportunity is critical to consider now as we work to lower our city's tax rate while also delivering essential city services and making capital improvements through the city's FY

2023-24 Budget and 2024 Capital Bond Program."

Through his work at CPAL, Cohen has estab-

lished strong relationships across government agencies, earned the respect of corporate leaders, and part-

nered with community organizations. In August 2019,

See MAYOR, Page 12

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With the new law, 4 out of 5 customers can find a health plan for \$10 or less per month with financial help. These quality plans cover doctor visits, prescription drugs, emergency care and more.

Dallas Black Dance Theatre announces new season, 'Illumination'

Dallas Black Dance Theatre (DBDT) announces its 2023/2024 season with a program that includes over twenty works and four world premieres. The company continues to push boundaries and provide audiences with unforgettable experiences. All programs are offered in-person and live stream, continuing the hybrid model created in 2020, which has enabled DBDT to serve audiences in over 43 countries and 41 states.

Dallas Black Dance Theatre has been at the forefront of contemporary modern dance for more than four decades. In its 47th season, while showcasing DBDT's commitment to exceptional skill and innovation, DBDT performances will explore the concepts of connection, energy and the power of collective expression, in a season themed "Illumination."

When asked to describe the season, DBDT Artistic



Season includes over 20 works and four world premieres with in-person and live streaming options available. Elijah W. Lancaster and Terrell Rogers (Courtesy photo)

Director Melissa M. Young responded, "Have you ever wondered what that indescribable feeling inside of you is when you watch dance? It's the illumination and connectivity of your senses falling into alignment, all at once."

Be transported to the heart of Africa at DBDT's 18th annual "DanceAfrica" festival with performances that will leave the heart racing to the beat of drums,

while paying homage to the past, present, and future of African heritage and in the beauty of its shared traditions. Held Oct. 6-7, 2023 at Moody Performance Hall, with DanceAfrica Festival & Marketplace on October 7, 2023. Presenting Sponsor is PNC Bank.

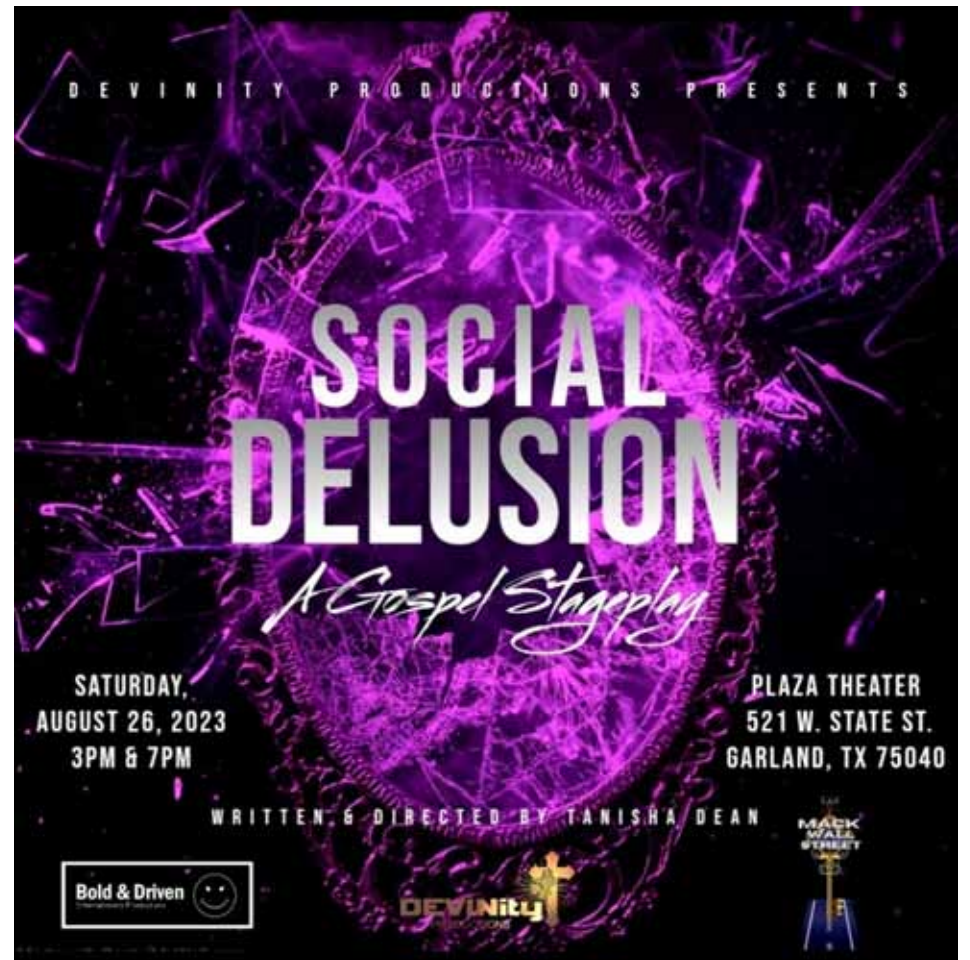
On October 7, explore the sights and sounds of Africa as Klyde Warren Park transforms to host a free outdoor festival and marketplace,

featuring an array of art, live dance, music and local vendors for the family. From

10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Klyde Warren Park, 2012 Woodall Rodgers Fwy.,

Dallas 75201 with present-

See DBDT, Page 12



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NDG Book Review: 'Sipping Dom Perignon Through a Straw'

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

You really get around. You're here, you're there, at all the best parties and all the biggest events. It seems like everyone knows you, too, and you call them all "friend." You're a mover and a shaker and you sure do get around – even if, as in the new book "Sipping Dom Perignon Through a Straw" by Eddie Ndopu, it's on four wheels.

He almost let it go.

In the days after receiving an acceptance letter from "the oldest university in the English-speaking world," Eddie Ndopu was stunned. The scholarship he'd land-



ed from Oxford paid for his classes and room and board. He'd also get a stipend but the scholarship didn't include one essential thing: funds for his "disability-related needs."

Diagnosed at age two

with spinal muscular atrophy, Ndopu was not expected to live beyond age five, but he defied the odds. Now his body required a wheelchair to get around, and help with his personal hygiene, bedtime, dressing, eating and drinking, and other day-to-day things he couldn't do himself. Not only was Oxford discloding money for that, but his regular caregiver, Lucky, was denied a visa provision.

That ultimately turned out for the better. Ndopu was in love with Lucky, who said he'd never be with another man but he suddenly was. Lucky's insincere vows broke Ndopu's

heart and gave him impetus to seize the Oxford offer. Things could change. He'd figure it out.

He said yes, and began searching for a new caregiver who'd bring him from Johannesburg to London and stay to help – but before he even got to Oxford, he was passed between two people, one of whom told him that England had laws by which caretakers had to abide. Caretaker Four decided the job wasn't for him. "Five" was homophobic. "Six" embarrassed Ndopu. "Seven" had family issues to tend to. And then the final blow arrived: a £66,000 bill (around \$84,000 U.S.) that

Oxford University wanted for their help...

"Sipping Dom Perignon Through a Straw" is really quite the complexity.

Author Eddie Ndopu has a lot to be proud of – his humanitarian work and activism on behalf of the disabled, his education, and his dogged wall-busting, to start – but only a fraction of this book is about those things. The rest is largely a good long rant about how a major institution colossally dropped the metaphorical ball, and about the individuals who disappointed Ndopu in ways large and small while time he was studying there. In that,

Ndupo expresses outrage – righteous and right, when he's dismissed, denigrated, or lessened – but others are not always given that grace, and seem to be dismissed and judged. Complex, see? – and conflicting.

Though readers will absolutely note the indignation and unfairness of what Ndopu endured, and may be compelled to act, don't look for a lot of joy in accomplishment inside this tale.

Instead, it's an assertive, loud call for change at every level, and you should consider it as such. You'll like "Sipping Dom Perignon Through a Straw" if you can get around that.



Cast of 'Gran Turismo' (Photo via NNPA)

Film Review: 'Gran Turismo' speeds onto the screen

By Dwight Brown
NNPA Film Critic

(**) Vroom. Vroom. Zoom. In his bedroom, he's a helluva race-car driver. On the racetrack, he's even better. That's according to this very engaging bio/spo/dra.

There's a whole generation who know little about the outside world and more about the virtual one in their

rooms. Nagging parents try to coax them out. Society looks down their nose. But for many adolescents, some now young adults, they've created their own universe. A community bound by a love for competitive, simu-

lated games. This is their glory story.

In Cardiff, Wales, Jann Mardenborough (Archie Madekwe, "Midsommar") is a console-gamer who stays glued to a seat in his bedroom. He's addicted to

Gran Turismo, a car racing simulator that pulls him into the world of fast autos, sharp turns and heated online competition.

His dad Steve (Dji-

See FILM, Page 13

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Wells Fargo launches Down Payment Grant program to help bridge homeownership gap

DES MOINES — Wells Fargo Home Lending last week announced it will offer \$10,000 Homebuyer Access grants to apply toward down payments for eligible homebuyers who currently live in or are purchasing homes in certain underserved communities in eight metropolitan areas. This offering, under the company's Special Purpose Credit Program (SPCP), adds another key component to Wells Fargo's efforts to help drive economic growth, sustainable homeownership, and neighborhood stability in minority communities.

"Homeownership is central to building wealth but has been out of reach for many minority families as a result of systemic inequalities in housing and finance," said Kevin Reen, head of Wells Fargo Home Lending. "One of the big-

gest barriers to achieving homeownership is coming up with the down payment. We're proud to make this dream a reality for families through our new \$10,000 Homebuyer Access grant," said Reen.

The Homebuyer Access grants are available to homebuyers who are purchasing or who currently live in homes in Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, Dallas-Ft. Worth-Arlington, Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV, Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Alpharetta, Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, and New York-Newark-Jersey City.

Homebuyer Access grants will be available to homebuyers who earn a combined 120% or less of the area median income in

the county where the property is located. The grant funds can only be used toward the down payment on a Wells Fargo fixed-rate conventional loan secured by a property that will be the purchaser's primary residence. Homebuyers who are eligible for the Homebuyer Access grant can combine the grant with many other programs for which they may qualify, including Wells Fargo's Dream. Plan. Home.SM closing cost credit and/or mortgage. As a result, homebuyers who qualify for both a Homebuyer Access grant and the closing cost credit could receive up to \$15,000 from Wells Fargo to help them purchase their home.

Potential homebuyers looking to purchase a home in any of the eight metropolitan areas and those who currently live in those

areas can find out more about the program, including how to contact a local Wells Fargo Home Lending office in their area, by clicking <https://wellsfargo.com/homegrant> or calling 866-327-6414.

The Homebuyer Access grant builds on an SPCP initiative Wells Fargo announced in April 2022. That SPCP initially focused on helping eligible Black homeowners whose mortgages are serviced by Wells Fargo lower their interest rates and reduce their monthly mortgage payments. Through that program, Wells Fargo subsidized the rate and covered one-time expenses—such as non-recurring closing costs or the VA funding fee—associated with the program. The program has helped more than 3,200 customers who previously

hadn't taken advantage of the low-rate environment to reduce their interest rates.

Beyond the SPCP, the company strives to increase home lending to traditionally underserved communities by removing impediments to home ownership for communities of color and creating a more inclusive housing system.

Areas of focus include:

- Investing an additional \$100 million to advance racial equity in homeownership, including strategic partnerships with non-profit organizations and community-focused engagements.

- Deploying additional home mortgage consultants in local minority communities. We will fo-

See GAP, Page 12

BALL, from Page 7

35 years. The Butterfly Ball is a community celebration of this heritage as well as our excitement for the future."

Throughout the year, KMB hosts a variety of events and projects to engage and educate residents to recycle, reduce litter and beautify Mesquite, including the upcoming Trash Bash on Sept. 30, during which community members come together to clean up the City. Other important

events this fall for KMB include Mesquite Recycles Day on Nov. 4 and the Recycled Fashion Show on Nov. 11 at Town East Mall.

One of KMB's signature projects is the Adopt-a-Spot program, through which families, neighborhood associations, businesses, churches, schools, and other organizations can adopt a location in town for two years. Signage with the adopting group's name is installed and the group

provides six clean-ups per year with supplies provided by KMB.

About 20 organizations have adopted various locations across the City.

Tickets start at \$75 and will be sold until Sept. 2. Tables and sponsorships are available. To purchase tickets and for more information about Mesquite's Butterfly Ball, visit www.cityofmesquite.com/ButterflyBall. To learn more about KMB's programs and events, visit www.keepmesquitebeautiful.org.

NICHOLS, from Page 1

Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke from the Civil Rights Division noted that even in a predominantly Black city like Memphis, there appears to be a potential disparity in traffic enforcement, disproportionately affecting Black drivers.

The Justice Department initiated a separate review in March, focusing on use-of-force policies, de-escalation

strategies, and specialized units within the Memphis Police Department.

Federal investigators are now delving into the specifics of Nichols' arrest and subsequent death. Nichols' mother sued the city and its police chief because of her son's death.

"I think the Tyre Nichols case harmed MPD's credibility," Mulroy told reporters.

"I think the DOJ investigation is going to help with that. Either they're going to find problems and then they'll give solutions to them, or they don't find problems and that'll be good.

"I don't see the existence of the DOJ investigation as being a threat to the credibility that potential jurors would give to MPD testimony. If anything, I see it as a cure for any such problem."

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State extends Texas Utility Help program providing financial assistance

The State of Texas is providing financial assistance for utility bills to qualified, low-income homeowners and renters through the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) and the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). The Texas Utility Help program, initially set to close September 30, has been extended to Dec. 29, 2023.



Eligible expenses include electricity, gas, propane, water and wastewater

water service, avoid disconnection or to pay a current or future bill.

Customers who meet the income criteria and other eligibility requirements can apply for bill payment assistance grants through texasutilityhelp.com or by calling (855) 566-2057, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Assistance is available in multiple languages.

Dallas Water Utilities (DWU) partnered with the State of Texas and Dallas County on the programs administered by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA).

Dallas Water Utilities (DWU) continues to encourage customers to call DWU Customer Service at 214-651-1441 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m.

to 5 p.m. to set up a payment plan to avoid late fees and water disconnection. Staff is available to assist DWU customers with developing a payment plan that fits their budget.

The agency's goal is to help customers to maintain this essential service and help in any way possible during this period of hot temperatures and low precipitation.

MAYOR, from Page 8

Mayor Johnson appointed Cohen to lead the Mayor's Task Force on Safe Communities.

"Unlocking federal funding will require targeted and coordinated action at the local level," Mayor Johnson said. "Alan Cohen

is the ideal professional to coalesce leaders to develop a clear go-forward strategy that considers Dallas' priority infrastructure needs."

Cohen thanked Mayor Johnson for his leadership on this issue and said, "Local communities have an

unprecedented opportunity with the upcoming surge in federal funding for infrastructure. It is vital that Dallas meets the moment and prepares to compete for our chance to build a stronger, more inclusive city. I applaud Mayor Johnson for seeing the enormity of this opportunity and positioning

Dallas for action now."

Cohen will identify up to eight members to serve on the working group. Among other responsibilities, the working group will identify and prioritize Dallas' infrastructure needs; engage with appropriate local, state, for-profit, non-profit, and community stakeholders;

leverage data to establish clear goals, prioritize infrastructure projects eligible for federal funding opportunities, and monitor progress toward achieving the established goals; and form tactical go-forward plans and coalitions of stakeholders dedicated to aggressively pursuing priority federal

funding opportunities.

"The stakes for cities like Dallas are high," Mayor Johnson added. "The Mayor's Working Group for Federal Infrastructure will equip Dallas with a competitive advantage to win coveted federal dollars that will benefit Dallas residents for decades to come."

GAP, from Page 11

cus on investing in local staffing and hiring home mortgage consultants who reflect the communities we serve. Hiring is underway in several communities, including Dallas, Philadel-

phia and New York.

- Established Wealth Opportunities Restored through Homeownership, or WORTH, a \$60 million national effort by the Wells Fargo Foundation to

address systematic barriers to homeownership for people of color. Nationally, WORTH aims to help 40,000 new homeowners of color in eight markets by the end of 2025.

- Announced expansion of "Dream. Plan. Home.,"

wherein closing cost credits provide borrowers with an income at or below 80% of area median income for the property's neighborhood. This, allows up to \$5,000 to use toward closing costs. The credit is available in 18 metropol-

itan areas.

- Announced Growing Diverse Housing Developers, a \$40 million grant initiative focused on expanding the growth and success of real estate developers of color, including Black and Latino-owned firms.

- Since 2019, Wells Fargo has donated more than \$390 million to help address national housing affordability, including supporting available and affordable rentals, homeownership and housing stability.

DBDT, from Page 9

ing Sponsor: Texas Commission on the Arts.

Nov. 10-11, 2023, DBDT's curated showcase "Director's Choice" will feature a diverse range of innovative talents, each with their own fresh perspective and voice. The show will include world premieres, one by 2023 Guggenheim Fellow Nejla Yarkin, award-winning Norbert De La Cruz III, and Francesca Harper's Instinct 11.1. A Post-Performance Talkback will occur after both performances running Nov. 10-11, 2023 at Dee & Charles Wyly Theatre. Presenting Sponsor is Texas Instruments.

Nov. 20-21, 2023 "Behind The Scenes" is a FREE program at DBDT Studios, offering an exclusive look into how DBDT performances get from the studio to the stage. Includes performances by Dallas Black Dance Theatre, DBDT: En-

core! and the Dallas Black Dance Academy! Presenting Sponsor is Bank of Texas.

In a world of creativity and inspiration in December, "Black on Black," held at DBDT Studios, will include an evening of intimate performances produced and choreographed by Dallas Black Dance Theatre and DBDT: Encore! company members. A pre-show reception will include light bites and beverages, courtesy of Roxor Spirits!, followed by a live DJ and dancing. (Must be 21+ to attend.) Presenting sponsor is Deloitte.

On Dec. 9, 2023, DBDT presents "Espresso Nutcracker" at Majestic Theatre. Travel to a winter wonderland full of cheer, delight, and the sweetest of treats with Dallas Black Dance Academy students' enchanting performance,

sprinkled with sugarplum fairies and holiday magic. This whimsical reimaging of a timeless tale will leave you merry and bright! Presenting Sponsor: Fichtelbaum Charitable Trust.

February 9-10, 2024, at Dee & Charles Wyly Theatre, celebrate the richness of "Cultural Awareness" as DBDT explores the interplay of movement, rhythm, and international expression woven together by the unifying language of dance. The event featuring two world premieres, includes a solo work by former Dallas Black Dance Academy student and Princess Grace Honraria award winner, Alysia Johnson. "Post Mortem," choreographed by 8-year veteran company member, Hana Delong, will include "His Grace!" by Christopher L. Huggins and ODETTA by Matthew Rushing. A Post-Performance Talkback will occur after both performances.

"Dancing Beyond Borders," will be held at W. E. Scott Theatre in Fort Worth on March 16, 2024 and at Eisemann Center in Richardson on March 23, 2024. Here, DBDT: Encore! transcends borders and boundaries in a brilliant display of contemporary modern dance. The journey explores the intersection of grace, athleticism, and artistry as Encore! travels to other local venues across the DFW region to expand cultural horizons.

On April 19-20, 2024 at Moody Performance Hall, DBDT features "Rising Excellence." DBDT: Encore! company will feature in-

novative choreography and performances by some of the most talented emerging artists in the field, DBDT's internationally recognized company members, embodying the next generation of artistic greatness. Presenting Sponsor: PNC Bank.

On May 17-18, 2024 at Dee & Charles Wyly Theatre, DBDT's grand finale "Spring Celebration!" features multi-faceted artists in a showcase of passion and finesse, featuring performances of "From Within" by Nijawwon Matthews, "Black in Time" by Kameron N. Saunders, and a special guest performance

by The DASH Ensemble. Presenting Sponsor: Dallas Tourism Public Improvement District.

As the 47th season draws to a close, DBDT offers "The BIG Dance," an evening dedicated to celebrating the legendary Motown sound that defined an era. The "BIG Dance" held at Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center on June 1, 2024, is DBDT's annual fundraiser, benefiting the educational outreach and scholarship programs of Dallas Black Dance Academy, the official School of Dallas Black Dance Theatre currently celebrating its 50th anniversary season.



TDLR seeks volunteers to serve on Auctioneer Advisory Board

AUSTIN – The Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) needs four licensed auctioneers, plus one member of the public, to serve on the Auctioneer Advisory Board.

“TDLR needs Texans who care about their communities to participate on our advisory boards and committees,” said TDLR Executive Director Mike Arismendez Jr.

“Thanks to a change in state law, we’re able to hold most of our advisory



Ameer Basheer / Unsplash

board meetings online, so members no longer have to travel to Austin to meet. We hope that more people will want to get involved.”

The board provides technical knowledge and in-

dustry expertise to TDLR about the Auctioneers program, which registers and regulates people who conduct live-bid auctions in Texas. (TDLR does not regulate online auctions.)

The board has a total of seven members who serve six-year terms, including four licensed auctioneers, two public members and an administrative head of a state agency selected by the Texas Commission on Licensing and Regulation. The public members cannot have any connection

to the auction industry. All members of the board are appointed by the chair of the Texas Commission on Licensing and Regulation.

For details on specific membership requirements and how to apply, please see this page (<https://www.tdlr.texas.gov/media/vacancies.htm>).

The deadline to apply for the Auctioneer Advisory Board is September 22.

Members of the board are not compensated or reimbursed for serving.

TDLR provides regula-

tory oversight for a broad range of occupations, businesses, facilities, and equipment in Texas.

The agency protects the health and safety of Texans by ensuring they are served by qualified, licensed professionals. Inspections of individuals, businesses, and equipment are done on a regular basis to safeguard the public.

Currently, the agency regulates 38 business and occupational licensing programs with almost 1,000,000 licensees across

the state.

Visit www.tdlr.texas.gov for more information and resources. You can search the TDLR licensee database and also find past violations in which a final order was issued against companies or individuals. TDLR’s Customer Service line is available anytime between 7 a.m. until 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, at 1-800-803-9202. TDLR representatives are fluent in English, Spanish and Vietnamese.

FILM, from Page 10

mon Hounsou) wishes his youngest son was more like the elder one Cobi (Daniel Puig), a footballer. There’s friction between Steve and Jann, but the diehard gamer doesn’t back down: “It’s what I love. It’s what I’m good at.” His mom Lesley (Geri Halliwell Horner, *Spice Girls*) is slightly more empathetic.

The riff between dad and son grows, making Jann feel more misunderstood and wayward. Until a buddy (Nikhil Parmar) clues him into a zany contest. Danny Moore (Orlando Bloom), a Nissan marketing executive, has a crazy idea. He’s organized an online competition and the top *Gran Turismo* players will come to Nissan and train to be real race car drivers.

The screenplay by Jason Hall, Neill Blomkamp and Zach Baylin pulls from the both the PlayStation Studios video game, Nissan and the real-life story of Mardenborough, who transformed himself from a behind-closed-doors superhero to the best driver at the 2011 GT Academy and eventually to a Le Mans competitor.

Their script is a nice mix of compelling subplots -- The underdog blue collar story vs an auto giant. Tense father/son and coach/student dramas.

A friendship with a young woman (Maevie Courrier-Lilley) blends ro-

mance into the storyline, and certainly, Jann being the son of a Black man and white woman, adds a multicultural dimension.

Blomkamp honed his directing skills with eerie sci-fi cult classics (“District 9”) and action/sci-fi films (Matt Damon’s “Elysium”). These days, he’s very adept at playing with the footage to garner great effects. Scenes with Jann in his room driving like its real and surrounded by a computer-generated car that assembles and disassembles in pieces are fun to watch. Sequences with Jann on a racetrack that segue back to him careening down a virtual track in his bedroom are equally fascinating.

Credit the visuals and pacing to Blomkamp’s savvy, cinematographer Jacques Jouffret’s (Tom Clancy’s “Jack Ryan”) keen eye, editors Austyn Daines and Colby Parker Jr.’s precision cuts and dazzling driving stunts by the real Jann himself.

Blomkamp shows equal depth with the dramatic moments, especially those between Mardenborough and his seemingly mean but increasingly paternal coach Jack Salter (David Harbour, “Stranger Things”). Or the ones with Bloom and Takehiro Hira (“Snake Eyes”), who plays Kazunori Yamaguchi CEO of Polyphony Digital and *Gran Turismo*’s inventor, inside Nissan’s

car biz headquarters.

Whether it’s working-class life in Britain, offices in Tokyo or pit stops on a racetrack in northwest France, the direction, script, production elements and cast hold your attention, visually and emotionally.

Archie Madekwe has a tall, nerdy, geeky look, which compared to his athletic brother and blue-collar dad, makes him look even

more like an outcast. Additionally, his run-ins with jealous rival drivers help to make his character a likable, vulnerable protagonist, and Madekwe works that angle.

However, nothing he does matches the acting prowess of either Bloom as the pragmatic exec, Harbour, the hard- then soft-hearted coach, Hira, the inventor, or Hounsou, the dad

with regrets.

It’s all so far-fetched that it’s hard to believe any of this really happened. That a gamer could become a real driving champion. That’s why at film’s end, when photos of the real Jann and

his extended family appear, it takes your breath away. Like a fast car driving by and just leaving a sound. Vroom.

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



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Out to Pastor: Memories Can Be So Memorable

By Dr. James L. Snyder

In growing older, I noticed a strange phenomenon. The older I get, the more I forget. I remember things that happened in my youth and the pressure of those memories is, are they true, or am I just making them up? I have nobody to verify those memories.

I don't think I will try to verify those memories because it may get me into trouble I don't need to.

Last week, for example, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage stumped me with one of her infamous questions.

"Do you know what next Monday is?"

I looked at her, smiled, scratched my head, and said, "No, who's birthday is it?"

Keeping up with family birthdays is not my strong suit. My wife has 11 siblings, and I have 2 siblings; with all their children and grandchildren, there must be hundreds of birthdays. I have trouble remembering my birthday at times, let alone family members.

"You don't know what next Monday is?"

"Oh," I said, "I just remembered, it's our daughter's birthday."

I didn't like the look she threw in my direction, but I caught it, and she said, "Her birthday was last week."

Okay, I'm in trouble. I have no idea whose birthday it is, and I have no way of finding out. I must succumb to The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage's agenda.

"What is next Monday's celebration?" I said with a worried look.

"You really don't know, do you?" She looked at me as though I had committed the unpardonable sin.

Thinking about it, I said, "I don't have another doctor's appointment on Monday, do I?"

Then she did something that I'd never seen her do before. She flashed her wedding ring in my direction.

"Oh no," I said in desperation, "it isn't our wedding anniversary is it?"

"Yes it is, and do you know which one?"

I can balance my checkbook but cannot balance wedding dates. Looking at her with a smile, I said, "Is it our 30th anniversary?"

"If you don't get your act together it might just be our last!"

Then she said, "Let me give you a clue. Our old-

est daughter just turned 51. Does that ring a bell?"

I did remember that she was born one year after our wedding, so I turned to my wife with a smile and said, "Oh, my dear, it must be our 52nd wedding anniversary."

It is incredible how fast time flies, particularly when you are busy.

I met my future wife at a Bible Institute I attended in September 1970. That seems such a long time ago. Then in December of that year, we went to a function with schoolmates, and coming home, we sat in the back part of the bus. We were chattering and having a good time.

Then this young girl looked at me and said, "Wouldn't it be great to get married?"

Not being girl-smart, I didn't get the drift of that conversation, but I smilingly said, "That sure would be very great." Then we laughed all the way home. She got the joke, but I did not.

Walking down the school hall one week later, many people looked at me, smiled and said, "Congratulations." I had no idea what they were talking about.

Then one of them said,

"I guess you're happy that your girlfriend is getting married." Then he laughed as he walked away.

I was happy she was getting married, but what about our relationship? I thought we had something. Now what do I do?

Someone else congratulated me, and I finally said, "Who is she marrying?"

"Oh you silly boy, she's going to be marrying you." Then they walked away laughing as though it was the joke of the week.

Why was I the last one to know I was getting married?

Later that week, I spent time with her and said, "Have you heard the rumor that is going around about you?"

"Yes, I have; I'm the one who started it."

"Well," I said hesitantly, "maybe you should've told me first."

"Oh, you silly boy," she said, "don't you remember we talked about it on our way back from that event in December?"

I had to stop and think because I wasn't quite sure what she was talking about.

"Don't you remember we

both agreed that it would be great to get married?"

I then remembered that conversation; I didn't understand its meaning at the time. Silly me, I thought getting married meant you made a proposal and were conscious of it.

The story develops and on February 14, 1971, I officially proposed marriage and gave her the engagement ring. The wedding took place on August 14 of that year. We barely knew each other a year before we tied the knot and got married. Maybe that's why it lasted so long.

It is hard to believe that was 52 years ago.

Reflecting on this memory, I remembered what Solomon said. "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her

price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil." (Proverbs 31:10-11).

I don't think it was an accident when I found the woman that was to be my wife. It was a work of the Lord in both our lives. For 52 years, not only have we been married, but we have also been serving the Lord together.

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 jamesnsnyder2@att.net. The church web site is www.whatafellowship.com.

ANDREWS, from Page 2

Commission meetings in Washington, D.C. as a local resident advocate. She also volunteers as a judge for her local annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., essay contest, as a Marion Barry Youth Leadership Institute Alumni Association member.

Mrs. Andrews is also a city-wide board member/parent advocate for Parents Amplifying Voices in Education (PAVE). Through PAVE, Mrs. Andrews has helped support and advocate for its many objectives, including adding 500 additional seats to D.C. Out of School Time programs and increasing the Uniform Per Student

Funding Formula of 5.05% to keep up with inflation so Local Education Agencies can manage expanding supports based on their school community needs. A life-changing opportunity to serve on the board, she enjoys supporting local D.C. students and their families. PAVE notably recognized Mrs. Andrews in 2023 as a runner-up for her volunteer work and awarded her a \$1,000 stipend to participate in leadership advancement courses. Mrs. Andrews attributes her success to her drive, motivation, and passion for assisting others in everything she does.

A native of Washington,

D.C., Mrs. Andrews graduated from Temple University in Philadelphia in 2008 with a Bachelor of Arts in criminal justice. She subsequently began pursuing a Master of Arts in legal administration at Marymount University, earning her degree and graduate certificate in paralegal studies in 2012. Honoring her achievements, Mrs. Andrews was inducted into the Lambda Epsilon Chi (LEX), the national paralegal honor society at Marymount University's School of business administration in 2012, and Temple University's Phi Alpha Delta, a pre-law fraternity in 2007. Andrews was recently included in Marquis Who's Who.

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Spiritual Warfare



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"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Ephesians 6:12

Have you ever heard someone say, "I will never do business with that man that professes to be a Christian" again?

I have heard this comment about Christian believers. This comment represents the battle that rages against us by the enemy of our soul to destroy the witness and effectiveness of Christian believers.

As believers, we must realize that we are in a war - a war for the souls of men, a war to discredit all that a believer stands for, a war that



is designed to divide Christian against Christian.

Satan's ploy in the life of believers is to do several things to make them "Ineffective" as a skilled warrior of God.

First, he wants to discredit them by allowing them to fail other people in their community or business services. This often shows up in failing to perform what they committed to do or performing in an unsatisfactory way.

Sometimes, this is a result of a downright failure of the believer to perform with excellence. In other cases, it may be a misun-

derstanding in the midst of the service that causes strife and division instigated by the enemy.

The result in both cases is the same: a division among Christians and even non-Christians, further resulting in a "damaged witness" for Christ.

The apostle Peter admonishes us to, *"They may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation..."* **1 Peter 2:12.**

There are times when each of us is thrust into situations out of our control. Defeating Satan in these battles requires extra com-

munication with those with whom we are dealing.

If the motive of your heart is to do right, then God will give you favor in order to work through these difficult spots. God will show you where the enemy is seeking to make you ineffective.

As stated, we are waging a spiritual war that is not flesh and blood. We must fight this war with spiritual weapons applied to practical daily living.

Being the Real Thing. *"For the froward (disobedient) is abomination to the Lord: but His secret is with the righteous."* **Proverbs 3:32.**

Coca-Cola had an advertising slogan that said, "It's the real thing." People are desperately looking everywhere for the real thing.

As we live in a day when technology can make us believe something that isn't,

actually is. Animation in movies today is so advanced they can make you believe actors are achieving the most extraordinary feats.

It is the ultimate deception. I believe that there is one thing that caused Jesus to get angry about more than anything else. It is when religious people do things inconsistent with what they are taught.

Hypocrisy is a form of deception designed to make

you believe something isn't reality. Being devious is a form of deceit.

God said that you can't violate His ways through deceit and hypocrisy and expect to have an intimate relationship with Him.

Ask God to make you a true follower of Jesus who is genuine, in all that you say and do. So that your intimacy with Him will grow and others will see that you are the real thing, with the real Word of God.

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