



# North Dallas Gazette

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## Cruz faces a number of challengers in March primary for U.S. Senate seat

By Lori Lee  
NDG Contributing Writer

On March 5, Texans will decide who will represent their parties in the crucial election this November. The primary will designate nominees for several state judgeships, one U.S. Senate seat and the state railroad commissioner, all these offices currently held by Republicans.

Given Senate members' staggered six-year terms, thirty-three terms will expire in January, 20 held by Democrats, 10 by Republicans, and three by independents. Only one of Texas' two U.S. Senate terms will expire. Republican Senator John Cornyn, elected in 2002, and who won reelection in 2008, 2014, and 2020, will hold office until 2027. Incumbent Senator Ted Cruz, however, is being challenged by nine candidates in the March primary. Cruz eked out a 2.6 points win over Beto O'Rourke in 2012.

Democratic challengers on the primary ballot include CEO of Alexandra Realty and former County Judge A. "Robert" Hassan, whose priorities include the economy, immigration, energy, crime, and healthcare, his website states.



U.S. Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) has developed quite an opposition on both sides of the political aisle (Heather Mount / Unsplash)

Criminologist Tracy Andrus and activist Heli Rodriguez Prillman are also running as democrats. In a September article run by the Corsicana Daily Sun, Andrus discussed the need for criminal justice reform and support for legalizing marijuana federally.

Prillman spoke of the need for technical innovation and universal healthcare, while supporting childcare and funding for working parents, young entrepreneurs and small businesses, they report.

Activist Meri Gomez also seeks the nomination. As a democrat and advocate for immigrants, Gomez calls for reforms in the immigra-

tion system. Mark Gonzalez, also on the Democratic ticket, was twice elected as District Attorney in Corpus Christi, a red county carried by Trump and Abbott. Gonzalez has diligently worked to reform Nueces County's criminal justice system.

Retired U.S. Navy captain and law professor Steven Keough, launched his campaign against U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz after hearing from Hispanic veterans in San Antonio, who said a "strong Democrat" with a "conservative background" could topple the three-term Republican

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#### People In The News ...



Rev. Jesse Jackson



Donnie Simpson

NDG Quote of the Week: "We shall overcome because the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

## Rev. Jesse Jackson

Religious leaders and human rights advocates, led by Reverend Jesse Jackson, are preparing for what they call a vital emergency summit for Gaza. The "Call to Action" summit is scheduled at the Rainbow PUSH Coalition Headquarters in Chicago on Friday, January 12, and Saturday, January 13. Jackson told the Black Press the summit would "address the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza, denounce violence against civilians, and urge immediate action to bring an end to the crisis."



Organized by a coalition including the Rainbow Push Coalition, the Arab American Institute, and Cedars Mediterranean Kitchen, the summit will feature a diverse lineup of

influential speakers, including Jackson, Dr. James Zogby (President of the Arab American Institute), columnist and political commentator Peter Beinart, Congressman Johnathon Jackson, Congressman Chuy Garcia, and others.

The central focus of the summit is to condemn attacks on civilians and call for an immediate, permanent ceasefire. "We are faith leaders and advocates, united in this moment of moral reckoning to affirm the sanctity of all human life," Jackson declared.

The organizers have unequivocally "condemned

the Israeli government's military siege and indiscriminate bombardment of Gaza." They said there's a moral obligation to leverage collective power to end the escalation of death and ongoing humanitarian crises.

The coalition demands an immediate and permanent ceasefire and the rapid release of all Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners held without charges or due process, and they are calling on U.S. leadership to facilitate unimpeded UN-supervised humanitarian aid in Gaza.

"I recommend that they

let everyone out," Jackson asserted. "The captives should be able to go home under the supervision of the United Nations, and anyone [bought to trial] should be done so in the World Court."

Jackson and the rest of the coalition have also urged America to abide by its regulations and condition funding to Israel on its adherence to U.S. law, like requirements for other nations receiving U.S. military financing.

The organizers collectively stressed that a ceasefire is just the beginning. The staggering civilian ca-

sualties underscore the belief that there is no military resolution that can bring justice for Palestinians and security for Israelis, Jackson insisted. He said there should be a diplomatic solution to "end apartheid and occupation."

Further, Jackson said the summit aims to build upon historical legacies and current global movements for peace, justice, and liberation. The civil rights legend and other organizers expressed concern about rising anti-Semitic and anti-Arab incidents.

The summit will also be broadcast over zoom.

## Donnie Simpson

Legendary radio and media personality Donnie Simpson signed off, possibly for the last time, on Friday, January 12. The illustrious career that spanned an incredible 55 years ended with a heartfelt message from the iconic DJ himself.

"Today's the day," Simpson posted on X. "Please make sure you tune into my last day ... Let's celebrate together as I thank each & every one of you for your support during my 55 years in radio."

An icon, trailblazer, and media legend, Simpson held a commanding presence in



Washington, D.C.

He gained international fame as a television and movie personality. From his early beginnings in Detroit to his stints at WKYS and WMMJ in Washington, he etched his name in the his-

tory of radio.

A true industry pioneer, Simpson was one of America's first video jockeys, hosting iconic shows like BET's "Video Soul." His achievements reached new heights when, in 1988, Billboard Magazine recognized him as both the best top radio personality and top program directo

After retiring in 2010, Simpson triumphantly returned to the airwaves and television screens in 2015. As the afternoon drive host on WMMJ, Majic 102.3 in Washington D.C., and the face of TV-One's "Donnie After Dark," he continued to captivate audiences with his

signature style.

As noted in his bio, Simpson started in Detroit as the "Love Bug." Simpson's passion for music, nurtured in his mother's record shop, laid the groundwork for an extraordinary career. He connected with the biggest stars globally throughout the years, showcasing his talent and versatility.

Simpson's television career soared as he anchored sports and hosted "Video Soul" on BET. In 2021, he announced the revival of "Video Soul."

Honored with inductions into the BET Walk of Fame (2004) and the R&B Hall of Fame of Class of 2020, Simpson's legacy is cemented in the annals of entertainment

history.

"I'm going to miss doing the show, Donnie's going to miss it, too, but he's got some great things planned," wrote News4 anchor Tony Perkins, who joined "The Donnie Simpson Show" in the 3 p.m. slot six years ago. "We loved doing the show. Thank you for all the responses on social media."

## Daniela Jean

(Black PR Wire) Miami, FL - The Florida International University (FIU) Alumni Association, in partnership with the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Commemorative Celebration Committee, proudly announces the induction of Daniela Jean into the prestigious MLK Alumni Hall of Fame. This recognition celebrates FIU alumni who have demonstrated exceptional engagement, service, and contributions to the university community, particularly focusing on minority advancement.

Daniela Jean's nomination stood out for her outstanding professional



achievements and significant impact on diverse environments, leading to unanimous approval by the MLK Commemorative Celebration Committee and subsequent approval by University President Dr. Kenneth Jessell. This esteemed recognition marks Daniela Jean as the sev-

enth recipient of the MLK Alumni Hall of Fame.

In addition to her notable achievements, Commissioner Daniela Jean has spearheaded the installation of a life-size MLK statue in the City of North Miami Beach, annual MLK themed contests for city youth and internship opportunities for FIU Students.

The induction ceremony will take place during the 33rd Annual MLK Commemorative Breakfast on Friday, January 12, 2024, at 8:00 AM, hosted at the Maidique Modesto campus in the Graham Center Ballrooms. Cornell William Brooks, Harvard Kennedy

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# The co-opting of a radical

By Frederick Joseph

In the annals of American history, few threads are as rich and as exploited as the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Revered for his unyielding commitment to nonviolence and racial equality, Dr. King’s image has been appropriated, his words selectively harvested to serve agendas far removed from his revolutionary intent. This intentional misappropriation is a glaring testament to the ongoing struggle against the very injustices he fought to dismantle.

Now heralded as a symbol of peace and racial harmony, Dr. King was, in the context of his time, a figure of immense controversy, a radical whose vision for America challenged the very foundations of its societal structures. Which is why I often find myself enraged by the posthumous celebration of his life and work by those who, had they lived during his era, would likely have been among his fiercest detractors.

To speak even more plainly, many of the people who now praise him and leverage his words, would have been jubilant at the news of his assassination.

A striking example of the hypocrisy surrounding Dr. King is seen in the political journey of John McCain. In 1983, McCain voted against the establishment of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, aligning with a subset of conservatives who viewed the holiday as unnecessary or who harbored deeper, unspoken hatred against King’s legacy. However, after King’s image underwent a posthumous transformation from a radical civil rights leader to a more universally accepted symbol of racial unity and American values, McCain, like others, later shifted his rhetoric. Often invoking King’s name in support of his own political agenda.

This opportunistic evolution — speaks to a broader pattern within many circles. It can not be overstated how

many people resisted or outright opposed Dr. King’s agenda, which aimed to upend deeply entrenched racial and economic hierarchies. Yet, in the years following King’s death, as his legacy began to be sanitized and repackaged in more palatable terms, millions of individuals began to align themselves with a version of Dr. King that fit their narratives.

This strategic leveraging of Dr. King’s legacy is not born of ignorance but of a calculated effort to pacify and undermine the movements he inspired. By plucking his calls for peace and nonviolence out of the broader context of his struggle, these actors weaponize Dr. King’s words against those who continue his fight. The radical Dr. King, the man who confronted systemic racism, who challenged the economic and social structures that perpetuate inequality, is conveniently obscured behind a veil of selective memory.

So much so, that his daughter, Bernice King, often takes to social media to correct public figures from purposely misrepresenting her father’s words and legacy.

Dr. King’s philosophy, deeply rooted in the principles of nonviolent resistance, was indeed about love and understanding. However, it was also, and crucially, about the relentless pursuit of justice — a pursuit that was radical, incendiary, and deeply threatening to the status quo. His mission was not merely to dream of a better world but to actively dismantle the oppressive systems that denied that world to so many.

On April 4, 1967, exactly one year before his assassination, Dr. King’s radicalism was on full display as he stood in the pulpit of Riverside Church in New York City and delivered a speech of profound significance and unflinching courage. Titled “Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence,” this speech marked a pivotal

moment in Dr. King’s journey as a civil rights leader, revealing the depth of his commitment to global justice and peace.

Dr. King’s Riverside address was not just a speech; it was a bold act of moral confrontation. In it, he extended his critique beyond the bounds of racial injustice in the United States to address the broader issues of war and poverty. He openly denounced the Vietnam War, a stance that was both controversial and risky, especially considering the widespread support for the war effort at the time. This was a radical departure from his earlier focus, a move that broadened the scope of his activism and demonstrated his belief in the interconnectedness of various forms of injustice.

The radicalism of Dr. King’s Riverside speech lay in its unapologetic condemnation of the United States’ involvement in Vietnam. He described the war as “a symptom of a far deeper malady within the American spirit,” linking it to the broader issues of militarism, materialism, and racism. Dr. King’s critique of the war went beyond mere policy disagreement; it was a profound moral indictment of the entire American socio-political system.

He argued that the war in Vietnam was inextricably linked to the struggle for civil rights at home, asserting that the same government that was failing to protect the rights of its Black citizens was also committing atrocities abroad. He made the powerful case that the war was diverting resources and attention from the crucial domestic issues of poverty and inequality.

His stance at Riverside drew intense criticism from many quarters, including some allies in the civil rights movement. His decision to speak out against the war risked alienating supporters, fracturing the civil rights coalition, and diminishing his influence. But Dr. King was undeterred.

His commitment to justice and peace compelled him to speak, regardless of the political cost.

This, coupled with his profound critique of white liberals made Dr. King one of America’s greatest threats in the eyes of many.

While he recognized the support of white allies as valuable in the fight for racial justice, Dr. King did not shy away from pointing out the limitations and contradictions inherent in the liberal stance of the time. His views, as articulated in his writings and speeches, reveal a deep understanding of the complexities of racial dynamics in America.

King’s perspective on white liberals is perhaps most famously encapsulated in his “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” written in 1963. In this seminal document, he expressed disappointment with the white moderate, whom he saw as more devoted to “order” than to justice. King lamented the fact that these individuals preferred a negative peace, which is the absence of tension, to a positive peace, which is the presence of justice. He observed that white moderates were all too often more concerned about the potential disruption caused by civil rights activism than the underlying injustice that the activism sought to address.

I’ve thought about this quite often since 2020, as many white liberals seemed more taken aback by corporations such as Target having their store windows broken, than they were by America’s constant breaking of Black and brown bodies. All while quoting Dr. King.

His critique of white liberals extended beyond mere disappointment. He was acutely aware of the tendency among some white supporters to also dictate the terms and pace of the civil rights movement. This paternalistic approach, often cloaked in a veneer of

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# World Health officials say nearly 10,000 global deaths in December were related to COVID; signal deepening health crisis

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National  
Correspondent

The World Health Organization (WHO) reported a staggering total of nearly 10,000 global deaths in December, raising alarm bells about a worsening worldwide health crisis stemming from the continued threat of COVID-19. WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus also noted pressing humanitarian crises in Gaza, Sudan, and Ethiopia that exacerbates the ongoing challenges related to COVID-19.

While COVID-19 is no longer classified as a global health emergency, the virus remains a formidable threat, Ghebreyesus warned. He said newer cases, driven by holiday gatherings and



While COVID-19 is no longer classified as a global health emergency, the virus remains a formidable threat, Ghebreyesus warned. He said newer cases, driven by holiday gatherings and the prevalence of the JN.1 variant, led to a 42% increase in hospitalizations and a 62% rise in ICU admissions. (Photo via NNPA)

the prevalence of the JN.1 variant, led to a 42% increase in hospitalizations and a 62% rise in ICU admissions.

Ghebreyesus urged governments to maintain surveillance and sequencing and ensure access to tests, treatments, and vaccines.

He also noted other emergencies the WHO is responding to, including in Gaza, Ukraine, Ethiopia, and Sudan.

Ghebreyesus called it “indescribable” that “this Sunday marks the 100th day of the conflict in Israel and the occupied Palestin-

ian territory.”

He said Gaza continues to face an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe to go along with rising health concerns borne out from the pandemic. The conflict has displaced nearly 90% of Gaza’s 1.9 million residents, who continue to endure “excruciating conditions with long queues for limited water and nutritionally inadequate bread,” the director general lamented.

He said only 15 hospitals are partially operational, and the absence of clean water and sanitation creates a breeding ground for diseases. WHO’s humanitarian aid efforts have encountered “insurmountable challenges” due to intense bombardment, movement restrictions, fuel shortages, and communication break-

downs, Ghebreyesus stated.

“People are standing in line for hours for a small amount of water, which alone is not sufficiently nutritious,” he asserted. “The lack of clean water and sanitation and overcrowded living conditions are creating the ideal environment for diseases to spread. We have the supplies, the teams, and the plans in place. What we don’t have is access.”

Further, the director general stressed the need for the release of hostages and an imperative for all parties to uphold international humanitarian law, ensuring healthcare protection. He also sounded an alarm about the ongoing situation in Sudan, a nation that’s grappling with nine months

of conflict where there’s escalating violence and mass displacement.

Ghebreyesus said Sudan residents have also experienced the rampant spread of diseases, including cholera. The WHO temporarily suspended operations in Al-Gezira due to security concerns, disrupting the annual harvest and heightening the risk of food insecurity. Even before the conflict, Ghebreyesus said Sudan faced food shortages, intensifying the crisis for vulnerable groups, particularly children under five and pregnant or breastfeeding women.

Meanwhile, in Ethiopia, the north-western region of Amhara is in the grip of a severe health crisis due to

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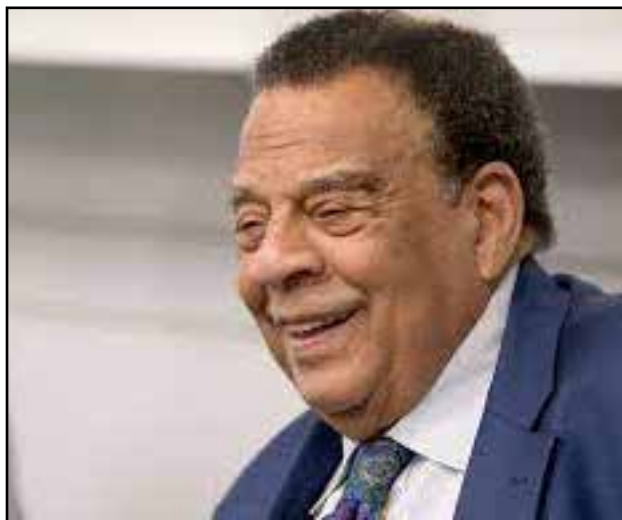
# Civil rights icon Andrew Young reflects on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy and America's progress on MLK Day

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National  
Correspondent

As the nation commemorates Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, civil rights icon, diplomat, and former Atlanta mayor Andrew Young reflected on King's legacy and progress in America since the 1960s.

One of the last surviving members of King's inner circle, Young, sat down for an exclusive interview on PBS-TV's *The Chavis Chronicles* with National Newspaper Publishers Association President and CEO Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr., where he shared valuable insights into his historical journey as a leader of the civil rights movement and his own enduring legacy.

"I do this," Young said, reflecting on challenging injustices like the false ar-



One of the last surviving members of King's inner circle, Young, sat down for an exclusive interview on PBS-TV's *The Chavis Chronicles* with National Newspaper Publishers Association President and CEO Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr., where he shared valuable insights into his historical journey as a leader of the civil rights movement and his own enduring legacy. (Photo via NNPA)

rest and imprisonment of the Wilmington Ten in the 1970s, "because it's the right thing to do. I wasn't being militant or outspoken. I was trying to get people to see just what it is."

From his beginnings in

segregated schools in New Orleans to his early graduation from Howard University and later studies at Hartford Theological Seminary, Young's commitment to justice emerged during his time as a pastor in

southern Georgia. Organizing voter registration drives in the face of death threats, he played a crucial role in the campaigns leading to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Elected to congress in 1972, Young became the first African American representative from the Deep South since Reconstruction. His legislative efforts included establishing the U.S. Institute for Peace, The African Development Bank, and the Chattahoochee River National Park. He left an indelible mark on the city by negotiating federal funds for vital infrastructure projects in Atlanta.

In 1977, President Jimmy Carter appointed Young as the first African American Ambassador to the United Nations, where he played a crucial role in

shaping U.S.-Africa policy based on human rights. His efforts contributed to ending white-minority rule in Namibia and Zimbabwe.

Reflecting on his experiences, Young shares poignant moments during the interview, including facing violence during the Civil Rights movement. He recalls, "When the Klan came marching down in the community, they wanted to provoke a fight. They had guns under their sheets in Lincolnville, Florida," he noted. "The same Black folks who got beat up with me said they had the love of Jesus in their hearts; that spiritual witness of non-violence and forgiveness moved the Congress, and the next week they passed the 1964 Civil Rights Act."

Assessing the progress in civil rights, Young emphasizes the strides made, saying, "If anybody says

things are no better now than they were then, they don't understand how well we have it now." He acknowledges the challenges but underscores the opportunities for education and progress.

As Young reflects on Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream, he interprets it as a call for equal opportunity. "We are no longer slaves; we have equal opportunity to make this a great nation if we are able to work hard. The educational opportunities are opening up," says Young. He acknowledges the partnership with white folks that contributed to Atlanta's success.

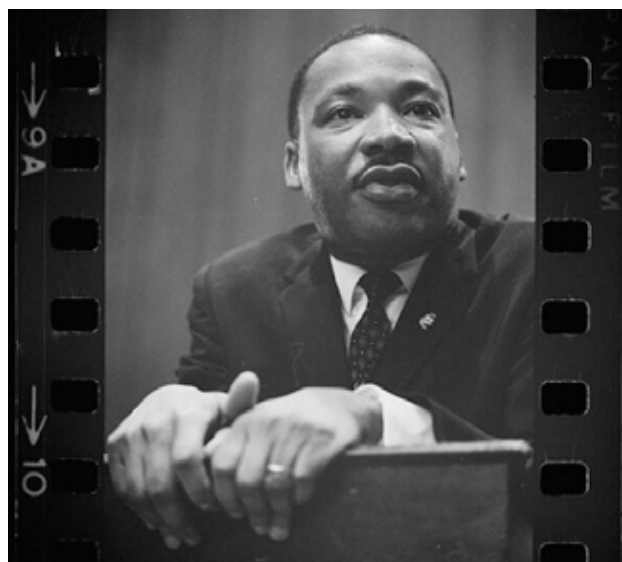
Young said he remains optimistic about the nation's future, echoing Dr. King's words: "It's inevitable to me that this nation, as Martin Luther King said, will live out, one day, the true meaning of its creed."

## Civil rights leaders 2024 insights on Martin Luther King's courage

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National  
Correspondent

During his short life, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stepped on all kinds of powerful toes in his fight for civil rights, and he was a courageous and determined leader who refused to let prison or violence sway his end mission. He also never lost sight of the fact that civil rights—addressing racial and economic injustice—were inextricable from liberation, freedom, equality, and world peace.

As the founding leader of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), Dr. King led a non-violent movement to abolish the triple evils crippling American society: racism, poverty, and militarism. Associates said he believed those forces were contrary to God's will for humanity and that they could only be effectively opposed by a interfaith-inspired non-



violent, multiracial social change movement.

On April 4, 1967, King spoke publicly and eloquently against the tragedies of the U.S.-led war in Vietnam. Today, as the nation observes Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, civil rights leaders, including those who knew the slain leader, offered their thoughts on what his position might be on conflicts in the Middle East and Russia

and on the twice-impeached and four-times indicted former President Donald Trump.

"At the March on Washington in 1964, Dr. King talked about Alabama Gov. George Wallace having his lips dripping with interposition and nullification," said the Rev. Peter Johnson, who began working for the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) in Plaquemine, La., and later was recruited

by Andrew Young to work for King in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in Atlanta. "What's the difference between George Wallace and Donald Trump? You're not going to hear Trump publicly

say the n-word, that's the only difference," Johnson remarked. "King would easily have seen that Trump is a bigot in the true sense of the word who actually believes he is superior to people of color."

Johnson, Rev. Dr. Jesse Jackson Sr, Rev. Dr. Benjamin Chavis Jr, and others said that the wars between Israel and Hamas and Russia and Ukraine would have

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# Welcome back for the second half!



**Joyce Foreman**  
Dallas ISD  
District 6

I hope your holidays were filled with joy and you are relaxed and ready for a productive second semester.

We have so much to look forward to in this new year from our District Six scholars, student-athletes, teachers, principals, team

members and community supporters. It's an honor to serve as your trustee.

It's also an honor for me to work alongside my fellow trustees, and as January is School Board Recognition Month, it's the perfect time for me to thank them for representing their communities and helping to provide the resources and opportunities for all our children to excel.

I am privileged to work with each and every one of them.

### Honoring a Hero

This time of year is special to me because we get to pay homage to one of our greatest American heroes, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. I'm proud of our District 6 students who made it to the finals of the MLK Jr. Oratory Competition: Aiden Body of T.L. Marsalis Elementary STEAM Academy and Jzairus (pronounced Jirus) Hopkins-Swanson of Thomas Tolbert Elementary. Congratulations to them and to all the students who

participated in the annual competition, and a special salute to the winner.

### Kudos to this year's Master Principals

I also want to recognize the 24 Master Principals who represent the district's top 10% in the categories of elementary, secondary and choice schools. Congrats to all 24 across Dallas ISD, and especially those in District 6: Constance Jawaid at Carpenter Elementary and Lakisha Merritt at Martin Weiss Elementary.

### Thanks to SOC for a great season

The South Oak Cliff Golden Bears gave us a thrilling season, and while they didn't walk away with the championship trophy this year, there's always next year and we will always have their backs.

### Deadline to apply to Choice Schools

The deadline to apply for the district's choice schools and programs is Jan. 31. Visit [www.dallasisd.org/choosedallasisd](http://www.dallasisd.org/choosedallasisd) for more

information about our academic offerings and find the best-fit school for your child.

### 2024 STEM Expo

On Saturday, Feb. 2, Dallas ISD's 2024 STEM Expo will take place at the Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center. Students and families can participate in more than 100 fun and academic experiences, with exhibits in science, technology, engineering, and math. To find more information and register, visit [www.dallasisd.org/stem](http://www.dallasisd.org/stem).

## Biden accelerates student debt relief with early implementation of SAVE Plan

By Stacy M. Brown

Again, attempting to fulfill a key promise made during his 2020 campaign, President Joe Biden announced the accelerated implementation of a crucial provision under the Student Aid for Voluntary Education (SAVE) plan. The president reaffirmed his commitment to reforming the student loan system and ensuring that higher education remains a pathway to the middle class, "not a barrier to opportunity."

"From Day One of my Administration, I vowed to fix the student loan system and make sure higher education is a pathway to the middle class—not a barrier to opportunity," Biden stated.

The president asserted that his administration's SAVE plan has helped 3.6 million Americans by can-



celing their student debt. The plan's goal is to create a more affordable student loan repayment structure while providing life-changing support to students and their families, Biden said.

"I am proud that my administration is implementing one of the most impactful provisions of the SAVE plan nearly six months ahead of schedule," Biden asserted. "Starting next month, borrowers enrolled in SAVE who took out less than \$12,000 in loans and have been in repayment

for ten years will get their remaining student debt canceled immediately."

He noted that this step should benefit community college borrowers, low-income individuals, and those facing challenges in repaying their loans. Biden further stressed the importance of swift action to provide borrowers with necessary relief, enabling them to move forward and pursue their aspirations without the weight of student loan debt.

"I encourage all borrowers eligible for early debt

cancellation to sign up for the SAVE plan at [studentaid.gov](http://studentaid.gov). Already, 6.9 million borrowers are enrolled in the plan, and 3.9 million

have a \$0 monthly payment," urged Biden, highlighting the existing enrollment numbers and the program's potential impact.

The president's announcement builds upon the administration's broader efforts to tackle the complexities of student loans. He cited accomplishments such as fixing the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program, increasing Pell Grants for families earning less than \$60,000 a year, and holding colleges ac-

countable for leaving students burdened with unaffordable debts.

"In the wake of the Supreme Court's decision on our student debt relief plan, we are continuing to pursue an alternative path to deliver student debt relief to as many borrowers as possible as quickly as possible," Biden insisted. "I won't back down from using every tool at our disposal to get student loan borrowers the relief they need to reach their dreams."

## WHO, from Page 4

ongoing conflict since April 2023, he said. Communication challenges, damaged health facilities, and restricted movement impede humanitarian assistance. Conflict, drought, and displacement exacerbate hunger and disease outbreaks, with cholera, malaria, measles, leishmaniasis, and dengue spreading. Urgent access to affected areas is

crucial, the director general affirmed.

Finally, Ghebreyesus insisted that just as governments and individuals take precautions against other diseases, "we must all continue to take precautions against COVID-19." The WHO plans to release its Health Emergency Appeal for 2024, outlining how much there's a need to pro-

tect the health of the most vulnerable people in 41 emergencies globally.

"In 2024, we aim to reach almost 90 million people with lifesaving support," Ghebreyesus declared. "The coming year will be a test for humanity; a test of whether we give into division, suspicion and narrow nationalism, or whether we are able to rise above our differences and seek the common good."

### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Thursday, January 25, 2024  
5:30 p.m.

Turney W. Leonard Governance  
and Training Center  
Conference Area  
5151 Samuell Blvd.  
Dallas, TX 75228

### Annual Report of the Performance on Texas Academic Performance Report for 2022-2023

The Dallas Independent School District will hold a public hearing to share information with the community regarding the educational performance of the district. The Meeting will take place at 5:30 p.m., Thursday, January 25, 2024, Conference Area, 5151 Samuell Blvd.

Persons interested in making comments at the public hearing must register to speak by contacting Board Services at (972) 925-3720. Registration will begin at 7:30 a.m., Monday, January 22, through Wednesday, January 24, at 5 p.m.

# Annual CASAblanca Casino Party slated for Feb. 2

The Dallas CASA Young Professionals will host the annual CASAblanca casino party “A Red-Carpet Affair” Feb. 2, 2024.

Named one of the top spring events every philanthropic young professional in Dallas should attend, CASAblanca will feature casino games, dancing, cocktails, appetizers, prizes and fun.

The Special Edition Band will perform all night while guests hit the dance floor. All proceeds benefit the children served by Dallas CASA.



Latisha Chaney and Nicole Streich enjoy a BFF moment at last year's annual event. (Photo: Ray Carlin / Courtesy)

The event will be held on Dragon (1500 Dragon Street Dallas TX 75207). The dress code is black-tie

optional (the more fabulous the better!). Tickets are \$175, and are available online (link through Dallas-Casa.org).

CASAblanca is hosted by the Dallas CASA Young Professionals, a vibrant group of volunteers whose mission is to increase awareness for Dallas CASA, while providing charitable and social opportunities for people ages 21 to 40 years. Event co-chairs are Brooke Donselson, Hannah Harpole and Amanda Rodriguez.

Dallas CASA (Court Ap-

pointed Special Advocates) seeks to protect children, restore childhood and help child victims of abuse or neglect achieve their full potential.

The agency's trained and supervised community volunteers are assigned by judges to advocate for the best interests of children who have experienced abuse or neglect and are living in the protective care of the state. For many children in foster care, their Dallas CASA volunteer is the only consistent, caring adult in their lives during a

frightening, uncertain time. Now in its 43rd year, Dallas CASA serves more children than any of the more than 900 CASA programs nationwide.

While Dallas CASA envisions a day when all children experience safe and enriching childhoods, the agency currently is able to provide a child advocate for every Dallas child in need. In 2022, 1,324 Dallas CASA volunteers were assigned to advocate for 2,611 children in protective care. To learn more, visit [dallascasa.org](http://dallascasa.org).

## Biden, The Black Church And Mother Emanuel

By John Thomas III, Ph.D.  
Editor  
*The Christian Recorder*

“At Church, Biden denounces poison of Supremacy”

“Gaza Protest Erupted During Biden Speech at Mother Emanuel”

“Biden’s Appeal to Black Voters Needs an Overhaul”

One could be forgiven for wondering exactly what happened at Mother Emanuel on Monday when US President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. visited in his first campaign swing of the 2024 Presidential cycle. As an

affiliate member of Mother Emanuel, a journalist, and a collegiate Political Science professor, I confess that I needed a few days to sit with the variety of emotions and perspectives that I felt after Monday’s program.

We know that the Black Church as an institution is more to the African American community than a religious place. It is a vital institutional pillar that has undergirded our existence. From providing physical places to gather and shelter to opportunities for leadership and training to incubators for economic develop-

ment, the Black Church is a singular institution whose influence sets African Americans apart from different parts of the Diaspora in the Western Hemisphere.

We AMEs take pride in navigating the world of United States politics, including Presidents in our midst. William McKinley visited Quinn Chapel AME Church in Chicago in one of his last speeches before his assassination in 1901. John F. Kennedy invited the entire Council of Bishops to the White House to recognize Daniel Payne’s role in signing the Emancipation Proclamation. And,

of course, Presidential candidates routinely attend our General Conferences.

So, when people question the appropriateness of the sitting United States President to show up to an AME Church, our history shows that he is just the latest in a long line of persons who have come to our doors. Furthermore, President Biden has a special relationship with the AME Church. He was a frequent visitor at Bethel AME Church in Wilmington, Delaware, when he represented that state in the United States Senate. He also personally visited

the families of the Mother Emanuel victims and the survivors of the 2015 massacre days after the tragedy in a show of solidarity—even though his own son, Beau, had died of cancer days before. As Congressman James Clyburn (and AME Church member) said in his introduction of the President, “We know Joe.” With this context, the visit of President Biden to an AME Church makes sense.

But we know contexts change. The Black Church is not what it once was, and American Democracy is not what it once was. When the protestors stood up in

Mother Emanuel during the President’s speech, I immediately noticed they were the youngest people in the sanctuary. Given that they couldn’t bring in signs, I appreciated their boldness and that, when asked to leave, they respectfully did so and honored the fact that it was a house of worship and sacred ground. We know that there is a generational and ethnic divide in American opinion on the conflict in Gaza, and many of the people were more concerned that they were “disrespecting the

**See EMANUEL, Page 12**

## SENATE, from Page 1

senator, the El Paso Times reports.

Thierry Tchenko, a proprietor of a Houston non-profit in Houston, focuses on creating an economy that works for all, while enabling communities to build and retain a workforce, his website states.

Three candidates lead in fundraising, polling, and endorsements, according to Ballotpedia. These include Democrats Colin Allred, Roland Gutierrez and Carl Sherman.

Colin Allred, elected to the U.S. House in 2018, has been a strong supporter of the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and he helped introduce the Building Chips in

America Act. Allred, who represents a suburban Dallas district, which he won from longtime Republican Congressman Pete Sessions, has a reputation for taking moderate positions and working across the aisle. He has delivered a number of big wins for Texas, The New Republic reports.

Roland Gutierrez, a state senator who represents San Antonio and Uvalde, spent the 2023 legislative session pushing for new gun restrictions and delivering floor speeches for Uvalde victims, the Texas Tribune reports. Gutierrez is said to favor adding more seats to the U.S. Supreme Court, adopting a single-payer

healthcare system, and introducing term limits for members of the U.S. Congress, Ballotpedia reports.

State Representative Carl Sherman from Desoto. With a background in local government, business and as a pastor, Sherman said Texans need a proven leader with “unwavering principles and deep faith.” He touts his experience and an ability to appeal to Independents and some Republicans, according to his website.

Tchenko, who worked in the Office of Management and Budget and for the Biden campaign, also stresses economic prosperity as a chief focus.

Two Republican candidates, Holland “Redd” Gibson and R. E. (Rufus)

Lopez, will fight for their party’s nomination as well.

All hope to win their party’s nomination and make a run for the U.S. Senate seat this November. However, with so many candidates in the running, the chances that no candidate will achieve the 51% required to avoid a costly runoff.

The Republican incumbent for Texas Railroad Commissioner, Christi Craddick, will also face three Republican challengers: Christi Clark, James Matlock, and Petra Olivia, while Democratic challengers will include Bill Burch and Katherine Culbert. The Texas Railroad Commission regulates the oil and gas industry, coal and uranium surface mining, natural gas utilities and

more.

Judges on the ballot include Republican Incumbent Justice Jimmy Blacklock, whose six-year term expires in January, will run for Texas Supreme Court Justice, Place 2 against two Democratic challengers: DaSean Jones and Randy Sarosdy.

Republican Incumbent Justice John Devine is running for his third term for Place 4 on the court against Christine Vinh Weems, a Democrat. Justice Jane Bland is also running for re-election to Place 6 on the state’s highest court, against democrats Bonnie Lee Goldstein and Joe Pool.

Presiding Judge Sharon Keller is running against Democrat Holly Taylor for

re-election to the state’s highest appeals court, the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals. Judges on each court serve staggered six-year terms.

Judge Barbara Parker Hervey is running for re-election to Place 7 on the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals. Hervey, a Republican, will run against Nancy Mulder, a Democrat.

Incumbent Republican Judge Michelle Slaughter will also run for Place 8 against Democrat Chika Anyiam.

Early voting for the March 5 primary will begin on February 20 and end on March 1. The last day to register to vote in Feb. 5, 2024, and the last day to apply for a ballot by mail is Feb. 23, 2024.

# Ethnicity and the rising voice of new voters in American politics

By Lori Lee  
NDG Contributing Writer

As the nation's diversity continues to grow, ethnic voting patterns will increasingly have a hand in determining our elections, and voters who are new to voting will wield greater influence.

Eligible Latino voters have increased by 4.7 million since 2018, reports the Brookings Institute. This wide increase is due in large part to a growing segment of young Latinos who are coming of age to vote. With a third of Latino voters young or new to voting and their median age much younger than the general electorate, young Latinos will be an essential demographic in 2024, explained Assistant Professor at Loyola Miramar University Claudia Sandoval.

Since young male voters tended to swing Republican from 2016 to 2020, some Democrats are concerned the Latino vote may follow with more movement toward the Republican party.

Yet these numbers do not necessarily represent a mass exodus, Sandoval clarifies. As the Pew Research Center reports, Latino registered voters leaned Democrat nearly two to one, in a 2022 survey, with little shift in party identification over the past few years.

Said Sandoval, Latinos voted Republican in much higher numbers in the early 80s for Reagan, a champion of immigration reform. In 2000, Republicans captured a sizable 35% of the Latino vote, finally peaking in 2004, as 44% of Latino voters leaned right aligning with George W. Bush's bipartisan stance on immigration.

While Trump is not seen as a progressive on immigration reform, some Latinos relate to him as an independent, she explained. Latino voters do not focus solely on immigration, said Sandoval. Highly concerned with the economy, healthcare, and education,



As the nation's diversity continues to grow, ever changing ethnic voting patterns will play a key in the 2024 election, and voters who are new to voting will wield great influence. (Geojango Maps / Unsplash)

they also care about violent crime and gun policy.

Among attitudes that may influence their vote, Sandoval notes that some Latino males, who are good at running businesses, believe they'd do better under a President from the business world. What is more, a third of Latino males believe the Democratic Party does not care about them.

Similar to Sandoval, Assistant Professor at Georgetown Jami Scott does not see existing dissatisfaction with the Democratic Party as leading to mass exodus. Despite low favorability for Biden, especially among typically left-leaning young voters, Black voters are more tolerant looking forward, said Scott, many having left their 2016 stay-at-home mentality for more of a hold-your-nose-and-vote strategy toward the upcoming election. Their choice to withhold the 2016 vote, born out of a dissatisfaction for desired policy changes, according to Scott, was also triggered by Russian influence in social media, according to The Guardian, which drove Black voters to boycott the election or vote third party.

While pointing to record low unemployment among Blacks and increasing opportunities for Black businesses and Black judges, Scott notes that the divided political and judicial spectrum has made some Biden

Administration failures inevitable, such as the shortcomings in student loan forgiveness, which she attributes to a conservative Supreme Court.

When it comes to the Asian American and Pacific Island (AAPI) vote, polls have not always accurately reflected their preferences, explains Professor of Public Policy and Political Science, UC Riverside Karthick Ramakrishnan. As founder of AAPI Data, Ramakrishnan has worked toward improving the accuracy of polling data, assisted by support in native languages. The group recently revealed data that they believe is a more accurate representation of AAPI views and leanings.

Asian Americans have consistently identified with the Democratic Party at about a 2 to 1 ratio, explained Ramakrishnan. Though some Vietnamese and Chinese Americans moved toward the Republican party in 2016, these groups moved away from the party while under Trump as President, with just over a quarter of Asian Americans now connected to the Republican party, said Ramakrishnan.

The tendency of the Democratic party to hold the AAPI vote has remained stable over time, he explained, recently showing a strong tendency to favor Joe Biden and Kamala

Harris, while disfavoring Donald Trump and Ron Disantis.

This tendency for AAPI voters to favor Democrats remains constant despite having Asian Americans candidates in the political spectrum, including Nikki Haley and Vivek Ramaswamy, who are both Asian American candidates. It is rare for someone who identifies as a strong Democrat to have a favorable view of either of these candidates, said Ramakrishnan.

Identification with a party shapes political opinion more so than ethnicity and even a candidate's own stand on the issues, said Ramakrishnan, and Indian and Japanese Americans tend to be among the strongest AAPI Democratic party supporters, with only about a quarter to a third being persuadable when party identification is weak, Ramakrishnan said. Those who identify strongly with a party are more likely to be moved by partisan shifts than even their own opinions, he said.

As Sandoval explained, none of the nuances in voter preferences will matter unless the ethnic groups show up in large numbers at the polls. Research tells us that grass roots efforts at canvassing and mobilization will be key, she said, warning that all too often, the parties fall short on investing in the Latino vote, while failing to fund the subgroups who would get out the vote.

Jessica Siles, Deputy Press Secretary at Voters of Tomorrow, tends to agree that mobilization is crucial.

The Gen Z-led organization that Siles represents engages young Americans in politics. The organization works to harness the power of the Gen Z vote in order to affect legislation. Making calls and knocking on doors, the organization contacted millions of young people during the 2022 election to help teach them the importance of political action.

Though Gen Z is more ethnically diverse than any other generation, they have displayed both unity and action over the past decade, said Siles. Shared concerns about gun violence and a common experience of growing up with climate change have united youth, who continue to march in the streets for change. Voting democrat by a 28 point margin, according to the Tufts Center for Information and Research on Civic Engagement, it's not that young people are so loyal to the party, said Siles. It's that they really care about a few core issues and vote on their behalf.

See **VOTERS**, Page 11



# Film Review: 'The Book of Clarence' is a puzzler to watch

By Dwight Brown  
NNPA Film Critic

(\*\*) It is written. Making a befuddling satire is a sin and mixing pageantry with ambiguity is not the next coming. That's why *The Book of Clarence* flounders.

This story of Jesus's final days riffs off the many Hollywood interpretations that came before it. From 1927's *The King of Kings* by Cecil B. DeMille to 2004's *The Passion of the Christ* by Mel Gibson. There's a clear opportunity for Black filmmakers to interpret this ancient tale, their way. If an Afrocentric perspective is the goal, that's still not a license to do just any old thing.

In 33AD, Clarence (LaKeith Stanfield, *Judas and the Black Messiah*), a hapless dude, wanders the streets of Jerusalem aimless and angling to become



LaKeith Stanfield in *The Book of Clarence* (Photo via NNPA)

somebody of worth. A bet with the menacing Jedediah (Eric Kofi Abrefa, *Blue Story*) finds him clinging to a chariot with his buddy Elijah (RJ Cyler, *Me Earl and the Dying Girl*) in a race against Mary Magdalene (Teyana Taylor, *One Thousand and One*) careening over the city's limestone streets. A bag of silver coins, the winner's prize, will be just enough for Clarence to pay off his debt with Jedediah. Nothing goes right. Clarence loses.

Jealous of his twin broth-

er Thomas (Stanfield), a key apostle to the reigning and very respected Jesus (Nicholas Pinnock, *Captain America: The First Avenger*), Clarence seeks fame and fortune. He also wants to impress his sweetheart Varinia (Anna Diop, *Nanny*), Jedediah's sister, and his mom Amina (Marianne Jean-Baptiste, *Secrets and Lies*). His bright idea? Masquerade as the new, improved messiah and people will anoint him and give him money. Friends of his pretend to be blind so he

can give them sight or play dead so he can wake them. Crowds gather, witness the miracles, swallow the ruse and donate to his cause. The charade is so successful, Romans, led by Pontius Pilate (James McAvoy, *The Last King of Scotland*), spy on him and arrest the new king of kings.

What follows is a faulty storyline that flails. Even so, the cast thrives. Stanfield's M.O. is less is more. He lets his eyes, physicality, expressions and demeanor carry his performance and the camera lens loves his

face. Add in his enigmatic presence, and he's compelling even when the film is not. The rest of the ensemble cast rises above the material too. Omar Sy as Barabbas, Alfre Woodard as Virgin Mary, David Oyelowo as John the Baptist, Michael Ward as Judas the Iscariot and Tom Glynn-Carney as the ambitious soldier Decimus all shine.

Writer/director Jeymes Samuel reinvented western movies with his very novel and ultra-hip *The Harder They Fall*. If he'd simply followed that straightforward path and created a Black

sword and sandals epic in the vein of *Gladiator*, he'd have a more accessible, box office-friendly film. He's got great action directing instincts, evidenced by his adrenaline-pumping chariot race. Samuel also knows how to pull a deft tech crew together that can recreate eras: production designer Peter Walpole (*The Matrix Resurrections*), costume designer Antoinette Messam (*Creed*), art directors Roberto Caruso and Francesco Scandale, cinematographer Rob Hardy (*Mission*

See CLARENCE, Page 16

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Faith D / Unsplash

# Cheers to 100 years of Texas State Parks

AUSTIN— As Texas State Parks’ yearlong birthday celebration winds down, we are looking back at the highlights from 2023.

“It has been a truly amazing year for Texas State Parks,” said Rodney Franklin, Director of Texas State Parks. “It has been a career highlight to see new visitors discover parks because of our celebrations and witness a year of milestones. Milestones made possible by our hardworking teams within the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, partnerships with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation and certainly H-E-B. I am forever grateful to Texans that helped us honor the legacy of 100 years of Texas State Parks but also expand the foundation of state parks for future generations of Texans.”

Here are some of the top achievements from the Texas State Parks Centennial Celebration:

- Texas State Parks received the 2023 National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management in October. The award recognizes the best state park system in the country. The National Gold Medal Award Program is governed and administered by the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration and announced at the National Recreation and Park Association annual conference.

- Texas Travel Alliance named Texas State Parks the 2023 Heritage Award winners Oct. 17 at the annual Texas Travel Summit. Past recipients of this award include the Dallas Cowboys, Southwest Airlines and Landry’s, Inc. The Heritage Award recognizes and honors outstanding businesses and organizations that have enriched the heritage of and made a lasting, positive imprint on the Texas travel industry. The selection is based on the organization demonstrating a history of exceptional achievement, exemplary business practices, innovative corporate culture and a commitment of excellence to their customers and their community.

- Voters overwhelmingly approved Proposition 14 during the November election, which created the Centennial Parks Conservation Fund. The \$1 Billion fund is made from a portion of state budget surplus and creates a dedicated funding stream for acquiring and developing new state parks.

- H-E-B partnership and new product line that will continue to benefit state parks and conservation for years to come.

- Two million dollars in donations raised for park specific projects that targeted visitor services

- Two commemorative books were written in honor of the Texas State Park Centennial- “The Art of

Texas State Parks” by Andrew Sansom and Linda J. Reaves, and “Texas State Parks- The First One Hundred Years 1923-2023” by George Bristol.

- A record number of people kicked off 2023 by participating in First Day Hikes. Nearly 8,000 people hiked, biked and paddled a combined 17,190 miles Jan. 1 at one of 83 participating parks. Cedar Hill State Park, about 25 minutes south of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex, welcomed the most participants, with 773 visitors taking part in multiple programs throughout the day.

- The traveling art exhibit, “The Art of Texas State Parks,” kicked off in Austin at the Bullock Museum. The exhibit featured painting of more than 30 parks by some of Texas’ most celebrated artists. The exhibit then travelled to the Houston Museum of Natural Science and the Panhandle Plains Museum in Canyon, and was so successful, additional locations have booked the exhibit across the state through the end of 2024.

- The Community Outdoor Outreach Program (CO-OP) awarded a record number of grants in honor of the centennial celebration, allocating more than \$2.8 million to 55 new grant-funded partnerships to help communities pro-

See PARKS, Page 11

“PREPARE TO BE ECSTATICALLY BLOWN AWAY!”

THE DAILY BEAST

*Tina*

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Paris Dabrowski

# Federal prosecutors seek death penalty for white man who fatally shot 10 Black people in Buffalo grocery store

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National  
Correspondent



Gendron is already serving a life sentence without parole after pleading guilty to New York state murder charges in November 2022. (Photo via NNPA)

Federal prosecutors announced on Friday, Jan. 12, their intention to pursue the death penalty for Payton Gendron, a 20-year-old white man responsible for a racist rampage that claimed the lives of 10 Black shoppers at a Buffalo grocery store in May 2022. Prosecutors revealed the decision in a court filing before a scheduled status conference hearing at the Robert H. Jackson Federal Courthouse in Buffalo.

Gendron is already serving a life sentence without parole after pleading guilty to New York state murder charges in November 2022. Defense attorneys

have expressed Gendron's willingness to plead guilty to federal hate crimes and weapons violations if prosecutors choose not to pursue the death penalty.

"Today's decision by the Department of Justice provides a pathway to both relief and a measure of closure for the victims and their families," said civil rights attorney Benjamin Crump. "They have been pleading for full justice for nearly two years, and today they are one step closer. We thank the DOJ for its diligence and for fighting for those whose lives

were so tragically affected by this atrocity. We ask that you continue to keep the victims, their families, and the entire Buffalo community in your prayers as they continue to grieve and pursue full justice for those who were stolen from them."

The announcement follows a nearly 20-month Justice Department case review, marking the first time Attorney General Merrick Garland has authorized a new capital prosecution. President Joe Biden, who campaigned against the death penalty, faced

criticism from civil rights groups, arguing that the death penalty historically and disproportionately affects racial minorities and the poor. Garland issued a moratorium on federal executions in 2021, which remains in place but does not prevent prosecutors from seeking a death sentence.

In 2023, emotions ran high at a sentencing hearing as the sister of one of the victims confronted Gendron. Chaos erupted when an enraged man charged at the defendant, leading to authorities rushing Gendron out of the courtroom.

After returning, Judge Susan Egan acknowledged the pain experienced by the victims' families but emphasized the need for appropriate conduct.

Gendron, who had targeted a specific predominantly Black Buffalo zip code, admitted to the racially charged massacre. He said he regretted his actions, attributing them to online hate and the belief in the "replacement theory." Gendron was sentenced to life in prison by Judge Egan, who condemned his ideologies as "ignorant, hateful, and evil."

## PARKS, from Page 10

mote the value of recreation and conservation across Texas.

• Texas Parks & Wildlife Magazine published its biggest issue in May, sponsored by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation. With 100 pages honoring 100 years of parks, the issue featured a Texas-size helping of information about the state park sys-

tem — the places and the people, the history and the future, the magic and the memories.

• The Recreational Trail Grants program allocated a record \$5.14 Million to 16 projects across the state, funded from a portion of the federal gas tax generated by gasoline purchases for off-highway vehicles. The Texas Legislature

has added an additional \$1,000,000 per year to the program (pending passage of the state budget), which includes an additional \$1,000,000 for this year from Sporting Goods Sales Tax funds. Additionally, several projects funded in previous years were completed under budget and five projects were cancelled, creating another \$700,000 available for reallocation this year.

• Texas State Parks and Minor League Baseball teams around the state teamed up for the first time this year to bring the ultimate day/night double-header opportunity. Visitors were able to spend a day at a state park and a night at the ballpark in partner-

ship with five minor league teams — Corpus Christi Hooks, El Paso Chihuahuas, Frisco RoughRiders, Round Rock Express and Sugarland Space Cowboys. The teams offered a variety of incentives to those who showed their park receipts at the gates.

• In May, visitors toasted "100 s'more years" of outdoor fun at Texas State Parks' official birthday party. Eighty state parks hosted events for all ages and skill levels focused on s'mores-themed fun, from making solar-baked s'mores to a s'mores-themed star party.

## VOTERS, from Page 8

With the highest youth turnout in about 30 years, Gen Z made up the entire 18 to 24 age block in 2022, said Siles. Their number one issue—the economy, as workers and taxpayers who are extremely concerned about being able to find a good job and pay for a house, she said. Though fairly united in their tendencies to lean left, disparities remain in this group in terms of race and gender, said Siles.

But it's issues like climate action, gun violence and abortion that bring them to the polls. Though there's been some confusing polling out there, said Siles, when it comes to top issues like climate change and abortion, only one party is somewhat acceptable, and Siles said she believes young voters will continue

to see that.

In terms of barriers to getting out the vote, Ramakrishnan cites misinformation affecting AAPI voters, while Siles points to a lack of information affecting youth. With numerous reports of voters never being contacted by candidates, compared to other generations, Siles said young people get their information from a lot of different places. Candidates should meet voters where they are online, said Siles, but they should also show up on college campuses and put in real effort to engage youth.

Transportation and voter I.D. issues create other barriers, which break down to be more of an issue for Black voters, said Siles. Voters of Tomorrow has physically mobilized, sup-

porting ride share programs, and through its voter champion pledge, pushes people to go out of their way to engage at colleges and on social media.

Whether Black voters will see 2024 as a moment when they need to step up for democracy remains to be seen, said Scott. In 2024, excitement may be the issue, she said, but unfortunately, the parties are not reaching out to grass roots organizations to mobilize the vote.

Black voters have been dissatisfied before, and they still showed up, said Scott. With high unemployment among Blacks during the 90s, they still came out on Election Day. There are a lot of things that Black people have not been happy with for a very long time, but they have still been willing to show up to vote, she said.



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# Diageo expands efforts for sustainable glass production with seed funding

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National  
Correspondent

In a move to accelerate the decarbonization of the glass industry on an international scale, Diageo, a prominent sponsor for the 2024 National Newspaper Publishers Association's (NNPA) annual mid-winter training conference, has announced a strategic initiative. Diageo will provide seed funding to facilitate



the expansion of Glass Futures activities into North America and India, two of the company's largest markets.

Glass Futures, a leading

glass research and technology organization, is partnering with Diageo to explore effective pathways to decarbonize the glass industry. This collaboration is

part of Diageo's commitment to sustainable practices and environmental responsibility.

The NNPA, representing 250 African American-owned newspapers and media companies in the United States, is hosting its annual mid-winter training conference in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., beginning on Wednesday, January 24, at the B Ocean Beach Resort. The theme of the 2024 conference is "Empower the

Black Press, the Black Vote, and Black America." Diageo's involvement reflects a commitment to impactful corporate partnerships.

With additional funding from Diageo, Glass Futures aims to delve into new technologies and system-wide approaches. The focus is reducing carbon emissions associated with glass production in North America and India, where Diageo has significant market influence.

While glass is inherently recyclable, addressing the carbon footprint of its production poses a challenge for the industry. Technological advancements and the limited availability of renewable energy infrastructure have contributed to this challenge. As a proactive supporter of Glass Futures, Diageo has been integral to driving innovative solutions.

See DIAGEO, Page 13

## EMANUEL, from Page 7

President" than their actual viewpoint about genocide. The largely 60-plus crowd in the room was a friendly audience to the President. And we know that the Black Church as an institution is losing inroads among younger generations. Faith will always be important to African Americans—but how that faith is practiced and what institutions shape it is evolving and changing. Likewise, African American voting patterns are shifting, and the arguments and appeals to Black voters must shift.

Bishop Samuel Green, Presiding Prelate of the 7th Episcopal District, reminded those assembled in his remarks that while Ella Baker, Malcolm X, Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Jr., and other luminaries of the African American freedom struggle might have had issues with American democracy if there was a choice between President Biden or former President Trump, we know they adamantly would have backed the incumbent. This stark reminder of the situation of American democracy, where White nationalist demagogues and insurrectionists have seemingly hijacked one party, speaks

to the peril that the country is in. Yet, for a generation that has seen the ladder to opportunity kicked down, George Floyd's life crushed out of him, and the US Capitol bathed in tear gas, the entire electoral process and its benefits are questionable.

As I walked out of Mother Emanuel and back to my office, I saw the snappy punditry beginning to digest the President's visit. Some things, however, take time to sit and think through. We do ourselves a disservice with snap judgments for a microwave news cycle. Members of the AME Church must think about what it means for the President of the United States to visit our church and what it means for Israel to flout humanitarian norms in the Gaza Strip. We must ask ourselves how best to use our resources to serve the communities we minister to in this troubling time for American Democracy.

There are no easy answers, but we know that our faith in Christ will guide us, and we must be obedient enough to follow and act upon it.

*John Thomas III, Ph.D. is the Editor of The Christian Recorder, the official news-*

*paper of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. He is the President of the Associated Church Press*

*and an Executive Committee Member of the World Association of Christian Communicators--North*

*America Section. A native of Nashville, Tennessee, he has recently relocated to Charleston, South Carolina*

*where he is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at the College of Charleston.*

## JEAN, from Page 2

School professor and former president and CEO of the NAACP, will deliver this year's Dotson Family Keynote Address.

The 33rd Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Commem-

orative Breakfast is part of a series of events hosted by the university each year to encourage students to participate in community service and thought leadership.

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# JCPenney's Hope & Wonder brand celebrates milestone in community giving

(Black PR Wire & BUSINESS WIRE) -- JCPenney, the shopping destination for America's diverse, working families, proudly celebrates Hope & Wonder, its private brand designed in-house by the JCPenney Creative Coalition to commemorate and celebrate moments that matter for customers and associates.

Since the brand launched in 2022, JCPenney has invested \$1 million in Hope & Wonder partnerships

and additional cultural initiatives as part of its ongoing commitment to celebrating diversity.

Now in its third year, Hope & Wonder honors cultural observances throughout the year including Black History Month, Women's History Month, Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, Pride, Juneteenth and Hispanic Heritage Month. Merchandise in the brand's assortment is designed by JCPenney's Creative Co-

alition, a cross-functional team of passionate BIPOC designers who bring their authentic selves and distinctive voices to create each unique Hope & Wonder collection. The ongoing mission of the Creative Coalition is to establish JCPenney as a year-round authentic resource for apparel, accessories, gifts, beauty and home by speaking to the heart of important cultural moments.

Hope & Wonder brand campaign visuals include

JCPenney associates, community leaders and members of the JCPenney Creative Coalition sporting apparel from the assortment. In 2023, Dr. Opal Lee, the "grandmother of Juneteenth," appeared in our 2023 Juneteenth collection photoshoot and filmed an exclusive interview with JCPenney.

In 2023, beneficiaries included Black Girls Smile, JA Worldwide, The Asian American Foundation, Point Foundation, Unity

Unlimited, Inc. in support of Opal's Walk for Freedom and Latinitas. JCPenney's support of these organizations goes beyond monetary donations through authentic engagement with their leaders and the causes they support. For example, in 2023, JCPenney associates marched alongside Dr. Opal Lee for the third year in a row at Opal's Walk for Freedom in Fort Worth, TX, honoring her life's work to have Juneteenth recognized as a national

holiday. Additionally, Latinitas named JCPenney its Corporate Partner of the Year for 2023.

In 2024, JCPenney is excited to support the important work of Black Girls Smile, Dress for Success Worldwide, The Asian American Foundation, Point Foundation, Unity Unlimited, Inc. and Latinitas by continuing its corporate commitment and by donating 100% of net profits through sales of the Hope & Wonder brand.

## DIAGEO, from Page 12

"We're looking forward to expanding our partnership with Glass Futures into North America and India to look into lower-carbon glass production," stated Andy Griffiths, head of Sustainable Procurement at Diageo.

"This is key for the success of Diageo's and the wider glass industry's decarbonization efforts. Partnering on innovative approaches is vital to making a net-zero world a reality, and we are hopeful that this collaboration will bring

great results in other markets going forward."

Officials said that the collaboration between Diageo and Glass Futures has already yielded positive results in the UK. A 2021 trial involving Glass Futures, Diageo, and Encirc showcased waste-based biofuel-powered furnaces for Dia-

geo's Black & White Scotch whisky brand. This innovative approach resulted in a remarkable 90% reduction in the carbon footprint of the bottle-making process.

Diageo's seed investment in Glass Futures' international expansion reportedly aligns with the company's broader commitment to

environmental, social, and governance (ESG) targets. The initiative contributes to Diageo's goal of reducing Scope 3 carbon emissions by 50%, measured against its 2020 baseline by 2030.

Meanwhile, Diageo's Vice President Stephanie Childes plans to sit with NNPA President and CEO

Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr. during the NNPA's popular fireside chat at 11:50 a.m. on Thursday, January 25, at the midwinter training conference in Fort Lauderdale. The discussion will center on harnessing the power of community, the Black Press, and inclusive corporate leadership.

## MLK, from Page 5

stirred Dr. King courageously to declare in King's own words that "An injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Dr. King would again say, "Peace is not just the absence of war; it is the presence of peace."

Rev. Jesse Jackson noted that King spoke of a deeper malady in American society. His view was that presidential administrations have been embroiling themselves in conflicts across the globe for the wrong reasons.

"Dr. King was outspokenly anti-war and anti-racism," said Rev. Mark Thompson, a civil rights leader who recently joined the National Newspaper Publishers Association as the trade association's global digital transformation director. "There's no question King would oppose the war in Ukraine and seek diplomatic solutions. I believe he would also call for a cease-fire in Gaza."

"I believe his posture on Congress's dysfunction would be consistent with the words he used to describe segregationist intransigence in his 'I Have a Dream' speech—inter-

position and nullification," Thompson declared.

NNPA President and CEO Rev. Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr., also an SCLC youth coordinator alum back in the 1960s, concurred. "Dr. King was a nonviolent freedom fighter who believed that we all members of one humanity. His concept of the 'beloved community' was all-inclusive and not discriminatory to anyone," Chavis insisted. "Today's world realities of racism, antisemitism, Islamophobia, oppression, war, hatred, and bigotry are void of love for one another. We need Dr. King's wisdom, inclusive theology, and leadership courage today more than ever before."

Johnson said there's little doubt about where King would stand on today's issues because the icon never wavered. "I don't think he would have changed his position fundamentally," Johnson determined.

"The Black Press of America, through the NNPA, salutes and pays an eternal salute to the wisdom, vision, and courage of The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.," Chavis

declared. "May the 2024 Martin Luther King National Holiday be a day of reflection, action, freedom

movement building, and constructive social change for all people in America and throughout the world."



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# O Energy, O Energy, Wherefore Art Thou O Energy?

Dr. James L. Snyder

Since I have reached a certain age, I cannot reveal that age; my energy seems limited. I don't have the energy I once had. Where it has gone, I have not discovered yet.

I once inquired of The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage where my energy went, and she replied, "Silly boy, you're over the hill, and so is your energy."

I almost asked her what that meant, but I didn't have the energy, and I didn't have the energy to climb back up that hill.

Not having enough energy does have its good

side. One thing is that it is an excellent excuse for not doing something. For example, when my wife asks me to do something that I really don't want to do, I say, "My Dear, I just don't have the energy or I would do it."

Of course, she scowls at me because I think she knows exactly what I'm saying.

I have discovered that the word "retired" is something I didn't understand before. It means that I am tired over and over and over again. How I long for those pre-tired days of long ago.

I didn't understand how

tired I was until recently.

A little over a year ago, our great-granddaughter entered our lives. When that happened, the great-grandmother opened "Grandma's Playtime Center." Now, the great-granddaughter is at our home during the week while her parents are working.

Seeing how much this little rascal grows within a year has been interesting. Somebody thought they were teaching her how to walk when, in reality, she learned how to run.

Hardly a step goes by with her that she's not running here and there.

I open my office door,

and before I fully open it, she ran inside before me. My challenge is finding the energy to get her out of my office.

Watching her running all day long it is a very tiring experience. I'm not sure where she gets all her energy but she seems never to run out. If only I could borrow some of her energy, it would be great. It would serve both of us well.

Since she's been staying with us throughout the week, I've realized how truly tired I was. Every day is a new level of tirement for me. I'm beginning to believe that there is actually no end to this tirement

cycle.

I still come back to that question: where did my energy go? If I can answer that question, I might solve some of my retirement problems.

Thinking back on my former years, I remember how much energy I had when I was younger.

As a young kid, my parents made me go to bed early, and sleeping early was difficult. I sought ways to convince my parents to let me stay up longer. No matter when I went to bed, I still had energy that I hadn't used that day. Oh, if only I could tap into that energy today.

Now, as I am older and in that tirement cycle, I look for excuses to go to bed earlier.

It has become a game between The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and me. We try to find new excuses to convince us to go to bed earlier.

Sitting in my chair, I will begin to fake a yawning session. Looking at me, my wife asks, "Are you ready for bed already?"

Looking at my watch and seeing that it's not even 9 o'clock, I respond by saying, "Oh, no not yet!"

"You will tell me when

**See SNYDER, Page 15**

## RADICAL, from Page 3

support, in fact, undermined the agency of Black Americans fighting for their rights and freedoms. Dr. King saw this as a subtle but insidious form of control, a way for white liberals to maintain their own sense of comfort and moral superiority without fully committing to the radical changes necessary for true equality.

Moreover, Dr. King recognized the danger of white complacency. He understood that the temporary alliance of some white liberals with the civil rights movement was often contingent on the movement not threatening their own privileged positions in society. He was wary of allies whose commitment to racial justice was superficial and who could easily retreat to the safety of their privileged lives when the fight for equality became too challenging or too threatening to their own status.

Despite these critiques, Dr. King did not dismiss the role of white allies outright. He acknowledged the genuine support of many white liberals and understood the strategic importance of building alliances across racial lines. However, his relationship with these allies was always marked by a sense of realism about the limits of their support and the need for the Black

community to lead its own struggle for justice.

These sorts of examinations by Dr. King are still deeply relevant—yet often ignored—today.

At the time of his death in 1968, Dr. King's approval rating stood at a mere 33%, a statistic that starkly contrasts with his near-universal acclaim today. This figure is telling; it speaks volumes about the climate of public opinion against him. Dr. King was not the widely beloved figure he is retrospectively made out to be. Instead, he was a disruptor, often vilified and considered a threat to the social order by a significant portion of the American populace.

The sanitization and appropriation of his legacy are not just acts of historical forgetfulness; they are acts of deliberate revisionism. By stripping his message of its radical edge, by reframing him as a universally beloved figure, these narratives conveniently ignore the societal divisions and entrenched opposition that he fought against. This revisionism serves to comfort those who, in Dr. King's time, and now, would find his messages deeply uncomfortable and threatening to their worldview.

In recognizing this paradox, it becomes essential

to confront the reality of Dr. King's legacy. He was a man who inspired both deep admiration and profound animosity. His calls for justice and equality were met with resistance and hostility, not just from overt racists but also from those who professed a more subtle, insidious form of prejudice. And still do. The very individuals and institutions that now honor him are, in many cases, the ideological antagonists of his story.

The deliberate distortion of Dr. King's message is also a tool for silencing contemporary activism—a form of gaslighting—a way to discredit and delegitimize the very movements that embody Dr. King's legacy. Those who quote him to condemn the unrest and disruption of today's activists, writers, and believers, ignore the fact that Dr. King himself was a disruptor, a radical force who recognized that true change often requires more than peaceful protest; it demands a fundamental upheaval of the social order.

To invoke his legacy in a manner that diminishes the validity of modern struggles against racial injustice is not just intellectually dishonest; it is a strategic move to maintain the very inequalities Dr. King sought to eradicate. It is an attempt to pacify, to coerce conformity under the guise of honoring

his memory, all the while perpetuating the systemic injustices he dedicated his life to fighting.

The co-opting of Dr. King's legacy serves as a mirror to society's ongoing discomfort with the realities of racial injustice. It reveals a collective reluctance to engage with the full complexity of his mission and the uncomfortable truths about our own society that his work lays bare. By sanitizing his message, these

actors attempt to erase the urgency and the radicalism that defined his life and work.

In this Hallmark card distortion, the radical Dr. King—the Dr. King who spoke truth to power, who stood firm against the tide of oppression, who demanded not just peace but justice—is lost. To honor his legacy truthfully, we must reject these manipulative narratives. We must embrace the totality of his message, rec-

ognizing that his vision was not merely one of harmony, but of radical transformation—a transformation that is still desperately needed today.

*Frederick is a two-time New York Times bestselling author of "The Black Friend" (2020) and "Patriarchy Blues" (2022), "Better Than We Found It" (2022) and "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever - The Courage to Dream" (2022). He can be found on Substack.*

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# Some Famous Quotes of Dr. M. L. King, Jr.



**Sister Tarpley**  
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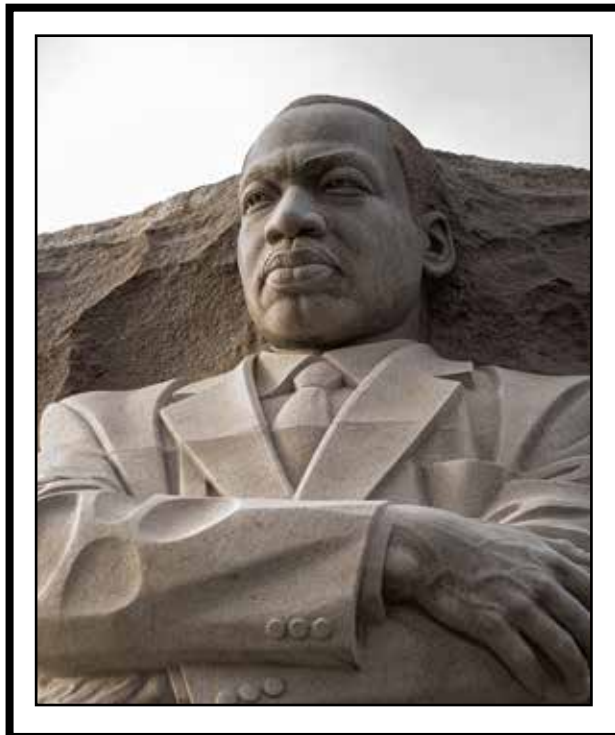
Lest we forget some of these inspiring words and quotes of Dr. King, remember the following:

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy. The true neighbor will risk his position, his prestige, and even his life for the welfare of others.”

“There are some things so dear, some things so precious, some things so eternally true, that they are worth dying for. And I submit to you that if a man has not discovered something that he will die for, he isn’t fit to live.”

“When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will



be able to speed up that day when all of God’s children, Black men and White men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, ‘Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!’”

“I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. That is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant.”

“We’ve been in the mountain of war. We’ve been in the mountain of violence. We’ve been in the mountain of hatred long enough.

It is necessary to move on now, but only by moving out of this mountain can we move to the promised land of justice and brotherhood and the Kingdom of God.

It all boils down to the fact that we must never allow ourselves to become satisfied with unattained goals. We must always maintain a kind of divine

discontent.”

“When our days become dreary with low-hoovering clouds of despair, and when our nights become darker than a thousand midnights, let us remember that there is a creative force in this universe, working to pull down the gigantic mountains of evil, a power that is able to make a way out of no way and transform dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows. Let us realize the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice.”

“We all have the drum major instinct. We all want to be important, to surpass others, to achieve distinction, to lead the parade. ... And the great issue of life is to harness the drum major instinct.

It is a good instinct if you don’t distort it and pervert it. Don’t give it up. Keep feeling the need for being important. Keep feeling the need for being first. But I want you to be the first in love.

I want you to be the first in moral excellence. I want you to be the first in gener-

osity.”

“Faith is taking the first step, even when you don’t see the whole staircase.”

“Hatred paralyzes life; love releases it. Hatred confuses life; love harmonizes it. Hatred darkens life; love illuminates it.”

“I submit that an individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for the law.”

In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.”

“It may be true that the law cannot make a man

love me, but it can stop him from lynching me, and I think that’s pretty important.” “Let no man pull you low enough to hate him.”

Like an unchecked cancer, hate corrodes the personality and eats away its vital unity. Hate destroys a man’s sense of values and his objectivity. It causes him to describe the beautiful as ugly and the ugly as beautiful, and to confuse the true with the false and the false with the true.”

“Man must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love.”

*(Editor’s Note: This column originally ran in January 2017.)*

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## SNYDER, from Page 14

you’re ready for bed, won’t you?”

I’m not too fond when she puts all the responsibility on me. If I had the energy, I would challenge her, but where do I get that kind of energy?

Occasionally, I will sneak a peek in her direction, and sometimes, I will see her eyes closed. I then say, “You’re not asleep are you?”

She would quickly open her eyes, looks at me, and says, “No, I was just praying.”

Finally, just before the clock hit 10 o’clock, she looked at me and said, “I think I’m ready for bed. I have to get up early tomorrow to take care of our

great-granddaughter.”

Only she could come up with a legitimate excuse to go to bed early. If only I could come up with a legitimate reason but I had to get up early in the morning I might be able to cash in on that.

Usually, I’ll respond by saying, “I’ll join you when I find the energy to get up off of my chair.”

Finding energy has become a hobby of mine. Unfortunately, I’m not too successful at this hobby.

I won’t give up the search for energy. Surely, there is something I can do to tap into some kind of energy. Maybe the fault lies with climate change.

Thinking about this the

other day, I remembered a Bible verse. “But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” (Isaiah 40:31).

Based on this, I have learned that waiting on God is the real secret to my daily energy. Like many people, I try to find my own energy and have failed many times. Only God can renew the strength I need to live each day for His glory.

Dr. James L. Snyder lives in Ocala, FL with the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. Telephone 1-352-216-3025, e-mail [jamesnyder51@gmail.com](mailto:jamesnyder51@gmail.com), website [www.jamesnyderministries.com](http://www.jamesnyderministries.com).

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**Parkland**

# NDG Book Review: 'Rental Person Who Does Nothing' could be a catalyst

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

You need a hand there? A little help?

You know where to find it: your contacts list is full of people who'll lend a hand, make repairs, offer assistance, lift, and oomph. You know people who'll run to your side when you need them and you know others, as in the new book "Rental Person Who Does Nothing" by Shoji Morimoto, who'll just stand around and watch.

In a way, Shoji Morimoto wasn't meant to work for someone else.

For many years, he was a freelance writer in Japan,



penning ads, textbooks, and material that he found dull and repetitive. He was "stressed" by it, and by every financial aspect of merely having to work and so, looking for something totally different, he

launched a service he called Do-Nothing Rental, announcing its basic lay-out on what was then Twitter.

You needed a fourth for a card game, he'd be that guy. Want someone to hold you accountable? He'd do it, but only if it didn't require him to make decisions. Need somebody to hold your spot in line? He was your man, but not twice. Want a lunch buddy? Tweet him and he'd meet you there. A good listener? He was on it. He'd show up when nobody else would. And yet - "Rental Person" was discerning and didn't take just any old task, it had to be legal and interesting.

The cost? Morimoto didn't charge for his efforts.

He was comped for transportation and usually for any meals and tickets required. Appreciative clients sent him gift certificates and freewill offers of cash but Morimoto mostly tended to his family's needs through financial trading and by using his savings. Still, he's adamant that Rental Person wasn't a volunteer gig, that it was a job but not exactly a business.

And even that all depended on what the client wanted...

"Rental Person Who Does Nothing" is one of those books that makes you

tilt your head, squint one eye, and wonder what the heck you just read.

It's quirky, to be sure. Appealing, to a point, but also somewhat half-finished and not completely applicable - and so probably not easily do-able. It's also confounding: in keeping with his do-nothing aim, author Shoji Morimoto admits up-front that he didn't even write this book, thus underscoring its title and reveling in the ultimate laziness - all the while ignoring an obvious (and well-exampled) need for occasional bursts of pure hustle.

For the right reader, this will sound like fun in its

unpredictability and its by-the-seat-of-one's-pants-ness. Alas, it'll make most business people intrigued but slightly horrified, if nothing but for the financial aspects and concerns laid out here. Those, along with repetition, ultimately competing statements, and impulsivity, and the book becomes a bit of a challenge.

Still, for people-watchers and well-moneyed free spirits who're ready to shuck the rat race, "Rental Person Who Does Nothing" may be a tiny catalyst for that one foot out the door. If you like the status quo, paycheck and all, though, it's safe to say hands-off.

## CLARENCE, from Page 9

Impossible: Fallout) and Samuel himself as the musical score's composer. The ingredients for a better film are obvious.

If you start with a premise everyone knows and dare to satirize it or express a contrary opinion, your

humor and mission must be clear. You need a consistent tone. Your ending has to summarize and reinforce all that came before it. Yes, sometimes the footage has a quirky hip feel (love the Soul Train-like dance off), but most of the comedy

seems forced, not organic or laugh-out-loud funny. Also, Clarence's journey of self-discovery goes from being eccentric, to skeptical, to inexplicable and then clumsy with odd tonal shifts that make what's on view an exasperating adv/com/dra. Not an entertaining or profound one.

Clarence's intellectual curiosity about Jesus's story and followers never pans out into an intelligible thesis. Clarence proclaims: "You pray to a man in the sky, who you never met."

If that's what he feels, why does he abandon his agnos-

tic life for a holy one? If he had the courage of his convictions, he might be a credible character.

If The Book of Clarence has a purpose, it's a mystery so hard to unravel that it will puzzle theater or streaming audiences.

It's a treatise on disbelief and belief that never gels. A baffling experience that becomes the cross writer/director Jaymes Samuel must bear.

Visit Film Critic Dwight Brown at [DwightBrownInk.com](http://DwightBrownInk.com).

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Thursday, Jan 25 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.	Thursday, Feb 9 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

For more information or to register for this event, please visit [dallascasa.org](http://dallascasa.org)

**NDBT**  
MORTGAGE DIVISION

**SPECIAL OFFERING**

- ★ **HomeStart Program**
  - ★ Minimum down payment options starting at 3%
  - ★ Available for ITIN Applicants
  - ★ \$2,500 Closing credit available!
- ★ **Community Home Equity**
  - ★ Use equity for home improvements, debt consolidation, etc.
  - ★ 1st and 2nd Lien options available

**Brenda Peralta**  
Mortgage Loan Officer  
972.716.7379  
NMLS: 2029954

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† NDBT homeownership course is required in order to be eligible for credit

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