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Rent hits minorities the hardest

- See Page 3



Covid vaccine is safe for newborns

- See Page 4



CASA aims for glamorous prom nights

- See Page 5



School data released on violent incidents

- See Page 6



The rundown on Grammy highlights

- See Page 7



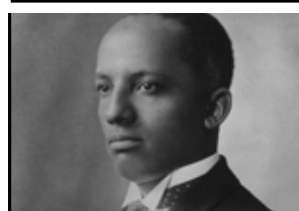
Local author offers positive message to kids

- See Page 8



Film Review: 'The Greatest Night in Pop'

- See Page 9



Sister Tarpley: Celebrating Black History

- See Page 14

Biden-Harris administration take steps to address racial wage gap

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National Correspondent



on January 29, the anniversary of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, the Biden-Harris Administration unveiled comprehensive measures to tackle persistent gender and racial wage gaps in the United States. (LinkedIn / Unsplash)

Taraji P. Henson's powerful statement that highlighted the glaring wage disparities faced by Black women in Hollywood perhaps pales in comparison to the meager salaries those in America's workforce historically contend with. And on January 29, the anniversary of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, the Biden-Harris Administration unveiled comprehensive measures to tackle persistent gender and racial wage gaps in the United States.

Henson recently emphasized the inequities, stating that "the math ain't mathing" when it comes to the disproportionate pay differences for Black women in the entertainment industry. Her poignant observation underscored the broader issue of unequal pay in that industry. President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris reaffirmed their commitment to equal pay as a fundamental component of their mission to ensure fairness and opportunity for all workers by observing the law that Barack Obama signed in 2009.

The administration said it recognized that women are paid, on average, only 77 cents for every

dollar paid to men. The wage gap is even more pronounced for women of color, where African Americans earn only 64 cents and Latina women earn a mere 55 cents for each dollar earned by their male counterparts.

Obama's legislation, signed on January 29, 2009, responded to the Supreme Court's decision in Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co., which stripped protections against pay discrimination.

"The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act reinstates prior law and emphasizes that pay discrimination claims based on sex, race, national origin, age, religion, and disability 'accrue' whenever an employee re-

ceives a discriminatory paycheck," Biden remarked. "This is a crucial step in rectifying historical injustices and creating a fairer future for all."

Building on the law's foundation, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is finalizing a rule to eliminate the consideration of an individual's current or past pay when determining federal employee salaries. Simultaneously, the Federal Acquisition Regulatory (FAR) Council proposes measures to prohibit federal contractors from seeking and considering applicants' compensation history during

See WAGE, Page 5

Inside...

- People in the News 2
- Op/Ed 3
- Health 4
- Community 5
- Education 6
- Feature 7-8
- Entertainment 9-10
- Marketplace 12-13
- Religion 14-15
- NDG Book Review 16



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People In The News ...



Joe Madison



Robin A. Walton

NDG Quote of the Week: "In recognizing the humanity of our fellow beings, we pay ourselves the highest tribute."
—Thurgood Marshall

Joe Madison

Tributes continued to pour in throughout Friday for Joe Madison, the talk show host, activist and philanthropist known as “The Black Eagle.” After a lengthy bout with prostate cancer, the popular SiriusXM host died on Feb. 1. He was 74.

Madison’s death comes as America observes the start of Black History Month. Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., President and CEO of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), stated, “On behalf of the National Newspaper



Publishers Association, representing the Black Press of America, we express our profound condolences to the family of Joe Madison. As a trailblazer and consistent freedom fighter jour-

nalist and broadcaster, Joe Madison embodied the essence and courage to speak truth to power.”

President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris also offered their thoughts. “Whether it was a hunger strike for voting rights or his advocacy for anti-lynching legislation that I was proud to sign in 2022, Joe fought hard against injustice,” Biden stated. Madison aligned his platform with his purpose, Harris added. “Through his decades-long career in radio, he championed the fight for equity and justice. Our nation is better because

of his voice.”

According to his official bio, the native of Dayton, Ohio, was an All-Conference running back at Washington University in St. Louis where he was also a baritone soloist in the university choir and a disc jockey at the campus radio station. He earned his bachelor’s degree in sociology, becoming the first person in his family to graduate college.

At age 24, he became the youngest executive director of the NAACP’s Detroit branch before being appointed the organization’s National Political Director

and eventually being elected to the National Board of Directors where he served for 14 years. During his tenure at the NAACP, Madison led hundreds of volunteers on a series of successful voter registration marches, including a cross-country “March for Dignity” from Los Angeles to Baltimore. The marches garnered thousands of signatures for an anti-apartheid bill in Congress.

Madison’s radio career began in 1980 at Detroit’s WXYZ. He continued his broadcast journey to WWDB in Philadelphia, WWRC and WOL in Wash-

ington, DC. The popularity of his WOL program led to syndication on the Radio One Talk Network and its XM satellite channel which merged with Sirius to become SiriusXM in 2008. In 2023, Madison celebrated his 15th anniversary with SiriusXM.

In 2015, Madison set the Guinness World Record for the longest on-air broadcast, 52 hours. During the record-breaking show, he raised more than \$250,000 for the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History

See MADISON, Page 14

Robin A. Walton

MULLICA HILL, N.J.-- (BUSINESS WIRE, Black PR Wire)-- Inspira Health today announced the promotion of Robin A. Walton to the role of Chief Philanthropy Officer and Senior Vice President, External Affairs, effective February 1, 2024. Walton will take on the responsibilities of the retiring Peter Kaprielyan, who served as senior vice president of the Inspira Foundation for the last decade.

Walton’s promotion comes as part of a strategic effort to continue the implementation of Inspira’s growth and community commitments in Southern



New Jersey. With an illustrious career spanning more than a decade in government and community relations across various sectors, including health care, higher education, and library services, Walton is set to lead Inspira Health towards

realizing its vision for widespread health access and community welfare.

Prior to her promotion, Walton served as senior vice president of government and external affairs at Inspira Health since August 30, 2021, where she established a record of forging strong, collaborative relationships with political representatives and government officials at the local, regional, and state levels. She will maintain her responsibilities within government and external affairs in this expanded role.

“A steadfast advocate for health care and community relations, Robin has already demonstrated an exception-

al ability to navigate and influence public policy, advise on health care legislation, and secure critical funding for community essentials,” said Amy Mansue, president & CEO of Inspira Health. “We are indebted to Robin for her dedication to Inspira and she will continue to play a critical role as

we move this organization forward.”

Since joining Inspira, Walton has helped secure funding for vital projects to expand access and care for the communities Inspira serves in the South Jersey region.

Through her new role, Walton is positioned to cul-

tivate even more profound and beneficial ties with the community and stakeholders, continuing to promote Inspira Health as a leader in health services. As Peter Kaprielyan transitions into retirement, he will work with Walton to support a smooth and effective handover.

Jerry and Brooke Girley

An African American father-daughter pair of lawyers, Jerry, and Brooke Girley are in the eye of Florida’s ongoing racist storm after a judge recommended 30-day suspensions for their vocal criticism following the overturning of a \$2.7 million jury ruling in a racial discrimination case.

In addition to suggesting suspension, Judge Lisa Herndon, presiding over the Florida Bar’s disciplinary case against the Girleys, also ordered the duo to attend a professionalism workshop. However, the Florida Supreme Court holds the key to the final decision, with potential penalties ranging from suspen-



sion to disbarment.

The Girleys’ attorney, David Winker, said his clients planned to request a rehearing, pointing out factual inaccuracies in the reports.

Advocates for the Girleys argue that the looming disciplinary action could have a chilling effect on free speech for lawyers in

Florida, where Republicans control the governor’s office and both chambers of the state legislature. Jerry Girley previously cited concerns about racial discourse and expression within the state.

The controversy origi-

See GIRLEY, Page 12

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Blacks, Latinos hit hardest by all-time high rental costs

More than 12 million families now pay half their income on housing

By Charlene Crowell

A new report on rental housing from Harvard’s Joint Center for Housing Studies (JCHS) makes clear why so many people are dissatisfied with the nation’s economy. Released in late January and entitled, America’s Rental Housing 2024, the report documents how ever-rising rental costs are burdening people in every state of the country.

In 2022, a record high of 22.4 million cost-burdened renter households rose by two million families since 2019. Affordable housing should cost no more than 30 percent of total household income.

“Median rents have risen nearly continuously since 2001 in inflation-adjusted terms and are 21 percent higher as of 2022,” states JCHS. “Meanwhile, renters’ incomes have risen just 2 percent during the same period...Among cost-burdened households, 12.1 million had housing costs that consumed more than half of their income, an all-time high for severe burdens.”

At the same time, eviction filings have returned to pre-pandemic levels in 2023 as relief measures expired. A record-setting 653,100 people were unhoused on a given night in January 2023, an increase of nearly 71,000 people in just one year. Once more, Blacks and Latinos are disproportionately impacted. Black people are 37 percent of all unhoused people but just 13 percent of the US population; while Latinos, representing 28 percent of homeless people are less than 20 percent of the population.

Ironically, according to the report, cost-burdened

renters include people with full-time jobs with a span of incomes that some may find surprising.

While all income groups had increasing cost-burden rates from 2019 to 2022, middle-income renters making \$45,000 to \$74,999 saw their cost-burdened share rise the fastest with a 5.4 percentage point in-

crease to 41 percent. Additionally, 8 million cost-burdened households were headed by a full-time, year-round worker.

“Median rents have risen nearly continuously since 2001 in inflation-adjusted terms and are 21 percent higher as of 2022. Meanwhile, renters’ incomes have risen just 2 percent during the same period.”

- JCHS

crease to 41 percent. Additionally, 8 million cost-burdened households were headed by a full-time, year-round worker.

Among the 14.6 million renter households comprising the working poor – those earning \$30,000 or less each year - had median cash savings of just \$300 and total net wealth of only \$3,200. They were also the most likely to live in substandard housing with multiple problems such as structural deficiencies, a lack of upkeep, or the inconsistent provision of basic features such as hot and cold running water, heat, and electricity. Households with lower incomes and households of color are disproportionately exposed to substandard conditions.

Long-standing federal programs like HUD’s Housing Voucher Program, better known as Section 8, were intended to provide

sanitary, standard housing for low and middle-income families. But today’s reality reveals a much different experience.

In 2022, HUD’s Housing Choice Vouchers assisted 2.3 million households, covering the difference between 30 percent of a household’s income and their area’s fair market

rent. Their usage, however, depends upon participation by private-market landlords, who are not required to accept the vouchers in most places. Additionally, program rules and timelines discourage some landlords from participating. According to the report, 40 percent of people who receive a voucher are unable to secure a signed lease in the allotted time.

rent. Their usage, however, depends upon participation by private-market landlords, who are not required to accept the vouchers in most places. Additionally, program rules and timelines discourage some landlords from participating. According to the report, 40 percent of people who receive a voucher are unable to secure a signed lease in the allotted time.

“Nationwide, states and cities also generate about \$3 billion annually through housing trust funds to meet local housing needs,” states the report. “All of these efforts are crucial but fall short of the growing need... In 2022, just 7.2 million units had contract rents under \$600—the maximum amount affordable to the 26 percent of renters with annual incomes under \$24,000. This marks a loss of 2.1 million units since 2012, when ad-

justing for inflation. The spike in asking rents during the pandemic accelerated the trend, with more than half a million low-rent units lost just between 2019 and 2022.”

For Diane Yentl, President and CEO of the National Low Income Housing Coalition, the nation’s dearth of affordable housing is at a crisis level.

“Without affordable, available housing options and higher incomes, more than 10 million of America’s lowest-income households, disproportionately people of color, pay at least half their income on rent and utilities,” said Yentl in a recent statement. “With so much money going to keep a roof over their heads, renters with the lowest incomes are forced to live precariously, always one unexpected expense – for a broken-down car or unreimbursed medical bill – away from housing instability, eviction, and, in the worst cases, homelessness. Yet Congress only provides housing assistance to one in four eligible households.”

The JCHS report reached a similar conclusion:

“The instability caused by a lack of affordable housing bleeds over to other public spending, threatening the well-being of millions of people... With housing challenges growing ever more severe, now is the time to make a fuller commitment to ensuring that all people living in the US have a decent, safe, and affordable place to call home.”

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

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Covid vaccine for pregnant women safe for newborn infants

(Newswise) — No increased risks for babies, and for some serious neonatal complications lower risks. This is the result of the largest study to date on the safety of newborn babies whose mothers were vaccinated against COVID-19 during pregnancy. The study is a collaboration between Swedish and Norwegian researchers and is published in the journal JAMA.

COVID-19 vaccination in pregnancy was not associated with any increased risks in newborn infants. On the contrary, the study of nearly 200,000 newborns in Sweden and Norway showed that babies born by women who chose to be vaccinated were less likely to suffer serious complications, including death. The mortality rate was only half as high in babies whose mothers had been vaccinated.

“We made several attempts to explain this finding. A direct vaccine effect is unlikely. Previous studies have shown that the vaccine does not cross the placenta and that it cannot be found in umbilical cord blood,” says Mikael Norman, professor of pediatrics and neonatology at the Department of Clinical

The complications affecting newborn infants of vaccinated mothers at significantly lower rates were rare, but they did occur in both groups.

Complication	Vaccinated mothers	Unvaccinated mothers
Infant death	0.9 out of 1,000 births	1.8 out of 1,000 births
Brain bleeding	1.7 out of 1,000 births	3.2 out of 1,000 births
Brain hypoxia/ischemia	1.8 out of 1,000 births	2.7 out of 1,000 births

Sources: Fass, Läkemedelverket and the study.

Science, Intervention and Technology, Karolinska Institutet and first author of the study.

Instead, the researchers have adjusted for several background factors that were unevenly distributed in the two groups of women. They also conducted seven different subgroup analyses of women and newborns.

“No matter how we look at it, the finding remains and therefore, we cannot say what the lower risk of death among infants of vaccinated women relates to,” says Mikael Norman.

The researchers used national registers in both countries and included 98 percent of all newborn babies of women who became pregnant after the vaccines became available. All births from gestational



Aditya Romansa / Unsplash

week 22 and onwards were included in the study. The first baby was born in June 2021 and the last one in January 2023. All babies were followed up for at least one month or as long as they were admitted to a neonatal unit.

In total, the study in-

cluded 196 470 newborns where 48 percent of the mothers had been vaccinated with one or more doses of an mRNA vaccine against COVID-19. Almost 80 percent had received the Pfizer/Biontech vaccine and just over 20 percent the vaccine from Moderna.

In addition to lower infant mortality, the researchers also found a significantly lower risk of two other serious complications in infants born to mothers who had been vaccinated. In total, fifteen neonatal complications and conditions were studied.

“We saw lower rates of cerebral hemorrhages and hypoxia-ischemic conditions of the brain in the newborns of vaccinated than in babies of unvaccinated in pregnancy, while the incidence of other bleedings, blood clots or inflammation in various organ systems did not differ between the groups,” says Mikael Norman.

Despite the fact that the pandemic is over, the study and the results are of great importance for healthcare professionals offering counseling, authorities issuing recommendations, and above all, for anyone who will become pregnant in the future, says Mikael Norman.

“COVID-19 is still present in society and is probably something we will have to deal with for a long time. It is therefore very important for the one hundred thousand women who become pregnant every year in Sweden, and the

130 million in the world, to know that vaccination with mRNA-vaccines against COVID-19 is safe for their babies. We found no increased risks, if anything, infants to vaccinated women had lower risks for some severe outcomes.”

The research was mainly funded by Region Stockholm and Karolinska Institutet, the Childhood Foundation of the Swedish Order of Freemasons, NordForsk, and the Norwegian Research Council. The researchers state that there are no conflicts of interest.

Facts: Pfizer’s and Biontech’s mRNA vaccine Comirnaty was approved on 21 December 2020, while Moderna’s mRNA vaccine Spikevax was approved shortly after, on 6 January 2021. They were the first two Covid vaccines to be approved.

The two mRNA-vaccines were the only ones recommended for pregnant women in Sweden and Norway. Initially, vaccination was only recommended to pregnant women at high risk for COVID-19, but from May 2021 in Sweden and from August 2021 in Norway, general vaccination of pregnant women was recommended.

New study identifies gene believed to be responsible for ALS and dementia

(Newswise) — CLEVELAND—Researchers at the Case Western Reserve School of Medicine have discovered why a gene that, when mutated, is a common cause of two debilitating brain diseases: amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) and frontotemporal dementia (FTD).

The study found that the protein generated by this mutant gene, C9ORF72, influences the immune system by regulating the production of Interleukin 17A

(IL-17A), a potent inflammatory molecule.

ALS is a neurodegenerative disease that results in progressive paralysis due to the loss of neurons in the central nervous system. ALS patients often have pre-existing autoimmune disease and inflammation of the brain that worsens as muscle function declines.

Aaron Burberry, an assistant professor of pathology at the School of Medicine and the study’s principal investigator, discovered

in mouse models with the C9ORF72 mutation—which affects roughly 10% of ALS patients—brain inflammation decreased and mobility improved when the IL-17A gene was blocked.

Burberry and his research team also discovered that another molecule found in the gut (CD80) contributes to inflammation in response to elevations of IL-17A in the brain. Their research was recently published in the peer-reviewed

journal Science Translational Medicine.

“Our research indicates that IL-17A blockade may be quickly repurposed to treat ALS patients to slow down the progression of their disease or possibly stop ALS from ever occurring,” Burberry said.

Treatments that block IL-17A have already been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to treat autoimmune diseases, such as psoriasis and rheumatoid arthritis. These

comparable therapies may help ALS patients stop or perhaps reverse the disease’s progression.

“For people living with a neurodegenerative disease,” Burberry said, “our work offers hope for a future where quality-of-life and cognition can be maintained long after their diagnosis.”

Burberry will next investigate the mechanisms by which C9ORF72 inhibits IL-17A in lymphoid cells and identify the elements

of the gut microbiome that are causing inflammation in the brain.

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Comerica Bank hosting 9th annual Prom Apparel Drive benefiting teens served by Dallas CASA

Your gently used formal wear could make a local teen's prom night dream come true. Comerica Bank is collecting clean prom dresses and formal wear for local teens who dream of a special prom night and might otherwise not be able to attend their high school prom.

Comerica Bank launched the prom dress drive benefiting Dallas CASA in 2015. Due to the success of the event, Comerica has added co-beneficiaries, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Dallas and Collin County, and has remained committed to the drive each year since. Clean and gently used formal wear is dropped off at participating

Drop-Off Locations			
Banking Center	Address		Telephone
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Cola-Fitzhugh	3202 N. Fitzhugh, Dallas, TX 75204	Driving directions	214-599-0162
Forest-Inwood	5200 Forest Lane, Dallas, TX 75244	Driving directions	214-692-7031
Lovers Lane-Devonshire	5647 W. Lovers Lane, Dallas, TX 75209	Driving directions	972-587-3430
NorthPark	8850 Bowdler St., Dallas, TX 75225	Driving directions	214-890-5106
Parker-Premier	3310 Premier Dr., Plano, TX 75023	Driving directions	972-422-7162

Comerica Bank locations, then delivered to Dallas CASA and Boys and Girls Clubs of Dallas. Members of Dallas CASA's staff and Children's Council sort the formal wear on shopping racks creating a shopping boutique in Dallas CASA's training facility. Since the

drive began in 2015, Comerica has collected and donated more than 6,000 items of formal wear.

On two special weekends in March, the temporary prom shopping boutique houses display racks of clothing and accessories, fitting rooms, alteration

stations and beauty advice. Teens served by Dallas CASA make appointments to select formal wear and accessories including shoes, purses and jewelry as well as gift bags of donated beauty prod-

See PROM, Page 12



Honey Yanibel Minaya Cruz / Unsplash

Report suggests White House medical unit handed out prescription drugs like candy during Trump Administration

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National Correspondent

According to a report issued by the Department of Defense, drugs were just as prevalent in the White House under former President Donald Trump as they are in a pharmacy. Reportedly, investigators found "an obscene lack of control over the handling of controlled medications" while the twice-impeached and four-times indicted Trump roamed the Oval Office.

The Department of Defense Office Inspector General's investigation reveals



Photo via NNPA

a disturbing lack of oversight over the distribution of controlled medications within the White House Medical Unit (WHMU) during Trump's presidency.

According to the report, while Trump served as president, the distribution of prescription medica-

The WHMU, responsible for managing the medical needs of White House personnel, was found to have "severe and systemic problems" under the

See CANDY, Page 11

tions, including controlled substances, went to ineligible White House staff. Based on 70 interviews with staffers employed between 2009 and 2018 and prescription records from 2017 to 2019, the investigation sheds light on the issue's magnitude.

pay decisions for federal contractors.

"Today's announcements build on our commitment to closing wage gaps, creating a fairer economy, and ensuring that every American has the opportunity to thrive, regardless of their gender or race," Biden declared.

mitment to building a more equitable future."

The Department of Labor's (DOL's) Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs will also provide guidance to clarify existing protections against discrimination in hiring or

WAGE, from Page 1

the hiring process. "The wage disparities faced by women, particularly women of color, are not just statistics; they represent real challenges that demand real solutions," Harris emphasized. "Our actions today are a com-



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New schools data examine violent incidents, bullying, drug possession, 'restorative' practices, security staff, and more

Most elementary and middle schools ban nonacademic use of cellphones, NCES finds

WASHINGTON — A collection of new data sheds light on the state of school crime and safety, as well as the school environment, in U.S. public schools, including a finding that 76 percent of public schools prohibit non-academic use of cell phones or smartphones during school hours. Also, 90 percent of public schools said they increased social and emotional support for students in response to the coronavirus pandemic in 2021-22, according to the new survey results from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the statistical center within the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences (IES).

In addition, 67 percent of public schools recorded at least one violent incident in 2021-22. The data also point to a decline in high/secondary schools reporting at least one incident of distribution, possession, or use of illegal drugs, at 71 percent, compared with such incidents in 2017-18 (76 percent) and 2019-20 (77 percent).

"These critically important data reveal some of the challenges public schools face in keeping the focus on teaching and learning, such as violence, drug use, and bullying," said NCES



Sam Baye / Unsplash

Commissioner Peggy G. Carr. "At the same time, we gain insights into ways public schools are stepping up with supports beyond academics, such as the finding that nine in ten public schools increased social and emotional supports for students."

The new data come from NCES's School Survey on Crime and Safety, a nationally representative survey of about 4,800 public elementary and secondary schools. The study was conducted from February 15 to July 19 of 2022.

The report and technical information for the School Survey on Crime and Safety are available online at <https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2024043>.

Key Findings

School Environment

- About 857,500 violent

incidents and 479,500 non-violent incidents were recorded by public schools in 2021-22.

- Sixty-seven percent of public schools reported having at least one violent incident. Also, 59 percent reported having at least one non-violent incident.

- About 71 percent of public high/secondary schools reported at least one incident of distribution, possession, or use of illegal drugs in 2021-22. This figure represented a drop when compared with 2017-18 (76 percent) and 2019-20 (77 percent).

- The school crime and safety data for 2021-22 show a 1-point increase in public schools reporting at least one hate crime (3 percent), compared with 2 percent in the 2019-20 and 2017-18 school years.

- Schools were also asked

about factors that limited their efforts to reduce or prevent crime. The two factors most often reported as limiting these efforts "in a major way" were lack of or inadequate alternative placements or programs for disruptive students (30 percent) and inadequate funding (27 percent).

Bullying and Cyberbullying

- A higher percentage of middle schools reported bullying on campus at least once per week in 2021-22, with 28 percent saying it took place at least once a week, compared with 15 percent for high/secondary schools and 10 percent for elementary schools.

- Similarly, cyberbullying at school or away from school at least once a week was reported by 37 percent of middle schools and 25 percent of high/secondary schools, compared to 6 percent of elementary schools.

Safety and Security Practices at Public Schools

- Public schools also reported on the different types of security staff present on campus at least once a week. About 46 percent of traditional public schools in 2021-22 had school resource officers (SROs). This compares with 18 percent at charter schools. In contrast, a higher percentage of char-

ter schools reported having security officers or security personnel (35 percent) compared with traditional public schools (25 percent).

- In addition, the data show a decline in the proportion of public schools with sworn law enforcement officers who routinely carry a firearm at school. The 2021-22 figure was 45 percent, down from 51 percent in 2019-20. However, the most recent figure was not measurably different from the 47 percent of law enforcement officers in public schools with a firearm in 2017-18.

- During the 2021-22 school year, 92 percent of public schools said they had a formal plan to prepare for and respond to multi-country or worldwide pandemic disease. Schools had written plans describing the procedures to be performed in various other crisis scenarios as well, including active shooters (96 percent), natural disasters (96 percent), suicide threats or incidents (94 percent), and bomb threats (92 percent).

- In 2021-22, higher percentages of elementary schools (87 percent), middle schools (77 percent), and schools with other grades combined (70 percent) reported having policies that prohibited the nonacademic

use of cellphones in school, compared to high/secondary schools (43 percent).

Supports for Students

- Public schools were asked whether they engaged in restorative practices with their students (often referred to as "restorative justice"). Fifty-nine percent of public schools said they did, about the same proportion as in 2019-20 but higher than the 42 percent in 2017-18.

- About 72 percent of charter schools reported involving students in restorative practices, which was higher than the percentage of traditional public schools (58 percent) that reported doing so.

- Forty-nine percent of public schools provided diagnostic mental health assessments in 2021-22 to evaluate students for mental health disorders. This figure was down from 55 percent in 2019-20, but not measurably different from 2017-18. Thirty-eight percent of schools provided treatment to students for mental health disorders in 2021-22. This figure was down from 2019-20 (42 percent) but not measurably different from 2017-18.

- About 90 percent of public schools offered individual mentoring, tutoring, or coaching of students by adults

Dallas ISD's Lone Star Emmy-winning show returns to the small screen

(Dallas ISD) Dallas ISD's acclaimed student-hosted television shows, "School Zone Dallas" and "Zona Escolar de Dallas," are returning after nearly a decade.

Each episode of "School Zone Dallas" and "Zona Escolar de Dallas" ("School Zone Dallas" in Spanish) will provide an insider's perspective on different Dallas ISD campuses and programs. "School Zone Dallas" will air on NBC at



Dallas ISD

5 p.m. on Saturdays starting Feb. 3. The Spanish version, "Zona Escolar de Dallas," is set to air on

Telemundo every Saturday in March, but will be live on Dallas ISD's YouTube channel beginning Feb. 3.

Originally premiering in October 2002, the show quickly garnered attention and praise attracting over 10,000 views. In 2003, the show's popularity surged to 50,000 views, prompting the creation of a Spanish version of the show.

"We wanted the world to see how articulate, intelligent, and fun students are," expressed Jon Dahlander, the driving force behind the original program and current chief of Partner-

ships and Intergovernmental Relations for Dallas ISD. "Having students tell our story will always be an effective way to showcase the many great opportunities that are available in Dallas ISD."

Before concluding its initial run, the show earned accolades, including the Lone Star Emmy for Outstanding Informational Program in 2003.

Darrell Pryor, former "School Zone Dallas" host

and current executive director of Creative Services with Dallas ISD, is leading the show's revival. "We're excited for 'School Zone Dallas' and 'Zona Escolar de Dallas' to return.

"We can't wait to share more incredible stories and continue the legacy."

This season will feature eight episodes. After the initial air date, all shows will be available on Dallas ISD's YouTube channel.

Killer Mike's Arresting Grammy Night and Jay-Z's Quest for Validation

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

This year's Grammy Awards included powerful performances from the likes of Stevie Wonder, Fantasia, Joni Mitchell and more, and Shawn "Jay-Z" Carter was honored with the Dr. Dre Global Impact Award. Though it was a celebratory, talent-filled celebration, there were behind-the-scenes drama and onstage moments that have people still talking after what is known as "music's biggest night."

Fresh off his uninformed



Grammy.com via NNPA

tirade two days earlier when he declared his more than three-decade animus toward President Joe Biden because the then-Senator pushed a highly consequential crime bill, Killer Mike spun around in disbelief and joy over his big Grammy Award wins.

The hip-hop star has, for some reason, refused to hold the twice-impeached and four-times indicted former President Donald Trump accountable for things like calling for the death of the Exonerated Five, continued racist attacks on Black and other women of color, cag-

ing infants and separating them from their families. But Trump apparently gets Mike's vote over Biden.

"The suspect was placed under arrest and was transported to LAPD Central Division. The suspect has been identified as 48-year-old Michael Render and booked for Misdemeanor Battery 243(A) PC, and is in the process of being released," authorities said a news release.

Jay-Z used his wife Beyoncé Knowles Carter as an example to discuss the politics behind awards and the Recording Academy.

"I don't want to embar-

rass this young lady, but she has more Grammys than anyone, and never won album of the year," he said about Beyoncé, the most-nominated female artist in history. "Even by your own metric, that does not work. Think about that, most Grammys, never won Album of the Year."

Beyoncé has received 32 Grammy awards and 88 nominations. Between them, the Carters have won at least 55 Grammys. Jay-Z went beyond his wife, noting others are snubbed too.

"Some of you are going to go home tonight and feel like you've been robbed.

Some of you may get robbed. Some of you don't belong in the category," he said to a roar of laughter.

"When I get nervous I tell the truth," Jay-Z added, before offering a message that he emphasized goes beyond the Grammys.

"Just in life, you've got to keep showing up," he said. "Forget the Grammys, you've got to keep showing up until they give you all those accolades you feel like you deserve. Until they call you chairman, until they call you a genius, until they call you the greatest of

See GRAMMY, Page 13

- | | |
|---|---|
| ALBUM OF THE YEAR
Midnights, Taylor Swift | The Light We Carry: Overcoming In Uncertain Times, Michelle Obama |
| RECORD OF THE YEAR
Flowers, Miley Cyrus | BEST REGGAE ALBUM
Colors of Royal, Julian Marley and Antaeus |
| SONG OF THE YEAR
What Was I Made For?, Billie Eilish (from the motion picture Barbie); Billie Eilish O'Connell and Finneas O'Connell, songwriters | BEST LATIN ROCK OR ALTERNATIVE ALBUM (tie)
Vida Cotidiana, Juanes and De Todas Las Flores, Natalia Lafourcade |
| BEST NEW ARTIST
Victoria Monet | BEST LATIN POP ALBUM
X Mi (Vol 1), Gaby Moreno |
| BEST POP VOCAL ALBUM
Midnights, Taylor Swift | BEST RAP ALBUM
Michael, Killer Mike |
| BEST POP SOLO PERFORMANCE
Flowers, Miley Cyrus | BEST RAP SONG
Scientists & Engineers, Killer Mike ft Andre 3000, Future and Eryn Allen Kane |
| BEST MUSICA URBANA ALBUM
Manana Sera Bonito, Karol G | BEST FOLK ALBUM
Joni Mitchell at Newport (Live), Joni Mitchell |
| BEST COUNTRY ALBUM
Bell Bottom Country, Lainey Wilson | BEST ROCK ALBUM
This Is Why, Paramore |
| BEST R&B SONG
Snooze, by SZA; Kenny B Edmonds, Blair Ferguson, Khri Riddick-Tynes, Solana Rowe and Leon Thomas, songwriters | BEST ROCK PERFORMANCE
Not Strong Enough, Boygenius |
| THE DR DRE GLOBAL IMPACT AWARD
Jay-Z | BEST ROCK SONG
Not Strong Enough, Boygenius |
| BEST POP DUO/GROUP PERFORMANCE
Ghost in the Machine, SZA featuring Phoebe Bridgers | BEST AMERICANA ALBUM
Weathervanes, Jason Isbell and the 400 Unit |
| BEST ALTERNATIVE MUSIC ALBUM
The Record, Boygenius | BEST METAL PERFORMANCE
72 Seasons, Metallica |
| SONGWRITER OF THE YEAR, NON-CLASSICAL
Theron Thomas | BEST JAZZ INSTRUMENTAL ALBUM
The Winds of Change, Billy Childs |
| PRODUCER OF THE YEAR, NON-CLASSICAL
Jack Antonoff | BEST JAZZ VOCAL ALBUM
How Love Begins, Nicole Zuraitis |
| BEST R&B ALBUM
Jaguar II, Victoria Monet | BEST COMEDY ALBUM
What's in a Name?, Dave Chapelle |
| BEST PROGRESSIVE R&B ALBUM
SOS, SZA | BEST GOSPEL ALBUM
All Things New: Live in Orlando, Tye Tribbett |
| BEST AUDIO BOOK, NARRATION AND STORYTELLING RECORDING | BEST CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN MUSIC ALBUM
Church Clothes 4, Lecrae |
| | BEST AFRICAN MUSIC PERFORMANCE
Water, Tyla |



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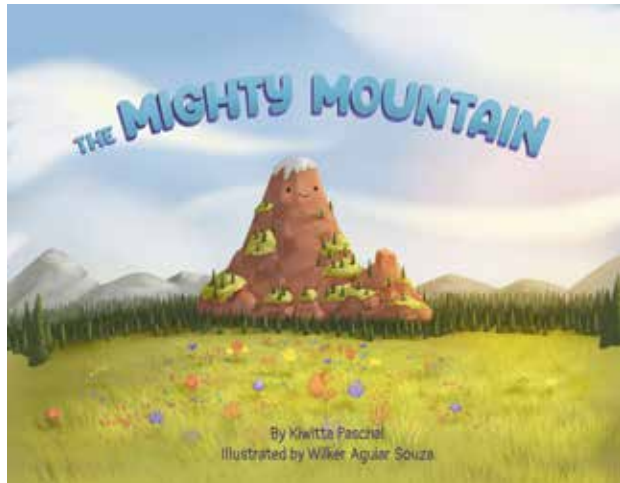
African American and local author Kiwitta Paschal writes a children's book with a strong and positive message

By: Jackie Hardy
NDG Contributing Writer

Newly published author, Kiwitta Paschal has joined the almost 6 percent of African American writers with his recent children's book entitled: "The Mighty Mountain."

"I recall praying for ideas a number of years ago for something of value that would be impactful to people, build a legacy for my family; and God imparted a parable about a mountain to my mind and I couldn't shake it," adds Paschal on what motivated him to write his first children's book.

"The Mighty Mountain" was a self-published project as Paschal started his own publishing company called, Blkpawn Publishing to create a platform where au-



thors, especially those that look like him could share their stories.

"I firmly believe in providing visual representations of success to all children, but especially children of color," he advises.

In fact, Paschal feels that if he can inspire just one child to become an author

then he has done his job. Suffice to say he has already done that as his daughter, Kelsee has written her first book under the Blkpawn Publishing moniker entitled, "Cookie-Day-Cookie-Day" and was released on National Cookie Day.

Per Paschal, the story was inspired by his daughter's love of baking as it centers on a young girl who is inspired to make cookies for her family.



Courtesy images

Paschal's own book, "The Mighty Mountain," gives its young readers a message of understanding their value and worth.

The book uniquely tells a story of how identity and purpose is found in God. It

touches on the challenges of what the process of coming to know your worth and value looks like and how it sometimes isn't as easily identified.

With anxiety among children at an all time high, Paschal's book is a message that is timely and needed. According to a statement by the United States Surgeon General, Vivek Murthy: "Mental health challenges in children, adolescents, and young adults are real and widespread. Even before the pandemic, an alarming number of young people struggled with feelings of helplessness, depression, and thoughts of suicide — and rates have increased over the past decade."

"The message that I want to resonate with my audience is to find your identity

and hope in God even with-in life's challenges," states Paschal regarding the message that inspired the story.

He further explains how we are innately wired to feel valued and oftentimes we associate our value and worth in how useful or needed we are to others.

For example, Paschal assesses having an identity that's centered around feeling needed by others can be a concern because when adversity or circumstances arise that hinder a person's ability to serve could prompt feelings of unworthiness.

"When adversity hits, how do you respond when you are no longer able to do the things you placed your worth in? Who do you become? The message of this

See AUTHOR, Page 12



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NDG Film Review: 'The Greatest Night' in Pop is now on Netflix

By Dwight Brown
NNPA Film Critic

(**1/2) How many music stars (45) were in the A&M studio on January 28, 1985, and what was that wattage like the night "We Are the World" was recorded? As one wag put it: "If a bomb lands on this place, John Denver is back on top!"

When Harry Belafonte beseeched Lionel Richie to help him raise money for hunger in Africa, he had no idea what would come. To his great surprise, Michael Jackson and Ritchie wrote the inspiring and very spiritual, pop gospel song "We are the World." Then artists from around the country showed up to record their tune, which won a 1986 Grammy for "Song of the Year."

Director/cinematographer Bao Nguyen expertly conducts new interviews with the recording session's veterans (Dionne Warwick, Bruce Springs-



The Greatest Night in Pop. (Photo courtesy of Sundance Film Festival)

teen, Cyndi Lauper), displays precious glimpses of legends (Ray Charles, Bette Midler) and captures others in the depths of expressing their vocal insecurities. Huey Lewis confesses: "I was nervous out of my brain." Clips of Diana Ross and Paul Simon singing around a piano as Stevie Wonder plays are priceless. And who knew that the vocal arranger Tom Bahler chose the singers who did solos based on

voice textures, shifting between gritty raspy ones and soft ones for variety?

The communal singing that brings all the artists together is heartwarming. The gossip that's revealed is still juicy: Sheila E swears she was only invited so they could snare Prince. And he ghosted them! It's also fascinating to learn that some of the recorded vocals weren't perfect, or the singers at their best. Yet three months later, when

the song premiered simultaneously on radio stations around the world, everything was flawless. Prov-

ing that studio engineers are magicians.

Recollecting how hot studio lights made everyone sweat and the room smell provides a nice dose of reality. And watching producer Quincy Jones nurture and herd the musicians reveals both his artistry and diplomacy.

Every cherished moment is here. The emotions, creativity and magnitude of the all-night session are still a wonder. No superfluous footage (editor David Brodie) is shown over the film's consistently entertaining 96-minute running time. None.

Legendary artists. Legendary moment. Legendary song. For a certain generation, 1980s lovers and music fans, this is the show of shows. A pop music, pop culture milestone. You get what you're looking for. You hear what you wanna hear. This nostalgic musical doc rocks as much as a live concert, but in the most divine, communal way.

For more information about the Sundance Film Festival go to: <https://festival.sundance.org>

Visit Film Critic Dwight Brown at DwightBrown-Ink.com.

Check us out on Youtube!

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The Queen of Sugar Hill: ReShonda Tate illuminates Hattie McDaniel's journey in a tale of resilience and triumph

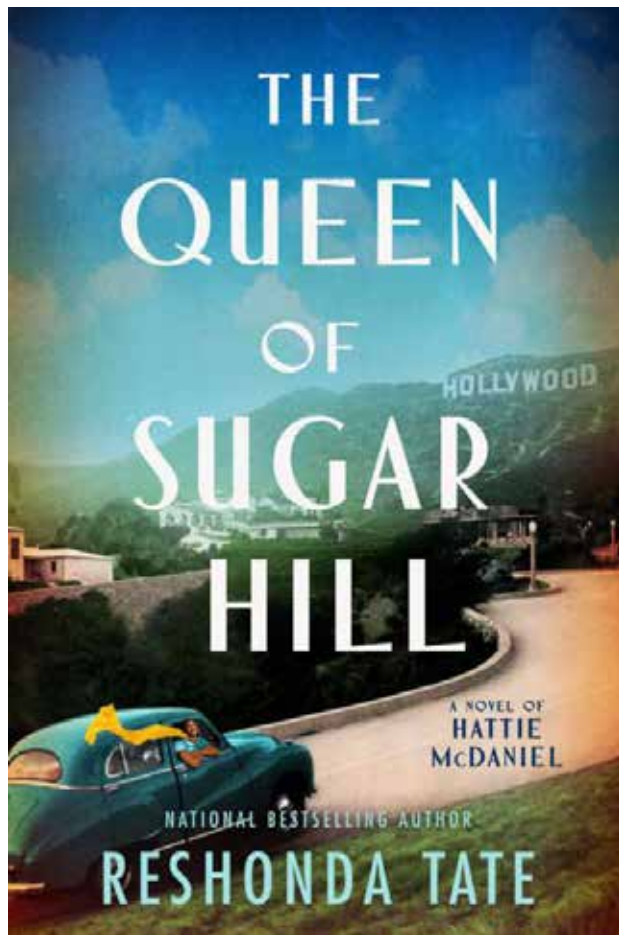
Reaching back to Hollywood's golden age, where dreams were spun under the spotlight and stars were born, bestselling author ReShonda Tate takes readers on a captivating journey through the life of Hattie McDaniel. In her latest work, "The Queen of Sugar Hill," Tate, a seasoned author and managing editor of the Defender Network in Houston, presents a mesmerizing fictional portrait of the trailblazing actress, the first Black person to win an Academy Award for her iconic role as Mammy in the classic film "Gone With the Wind."

"It is fiction based on fact," Tate exclaimed of her extraordinary 55th novel.

As McDaniel graced the stage in 1940 to claim her historic victory for Best Supporting Actress, tears of joy streamed down her face, believing that the moment would be the pinnacle of her career. Little did she know the triumph on that stage would be followed by a series of challenges that would test her resilience and determination.

The months that followed were plagued by what became known as the "Oscar curse." Despite her achievements, Tate reveals how McDaniel struggled to find work in an industry that couldn't see beyond the stereotypical character of Mammy. Caught between two worlds—Black and white—she faced rejection from both sides. "Whites saw only the character she portrayed, while the Black community resented the demeaning portrayal," Tate noted.

Amidst the adversity, McDaniel persisted in her fight to pave the way for other Black actors. Beyond



the glitz and glamour of Hollywood, she devoted herself to supporting war efforts, combating housing discrimination, and navigating the complexities of four failed marriages.

"The Queen of Sugar Hill" brings McDaniel's powerful story to life, capturing her unwavering passion for ambition, love, sex, family, friendship, and equality. ReShonda Tate crafts an unforgettable novel that delves into the essence of resilience, dedication, and determination—illuminating what it truly takes to pursue dreams, even when faced with seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

In this narrative, Tate explores Hattie's triumphs and tragedies and sheds light on the steadfast friendships she cultivated with Hollywood luminaries like Clark

Gable, Louise Beavers, Ruby Berkley Goodwin, and Dorothy Dandridge. Through Tate's vivid storytelling, "The Queen of Sugar Hill" stands as a testament to the indomitable spirit of a woman who, against all odds, left an enduring legacy and paved the way for future generations of Black artists in the unforgiving landscape of Hollywood.

"In bringing to life the inimitable Hattie against the backdrop of her segregated times, 'The Queen of Sugar Hill' introduces readers to the important, inspiring, heart-wrenching story of the legendary actress whose legacy deserves to be fully understood and celebrated," said Marie Benedict, the New York Times Best-selling author of "The Personal Librarian" and "The Other Mrs. Christie."



GAROI media awarded 'Digital Marketing Campaign of the Year' by American Marketing Association

(Black PR Wire) Miami, FL – GAROI Media, a leading advertising agency based in Miami, was recognized with the prestigious “Digital Marketing Campaign of the Year” award at the 5th Annual American Marketing Association (AMA) South Florida Awards. This accolade celebrates the agency’s innova-

tive and impactful advertising campaign for the New World Symphony, titled “I Dream a World: Harlem Renaissance in Europe.”

This innovative campaign effectively highlighted the two-week multidisciplinary concert series, showcasing the cultural connections between the Harlem Renaissance and

Europe, which resonated deeply with the South Florida community. Utilizing a mix of data-driven strategies and creative storytelling, it skillfully engaged diverse audiences through a combination of traditional and digital media.

The acclaimed full-service boutique agency, known for its exceptional

strategic advertising and digital marketing expertise, also received top finalist honors in several other categories, including Marketing Campaign of the Year, Marketing Team of the Year, and Non-Profit Marketing Campaign of the Year.

“We are thrilled and honored to receive this pres-

tigious recognition from AMA South Florida,” said Lasana Smith, Founder and CEO of GAROI Media. “Our team’s commitment to innovation and excellence in digital marketing has truly paid off, and this award is a testament to our hard work and dedication.”

The award ceremony, held at the O Cinema in

South Beach Miami, celebrated outstanding marketing campaigns that significantly impacted the South Florida community. GAROI Media stood out among more than 70 submissions, evaluated by a panel of over 20 highly qualified jurors with extensive marketing and advertising experience.

U.S. Black Chambers, Inc. (USBC) joins forces with Lendistry to boost opportunities for underserved entrepreneurs with new USBC lending portal

(Black PR Wire) In a landmark collaboration, U.S. Black Chambers, Inc. (USBC) and Lendistry unveil the USBC Lending Portal Powered by Lendistry, a groundbreaking initiative aimed at leveling the financial playing field for Minority, Women, and Veteran-Owned small businesses. This venture marks a significant stride in equipping these enterprises with the much-needed access to capital, specially crafted to meet their distinct needs and goals.

Key advantages of the USBC Lending Portal Powered by Lendistry include:

- Rapid financing availability, with funds accessible in as little as five days
- Extended loan terms of up to 10 years
- Competitive, market-friendly interest rates
- Loan amounts ranging from \$25,000 to \$5 million

Lendistry, a trailblazer in fostering economic growth for small business owners

in underserved communities, is at the forefront of this initiative. Merging technological efficiency with responsible lending practices, Lendistry not only offers financial resources but also delivers financial education, backed by the commitment of social investors and national banking partners.

Everett K. Sands, President of Lendistry, underscores the significance of this partnership “U.S. Black Chambers has been a valued ally and friend to Lendistry for years. We’re excited to make our partnership official in a high-impact way. Accessible technology and community partnerships are the

winning combination for bringing access to capital to underserved small businesses, so we expect the USBC Lending Portal to help a lot of communities grow.”

As a minority-led Community Development Financial Institution, Lendistry is devoted to nurturing economic prosperity for small businesses in over-

looked urban and rural areas. The organization works closely with its non-profit affiliate, The Center by Lendistry, to provide small businesses with essential support services such as technical assistance, business courses, and access to various programs.

Ron Busby Sr., President & CEO of USBC, expressed his enthusiasm for the partnership’s impact, emphasizing, “The USBC Lending Portal, powered by Lendistry, is a pivotal development in our mission to support Black businesses. This initiative is a direct reflection of USBC’s commitment to one of our core pillars: facilitating access to capital. By providing

with all recommendations outlined in the report. Lester Martínez-López, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, issued a memo attached to the report, emphasizing the need for the Director of the Defense Health Agency, in coordination with the WHMU Director, to develop policies and procedures for managing controlled and non-controlled medications, covering procurement, storage, inventory, prescribing, dispensing, and disposal. Martínez-López said the aim is to ensure better control and compliance with pharmacy safety standards within the White House Medical Unit.

See USBC, Page 13

CANDY, from Page 5

Trump administration. The report revealed that the unit dispensed non-emergency-controlled medications, such as Ambien and Provigil, without properly verifying the patient’s identity. Additionally, over-the-counter medications were left in open bins for patient retrieval and use, posing potential safety risks.

A significant concern highlighted in the investigation is the White House Medical Unit’s preference for brand-name drugs over generic equivalents when ordering controlled substances from the Walter Reed Medical Center

in Maryland. The report states that over three years, the unit spent an estimated \$46,500 on brand-name Ambien, 174 times more expensive than the generic equivalent.

The investigation further pointed out that the WHMU officials claimed to keep pharmaceutical records for only two years, limiting investigators’ access to records from 2017 to 2019. The report recommends developing a pharmaceutical oversight plan for the WHMU to address these issues.

In response to the findings, the Department of Defense said it has concurred



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James DuBose ignites a streaming revolution, uplifting Black voices globally with In The Black Network

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

In a seismic move set to redefine the streaming landscape, James DuBose, the visionary former General Manager of Fox Soul, has unleashed his revolutionary ad-supported video-on-demand (AVOD) platform, In The Black Network (ITBN). DuBose started the streaming service in October and has intentionally designed it to magnify Black voices and showcase original narratives.

In The Black Network

is not merely a streaming platform; “it is a cultural phenomenon set to house a rich tapestry of entertainment meticulously curated from the vault of Fox Television Stations,” DuBose told the National Newspaper Publishers Association’s (NNPA) Let It Be Known morning news show.

The NNPA is the trade association of the 250 African American newspapers and media companies that comprise the 197-year-old Black Press of America.

Offering an expansive collection of free entertain-

ment content, the new platform will be easily accessible through a dedicated app on iOS and Android devices, Apple TV, YouTube, and Samsung media players, with plans to forge additional distribution partnerships shortly.

A luminary in the television and filmmaking realms, DuBose’s mission goes beyond entertainment. He told Let It Be Known that it’s about creating a Black-owned streaming powerhouse that becomes the epitome of Black pride. The ITBN service promises a kaleidoscope of multi-

genre content, ranging from sports, music, scripted dramas, and talk shows to children and family programs and feature films.

He said there are plans to use news and entertainment host, Niele Anderson, to host political town halls and to inform and educate voters ahead of the 2024 presidential election.

“I love everything about our culture: our faith, our resilience, our rhythm, our minds, and our love,” DuBose asserted. “These pillars are the focus of our curated content, which honors and elevates black

culture and cultivates pride within our community. Throughout my career, I’ve always aimed to uplift Black voices, so bringing this new network to fruition is extremely personal and important to me. We want viewers to feel connected to authentic stories that speak to our culture and gain a shared sense of self from enjoying our entertainingly inspiring content.”

DuBose has strategically aligned with content powerhouses such as pocket.watch, Black Waterhorse, Maverick Entertainment,

and he’s chosen shows from Fox Soul’s licensed library.

“We want folks to go to one place,” he said. “If you want to watch Netflix, you go to Netflix. We want that for In The Black.”

DuBose added that he envisions challenging industry giants like Tubi and Netflix in the free streaming TV space, not just in the United States but globally. “We want to be a place that’s easier to get through the greenlight process. Too many talented creators in our culture don’t get their voices or vision seen.”

PROM, from Page 5

ucts for their special night. For many teen victims of abuse or neglect, attending prom looking their best is a chance to feel like any other teen for a few hours.

Dallas CASA Children’s Council coordinates the

shopping days. Event co-chairs are Jana Brosin, Anne Killebrew and Megan Martinez.

Items may be donated the entire month of February at select Comerica Bank locations (see listing).

Dallas CASA (Court Appointed 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 advo-

cate 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.

Dallas CASA envisions a day when all children experience safe childhoods and grow into resourceful, healthy adults. Now in its 44th year, Dallas CASA serves more children than any of the more than 900 CASA programs nationwide. In 2023, 1,240 Dal-

las CASA volunteers were assigned to advocate for 2,151 children in protective care. For the past five years, the agency has been able to provide an advocate for every Dallas child in need, but each year more are needed. To learn more, visit dallascasa.org.

GIRLEY, from Page 2

nated from Jerry Girley’s representation of a Black doctor dismissed from AdventHealth in Orlando in 2021. Despite a jury ruling in favor of Girley’s client, the presiding judge overruled the decision, contending a lack of evidence establishing racial discrimination in the dismissal.

The Florida Bar reported that Jerry and Brooke Girley publicly criticized the judge’s decision, accusing improper conduct within

the court system. The Bar argued that their statements, both in interviews and on social media, undermined public confidence in the judiciary and were prejudicial to the administration of justice.

In her reports recommending disciplinary measures, Herndon asserted that the Girleys had violated their oath of admission to the Florida Bar by failing to show respect to judicial officers and making false

statements. She argued that the Girleys’ claims were not First Amendment-protected free speech, in opposition to their arguments.

Founded in 2007, The Girley Law Firm P.A. focuses on civil rights, criminal defense, and social security cases. Described as a community trust, the firm advocates for justice and equality for all, irrespective of race, color, or creed.

Brooke Girley, an accomplished attorney and media executive, has contributed to significant victories in

civil rights cases alongside her father. Passionate about racial equality, she has served in various capacities, including as an adjunct professor and a media executive in the religious space.

Jerry Girley’s background includes service in the United States Navy, civilian employment with the Orlando Police Department, and a dedication to civil rights issues. He is the President and Managing Attorney of the Girley Law Firm and serves as General Counsel for Freedom Min-

istries Church.

“The state of Florida has a shameful history of discrimination and bias against racial minorities,” the ACLU of Florida noted on its website. “Though great strides have been made for equality during and since the Civil Rights Movement, racial minorities still face challenges and discrimination in our state.”

The ACLU’s statement continued:

“Because so many of Florida’s voting problems, particularly those that be-

came apparent during and since the 2000 Presidential election, fell most heavily on African Americans and language minority communities, much of the ACLU of Florida work is directed toward correcting voting irregularities that have a disproportionate impact on those groups. The ACLU of Florida also actively supports reforms such as the creation of effective civilian review boards for law enforcement that would bring changes in police policies and practices.”

AUTHOR, from Page 8

story centers around a truth that I hold, which is that our identity is found in God and who He designed us to be,” he states.

Paschal shared how the response to his book has been overwhelmingly positive. He disclosed the book has been sold in over a half dozen countries around the world.

It is his hope the message from his book will resonate

with people over a lifetime much like past classical children’s literature such as: “The Little Engine that Could,” “The Giving Tree,” or the “Hungry Caterpillar.”

“It still blows my mind that my book is international. The stories that warm my heart the most are when I am told ‘The Mighty Mountain’ is their child’s favorite book, the one they want to read over

and over...”

Paschal has learned many lessons in publishing his first children’s book and his advice to other minorities with aspirations to publish their story is pretty practical as he explains the importance of telling your unique story is similar to the variety of brands of bread offered at a grocery store and although the competitors offer similar types of bread there continues to be a demand for

each one because every customer has different taste and needs.

“Your style and approach are perfect for what someone is looking for, he surmises.”

“The Mighty Mountain” is just the beginning of several projects Paschal plans to release as he shared how he is working on a book geared for graduates transitioning to college as well as another children’s book on the topic of faith and he

has a vision for a series of books that will help educate children on career options and how these careers make a positive impact on society.

Paschal is also trying to make his book more accessible to the general public by encouraging those within our community to request his book be added to their local library’s catalog of books.

Retailers and/or churches can also email [sales@](mailto:sales@blkpawnpublishing.com)

blkpawnpublishing.com to request his book to add to their inventory.

For public speaking or reading engagements, contact ki.paschal@blkpawnpublishing.com. To sign up for his newsletter or to purchase a book directly from Blkpawn Publishing, visit blkpawnpublishing.com or you can purchase the book on all major online retail bookstores like Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Bookshop, or Books-a-Million.

PayPal and Venmo unveil six new innovations to revolutionize commerce

SAN JOSE (PRNews-wire) -- PayPal Holdings, Inc. (NASDAQ: PYPL) today announced six new innovations the company is piloting and bringing to market this year to revolutionize commerce through artificial intelligence (AI) driven personalization for both merchants and consumers. During the PayPal First Look keynote, Alex Chriss, President and CEO, introduced: a completely new PayPal checkout experience that radically speeds up check out for consumers and helps merchants convert transactions like never before; Fastlane by PayPal, a dramatically faster and smarter guest checkout experience; Smart Receipts, giving customers AI-personalized recommendations from merchants to keep them coming back; the PayPal advanced offers platform so merchants can provide relevant, personalized, real-time offers to consumers and drive more sales; a re-invented PayPal consumer app giving shoppers new ways to earn cash back and more reasons to use PayP-

al; and, Venmo's enhanced business profiles, so small businesses can find and engage new customers, and grow their businesses.

"PayPal is on a mission to revolutionize commerce, globally, and today we are starting the next chapter," said Alex Chriss, President and CEO, PayPal. "With nearly 400 million consumer accounts, and 35 million merchant accounts, PayPal handles transactions for about a quarter of the world's e-commerce transactions each year, but more importantly, shoppers trust PayPal to power their payments."

Chriss continued, "PayPal is introducing six new innovations that will not only solve real customer pain points, but we believe will change the world of payments and commerce. From new solutions for merchants to speed up checkout and personalize offers, to a new consumer app that will give our loyal customers more reasons to shop with PayPal, to the next generation of Venmo designed to be the growth platform for local small

businesses, PayPal has always brought the future of money to our consumers and merchants and today marks the next revolution."

With digital commerce expected to exceed \$6 trillion in 2024, merchants need new, advanced ways to speed consumers through checkout in a seamless way that reduces lost sales. Additionally, consumers are continuously looking to stretch their budgets and get as much value while shopping as possible. PayPal's global scale and extensive data set, combined with the power of AI, will deliver the next generation of value for both consumers and merchants.

Transforming Checkout

Checkout is the last interaction between a consumer and a merchant, and while it seems so simple, any friction can disrupt the

moment. Business owners want to focus on the next sale and consumers are looking to remove any annoying interruptions like password prompts or lagging response times. To address this, PayPal has massively accelerated the checkout process to get customers to choose PayPal, integrate passkeys to enable customers to log in with their face or fingerprint with one tap, and to improve latency. In fact, this will reduce latency by as much as 50%, and enable customers to check out twice as fast, all with the same level of security and trust they have come to expect from PayPal. Additionally, the new PayPal checkout will also leverage AI to get smarter and faster over time.

Introducing Fastlane by PayPal
Merchants are losing out on sales because the guest

checkout process is both slow and cumbersome. Additionally, shoppers do not often sign in or sign up while browsing, and when they are ready to check out, they must find their password, update their credit card information, or shipping address. To help, PayPal is introducing Fastlane by PayPal, a new one-click guest checkout experience that merchants using PayPal's platform will be able to offer their shoppers, allowing them to make a fast and painless purchase. Customers simply save their information with Fastlane to check out in as little as one tap. No username or password to remember, no personal information to update, and no need to share a credit card with businesses

all over the web. PayPal has been piloting Fastlane by PayPal with a group of merchants and are seeing astounding early results. Select merchants on BigCommerce, a leading open software-as-a-service (SaaS) ecommerce platform and longtime PayPal partner, have seen early results showing that Fastlane can recognize 70% of guests and accelerated checkout speeds of nearly 40% compared to a traditional guest checkout process.

These are just the first two new features of many the companies are rolling out. For more information on all the new experiences, visit <http://www.paypal.com/us/whats-new/first-look>.

USBC, from Page 11

tailored financial solutions, we are not only advancing equitable financial access but also empowering these businesses towards greater success and sustainability."

USBC encourages small businesses from underserved backgrounds to explore the opportunities offered by the USBC Lending Portal Powered

by Lendistry. This innovative borrowing approach is poised to make a substantial impact on the economic landscape for minority, women, and veteran-owned businesses.

For further details and to access the USBC Lending Portal Powered by Lendistry, visit <https://usblackchambers.org/lendistry/>.

GRAMMY, from Page 7

all time." The awards had several surprises, including Celine Dion presenting Taylor Swift with Album of the Year honors. Other winners included: Taylor Swift's "Midnights," for Album of the Year and Best Pop Vocal Album; "Flowers," by Miley

Cyrus as Record of the Year and Best Pop Solo Performance; "What Was I Made For?," by Billie Eilish (from the motion picture "Barbie"), written by Billie Eilish O'Connell and Finneas O'Connell for Song of the Year; and Victoria Monet as Best New Artist.



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Making Decisions Is The Hardest Part Of My Life

Dr. James L. Snyder

If it were not for decisions, my life would be perfect. After all these years, I still wrestle with decision-making. I admit that I often don't make good decision.

I'm not sure, so don't repeat this, but I think The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage knows this and uses it to her advantage. How? I don't know. She is the primary source behind my decision-making.

I hate choosing one thing over another when both things are good. That's a bad part of life if you ask me. Why can't everything be easy?

Driving across town, I must decide whether to turn right or left. That's not much of a decision-making process because I know where I'm going. If I make the right decisions while driving, I will get to where I need to be.

So, making decisions can be a real challenge for me.

For example, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage in the morning will ask me what I want for supper. I have not even had lunch yet, and now I am



backed into a corner and have to make a decision about supper.

Usually, I respond by saying, "Whatever you would like to make for supper will be okay with me." Then I smile because I don't know what I am getting into. She has been making supper for me for over 53 years, and I have no complaints as of today. Her decision about supper is always okay with me.

Of course, there are those times when she asks me that question, and sometimes I will respond by saying, "Anything but broccoli."

I need to be careful in this area because she is a vegetable aficionado in the

strictest sense of the word. If it's a vegetable, it's on her menu, and it's not even open for a decision.

I always wrestle with decisions, and by now, I should have perfected my decision-making skills. Just when I think I have, some decision comes before me that I have difficulty dealing with.

The other day, for example, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage was baking pies for some family get-together. I could smell them all the way back to my office.

She came to my office, looked in, and asked, "Would you like a piece of pie?"

That's not even in the

decision category. So I answered, "Of course I do."

"Okay," she said, "which pie would you like? You can only have one piece."

I asked her about the pies she was baking, and she said, "I have Apple pie, lemon meringue pie, peach pie, coconut cream pie, and chocolate pie. You can only have one piece, so which one?"

That is not a decision-making venue. There is no way I can decide on one pie over five pieces of pie. No matter which pie I pick, I'm gonna love it, but I'm also going to wonder about the other pies that she has.

After all these years, I can't deal with that kind of decision-making process.

Pondering on that decision-making process, I looked at her and said, "I'm not sure which one I want; what would you recommend?"

Looking at me with a sly little grin, she said, "I'm not sure which one I would pick. They're all very delicious and so it doesn't matter which one you pick."

That's the problem with making a decision. When you make a decision, you

eliminate everything else. If I decide on the pie that I'm going to eat at the time, it eliminates all the other pies that are on the table. How can anybody handle that kind of decision-making process?

As she was ready to leave my office, I stopped her and said, "I'll take any pie you choose for me and bring it here." Then I smiled.

I waited. And waited. And waited. She never came back with any pie for me. I had no idea what was wrong.

Finally, my nerves got the best of me, and I walked into the kitchen to find out what was happening.

There she was, sitting down at the table, eating a nice piece of pie. I looked at her. She looked back and smiled. Then I asked her, "So, where's my pie?"

She looked at me, laughed, and said, "Since you could not make up your mind when I asked you, I just thought you didn't want any pie." Then she laughed some more.

I did not think that was funny, I walked over to the pies and carefully looked at them. Each one had its own

aroma and I loved each one. Looking at them, I was trying to figure out which pie I would choose to eat.

Making decisions is very hard to do, at least for me especially when it comes to choosing my pie. No matter which pie I choose, I would love it, but then I would wonder about the pies I did not choose.

Life has its ups and downs.

When I have to make a decision about anything, a Bible verse comes to mind.

Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

When I trust my understanding, I always fail in some degree. When I accept the fact that I don't know everything, I then turn my trust to the Lord.

Dr. James L. Snyder lives in Ocala, FL with the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. Telephone 1-352-216-3025, e-mail jamesnsnyder51@gmail.com, website www.jamesnsnyderministries.com.

MADISON, from Page 2

and Culture. Five months later, Madison made history again by broadcasting live from Cuba and becoming the first American radio host to do so in more than 50 years.

In 2021, Madison went on a 73-day hunger strike to encourage passage of voting rights bills. Unbeknownst to his listeners, he was fighting prostate cancer during his hunger strike. When asked if he understood the danger he was in, he replied, "I am willing to die."

His bio further noted that a few months after his hunger strike, the Emmett Till

Antilynching Act passed in the Senate with the help of Madison's continued push on the radio. His efforts were noticed by many, including the then Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, who publicly thanked him for another fight for justice.

Madison and his wife Sharon have been married for more than 45 years and they currently reside in Washington, D.C. Their blended family includes four children, five grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

In a statement, Madison's family invited fans

and friends to send condolences. "Joe dedicated his life to fighting for all those who are undervalued, underestimated, and marginalized. On air he often posed the question, 'What are you going to do about it?'. Although he is no longer with us, we hope you will join us in answering that call by continuing to be proactive in the fight against injustice. The outpouring of prayers and support over the last few months lifted Joe's spirits and strengthened us as a family. We continue to ask for privacy as we gather together to support each other through this difficult time."

Let us hear from you!
 If there is any news, events or anything else we need to know about, give us an e-mail at: editor@northdallasgazette.com

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Black History Month



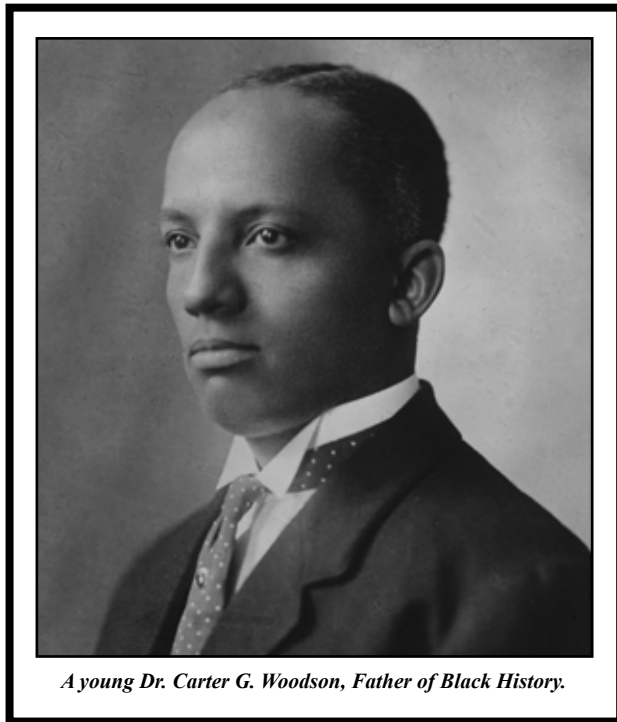
The month of February is “our nation’s” observation of Black History. The 2015 theme is: “A Century of Black Life, History, and Culture”

It is disheartening to think of the controversy surrounding this very important holiday in America.

Some people joked, “We were given the shortest month of the year to celebrate our history.” This is not just Black History that we are celebrating, not just America’s history, but history of the world.

Many great and useful inventions that are being used worldwide, and that are taken for granted were invented by Black people. The cell phone (Henry T. Sampson and his “gamma-electric cell”) was invented by a Black man.

The first open heart surgery (Vivien Thomas a surgical technician who developed the procedures used to



treat blue baby syndrome in the 1940s) to name essential things that are in use today.

Some people think that it’s by pure accident that some Black citizens, not the same ones that we hear about year after year; have done anything worthwhile.

There are others that easily accept that we have a few famous entertainers, sports figures and a few entrepreneurs making millions of dollars; but they

are slow to recognize that there are many Blacks that have excelled, and are continuing to excel and invent devices.

They use math and science to make a difference in how we live, work, play and entertain today.

As a retired teacher, I too wish that all history of great magnitude is put in our textbooks, especially Black history, which is American’s history; in spite of what we have been

taught.

But wishing it is not going to get the information in our textbooks on the grand scale that it needs to be (School Districts in Texas and California, they are the largest buyers of textbooks, could insist and get their request granted.

The story of Carter Godwin Woodson, Father of Black History (December 1875 – April 1950, is a captivating and inspiration story in itself.

Dr. Woodson said, “Those who have no record of what their forebears have accomplished lose the inspiration which comes from the teaching of biography and history.”

When Dr. Woodson established Negro History week in 1926, he realized the importance of providing a theme to focus the attention of the public.

The intention has never been to dictate or limit the exploration of the Black experience, but to bring to

the public’s attention important developments that merit emphasis.

He believed that Blacks should know their past in order to participate intelligently in the affairs in our country.

Dr. Woodson strongly believed that Black history—which others (even some Black people) have tried so diligently to erase—is a firm foundation for young Black people to build on in order to become productive citizens of our society.

Prior to “Negro History WEEK,” Dr. Woodson and several of his friends estab-

lished the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. In the 1960s it was established as Black History MONTH.

In 1912 (the year my mother, Cedella Baker Demus, was born) Dr. Woodson, received his Ph.D in history from Harvard University. He developed an important philosophy of history.

History, he insisted, was not the mere gathering of fact. The object of historical study is to arrive at a reasonable interpretation of

See TARPLEY, Page 16

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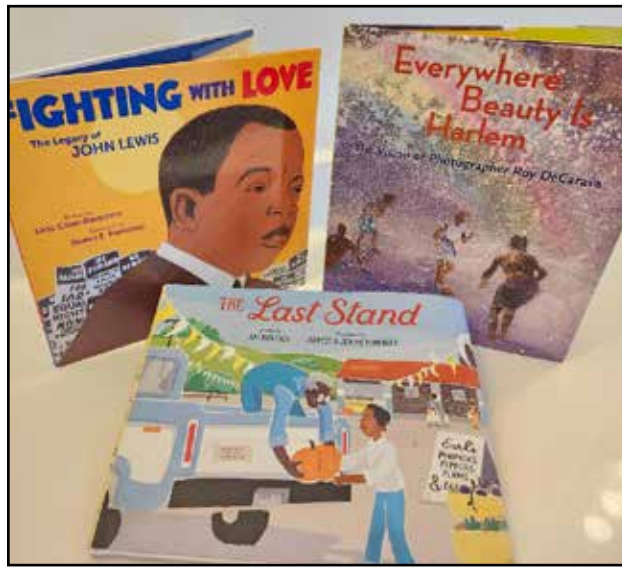
NDG Book Review: Black History Month books for Kids

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

You know your history. You know about slavery and Jim Crow and Harriet Tubman and Malcolm X. You know about all those things, and more. So now make sure your child knows, too, by bringing home these great Black History Month books for kids...

Since forever, African Americans have been first-rate gardeners and farmers and in "The Last Stand" by Antwan Eady, illustrated by Jarrett and Jerome Phumphrey (Knopf, \$18.99), Mr. Earl's grandson worries about his Papa, who runs a farmer's market.

Two summers ago, there were five people with country roadside stands. Now, it's just Mr. Earl. What will the people in their community do if there's no fresh produce or fresh eggs?



Who will have peppers for Mr. Johnny or pumpkins for Ms. Rosa? What will happen on the day when Papa's "too tired" to go to his market stall? This book, and the stories it can lead to, will help your 3-to-5-year-old learn more about everyday Black history.

If your ancestors came North in the Great Migration, then you'll want to

bring "Everywhere Beauty is Harlem" by Gary Golio, art by E.B. Lewis (Calkins Creek, \$18.99).

When photographer Roy DeCarava came to Harlem in the early 1940s, he landed in Harlem. And so, after work every evening, he slipped film into his camera, and he went hunting for treasures – not gold or jewels, but people. A

man snoozing on the subway, a little boy drawing with sidewalk chalk, an artist standing streetside with his wares, not one of them escaped his notice. Looking into the eyes of those people he captured on film, "Roy sees Harlem."

Your 3-to-7-year-old will want to see, too. Be sure to read the biography at the end of this tale, so you can give your child the full, authentic story.

And finally, if your 6-to-9-year-old needs to know about a legend, read "Fighting With Love: The Legacy of John Lewis" by Lesa Cline-Ransome, illustrated by James E. Ransome (Simon & Schuster, \$18.99).

Here, your child will learn that John Lewis was the son of a sharecropper, and he dreamed of a better life. He wanted an education, and he sneaked out and got one. He was a

teenager before he heard the words "justice" and "segregation," and he knew instantly that they were important. When he left on a bus to go to Seminary school, his mother warned him not to get in trouble, but how could he not?

"Fighting with Love" is wonderfully illustrated but the story's longer and much more in-depth. You may find in the picture book section for little kids, but older children are the right audience for it. For them, this is a great introduction to Lewis's life, and to historical biographies in general.

If you need more Black History Month reading for your child, or if you've got older kids itching to learn more, too, then ask your favorite librarian or bookseller for help. For any age, and any month, that's the place to find books to know your history.

TARPLEY, from Page 15

the facts. History is more than political and military records of peoples and nations. It must include some description of the social conditions of the period being studied.

Even Dr. Woodson often said that he hoped the time would come when Negro History Week would be unnecessary; when all Americans would willingly recognize the contributions of Black Americans as a legitimate and integral part of the history of this country.

His concept has given a profound sense of dignity to all Black people; and we must not forget it! Nor should we stop Black History Month.

(Editor's Note: This column originally ran in February 2015.)

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