



# North Dallas Gazette

"Most respected Voice of the Minority Community"

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# The Surreptitious Segregation: School Choice does not make for choice schools

By Allen R. Gray  
NDG Contributing Writer

The problem for Black students with school vouchers and choice schools is that for them there may not be much of a choice. If invoked, voucher programs will force Black students to face the greatest segregationist of them. No. It is not the ghost of George Wallace or the revenant of Jim Crow, but the most formidable segregationist of them all: money. Even if a student choses a good school, the difference between the value of the voucher and what private schools really cost, the student may not be able to afford it.

Furthermore, even if a family can manage to afford the school's tuition, that institution of learning is under no obligation to accept them. Private schools are private businesses that are in the game



Whole School Choice advocates extoll the value of opening options to students, hidden barriers minimize these advantages to poor and minority kids. (TopSphere Media / Unsplash)

for a profit. Therefore, they are not affiliated with local, regional, state, or national government. So, whatever decisions were made in Brown v. Topeka Board of Education do not apply to private entities. Voucher programs may have

some good selling points on the surface, but those points are not all pie in the sky.

Some of the more detrimental effects of vouchers are well worth noting. Vouchers will take money

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## Mark Your Calendars...

EARLY VOTING			
April 22-26	Mon. - Fri.	8 a.m. - 5 p.m.	
April 27	Saturday	7 a.m. - 7 p.m.	
April 28	Sunday	12 p.m. - 6 p.m.	
April 29-30	Mon. - Tue.	7 a.m. - 7 p.m.	

ELECTION DAY	
May 4	Saturday 7 a.m. - 7 p.m.

*"Voting is the foundation stone of political action."*  
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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### People In The News ...



Adm. Zeita Merchant



Mayor Sharon Tucker

NDG Quote of the Week: "Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed."

- Booker T. Washington

## Adm. Zeita Merchant

U.S. Coast Guard Capt. Zeita Merchant has made history as the first Black female admiral in the service's 233-year history. Admiral Merchant, previously the commander of Sector New York, will now lead the Coast Guard Personnel Service Center in Washington, D.C., where she will oversee recruitment and scholarships.



never thought it would be in the form of military service. I really feel like this is God's plan and not my plan," she told the Clarion Ledger newspaper in Jackson, Mississippi.

Officials said the promotion highlights the Coast Guard's ongoing commitment to diversity and inclusion. Historian William H. Thiesen notes that African Americans have played a pivotal role in the Coast Guard's history since its inception in 1790. "From the earliest days of the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service, Black sailors served alongside their white counterparts, with many making significant contributions during conflicts such as the Quasi-War with France and the War of 1812," Thiesen wrote in a column for the Coast Guard's newsletter.

He wrote that the Coast Guard's rich and illustrious history of African American service is filled with bravery and accomplishment milestones. From Aaron Carter, the first African American to die in combat defending the Cape Florida Lighthouse in 1836, to "Hell Roaring" Mike Healy, the first African American commissioned officer and ship's captain, Black Coast Guard members have consistently broken barriers and paved the way for future generations.

During World War II, the Coast Guard led the federal government's first official

experiments in desegregation, commissioning its first African American officers and assigning Black officers and enlisted men to the USS Sea Cloud. By the war's end, 5,000 Black members had served in the Coast Guard, with one in every five reaching petty officer or warrant officer levels.

In the following decades, African Americans continued to achieve notable milestones within the service. Thiesen asserted that Lovine Freamon and Bobby Wilks became the first Black graduates from Officer Candidate School

in 1954 and 1956. Merle Smith, the first African American graduate of the Coast Guard Academy in 1966, later received the Bronze Star Medal for his service in Vietnam.

Modern times have seen African Americans reach even greater heights within the Coast Guard. Vince Patton became the first Black Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard in 1998, followed by Erroll Brown, the first Black flag officer, in 2002. Jeanine McIntosh earned her wings as the first African American fe-

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## Mayor Sharon Tucker

Fort Wayne Councilwoman Sharon Tucker has made history after becoming Indiana's second-largest city's new mayor. Tucker becomes Fort Wayne's first Black mayor and second woman to hold the position. She was selected during a Democratic caucus to replace the late Mayor Tom Henry, who died in March.



according to Derek Camp, chairman of the Allen County Democratic Party.

"Today, Mayor Tucker proved that she has the energy and support of our party, and we look forward to supporting her as she works to continue moving our

community forward," Fort Wayne Democratic Party officials stated in a news release.

Seven candidates, including Indiana Democratic House leader and state Rep. Phil GiaQuinta, ran in the party caucus. A total of 92 precinct committee members cast votes to determine the successor to Henry, who died at the age of 72 after battling stomach cancer.

Camp confirmed that Tucker will serve the remainder of Henry's term, which runs through December 31, 2027.

Tucker's Background and Community Involvement

A graduate of Indiana

Tech, Tucker holds two Bachelor of Science degrees in Management and Human Resources. She has a community and civic engagement history, having served as the Treasurer for the Allen County Democratic Party for five years and as Vice Chair in 2016.

Tucker was elected 1st

District Councilwoman on the Allen County Council in 2014 and re-elected to a second term in 2018. She later won the 6th District City Council seat in 2019, becoming the first African American woman to hold that position.

In addition to her political roles, Tucker has been

involved in various community organizations. She is a Zeta Phi Beta Sorority member, AVOW (Advancing Voices of Women), and the NAACP. Tucker also volunteers on the Board of Directors for the Allen County Public Library, Al-

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## Dr. Carlos Cruz

Dr. Carlos Cruz, vice chancellor student well-being and social support, has been named a 2024-2025 Aspen Rising Presidents Fellow. Forty fellows from diverse institutions, located in 20 different states, were selected through a competitive process. Over the next 10 months, they will work closely with accomplished community college presidents and thought leaders and study field-leading research to advance excellence and equitable student outcomes.



professionally through this opportunity to work alongside the other fellows in breaking barriers to student success in community colleges."

Dr. Cruz has more than 15 years of experience in higher education leadership and management in student affairs, learning development,

grant programs, operations, strategic planning and community partnerships. In his current role, he oversees student care coordination, counseling and psychological services, health services and promotion, and basic needs and community connections departments at Dallas College. He was instrumental in developing the institution's Student Care Network, a holistic system of care, services and resources that empowers students to succeed.

"As a first-generation Latino male who sought education as the path to a brighter future, this fellowship is a true testimony to my commitment to lifelong

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# Stupid is as Stupid Does. C'mon people!

By Jim Clingman

In March of 2018, after 25 years of doing so, I submitted my final Black-economics column to the members of the National Newspaper Publishers Association.

The article was titled, "The Last Dance," and I wrote it because I could no longer use my computer. ALS had made its way to my arms and hands preventing me from doing something else I loved doing.

Since that time, I have gotten back to writing, only now with my eyes on my eye gaze computer. You can check out my work on ALS News Today online.

But this is not about me. It's about us, Black people. So I humbly ask the NNPA and all Black news outlets (I don't think this will appear in the New York Times or the Washington Post) - whether print or online - to indulge me one more time because I really have to speak to my family.

While our overall political status leaves much to be desired, I want to hone in on one slice of it: The slice called DEI. Trump and others of his ilk are constantly railing against Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. In my opinion, it's the new N-word.

Let's take a different look at these issues. It's hilarious that Trump thinks DEI is bad when he uses it to boost his popularity. Diversity? Inclusion? He has insulted Hispanics by calling them rapists and criminals. He said they are poisoning the blood of this country.

He insults women in so many ways, questioning their intelligence and competency when it comes to what they think is right for their bodies. He insulted Muslims when he issued a

ban against their entrance to this country.

He insulted Jews by questioning their beliefs and saying those among them who vote for Democrats are not Jewish. He insults Christians in a variety of ways, the latest of which includes hawking over-priced bibles but can't recite one verse from it. He says he gets forgiveness by drinking a little wine and

has insulted others like "my African American," and his water boy, Tim Scott, who then insulted himself by responding, "I just love you."

To top it all off, he insulted African countries by calling them S---hole nations, which is also an insult to our ancestors. It's obvious Trump knows nothing about African history, but even if he did it would not change his insults.

*"While our overall political status leaves much to be desired, I want to hone in on one slice of it: The slice called DEI. Trump and others of his ilk are constantly railing against Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. In my opinion, it's the new N-word."*

eating a cracker.

He insulted Puerto Ricans by throwing paper towels to them after they suffered one of the worst hurricanes in their history. He insulted veterans by calling their dead "suckers and losers." He asked his general what's in for them (soldiers and sailors).

And to think some members of all those groups want him to be their President is mind-boggling to me. Some even have bowed down before a golden image of Trump, despite what happened to the ones who did the same thing under the leadership of Moses.

Now let's look at Black people, my people. Trump called for the death penalty for five Black teens wrongly accused of crimes. He insulted Obama by questioning his citizenship. Trump

He knows nothing about the greatness of Songhai, Mali, Timbuktu, Kemet, Ethiopia, and many other African nations of then and now.

He said people from Congo are diseased and a bunch of criminals. It is funny that King Leopold II of Belgium and other heads of state didn't feel they were S - - holes.

Leopold coveted the Congo, during which time he caused the deaths of as many as ten million Congolese and walked away with one billion dollars. He wanted the land and the free labor to work on the rubber tree plantations, but tortured the people and their children in the process. Ever heard of the Belgian Congo and Leopoldville?

What really hurts is the fact that some members of

our group will also vote for the pumpkin. With black skinned folks like Clarence Thomas, Byron Donalds, Candace Owens, and Tim Scott leading the way, some pitiful Black people will follow them to the gallows.

That staged event in Atlanta was certainly one for the books. Trump plants a black skinned stooge in a Chick-fil-A, who hugged and swooned over him, all of which was set up. Instead of paper towels he gave the Black folks milkshakes and chicken to get their votes.

By the way, do you know how many Black workers there are in government jobs? Trump and Steven Miller have plans to downsize when they get back in charge. Black unemployment increase? You betcha.

Now, for all of you who say God sent Trump to deliver us, I simply say, may God's will be done despite my feelings or complaints, which place me the company of Jeremiah, Job, and Habakkuk. His will is perfect.

Diversity and inclusion, when used as Trump does, are despicable and evil. His insults and name-calling are as diverse and inclusive as they come. Used properly, DEI is simply a tool to assist in the repair of Black people. Long overdue.

But what about Equity? Well, that simply means "The quality of being fair and impartial," something the anti-DEI crowd would do well to learn and implement.

Brothers and sisters if you want an even more corrupt Supreme Court and Congress, if you want to see even more racists in public office, and if you don't mind having a King and dictator rather than a President, Trump is your guy.

Keep up with the news

O N L I N E

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# The Legacy Grace Project hosts national conference for women living with HIV/AIDS

Legacy Cares announces the 25th anniversary of what is now the largest conference for women living with HIV/AIDS in the nation. This year the Grace Project National Conference for Women Living with HIV/AIDS will host nearly 200 women living with HIV from North Texas and nationwide. The event is designed to bring formerly isolated women living with an HIV diagnosis together. The goal of the conference is to SEE (Support, Educate and Empower) each woman and create future advocates for HIV prevention, health educa-



Courtesy photo

tion and awareness.

The conference has support from the HIV community of North Texas with many HIV organizations partnering with the event. Individuals can sponsor the conference fee for one de-

serving HIV+ woman for only \$200 and larger sponsorships are also welcome.

It is a three-day conference for Women with HIV/AIDS seeking to encourage hope and hold families together while also increasing

awareness about the spread of HIV in our communities through educational seminars on issues ranging from how to disclose your status, proper nutrition, and medication adherence. It also seeks to educate and support women with living HIV while building relationships and grass root leaders.

It will be held Friday, May 17th through Sunday, May 19th, 2024 at the Westin Dallas Park Central Hotel, 12720 Merit Drive, Dallas, TX, 75251.

For more info call the Grace Project line 214-520-6308 ext. 384 or on the

web at <https://legacygraceproject.org> and <https://www.iamredproject.org/graceprojectconference>

Sponsorship information is available on the web at [www.legacygraceproject.org](http://www.legacygraceproject.org).

The Grace Project was inspired by Grace Hunt, a loving and generous woman who counseled women with HIV/AIDS. The program seeks to encourage hope and hold families together through a supportive net of services including mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment, support building, and education as women are the

fastest growing population of new HIV infections. The conference is the centerpiece of the program.

Legacy Cares ([www.legacycares.org](http://www.legacycares.org)) was founded 30 years ago by a small group of psychotherapists and people living with HIV/AIDS who needed a place to go for support in dealing with this life changing disease.

Legacy also provides housing opportunities and operates Legacy Founders Cottage, a seven-bedroom house that provides around-the-clock care for critically ill and dying AIDS patients in a home-like setting.

## Signs of Multiple Sclerosis show up in blood years before symptoms

(Newsweek) — In a discovery that could hasten treatment for patients with multiple sclerosis (MS), UC San Francisco scientists have discovered a harbinger in the blood of some people who later went on to develop the disease.

In about 1 in 10 cases of MS, the body begins producing a distinctive set of antibodies against its own proteins years before symptoms emerge. These autoantibodies appear to bind to both human cells and common pathogens, possibly explaining the immune attacks on the brain and spinal cord that are the hallmark of MS.

The findings were published in *Nature Medicine* on April 19.

MS can lead to a devastating loss of motor control, although new treatments can slow the progress of the disease and, for example, preserve a patient's ability to walk. The scientists hope the autoantibodies they have discovered will one day be detected with a simple blood test, giving patients a head start on receiving treatment.

"Over the last few decades, there's been a move

in the field to treat MS earlier and more aggressively with newer, more potent therapies," said UCSF neurologist Michael Wilson, MD, a senior author of the paper. "A diagnostic result like this makes such early intervention more likely, giving patients hope for a better life."

### Linking infections with autoimmune disease

Autoimmune diseases like MS are believed to result, in part, from rare immune reactions to common infections.

In 2014, Wilson joined forces with Joe DeRisi, PhD, president of the Chan Zuckerberg Biohub SF and a senior author of the paper, to develop better tools for unmasking the culprits behind autoimmune disease. They took a technique in which viruses are engineered to display bits of proteins like flags on their surface, called phage display immunoprecipitation sequencing (PhIP-Seq), and further optimized it to screen human blood for autoantibodies.

PhIP-Seq detects autoantibodies against more than 10,000 human proteins, enough to investigate

nearly any autoimmune disease. In 2019, they successfully used it to discover a rare autoimmune disease that seemed to arise from testicular cancer.

MS affects more than 900,000 people in the US. Its early symptoms, like dizziness, spasms, and fatigue, can resemble other conditions, and diagnosis requires careful analysis of brain MRI scans.

The phage display system, the scientists reasoned, could reveal the autoantibodies behind the immune attacks of MS and create new opportunities to understand and treat the disease.

The project was spearheaded by first co-authors Colin Zamecnik, PhD, a postdoctoral researcher in DeRisi's and Wilson's labs; and Gavin Sowa, MD, MS, former UCSF medical student and now internal medicine resident at Northwestern University.

They partnered with Mitch Wallin, MD, MPH, from the University of Maryland and a senior author of the paper, to search for autoantibodies in the blood of people with MS. These samples were ob-

tained from the U.S. Department of Defense Serum Repository, which stores blood taken from armed service members when they apply to join the military.

The group analyzed blood from 250 MS patients collected after their diagnosis, plus samples taken five or more years earlier when they joined the military. The researchers also looked at comparable blood samples from 250 healthy veterans.

Between the large number of subjects and the before-and-after timing of the samples, it was "a phenomenal cohort of individuals to look at to see how this kind of autoimmunity develops over the course of clinical onset of this disease," said Zamecnik.

### A consistent signature of MS

Using a mere one-thousandth of a milliliter of blood from each time point, the scientists thought they would see a jump in autoantibodies as the first symptoms of MS appeared. Instead, they found that 10% of the MS patients had a striking abundance of autoantibodies years before their diagnosis.

The dozen or so autoantibodies all stuck to a chemical pattern that resembled one found in common viruses, including Epstein-Barr Virus (EBV), which infects more than 85% of all people, yet has been

flagged in previous studies as a contributing cause for MS.

Years before diagnosis, this subset of MS patients had other signs of an im-

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# President Biden signs legislation banning TikTok

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National  
Correspondent



TikTok, the clock is ticking on the popular social media app's existence in the United States. President Joe Biden signed a bill on Wednesday approving the ban of TikTok, adding significant pressure on the platform to find a new owner.

The legislation, part of a broader foreign aid package supporting Israel and Ukraine, passed the House with a decisive 352-65 vote last week and received Senate approval on Tuesday. The Protecting Americans from Foreign Adversary Controlled Applications Act

is the most severe threat to TikTok since U.S. officials first raised concerns in 2020.

Under the new law, TikTok's Chinese parent company, ByteDance, has 270 days to sell TikTok to a non-Chinese entity. Failure to comply would result in TikTok's removal from U.S. app stores and restrictions on "internet hosting serv-

es" supporting the platform, limiting its accessibility to new users and interactions with its content.

Biden set the sale deadline for January 19, 2025, with an option to extend it by another 90 days if progress is made toward a sale. This could grant TikTok up to a year before facing a ban.

TikTok CEO Shou Chew responded defiantly to the legislation, assuring users in a video message, "Rest assured: we aren't going anywhere." Chew stated, "We are confident and will keep fighting for your rights in the courts. The facts and the Constitution are on our side, and we expect to prevail."

TikTok spokespersons criticized the law as "unconstitutional," warning of its devastating impact on the platform's 170 million U.S. users and 7 million businesses operating on the app.

The bill's proponents argue that it addresses genuine national security concerns. It would allow the president, with intelligence agency input, to designate social media applications controlled by foreign adversaries as national security threats. These designated apps would then face bans unless they severed ties with foreign entities.

Despite bipartisan support for the bill, with House

Speaker Mike Johnson (R-La.) describing Communist China as America's most significant geopolitical foe using technology to undermine the U.S. economy and security, it faced notable opposition: fifty Democrats and 15 Republicans, including Reps. Pramila Jayapal (D-Wash.), Ro Khanna (D-Calif.), and Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-Ga.) voted against it.

Critics raised concerns over potential infringements on free speech and adverse impacts on small businesses. TikTok's broad demographic reach was highlighted, with over 834 million global users, including 135 million in the

U.S., predominantly under 20.

The legislation's opponents, including TikTok, argue that it risks curtailing First Amendment rights and harming thousands of minority-owned small businesses reliant on the platform. The company has launched an aggressive lobbying campaign to combat the proposed legislation.

Paul Tran, co-owner of a skincare company that attributes much of its success to TikTok, said, "You will be destroying small businesses like us; this is our livelihood." He cautioned lawmakers against undermining the American Dream cherished by many.

## Rep. Ilhan Omar's daughter suspended from Barnard College over protests

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National  
Correspondent

Isra Hirsi, the daughter of Democratic Minnesota Rep. Ilhan Omar, has been suspended from Barnard College for her involvement in pro-Palestinian demonstrations at Columbia University. Hirsi, a junior at Barnard in New York City, announced her suspension on social me-

dia, stating she was one of three students penalized for supporting Palestinians.

"I've received notice that I am one of three students suspended for standing in solidarity with Palestinians facing genocide," Hirsi wrote on her social media platform. She highlighted her involvement with Columbia University Apartheid Divest and her clean disciplinary record during her three years at Barnard.

The suspension comes after Omar's constant calls for a ceasefire. Earlier this month, Omar and 55 other Democratic representatives sent a letter to President Biden and Secretary Blinken, urging them to halt arms assistance to Israel. An Israeli airstrike that killed seven World Central Kitchen humanitarian aid workers, including one American, served as the inspiration for the letter.

The representatives expressed deep concern over Israel's ongoing blockade of humanitarian aid to Gaza, which has exacerbated the region's descent into famine. They called for a comprehensive investigation into the airstrike and suggested withholding arms transfers to Israel until those responsible are held accountable.



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Isra Hirsi (Photo via NNPA)

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## South Dallas Gilliam Debaters repeat two rounds of success in Atlanta

On Friday, March 8, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. – the Kathlyn Joy Gilliam Museum “South Dallas Gilliam Debate Team” won both rounds of competition at the Atlanta Urban Debate League Tournament (elementary competition). NOTE: Two teams of three and each team won both rounds! The tournament is sponsored each year by Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia.

This would be the Dallas team’s first competition since COVID. The debate program has been in existence since 2016. Each year of participation, they have come home with winning teams. This year they continue the tradition!

The 2023-2024 debate team members are Matthew Cash Hill; Jayce Allen Dabney; Ella Grace Najm; Savannah Louise Lewis; Jackson Ellington Yates and



Courtesy photo

Claudette Pounders. All of the debaters are from the South Dallas community. This year the students were asked to come up with a plan to “reduce human-caused climate change.” The South Dallas Gilliam Debaters developed a campaign to get

children involved in climate change.

They call it the “Get it Right On Using Light” campaign. Their plan was precise and is very easy to do. They offered suggestions such as reducing the use of electricity; keeping home

and business temperatures regulated; unplugging vampire devices and using high efficient light bulbs.

This team has a range of personalities – bold; confident; determined, outspoken and quite energetic. Coaches will continue to

plant the seed for success in October 2024 when they will pick up where they left off -- working with this same group of bright minds. At least one new team of three will be invited to join the group in October 2024.

This season, the Museum welcomed two new coaches to work with the students. They are, Attorney Cheryl Wattlely (Professor of Law at the University of North Texas Dallas) and son Andrew Wattlely (Intellectual Standup Comic). The coaches bonded instantly with the students. KJGM President and CEO, Connie Harris, comments,

“This is a remarkable mother and son tag team who gave each student 100% of their time in preparing for the tournament. Such a unique pair – sharp and funny which allows the students to relate.” The coaches offered their as-

sistance on a volunteer basis to help broaden young minds. With their patience and genuine concern to see this group of young students succeed, they have truly made a difference. They have planted memories that will follow each debater for many years to come.

Junior coaches for this class were Amir Najm (Kathlyn Joy Gilliam Collegiate Academy); LaDarius Buckner (St. Anthony Academy); and Aleigha West (Martin Luther King Jr. Arts Academy). All are from the South Dallas Community. Carla Ranger (retired DISD Board Trustee) also worked closely with the students in preparation for the tournament. Not to forget the amazing parents who encouraged and made sure each student showed up for some vigorous practices. We want to thank them all!, says Ms. Harris.

## UT-Arlington’s first African American history professor’s past highlighted at National World War II Museum in New Orleans

By Cristol Gonzalez  
UT-Arlington

A new exhibit at the National World War II Museum in New Orleans features the story of Reby Cary, a Coast Guardsman and the first African American professor at The University of Texas at Arlington.

UTA Libraries Special Collections worked with the museum and supplied a photo of Cary from the UTA News Service Photograph Collection for the exhibit.

Cary taught the University’s first African American history courses and launched the Minority Cultures Collection with UTA Libraries. He was also the associate dean of student affairs and UTA’s first African American administrator. Before coming to the

University, he served as a radio operator in the Coast Guard aboard the USS Cambria, an attack transport ship, in the Pacific theater during World War II.

In a 2007 interview that is part of the Veterans History Project with the Library of Congress, Cary

spoke about what he saw during battles at Saipan and Okinawa. You can view the full 2007 interview with Cary on the Library of Congress’ website.

Rob Citino, a distinguished fellow with the National World War II Museum, said museum staff wanted to look at how the legacy and impact of World War II resonated with the civil rights movement through today. When they read Cary’s story, they knew it would be a perfect fit.

“Many African Americans came back and were not only proud of their service records, as all Americans were, but they pitched in to change the country in a positive fashion,” Citino said. “We really think that is an important legacy of World War II.”

After being discharged from the Coast Guard in 1945, Cary worked in education, helping to establish McDonald College of Industrial Arts, a trade school for African American veterans, in 1946 in Fort Worth.

He later taught at Dunbar High School and Tarrant County Junior College before coming to UTA. While at UTA, Cary was elected to the Fort Worth school board. He later served in the Texas House of Representatives from 1979-1985 and held numerous positions in civic organizations.

“Reby Cary was a man who broke down walls and then walked through the gaps he had created to make things better for African Americans and all Americans,” Citino said.

### CRUZ, from Page 2

learning and being a force of change for my community and Dallas College,” he said. “As a fellow, I will have the opportunity to

learn from national leaders and apply grounded and innovative strategies to meet the needs of today’s student success challenges.”

Dr. Cruz holds a Doctor of Education in organizational change and leadership from the University of Southern California, a Master of Education in educational leadership from Southern

Methodist University, and a Bachelor of Arts in biology from the University of Texas at Austin.

“With so many community college presidents taking or nearing retirement,

Aspen has a heightened sense of urgency to develop new leaders who are committed to systemic change,” said Josh Wyner, executive director of Aspen Institute College Excellence Pro-

gram. “Community colleges have a unique opportunity to advance the talent communities need and enable the economic mobility that draws so many students to higher education.”



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# Melania Trump's family immigration sponsorship contradicts Trump policies

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National  
Correspondent



*Despite the Trump administration's rhetoric against family-based immigration, Melania Trump sponsored her mother for legal permanent residency, a process that her immigration lawyer, Michael Wildes, emphasized followed standard procedures. (iStockphoto / NNPA)*

Newly released federal immigration records have revealed that Melania Trump sponsored her mother, Amalija Knavs, for immigration to the United States through a family-based process. According to the Washington Post, the disclosure contrasts sharply with the aggressive immigration policy that former President Donald Trump and his administration advocated.

Melania Trump used the legal route of family-based immigration, which her husband and his advisors frequently criticized as "chain migration," in opposition to the policies promoted by the Trump administration. The records, which the news outlet received through a Freedom of Information query, placed a spotlight on the entire journey Knavs un-

dertook from Slovenia to the United States. It highlighted how the twice-impeached, and four-times indicted Trump and his administration's policies would have made the process significantly more challenging for others.

In routine rhetoric, Trump has denounced the kind of entry into America that his mother-in-law used, without ever owning up to how she gained citizenship.

"The Democrats have been told, and fully understand, that there can be no

DACA without the desperately needed WALL at the Southern Border and an END to the horrible Chain Migration & ridiculous Lottery System of Immigration etc.," Trump tweeted on Dec. 29, 2017. "We must protect our Country at all cost!"

However, the immigration records contradict Trump, and provided insight into Knavs's educational background and language proficiency, showcasing her efforts to learn English during her

immigration application. The Washington Post noted that the 165-page immigration file released on March 25 is heavily redacted in some parts, but it confirms that Knavs was sponsored by an adult child for a green card, and it lists the financial sponsor of the parent as "Melania Trump."

Despite the Trump administration's rhetoric against family-based immigration, Melania Trump sponsored her mother for legal permanent residency, a process that her immigration lawyer, Michael Wildes, emphasized followed standard procedures.

The records show that Knavs obtained legal permanent residency in 2010 and later attained citizenship in 2018, along with her husband, Viktor. "By the time Knavs applied for an immigrant visa, records show she was fluent in Slovenian but 'learning English,'" the newspaper reported. "Her citizenship application says she retired in 1998."

The paper said records show that Knavs was a regular visitor to the United States after her daughter moved to this country and became a permanent resident. Melania Trump mar-

ried Donald Trump in 2005 and had their son the following year. She said she also became a citizen in 2006.

The Post noted further that Knavs appeared in New York for an interview and citizenship test, which involves questions in English and a test on U.S. civics. She correctly answered questions such as the name of the U.S. national anthem ("The Star-Spangled Banner") and the ocean on the west coast of the United States (Pacific).

Asked "What is the 'rule of law?'" she gave no answer.

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# The California Journalism Preservation Act (CJPA) will hurt African American and other minority-owned newspapers

*CJPA prevents minority-owned newspapers from keeping communities informed, lines pockets of Big Corporate Media*

By Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr.  
President and CEO  
National Newspaper  
Publishers Association



*Local journalism is facing financial pressure and our industry needs to adapt to the preferences of our readers. But CJPA, while well-intentioned, will not provide a long-term, sustainable solution. (Photo: iStockphoto / NNPA)*

California state legislators are pushing legislation that would enrich huge legacy media corporations at the expense of independent, minority-owned newspapers who serve their individual communities. The bill, known as the California Journalism Preservation Act (CJPA), claims to rescue local journalism when in reality it would make it harder for community newspapers to do what they do best – keep citizens engaged and informed with the news that matters to them.

As the President and CEO of the National Newspaper Publishers Association, which represents 30 California publications that engage the interests of the more than 2,237,000 Black Americans in the state, I agree there's more work to do to shore up the

local news organizations and support community journalists. It's no secret that these businesses face many challenges, especially as the way readers are consuming news is evolving, and we need an all-in effort to secure a more sustainable future for news.

Where CJPA falls short is its provision requiring online platforms to pay news publishers for linking to or hosting news content. This mandate creates numerous unintended consequences that would stifle the ability of minority-owned publications to deliver news

and information to people, build online communities, and generate local advertising revenue.

First and foremost, this violates the principles of the open web. Many Black Californians rely on the internet for access to essential news and information – it sparks their creativity, fosters connection, and introduces them to diverse perspectives. And when it comes to notifying our communities of news, information, and dangers related to public health, natural disasters, crime in their area, or scams, time is

of the essence. CJPA would limit Californians' access to relevant news and information.

Meta has already said they'd remove news in California if the bill passes, and recently, Google announced that it is testing the removal of news links for some users in the state to prepare should CJPA go into effect. The value that the Black newspapers bring to their community cannot be replaced by technology platforms, but platforms play a significant role in helping to connect people with important community outlets that cover local events, support community news publishers, and increase readership. All of this translates into increased revenue for Black publishers through ad clicks, paid subscrip-

tions, and donations. Rearranging the financing of news online would place this all at risk and fly in the face of the purported goals of this bill.

What's more, there is no guarantee that the fees derived from the bill will land where they are needed most: in the hands of local journalists that produce news content in California. Unfortunately, the majority of the funds would go to large publishers and investment firms from outside the state, with already deep pockets.

Over the years, our newspapers have greatly benefited from collaboration with technology companies. For example, through the Google News Initiative, publications have received funding and training that have helped

us adapt our business models and pursue innovative strategies to reach additional members of our community. CJPA would likely put an end to those impactful programs.

Local journalism is facing financial pressure and our industry needs to adapt to the preferences of our readers. But CJPA, while well-intentioned, will not provide a long-term, sustainable solution. I urge California lawmakers to hold discussions between the platforms, news publishers, and the state to explore a different solution to these problems. It's critical that we find an alternative proposal to ensure support goes to the minority-owned news organizations that serve vulnerable communities in the state of California.

**GARY CLARK JR.**

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Zendaya and Josh O'Connor in *Challengers* (Photo via NNPA)

## Film Review: 'Challengers' is a top-notch, sporty tale

By Dwight Brown  
NNPA Film Critic

(\*\*\*) Sometimes, three's a crowd. Sometimes, not. Especially when a very desirable female tennis star enjoys making two male tennis players compete for her affection. "Whoever wins, gets my number."

They've known each other since the early 2000s. As a teenager, Tashi Duncan (Zendaya, *Dune*), was once the queen of the Women's Tennis Association (WTS) juniors. She won tournaments, was on the verge of big endorsements and was a media darling. Back then, from a distance, her two biggest admirers were American Tennis Professional (ATP) junior players Art Donaldson (Mike Faist, *West Side Story*) and Patrick Zweig (Josh O'Connor, *The Crown*). Those two schemed to meet, seduce and endear themselves to Tashi. What they hadn't fathomed was that she would smack their emotions around like tennis balls.

The screenplay by Justin Kuritzkes curiously eschews a linear narrative. Instead, it starts with the

older trio in 2019 and when roles have switched. Art is a world champ, Tashi is his wife and demanding coach who presses him to beat his opponents: "Decimate that little bitch!" Patrick, who beat Art unmercifully on court in their younger years, is a washed-up player. He's back competing on the challenger circuit, where tennis players dwell until they make enough points to get into the main regular tournaments and slams (Australian, French, Wimbledon and U.S.). It's a crucial time for Art, who's won the three grand slams but not the impending U.S. Open. Now, his game is rocky and so is his relationship with Tashi.

Kuritzkes makes the emotional powerbroker the young woman. She snaps her fingers, and both men come running. These days she bosses and nurtures Art. While Pat is her taboo boy toy. It's an intriguing dynamic. Add in the Black girl dominating the two white guys, and the modern verve in the characters and relationships is very refreshing. In fact, watching the romance, jealousy, envy, yearning and lust

play out over 2h 11m (editor Marco Costa, *Bones and All*) is a spectator sport. Tracking the jumbled time periods, mood swings, betrayals, twists and turns is enough to make your head swivel. Left to right and right to left. Like fans watching at a tennis match.

Director Luca Guadagnino garnered acclaim for his Oscar-nominated gay, May/December romance *Call Me by Your Name*. Subsequent films (*Suspiria*, *Bones and All*) didn't make a dent. *Challengers* proves that it was the projects not his direction. He makes sense out of the jigsaw puzzle script and viewers will never feel lost due to his astute guidance. He masterfully leads the young actors through titillating bedroom scenes. The cavorting is frisky and erotic. Never dirty. Some nudity, no graphic sex or truly offensive language. But the film does have an 'R' rating, so you might think twice before inviting your great granny to sit next to you at the movie theater.

The director magically gets the lead cast to hit and

See FILM, Page 14

# Mary J. Blige and A Tribe Called Quest to be inducted into Rock & Roll Hall of Fame 2024

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National  
Correspondent

Mary J. Blige and A Tribe Called Quest are among the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame class of 2024. The Rock Hall has announced one of its most significant inductions yet, with the R&B queen and hip-hop legends joining a prestigious roster that includes Kool & The Gang, Cher, Foreigner, Dave Matthews Band, Peter Frampton, and Ozzy Osbourne.

“This diverse group of inductees each broke down musical barriers and influenced countless artists that followed in their footsteps,” John Sykes, chairman of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Foundation, said.

Blige, a multi-talented inspiration from the Bronx, New York, has long cemented her place in music history. Many said her jour-

ney is a testament to transformation and empowerment. A global superstar, Blige has eight multi-platinum albums, nine Grammy Awards, two Academy Award nominations, and a SAG nomination to her name.

Blige entered the scene at 18 when she signed with Andre Harrell’s Uptown Records in 1989, and introduced a unique blend of hip-hop, soul, and raw, honest lyrics by drawing inspiration from music legends like Aretha Franklin, Chaka Khan, and Gladys Knight. Her 1992 debut album, “What’s the 411?,” featuring chart-topping hits like “You Remind Me” and “Real Love,” marked the beginning of her storied career, captivating audiences worldwide.

Meanwhile, A Tribe Called Quest, formed in 1985 in St. Albans, Queens, New York, has been hailed for their revolutionary con-

tributions to hip-hop. Comprising Q-Tip, Phife Dawg, Ali Shaheed Muhammad, and Jarobi White, the group reshaped the genre with their innovative sound and socially conscious lyrics.

Throughout the 1990s, A Tribe Called Quest delivered a series of iconic tracks, including “Can I Kick It,” “Check the Rhime,” and “Scenario,” solidifying their place in music history. Despite facing challenges, including the tragic loss of Phife Dawg in 2016, the group continued to push boundaries, releasing their final album, “We Got It from Here... Thank You 4 Your Service,” in 2016. A year later, they received the 2017 Brit Awards for International Group before officially disbanding.

The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame’s Class of 2024 induction ceremony is scheduled for October 19 at the Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse in Cleveland, Ohio. Fans

can catch the event live on Disney+, with an airing on ABC to follow and availability on Hulu the next day.

The Rock Hall was established in 1983 by Ahmet Ertegun who assembled a team of executives, journalists and attorneys, and began inducting its first class of musicians three years later.

Cleveland, the home of renowned disc jockey Alan Freed, lobbied to have the museum hosted in its city and pledged \$65 million to the project.

In June 1993 ground was broken on the site and the dedication took place on Sept. 1, 1995.

In addition to inducting new musicians each year, the Rock Hall hosts numerous exhibits and hosts a wide range of events annually.



The Rock Hall has announced one of its most significant inductions yet with the R&B queen and hip-hop legends joining a prestigious roster that includes Kool & The Gang, Cher, Foreigner, Dave Matthews Band, Peter Frampton, and Ozzy Osbourne. (Photo via NNPA)

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# The BOSS Network and Sage award \$250,000 to Black women entrepreneurs through grant program

(Black PR Wire) The BOSS Network, an online community of professional and entrepreneurial women who support each other through digital content, programs and event-based networking, and Sage, the leader in accounting, financial, HR and payroll technology for small and mid-sized businesses, recently announced the 25 awardees of the 2024 Invest in Progress Grant to support Black women entrepreneurs in their first five years of business.

The BOSS Network and Sage's "Invest in Progress" grant is a three-year, \$1.5 million commitment via the Sage Foundation to

support the BOSS Impact Fund, which is focused on raising investment funding for 500+ black women-led businesses and preparing entrepreneurs to build scalable, growth aggressive companies.

In January 2024, participants were invited to apply for the "Invest in Progress" grant – which offered 25 Black women entrepreneurs across the United States, the opportunity to receive a capital investment of \$10,000 toward successfully starting and growing their business, in addition to an entrepreneurial mentor program in support of Black women-owned small businesses.

The partnership, in its third year, received over 12,000 applicants nationwide. This year's winners also feature four members from each of the Divine Nine sororities—including Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated; Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated; Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Incorporated—the National Pan-Hellenic Council, Incorporated, and the Chicago Urban League. The final 25 awardees represent entrepreneurs from various industries, including Beauty & Self-Care, IT Solutions, Travel, Healthcare, Professional Services and Food and Beverage.

The BOSS Network and

Sage "Invest in Progress" grant includes a 12-month program of entrepreneurial mentorship, coaching, connections, and education focused on knocking down barriers to business success and guiding these businesswomen to reach their full potential. Each "Invest in Progress" grant awardee receives:

- \$10,000 USD in funding
- Quarterly business training courses through BOSS Business University sponsored by Sage, focusing on marketing, finance, customer service, and business strategy
- Access to The BOSS Network online community
- Complimentary Sage

Business Cloud Accounting software  
"The BOSS Network has been proud to have Sage as a partner of the Invest in

Progress Grant, as a part of our BOSS Impact Fund. As we celebrate our three-year

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## TUCKER, from Page 11

liance Health Clinic, and SEED.

In 2012, Tucker founded the 'Women in Politics Forum,' an annual event focusing on empowering, engaging, and educating women on political in-

volvement. According to her official council bio, Tucker has mentored several local female political candidates and advocated for women's political representation.

In 2021, Tucker launched

Project Activate SouthEast Fort Wayne (PASE), an entrepreneurial training and pitch competition designed to support economic development in the southeast portion of the city.

Outside of her political and community service, Tucker runs an e-commerce

business and a YouTube channel, Classy Shay Designs, which offers craft supplies for DIY projects and custom gifts.

## MS, from Page 4

mune war in the brain. Ahmed Abdelhak, MD, co-author of the paper and a postdoctoral researcher in the UCSF laboratory of Ari Green, MD, found that patients with these autoantibodies had elevated levels of neurofilament light (Nfl), a protein that gets released as neurons break down.

Perhaps, the researchers speculated, the immune system was mistaking friendly human proteins for some viral foe, leading to a lifetime of MS.

"When we analyze healthy people using our technology, everybody looks unique, with their own fingerprint of immunological experience, like a snowflake," DeRisi said. "It's when the immunological signature of a person looks like someone else, and they stop looking like

snowflakes that we begin to suspect something is wrong, and that's what we found in these MS patients."

### A test to speed patients toward the right therapies

To confirm their findings, the team analyzed blood samples from patients in the UCSF ORIGINS study. These patients all had neurological symptoms and many, but not all, went on to be diagnosed with MS.

Once again, 10% of the patients in the ORIGINS study who were diagnosed with MS had the same autoantibody pattern. The pattern was 100% predictive of an MS diagnosis. Across both the Department of Defense group and the ORIGINS group, every patient with this autoantibody pattern has MS.

"Diagnosis is not always straightforward for MS, because we haven't had disease specific biomarkers," Wilson said. "We're excited to have anything that can give more diagnostic certainty earlier on, to have a concrete discussion about whether to start treatment for each patient." Many questions remain about MS, ranging from what's instigating the immune response in some MS patients to how the disease develops in the other 90% of patients. But the researchers believe they now have a definitive sign that MS is brewing.

"Imagine if we could diagnose MS before some patients reach the clinic," said Stephen Hauser, MD, director of the UCSF Weill Institute for Neurosciences and a senior author of the paper. "It enhances our chances of moving from suppression to cure."



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## GRANTS, from Page 11

mark, we are pleased to say that this investment has greatly impacted the lives of 85 Black women entrepreneurs—who have each received \$10,000 to fund their businesses,” said Dr. Cameka Smith, CEO and Founder

of The BOSS Network. “It is widely known that less than 1% of minority founders get investment funding for the start of their small businesses. There is also the challenge of Black female founders being indis-

criminated simply for fighting for equity and fairness at the table. With the continued help of supporters such as Sage, The BOSS Network will remain committed to giving Black women entrepreneurs the resources they need to win.”

“The Chicago Urban

League continues to emphasize the importance of supporting entrepreneurs and small businesses,” said Kelly Evans, VP of Entrepreneurship and Innovation. “This program not only provides funding but empowers business owners with a supportive network of pro-

fessionals invested in their success.”

“We are inspired by the perseverance and potential of the awardees selected for the third year of the “Invest in Progress” grant,” said Cadence Willis, VP, Sage Foundation. “Sage is proud to support these women by

continuing our commitment to help underserved communities start and grow successful businesses.”

For more information on the BOSS Network and Sage “Invest in Progress” grant and the BOSS Impact Fund, visit BOSSImpactFund.com.

directly from the pockets of public schools that are already reeling from lack of funding. Gov. Gregg Abbott has at his disposal the Economic Stabilizer Fund—or “Rainy Day Fund”—which currently has in its coffers \$13.6 billion. By 2024-2025, that treasure chest is projected to reach \$27.1 billion, a total that will most certainly max-out the allowable limit of 10% of certain revenue deposited into the General Revenue Fund, as established by a 1988 constitutional amendment.

Even at the threat of surpassing the 10% limit, Abbott, the drum major for vouchers, chooses to sit on those funds and “starve out” a Texas public school system that is already strapped for operating capital. Vouchers would take what little public funds are available and divert those funds into the pockets of parochial schools, not unlike the move towards the privatization of prisons. The focus then shifts from the best interest of the child to the bottom-line of wealthy investors.

Unlike public schools, vouchers do not mean that an education at a private school is going to be free.

A 2023 report by Institute of Education Sciences (IES) listed the average national cost of private schools from kindergarten to postsecondary at \$312,026; or an average cost of \$12,350 annually for students K-12. Vouch-

ers will not cover that full amount. In Texas, the average annual tuition for private school grades K-12 is about \$10,668.

The Texas public school revenue contributed \$9,927 per student 2018-19, which was paid by taxpayers from federal funds and local property taxes.

According to the Texas Education Agency, in 2018-19 the Texas school system was responsible for 5.43 million students. Well over 60% of those 5.4 million students were economically disadvantaged. That total only grows with each immigrant border crossing—whether that immigrant is from Ukraine or Venezuela.

The difference between the cost of a private school education and what Texas is willing (or able) to pay creates an unavoidable and burgeoning gap that the parent is responsible for.

Now shift the focus from cost to what is most important.

The big selling point with voucher programs is presented as being about quality learning environs and increased academic performance.

Caveat emptor: Different does not necessarily mean better. The mettle and worth of voucher programs have been put to the test in other states.

Texas’ neighboring state tried the Louisiana Scholarship Program a.k.a. the School Choice Demonstration Project. The end goal

was to demonstrate the merit of voucher systems.

After one year of that demonstration, one researcher determined that program had a “statistically significant negative impact on student(s).” He had the same conclusion for both math and reading.

There was also the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program. A branch of Donald Trump’s U.S. Department of Education released a study saying that students “benefitting” from that program “actually made it worse” when came to those students’ math scores.

Albeit the final report card from Washington DC and Louisiana has little to no bearing on what Texas’ governor aims to do with his state’s students.

The elusive pursuit of vouchers is causing Abbott much consternation and the political jousting has him rolling around in circles. Here is the final tally of the most recent Texas House vote that Abbott forced into existence this past November 2023. The distinguished gentlepersons from Texas were voting on whether to remove the voucher provision from a colossal education funding bill.

The distinguished gentlepersons killed the provision dead in a vote of 84-63. There were actually 21 Republicans who were human enough to say politics bedamned and sided with the democrats.

Brian Harrison the State Rep. for Midlothian said, “The rich in Texas have school choice; poor Texans

do not,” then added, “this amendment is a slap in the face to the voters who elected us.”

Abbott, though, said the failed measure was “just another step on the path to provide school choice,” because he is not about to quit because, “I am in it to win it.”

Then he shot a slug at the “pro-union Republicans in the Texas House who voted with Democrats,” as though they were turncoats of some greater cause.

The Republican Representative from College Station, John Raney, spoke from the heart. In an interview Raney said, “I believe in my heart that using taxpayer dollars to fund an entitlement program is not conservative, and it’s bad public policy,

“Expanding government-defined choice programs for a few without accountability... undermines our constitutional and moral duty to educate the children of Texas.”

Black students are all too

familiar with “for a few without accountability” being connected to their educational journey. The education of Black students has come too far for it to be turned back by political desires and the need to line the pockets of greedy investors.

Just consider a sample size of the scholastic odyssey Black people have been made to suffer. The story of Black students and their pursuit of an education is a struggle that has lived long past the yokes of slavery.

In a time in America when one might be severely punished or killed for teaching Negroes to read and write, Fanny Jackson Coppin (1837-1913) made manifest a passion for the higher education for Black women. Coppin was this nation’s first Black principal, and she is the namesake of Coppin State University.

The list of those who have championed the cause of Blacks extends much further, from Mary McLeod

Bethune of Bethune-Cookman to Obie and Sadie Phillips—who between the two of them served their students by being everything from the principal to the bus driver—to today’s woke champions of the equitable education of Black students like Dominique Alexander.

University of Arkansas professor Dr. Patrick Wolf’s summation is that: for vouchers to have any chance of being equitable there must be a criterion for: enrollment, financial practices, student mobility, and the health, safety and welfare of students.

Perhaps more than anything else, Dr. Wolf warns that choice schools must be prohibited from “being selective in their enrollment of voucher students...”

One must keep in mind that the purpose of private schools and schools of choice was so that the children of the rich and the few will not have to sit in a desk next to “those children.”

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# Supreme Court eases path for discrimination claims in job transfers

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National  
Correspondent

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled in favor of a female police sergeant from St. Louis, making it easier for workers to pursue employment discrimination claims related to job transfers. The court sided with Sgt. Jatonya Clayborn Muldrow, who alleged she was reassigned to a less prestigious role within the St. Louis Police Department because of her gender.

Muldrow, a Black woman, sued the department under Title VII of the Civil

Rights Act after being transferred from the intelligence division in 2017. In her previous role, she had been deputized as an FBI agent, worked a steady weekday schedule, and was involved in investigating public corruption and human trafficking cases. However, her new assignment lacked the same prestige and benefits.

Despite maintaining her pay, Muldrow lost her FBI privileges, had to work patrol, and was assigned weekend shifts. A male sergeant who had previously worked with Muldrow's male supervisor took over for her.

The central issue before the justices was whether Title VII protects against all discriminatory job transfers or requires employees to demonstrate that the involuntary move resulted in a 'significant disadvantage,' such as harm to career prospects or changes in salary or rank.

In a crucial clarification, Justice Elena Kagan, in her opinion for the court, pointed out that some lower courts had used the incorrect higher standard. She stated that while an employee must demonstrate some harm from a forced transfer to succeed, they need not

meet a 'significance test.'

Kagan emphasized that Muldrow's allegations met the court's new standard "with room to spare" despite her rank and pay remaining unchanged, and her ability to advance to other positions. Legal experts said the decision could lower the bar for employees to proceed with discrimination claims in court, potentially allowing lawsuits that failed under the previous standard to succeed.

Although the court's judgment was unanimous, Justices Clarence Thomas, Samuel A. Alito Jr., and Brett M. Kavanaugh each

wrote separately to explain their differing views on the decision's impact.

Justice Alito doubted that the decision would make a meaningful difference, suggesting that lower court judges should continue their current practices. Justice Kavanaugh indicated that he would not require any separate showing of harm, stating that "the discrimination is harm" under federal law. Thomas also asserted there was "little practical difference" between the court's new test and the current practice of appeals court judges.

The Supreme Court's

ruling in favor of Muldrow not only clarifies that Title VII does not require courts to differentiate between job transfers causing significant disadvantages and those causing lesser harm but also significantly strengthens protections against employment discrimination based on sex and other protected characteristics.

Experts further opined that the landmark decision makes it easier for workers like Muldrow to pursue legal remedies for discriminatory job transfers, thereby profoundly impacting workplace diversity, equity, and inclusion programs.

## OMAR, from Page 5

The letter also highlighted the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza, where over 32,000 people have been killed since the conflict began, nearly half of whom are children. Omar and others noted that Israel's restrictions on aid flow have further intensified the crisis, with hundreds of aid trucks stranded at the Rafah border crossing due to

Israeli constraints.

World Central Kitchen, which has provided over 43 million meals to Palestinians in Gaza, has been forced to suspend its operations following the attacks on aid workers. They said the absence of this critical support will exacerbate the hunger crisis in the region.

The representatives concluded by urging the Biden

Administration to reconsider its decision to approve new arms transfers to Israel, stressing the need for compliance with U.S. and international law.

"We again strongly urge you to withhold any offensive weapons transfers until the investigation into the

airstrike is concluded. If it is found that this strike violated U.S. or international law, those responsible will be held accountable," Omar and others wrote. "And we again urge you to ensure that any future military assistance to Israel, including already authorized trans-

fers, is subject to conditions to ensure it is used in compliance with U.S. and international law."

Omar has been advocat-

ing for a ceasefire since October 2023 and continues to voice her concerns over the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

## MERCHANT, from Page 2

male aviator in 2005, and in 2009, Felicia Thomas became the first Black female to command a cutter.

Merchant's distinguished career features key roles such as Special Assistant to the 27th and 28th Vice Commandants of the Coast Guard, Congressional Fellow for the Committees on Oversight and Reform and Transportation and Infrastructure, and Executive Strategic Planner for the Coast Guard Flag and Senior Executive Service Corps.

Her educational background is equally impressive, holding a Doctor of Business Administration and a Master of Quality Systems Management from the National Graduate School at New England Institute of Business. She also earned a Master

of Public Administration from George Washington University and a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Tougaloo College.

Additionally, Merchant completed the Executive Education Leadership in Homeland Security program at Harvard Kennedy School of Government and was a Seminar XXI National Security and Foreign Affairs Fellow at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

When a reporter asked what she would tell her teenage self, Merchant replied, "We get in our own way because we think we don't deserve the best based on where we're from. "I would tell my younger self that you got to get out of your head, get out of your own way and the world is truly yours to conquer."



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# And Then An Angel Floated By

Dr. James L. Snyder

Some weeks can be tough. I've had a few in my life that came unexpectedly and challenged my determination.

Last week was one of those weeks.

We had a serious "Bug Squatting" situation in our home. I really can't determine what the bug was; all I can say is that it was.

The situation affected everyone in our family, including many of our friends.

I was the only one who did not suffer from it. Unfortunately for me, I chuckled within and was proud that I did not get hit by it. But everyone, including The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, had very serious accouterments, which I will not explain for various reasons.

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage was in bed for one full day, which is rather unusual for her. She's always up and doing something, but this time, she was down, and I won't mention what she was doing.

It seemed to pass, and at that time, I was not affect-



ed. I very smugly thought that I was the only one who survived all of that "Bug Squatting" scenario.

Then, the unmentionable happened. It was a Friday night, and I had my first episode of diarrhea. It came and went rather quickly, and I had no other health problems. I didn't have any sick stomach or even a headache. I thought I had escaped that problem.

Then Saturday morning started. All day long, I had diarrhea and spent most of my time in the bathroom. I didn't know what I was going to do, but I didn't have any other symptoms, at least at that time.

I was afraid we would have to cancel the Sunday morning service, and I hate doing that with a passion.

By early afternoon on Saturday, I was fine. I didn't feel sick anywhere and had no further problems—at least, that's what I thought.

The plans were to go through Sunday just as planned.

At about 5 a.m. Sunday, before I woke up, I had an episode that made me race to the bathroom and caused some alarm. However, it was over in a moment, and there were no residues left in my body.

The best thing to do was to keep this a secret, especially from The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage.

We got up Sunday morning as usual and got ready, and at the right time, we left for our church service at the assisted living facil-

ity that we minister to. Everything was going fine. As we drove, I took various sips of my coffee and felt great.

The service began as usual at 10 o'clock. We sang some hymns, and then it came time for me to preach the sermon.

For a variety of reasons, I sit in a chair behind a table as I preach. There is just a small group of people around me, so that makes a better situation.

It's good I was sitting down because if I had not been, I would have been in serious trouble.

I introduced the sermon, read the Scripture, and then gave the opening prayer.

As I began the sermon, I began to feel a little funny. And I don't mean laughing funny. It was a weird kind of funny like I've never had before.

It wasn't long before everything became rather hazy for me. I became somewhat dizzy and couldn't speak as I usually do.

Then it happened. Right before me, an Angel floated by, waving her hand. After that, I'm not quite sure

what happened. I do know that one of the nurses came to take my blood pressure and found that it had dropped.

The recourse was to take me by ambulance to the hospital. At the time, I wasn't quite sure what was happening.

Before I knew it, I was ushered into the hospital to the intensive care unit surrounded by medical professionals.

Pretty soon, I became a little more conscious of my surroundings and began to realize that I was in the hospital and everybody's attention was focused on me. At the time I didn't know if I should start preaching or start telling a joke.

The nurses left, and another nurse came in, and I knew exactly what she was there for. I greeted her by saying, "Hello, Nurse Dracula." She then stuck my arm with needles and began to suck my blood out as fast as she could. It took her several times to find the right vein to get the blood she needed. I was suspicious about that. I just assumed she was getting even at me calling her Nurse

Dracula.

I spent the rest of the day in the hospital. They put me in the third-floor room where my daughter is the head nurse.

They went through all their medical processes, even a CAT scan, and found nothing wrong with me. I did have the bug, whatever that bug is, and I did have a light infection that caused me to cough and sneeze quite a bit.

I learned one valuable lesson from this adventure. When somebody gets the bug, never assume that I won't. Don't laugh at the ones who do because those "Bug Squatters" heard me laughing and got their revenge on me.

A verse of scripture came to mind. "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise" (Luke 6:31).

This is the goal of my life.

*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.*

## FILM, from Page 9

serve the ball like pros. Their flat forehands, top-spin backhands and serves look like the real thing. Great fakery for a tennis movie. Better than that in 2017's *Battle of the Sexes*. The sleight of hand is so good, hardcore tennis players won't cringe, except when the actors don't bend their knees enough and grip the racquet handle too high and not at the base. Guadagnino also gives the three main actors room to play and develop their characters. Their authenticity is helped by the realistic dialogue. Conversations that sound like excellent writing, improvisation or things you'd overhear tennis players say.

Faist, as Art the man/

boy who's in constant need of reassurance, gets to the heart of his timid character. A cuckold. O'Connor (God's Own Country, *Peaky Blinders*), a very versatile U.K. actor, drops his British accent and is thoroughly believable as the aggressive, cunning seducer. Zendaya's beguiling Tashi, herds her two admirers like sheep. She's tall, lean and has a typical tennis champ's body. Akin to that of a Venus Williams or Maria Sharapova. Her cocky, Serena Williams tennis walk, sports star mannerisms and quick-stepping footwork mimic the real thing. She's flirtatious, reckless and caring all at the same time.

Music by Trent Reznor

and Atticus Ross (Oscar winners for *The Social Network* and *Soul*) pumps up the volume with EDM and house music. J.W. Anderson's costumes fit the courts and casual lifestyle. Cinematography by Sayombhu Mukdeeprom (*Call Me by Your Name*) is nimble in exterior shots during tennis matches and sensual in steamy hotel bedroom scenes.

*Challengers* is a top of the league sports/drama/romance movie. Fans of the genre will enjoy watching the high-energy tennis and the boy-girl-boy love triangle. Hard to figure out who will win in the end. That's the mark of a very competitive match.

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

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# Let Someone Know You Care



**Sister Tarpley**  
NDG  
Religion  
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The Lord loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love. Psalm 33:5

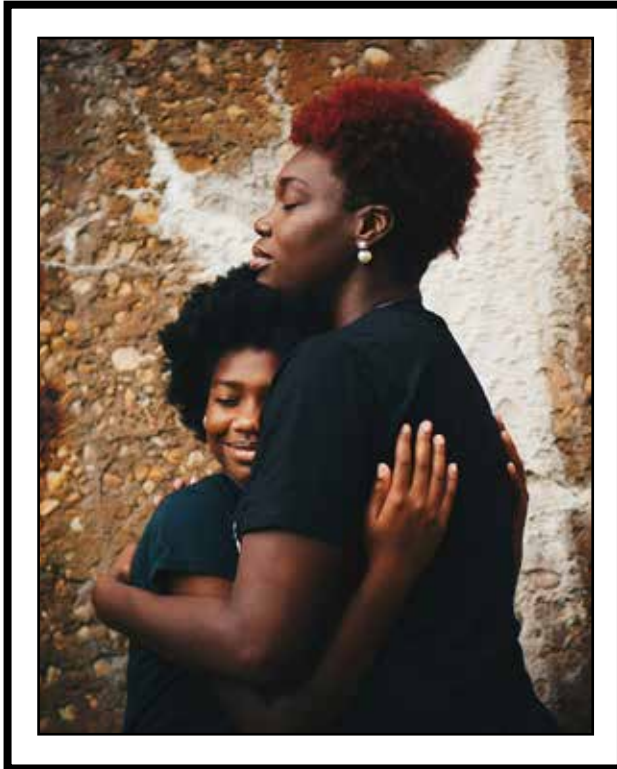
A loved one died, and on that clear, cold morning, in the warmth of the day the other person was struck with the pain of learning that sometimes there isn't anymore.

No more hugs, no more special moments to celebrate together, no more phone calls just to chat, no more "just one minute."

Sometimes, what we care about the most gets all used up and goes away, never to return before we can say, "good-bye," before we can say, "I love you."

So while we have it. Its best we love it, care for it and fix it when it's broken . . . and heal it when it's sick.

This is true for spouses, children, other family members, friends, marriages, aging parents and grandpar-



ents.

We keep and love them because they are worth it, because we are worth it.

Some things we keep -- like a best friend who moved away or a classmate we grew up with. There are just some things that make us happy, no matter what.

Life is important, like people we know who are special; and so, we keep them close! Suppose one

morning you never wake up, do all your family and friends know you love them?

I was thinking ... I could die today, tomorrow or next week, and I wondered if I had any wounds needing to be healed, friendships that needed rekindling or three words needing to be said.

Let every one know you love them. Even if you think they don't love you

back, you would be amazed at what those three little words and a smile can do.

Live today to the fullest because tomorrow is not promised.

Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow: There are two days in every week about which we should not worry, two days which should be kept free from fear and apprehension.

One of these days is YESTERDAY with its mistakes and cares, its faults and blunders, its aches and pains. Yesterday has passed forever beyond our control.

All the money in the world cannot bring back Yesterday. We cannot erase a single word we said. Yesterday is gone forever.

The other day we should not worry about is TOMORROW with its possible adversities, its burdens, its large promise and poor performance. Tomorrow is

also beyond our immediate control.

Tomorrow's sun will rise, either in splendor or behind a mask of clouds—but it will rise. Until it does, we have no stake in Tomorrow, for it is as yet unborn; and its no guarantee that we live to see Tomorrow.

This leaves only one day – TODAY – Any man or woman can fight the battles of just one day! It is only when you and I add the burdens of those two other eternities – Yesterday and Tomorrow that we break down.

It is not the experience of Today that drives men and women into a state of depression and worrying—it is remorse or bitterness for something which happened Yesterday which is forever beyond our control; and the dread of what Tomorrow which is yet unborn and beyond our immediate control, may bring.

Let us, therefore, live but one day at a time. Let Us Pray and Learn to Keep An Open Mind.

*(Editor's Note: This column originally ran in April 2017.)*

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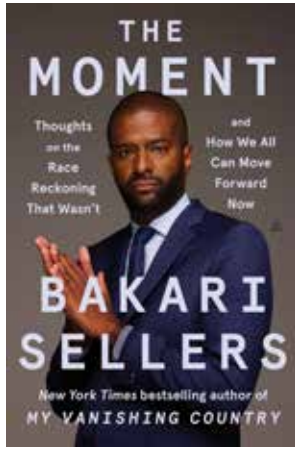
# NDG Book Review: 'The Moment' is a thought-provoking read

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

You have one last nerve, and somebody's on it.

Honestly, some folks don't know what you deal with every day, or how tired you are. They're lazy or ignorant or misinformed, they think they know but they don't. Some haven't even tried to open their eyes. You can deal with some of them, but most, well, You. Just. Can't. And in the new book, "The Moment" by Bakari Sellers, you'll see how we can change that.

Every now and then, Bakari Sellers says he pulls out a black-and-white photograph that was taken de-



acades before he was born.

In it are seven young Black men, including a future congressman, two performers, members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee... and Sellers' father, who was

also deeply involved in the Civil Rights Movement. Sellers still calls some of those men "Uncle," and he says he learned about them and activism in general because, when he was a boy, he was his father's "shadow."

His father says that things are worse now than they were sixty years ago, but Sellers disagrees. A lot of action toward equality goes unnoticed, but work still needs to be done – lots of it, and it's going to take "perseverance... [and] utilizing the mediums available." As he was his father's "shadow," Sellers hopes, for instance, to teach his own son

through example so that the boy will have "freedom to dictate how [he] will change the world..."

In the meantime, the rest of us have much to acknowledge, starting with inequality within our justice system and the police. We must recognize that COVID deaths among Black Americans can be traced to an epidemic of racism, and we must insist that doctors do better for Black patients. Black churches and church leaders need to renew their place in the community and we need to acknowledge facts about "white terror," on and offline.

And finally, let's re-ex-

amine these issues again, together. Says Sellers, we can only deal with them when they are "fully exposed."

Yet another book on fixing racism? Yes, please, because eventually, something's got to give. Maybe "The Moment" will be the catalyst for change.

Author and South Carolina legislator Bakari Sellers takes each point in the national discussion, and he turns it this way and that to better shed light on it. By showing readers how issues of inequality and today's racism are tied somehow to the Civil Rights Movement, we can see where

problems endure and why. Politics, of course, figures into this examination, and Sellers makes that plain to follow, all the way back to the mid-1960s, to the White House and in several states. This book is also partly biographical which, as readers will note, makes it more relatable and deepens the need for each "prescription" he advises.

"The Moment" is a book for anyone who's good and well done with racism and ready to make it stop. It's a thought-provoker, and its clear-cut, no-nonsense sentiment is perfect for white understanding, too, so find this book and get on it.



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