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Supreme Court upholds S. Carolina redistricting, displacing Black voters

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior
National Correspondent

The U.S. Supreme Court has reinstated South Carolina's redrawn congressional map, declaring it not unconstitutional racial gerrymandering. Justice Samuel Alito authored the 6-3 opinion, which overturned a lower court's finding that the map had illegally removed 30,000 Black voters to favor a white Republican candidate in the 1st Congressional District.

The decision has prompted strong reactions, including from Devon Ombres, senior director for Courts and Legal Policy at the Center for American Progress.

"This ruling allows South Carolina to strip power away from Black voters and implement a congressional map that is clearly racially gerrymandered," Ombres stated. "The majority cherry-picked evidence disregarded inconvenient proof of racial gerrymandering and substituted its own judgment of the facts instead of deferring to the court below. Worse, the majority makes it clear that, in the future, it will be more difficult to challenge unconstitutional racial gerrymanders."

The case, *Alexander v. South Carolina State Conference of the N.A.A.C.P.*, No. 22-807, presented a complex challenge of distinguishing the roles of race and partisanship in drawing voting maps, especially as Black voters predominantly support Democrats.



The case, *Alexander v. South Carolina State Conference of the N.A.A.C.P.*, No. 22-807, presented a complex challenge of distinguishing the roles of race and partisanship in drawing voting maps, especially as Black voters predominantly support Democrats. (Photo via NNPA)

gushing the roles of race and partisanship in drawing voting maps, especially as Black voters predominantly support Democrats. A unanimous three-judge panel of the Federal District Court in Columbia, S.C., had ruled in early 2023 that the state's First Congressional District, drawn after the 2020 census, violated the Constitution by prioritizing race. However, the Supreme Court's ruling now overturns that decision.

The lower court had held its decision while Republican lawmakers appealed to the Supreme Court, with the parties urging a resolution by January 1. After the deadline passed, the panel ruled in March that the 2024 election would proceed under the contested map, acknowledging practical constraints.

"With the primary election procedures rapidly approaching, the appeal before the Supreme Court still pending and no remedial plan in place," the panel wrote, "the ideal must bend to the practical."

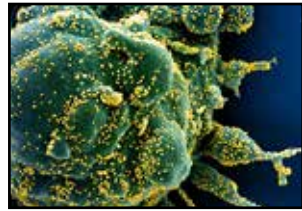
The disputed district, centered in Charleston, has been a Republican stronghold since 1980, except for 2018. The 2020 race was notably close, leading Republican lawmakers to strengthen the district's Republican tilt post-census. The judges ruled that this goal was achieved by "bleaching African American voters out of the Charleston Coun-

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Game-changing power of love in kids' lives

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People In The News ...



Wlilie Earl Vereen



Marilyn Mosby

NDG Quote of the Week: "Defining myself, as opposed to being defined by others, is one of the most difficult challenges I face."

- Carol Moseley-Braun

Willie Earl Vereen

A memorial service for Willie Earl Vereen, a member of the political prisoner group Wilmington Ten, is scheduled for noon on Tuesday, May 28, at the Temple of Truth Light and Life in North Carolina. Vereen died on Saturday, May 25, at the age of 69. A viewing will be held later at John H. Shaw's Son Funeral Home at 520 Red Cross St. Family members have scheduled a Wednesday funeral.

Vereen, who had battled liver cancer and endured years of dialysis, died at

5:30 a.m. while in hospice care. His death marks the passing of another key figure in the fight for racial justice in the 1970s.

The Wilmington Ten were a group of civil rights activists wrongfully convicted in 1971 for the firebombing of Mike's Grocery Store and shooting at firefighters. The group, comprising nine Black men and one white woman, included Wayne Moore, Ann Shepard, James McKoy, Marvin Patrick, Reginald Epps, Jerry Jacobs, Connie Tindall, William Wright,



and National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) President and CEO Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr.

Wilmington was a flashpoint for conflict during a time of racial unrest, with violent clashes between black activists and orga-

nizations supporting white supremacy, like the Ku Klux Klan. Racially biased legal proceedings and prosecutorial misconduct were the leading causes of the Wilmington Ten's false accusations and subsequent convictions.

The activists received

harsh sentences, with their total prison terms amounting to 282 years. They spent almost a decade in prison before a federal appellate court overturned their convictions in 1980. The court cited prosecutorial misconduct, including suppressing evidence and coercing false testimonies.

Amnesty International declared the Wilmington Ten "prisoners of conscience" in 1976, bringing international attention to their case. The organization's support, alongside public statements from American Ambassador to the United Nations Andrew

Young, who described the charges as "trumped up," underscored the political nature of their imprisonment.

In 2012, North Carolina Governor Beverly Perdue issued pardons of innocence for the Wilmington Ten, recognizing the racial injustices that had tainted their convictions. "These convictions were tainted by naked racism and represent an ugly stain on North Carolina's criminal justice system that cannot be allowed to stand any longer," Perdue stated. "Just-

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Marilyn Mosby

Following her conviction for mortgage fraud and perjury, former Baltimore State's Attorney Marilyn Mosby received a 12-month home detention sentence and two years of supervised release. U.S. District Judge Lydia Kay Griggsby handed down the sentence on Thursday, May 23, after a protracted and highly publicized legal battle that has stirred significant debate over race, politics, and justice.

Mosby, 44, gained national attention in 2015 for charging six Baltimore police officers in the death of Freddie Gray, a Black man



fatally injured in police custody. Gray's death led to riots and protests in the city. After three officers were acquitted, Mosby's office dropped charges against the other three officers.

In 2020, at the height of the pandemic, Mosby with-

drew \$90,000 from Baltimore City's deferred compensation plan and used it to make down payments on vacation homes in Kissimmee and Longboat Key, Florida. Prosecutors argued that Mosby improperly accessed the funds under provisions of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act by falsely claiming that the pandemic had harmed her travel-oriented side business.

Mosby's sentencing argument said the retirement funds came from her own income and that no one was defrauded because she paid an early withdrawal penalty and all federal taxes on the money. The government

said that money remained the property of the city until she was legally eligible, and her perjury harmed everyone who followed the rules during the coronavirus pandemic.

Mosby's mortgage fraud conviction stems from a \$5,000 "gift letter" she submitted when taking a

loan to buy the Longboat Key property. Prosecutors said the letter falsely stated that Mosby's husband was giving her a \$5,000 gift for the closing when it was her own money.

Judge Griggsby rejected the defense's argument that the forfeiture amounted to an excessive fine, ruling

that Mosby must surrender the assets gained through "her crimes." The judge did allow Mosby to collect back more than \$40,000 that she used as a down payment for the Longboat Key condo, but the mortgage of \$428,000 was fraudulently

See MOSBY, Page 13

Rep. Shontel Brown

(Black PR Wire) Washington, D.C. – Congresswoman Shontel Brown (OH-11) has introduced new legislation to encourage a new federal grant program for the detection and treatment of uterine fibroids, The Uterine Fibroid Intervention and Gynecological Health and Treatment Act (U-FIGHT Act).

The U-FIGHT Act authorizes the Secretary of Health and Human Services to award grants to increase early detection of and intervention for uterine fibroids, education and awareness programs, and research. The U-FIGHT Act also addresses Asherman's syndrome, uterine scar tissue build-up



following surgery, as well as disparities in pain control and management as it relates to uterine fibroids.

The U-FIGHT Act is coled by Congresswoman Yvette Clarke (NY-09), who is also the sponsor of the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Uterine Fibroid Research and Education Act, which

would support National Institutes of Health research into uterine fibroids. Stephanie Tubbs Jones represented Ohio's 11th District from 1999-2008 and first introduced the Uterine Fibroids Research and Education Act in 2001.

Congresswoman Brown's U-Fight Act has 50 cosponsors in the House of Representatives.

The U-Fight Act is endorsed by: The White Dress Project, The Fibroid Foundation, Black Health Matters, Ohio Physicians for Reproductive Rights, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Birthing Beautiful Communities, The Center for Black

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The game-changing power of love

Kali Thorne Ladd
Chief Executive Officer
Children's Institute

For many working in the early childhood field, we understand the need to offer our youngest children nurturing and caring environments that stimulate learning and healthy development. The neuroscience of brain development helps us understand why. In the first year of life, 1 million neural connections are made in the brain every minute. The first 1,000 days of a child's life are most critical to brain development and social-emotional well-being. Ninety-five percent of brain development happens in the first five years of a child's life.

Neuroplasticity is greatest in our younger years, so our ability to scaffold our brain toward resiliency starts early and has a lasting impact. But many things can get in the way of optimal development for young children. Abuse, racism, and poverty can cause stress and trauma. Being bullied in school or elsewhere can create significant challenges and undermine a sense of belonging. The lack of caring adults in these circumstances can leave children feeling unsafe and insecure. Living through a global pandemic or under the constant threat of racial or school violence can compound the stress response in children.

When a child experiences stressful things, especially over a prolonged period, there is great danger that the stress can register in the brain and body as trauma. When this happens, it has an extremely negative impact. The trauma scars reshape

a child's brain. It disrupts the foundations of memory, decision-making, and emotional stability. Later in life, these traumatic wounds can fuel the fires of addiction and mental illness and cast shadows over the path of learning and growth. Trauma disrupts everything.

But there is one im-

portant research and data point that offers hope. When children experience hard things, the one thing that can help them overcome trauma and develop resiliency is love. Loving, caring relationships are the most important factor in building sturdy brain architecture and turning stress into resiliency. This is game-changing. It's something we can all understand. Each one of us is wired for love. We all need it, and children have the greatest opportunity to thrive when immersed in it.

“When children experience hard things, the one thing that can help them overcome trauma and develop resiliency is love. Loving, caring relationships are the most important factor in building sturdy brain architecture and turning stress into resiliency.”

ports to build from. Now we simply need the commitment to act in the best interest of our children.

Here are some next steps:

- Visualize an ecosystem of love, care, and learning for children that begins before they are born and is designed to help them grow and thrive.
- Prioritize giving all children access to loving, caring adults inside and outside of the home, understanding that love is not just nice to have, it's an essential need.
- Create dedicated funding streams for the expansion of early childhood programs and services at

But what does this mean for people and organizations in the early childhood

field? For teachers, policy-makers and advocates? For leaders of organizations or our local, state, and federal government? It means we have a moral imperative to create the best possible conditions for learning, love and growth for our youngest children. The good news is that we have plenty of examples and ef-

forts to build from. Now we simply need the commitment to act in the best interest of our children.

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- Create dedicated funding streams for the expansion of early childhood programs and services at

local, state, and federal levels.

- Ensure public access to quality preschool programs that promote early learning and health development while simultaneously strengthening the supply of childcare and the needs of working parents and families.
- Ensure that policymaking at all levels centers on young children and their families, including housing, healthcare, behavioral health, law enforcement, economic development, and education.

Now, it can be overwhelming to think about changing these complex systems. But there is a way to simplify things and for each of us to commit to doing what's right for children in our world today, right now. Reach into your soul and heart and imagine your power to give the gift of love and resiliency to a child. Maybe it's a child you know, a classroom you're familiar with, a community or church that is part of your life. When you look inside, know that you can be an ambassador for love, an ambassador for helping children thrive in a community of love. It takes a lot of love to heal the world, but only takes a little to help a child know they belong, that they are cared for and safe, that they are loved and that they can heal. When we do that, we can change the world with one act of love followed by another, and another.

local, state, and federal levels.

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Kali Thorne Ladd leads the Children's Institute, which leverages research, practice, policy, and advocacy to shift systems toward justice for families so that all of Oregon's children, prenatal to grade 5, have access to opportunity.

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How COVID-19 'breakthrough' infections alter immune cells

(Newswise) — LA JOLLA, CA—New research from scientists at La Jolla Institute for Immunology (LJI) suggests people who received COVID-19 vaccines and then experienced “breakthrough” infections are especially well armed against future SARS-CoV-2 infections.

By analyzing blood samples from study volunteers, the LJI researchers discovered that people who experienced symptomatic breakthrough infections develop T cells that are better at recognizing and targeting SARS-CoV-2, including the Omicron and Delta variants. The researchers describe this increased protection as an “immunity wall.”

“The virus evolves, but, importantly, so does the immune system. T cells do not sit idle. Instead, they learn to recognize the parts of the virus that mutate,” says LJI Professor Alessandro Sette, Dr.Biol. Sci., who co-led the Cell Reports Medicine study with LJI Professor Shane Crotty, Ph.D., and LJI Research Assistant Professor Alba Grifoni, Ph.D.

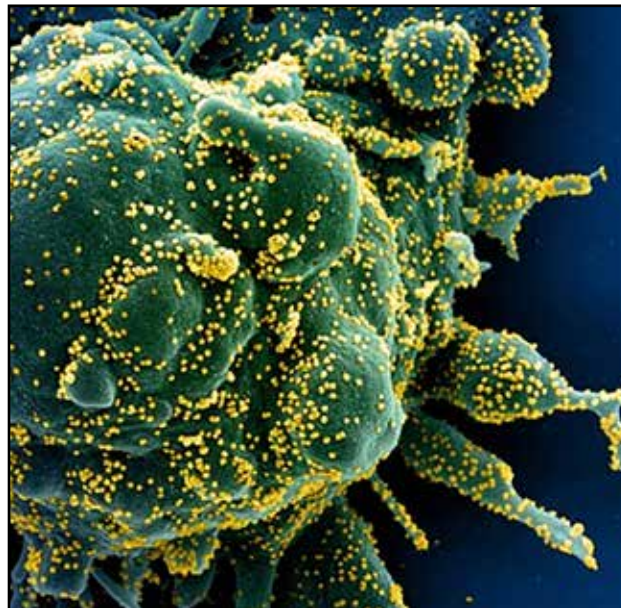
Key findings:

- Study volunteers who experienced symptomatic breakthrough infections developed T cells that recognized multiple targets on the SARS-CoV-2 viral “Spike” and non-Spike epitopes.

- This infection left study volunteers with T cells that were better equipped to recognize mutated regions on new SARS-CoV-2 variants.

- Even asymptomatic breakthrough infections boost T cell responses, though the effect was not as significant.

- Breakthrough infections also led B cells to produce cross-reactive antibodies against SARS-CoV-2. Most of these antibodies targeted the new viral variants and the original



Colorized scanning electron micrograph of an apoptotic cell (green) heavily infected with SARS-CoV-2 virus particles (yellow), isolated from a patient sample. (Image credit: NIAID)

vaccine antigens.

- The researchers found no evidence of harmful “T cell exhaustion” in study volunteers who had experienced repeated COVID-19 vaccinations and SARS-CoV-2 infections.

T cells gain fighting power

Many studies have shown that vaccination against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, provides people with significant immune protection against severe disease. Several LJI-led studies have shown that this immune protection is long-lasting and can even help protect the body from new viral “variants of concern.”

For the new study, LJI scientists investigated exactly how breakthrough infections affect T cells and B cells. The researchers followed a large group of study volunteers who had been vaccinated against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Over time, many of these volunteers experienced breakthrough infections. The LJI scientists followed up with these volunteers to collect new blood samples post infection.

“With this study volunteer cohort, we were in a unique position to see how

the immune system looked before and after a breakthrough infection,” says Grifoni.

Study co-first author and LJI Postdoctoral Researcher Alison Tarke, Ph.D., spearheaded research showing that breakthrough infections prompted T cells to expand their “repertoires.” That meant the cells could recognize multiple features, or antigens, on SARS-CoV-2.

These T cells appeared to develop their broad repertoires due to a combination of vaccination and breakthrough infection. COVID-19 vaccines taught the T cells to recognize a key part of SARS-CoV-2 called the “Spike” protein. Meanwhile, SARS-CoV-2 infection prompted T cells to recognize Spike, as well as several other viral proteins.

Breakthrough infection had left these study volunteers with T cells that could recognize and target SARS-CoV-2, even if part of it was mutated.

More layers of protection

Breakthrough Omicron and Delta variant infections also prompted B cells to produce more diverse antibodies. These antibodies could target epitopes that the vaccine and the in-

fecting SARS-CoV-2 variant had in common.

In fact, most of these new antibodies were good at attacking epitopes that the vaccine and the variants had in common. “New B cell responses that are only specific to the infecting variant, but not the vaccine, are very rare,” says study co-first author and LJI Instructor Parham Ramezani-Rad, Ph.D.

The researchers uncovered another interesting trend in people with breakthrough infections. COVID-19 vaccines tend to be given in the upper arm, which means anti-SARS-CoV-2 immune cells devel-

op far away from the upper respiratory system. SARS-CoV-2 tends to infect the upper respiratory tract first, which means there can be a delay getting the right immune cells to the scene of infection. “A breakthrough infection has the potential of adding a layer of protection on top of a vaccine,” says Grifoni.

What about asymptomatic infections?

As they worked, the scientists also found markers of previous SARS-CoV-2 infection in about 30 percent of study volunteers who had never shown COVID-19 symptoms. These

volunteers appeared to have contracted asymptomatic cases of COVID-19 at some point earlier in the pandemic.

“Our study suggests most people who never thought they got a breakthrough infection actually did,” says Grifoni. “The majority of the population appears to be affected by a combination of vaccination and one or more breakthrough infections.”

No evidence of T cell exhaustion

The new study also addresses concerns that repeated infection or CO-

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New standards set for voluntary carbon markets to drive climate action

By Stacy M. Brown
 NNPA Senior National
 Correspondent

President Joe Biden has led a momentous climate agenda, marking significant achievements through legislation and executive action. The Inflation Reduction Act, a landmark climate investment, and executive measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across all economic sectors are clear demonstrations of this commitment. Under Biden's Investing in America agenda, over \$860 billion in business investments have been sparked in future-focused industries such as electric vehicles, clean energy, and semiconductors, bolstered by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, CHIPS and Science Act, and Inflation Reduction Act.

In a fact sheet, the White House noted that these investments are not only creating new manufacturing and clean energy jobs but also breathing new life into previously overlooked communities.

The Biden-Harris Administration said it remains committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030 and achiev-



Additionally, the administration is involved in international standard-setting efforts and supporting high-integrity VCMs in global markets. (Photo via NNPA)

ing net-zero emissions by 2050. "This commitment is not just about the environment, but also about creating economic opportunities across diverse American businesses, from rural farms to innovative tech companies and historically underserved entrepreneurs," officials noted in the fact sheet.

Key officials, including Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm, have co-signed a Joint Statement of Policy and new Principles for Responsible Participation in Voluntary Carbon Markets (VCMs) as part of this vision. These principles lay out the U.S. government's strategy for advancing high-integrity VCMs, ensuring they drive credible climate action and econom-

ic opportunity. Officials said high-integrity VCMs can significantly enhance decarbonization by providing reliable revenue streams for various projects and practices, including nature-based solutions and innovative climate technologies. However, the White House contends that current challenges in VCMs, such as unreliable crediting methodologies and insufficient decarbonization outcomes, necessitate further action.

The administration's new principles address these issues by establishing robust standards for carbon credit supply and demand, improving market functioning, ensuring fair treatment of all participants, and instilling market confidence.

The specific principles for responsible participa-

tion in VCMs are designed to ensure that the market operates with integrity. These principles include ensuring carbon credits represent real decarbonization, avoiding environmental and social harm, supporting co-benefits and inclusive benefits-sharing, prioritizing emissions reductions within corporate value chains, and maintaining transparency and high standards in credit use. The aim is to prevent greenwashing and ensure that VCMs are

a tool for emissions reduction, not a replacement for them.

The Biden-Harris Administration is also advancing efforts to develop VCMs, including initiatives to create new climate opportunities for farmers and forest landowners, conduct first-of-its-kind credit purchases, and advance carbon dioxide removal (CDR) technology. For instance, the Department of Agriculture (USDA) is implementing programs to help farmers and forest landowners participate in VCMs. At the same time, the Department of Energy (DOE) announced a \$35 million Carbon Dioxide Removal Purchase Pilot Prize and other investments in CDR technologies.

Additionally, the administration is involved in international standard-setting efforts and supporting high-integrity VCMs in

global markets. The U.S. government is engaged in initiatives like the LEAF Coalition and the Energy Transition Accelerator, which promote sector-wide approaches to decarbonization and support projects in developing countries.

U.S. regulatory agencies, such as the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC), promote transparency and combat fraud in VCMs to ensure market integrity. An interagency Task Force on Voluntary Carbon Markets has been established to coordinate actions across the administration.

"The Biden-Harris Administration's commitment to high-integrity VCMs is crucial for channeling private capital toward effective climate solutions, preserving ecosystems, and achieving U.S. and global climate goals," officials observed.

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Biden-Harris Administration approves \$7.7 billion in additional student loan debt relief

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

The Biden-Harris Administration announced the approval of \$7.7 billion in student loan debt relief for 160,500 borrowers. This measure targets three categories of borrowers: those qualifying for Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF), participants in President Biden's Saving on a Valuable Education (SAVE) Plan who are eligible for its shortened forgiveness period, and those benefiting from adjustments to income-driven repayment (IDR) plans.

With the addition of the new relief, the administration has now approved \$167 billion in loan forgiveness for 4.75 million Americans. "The Biden-Harris Administration remains persistent about our efforts to bring student debt relief to millions more across the country, and this announcement proves it," stated U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona. "One out of every 10 federal student loan borrowers approved for debt relief means one out of every 10 borrowers now has financial breathing room



This measure targets three categories of borrowers: those qualifying for Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF), participants in President Biden's Saving on a Valuable Education (SAVE) Plan who are eligible for its shortened forgiveness period, and those benefiting from adjustments to income-driven repayment (IDR) plans. (LinkedIn Sales Solutions / Unsplash)

and a burden lifted."

The latest breakdown of the \$7.7 billion in debt relief includes:

- \$5.2 billion for 66,900 borrowers through fixes to PSLF, marking a total of \$68 billion in forgiveness for over 942,000 borrowers.
- \$613 million for 54,300 borrowers via the SAVE

Plan, targeting those with smaller loans, with forgiveness after at least 10 years of payments if they originally borrowed \$12,000 or less. This brings the total relief under the SAVE Plan to \$5.5 billion for 414,000 borrowers.

- \$1.9 billion for 39,200 borrowers through administrative adjustments to

IDR payment counts. This addresses issues with forbearance misuse by loan servicers, bringing the total IDR relief to \$51 billion for more than 1 million borrowers.

"Another 160,000 borrowers and their families will get some much-needed relief thanks to the continued efforts of the Biden-Harris Administration to fix the broken student loan system," said U.S. Under Secretary of Education James Kvaal. "We congratulate those borrowers on their due forgiveness and we will continue to work to deliver relief to others."

The Department of Education also updated the timing for payment count adjustments, giving borrowers until June 30, 2024, to consolidate their loans to benefit from these adjustments.

Borrowers have begun receiving emails informing them of their approvals, with the relief processing in the coming weeks.

In a related development, the Biden-Harris Administration revealed new plans in April to extend student debt relief to tens of millions more borrowers. The initiative aims to make

over 30 million borrowers eligible for debt relief, including those already approved. The proposed regulations, part of an ongoing process since last summer, aim to:

- Waive accrued and capitalized interest for millions of borrowers.
- Automatically discharge debt for borrowers eligible for forgiveness under various programs.
- Eliminate student debt for borrowers in repayment for 20 or more years.
- Aid borrowers from low-financial-value programs or institutions.
- Assist borrowers facing repayment hardships.

Public comments on the first set of plans closed on May 17, with the final rule expected to be published this fall.

White House officials noted that the administration's track record includes significant steps to alleviate student debt burdens and ensure educational loans do not hinder opportunities. Key achievements include a \$900 increase in the maximum Pell Grant, protections against unaffordable career programs, and debt relief for over 1.6 million borrowers defrauded

by their schools or facing institutional closures.

"Today, my administration is canceling student debt for 160,000 more people, bringing the total number of Americans who have benefited from our debt relief actions to 4.75 million," Biden stated. "Each of those borrowers has received an average of over \$35,000 in debt cancellation."

Despite the U.S. Supreme Court striking down Biden's initial forgiveness programs and staunch Republican opposition to erasing student debt, the comprehensive measures continue to reflect the administration's stated commitment to easing the financial burden on students and their families, which officials declared fosters greater financial stability and broader economic benefits.

"From day one, I promised to fight to ensure higher education is a ticket to the middle class, not a barrier to opportunity," the president declared. "I will never stop working to cancel student debt, no matter how many times Republican elected officials try to stop us."

Nominations sought for next class of Dallas ISD Athletic Hall of Fame

(Dallas ISD) Nominations are now being accepted for the next class of the Dallas ISD Athletic Hall of Fame.

The Dallas ISD Athletic Hall of Fame acknowledges those who have raised the level of public awareness and appreciation (support) for high school athletics through their distinguished achievement and excellence, both on and off the field of competition. These

individuals may include former student-athletes, coaches, administrators, contest officials, media personnel, sports medicine personnel, athletic trainers, or distinguished volunteers. Nominees may be active or retired from their fields and must exemplify the highest standards of sportsmanship, ethical conduct and moral character.

Since its creation in 2017, the Hall of Fame has

welcomed 51 individuals into its membership. The Hall of Fame recognizes and honors individuals who have made significant contributions to the district's storied high school athletic programs.

Individuals may be nominated in one of three categories: past Dallas ISD student-athlete, former Dallas ISD coach, and contributors. Nominees must exemplify the highest stan-

dards of sportsmanship, ethical conduct, and moral character.

All nominees will be judged on their significant and/or long-term contributions to Dallas ISD athletics. While many have served their schools or areas over a long and distinguished career, their accomplishments must have been worthy of district-wide recognition for them to be considered. Longev-

ity, without meaningful impact, does not constitute appropriate credentials for Hall of Fame consideration. The Dallas ISD Hall of Fame Committee may consider a nominee's total record of contribution(s) to high school athletics in determining eligibility for candidacy and not just his/her record of service in the category in which the nomination is made. The Committee also may waive

the minimum years of service requirement when exceptional circumstances such as injury, illness, or death have prevented an otherwise worthy candidate from meeting the requirement.

Nominations will be open through Wednesday, July 17. For more information and to download the official nomination form, please visit: www.dallasisd.org/athletichalloffame.



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Biden, Harris invited to NNPA Convention as Black Press celebrates 197 years, addresses voter turnout and empowering Black communities

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

The National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) will host its annual national convention from June 19 to 22 at the Four Seasons Hotel Baltimore. The NNPA is the trade association of the more than 250 African American-owned newspapers and media companies that comprise the Black Press of America.

This year's event, themed "Empowering Black Press, Communities, Families, and Voter Turnout," marks the Black Press's 197th anniversary, just three years shy of its bicentennial.

The Black Press was founded in 1827, before slavery ended in America, with the publication of Freedom's Journal in New York, published by John B. Russwurm and Samuel Cornish. The conglomerate has long championed the cause of African Americans and has been counted on for decades to rally the Black community around specific political candidates. "We wish to plead our own cause, for too long others have spoken for us," declared Russwurm and Cornish in their inaugural issue.

President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris have received formal invitations to attend the convention, and their participation is highly anticipated by the over 250 Black-owned newspaper and media company owners and their team of editors and journalists who are expected in Baltimore. With the 2024 election looming, Biden's engagement with the Black Press is critical to his bid for re-election, underscoring the importance of the Black vote.

Reflecting on a pivotal moment from the 1992 NNPA convention in Baltimore, Bob Bogle of the Philadelphia Tribune and



Sonny Messiah Jiles of the Houston Defender recalled the fallout when Democratic presidential candidate Bill Clinton backed out of his scheduled appearance. Black publishers were furious with Clinton's decision. Bogle, at the time, called it "an affront to the Black Press, and it's an affront to African Americans everywhere."

Clinton later realized the gravity of his mistake and made amends by addressing the Black Press collectively. This historical context adds weight to the expectations placed on Biden, as Bogle and Jiles have expressed a similar resolve this year.

NNPA Chair Bobby Henry emphasized the significance of this year's theme: "Our theme, 'Empowering the Black Press, Communities, Families, and Voter Turnout,' is of paramount importance. This conference is a critical platform for addressing the unique challenges and opportunities for political parties to share their messages with the media that serves the population and can make or break elections."

The convention will feature several high-profile

presentations and panels, including a keynote address by Damon Todd Hewitt, President & Executive Director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, titled "What is at Stake for African Americans: the 2024 Vote." Rev. Mark Thompson of NNPA Global will moderate the "Generation Z Voter Issues" panel, featuring current and former HBCU students.

A panel discussion on "From NNPA Intern to Full-Time: How the Chevrolet Discover the Unexpected Program is Fueling the Workforce of the Future," hosted by General Motors, and a Pfizer-sponsored breakfast on "Using AI Technology to Extend Audience Reach and Ensure Inclusive Voices" are two additional highlights. The Google News Initiative will present "News Consumer Insights" with Chrissey Towle, Google's Director of News Partnerships.

Rahn Bailey, MD, of LSU Health New Orleans School of Medicine, Elliott T. Boyce, Sr., retired Director of the New York State Police, and Major Neil Franklin, former Executive Director of the Law

Enforcement Action Partnership, will be on a panel. Maryland Governor Wesley Moore will host to discuss "The Importance of the 2024 Black Vote and Public Policy." NNPA Partners and sponsors Reynolds, Pfizer Rare Disease, Google News Initiative, General Motors, American Petroleum Institute, Comcast NBC Universal, Nissan, and AARP.

The NNPA Fund's annual Merit Awards and gala will occur on Thursday, June 20. On Friday, June 21, the NNPA's annual black-tie gala will include a tribute to Frankie Beverly. Congressman Kweisi Mfume, U.S. Cabinet Secretary Mi-

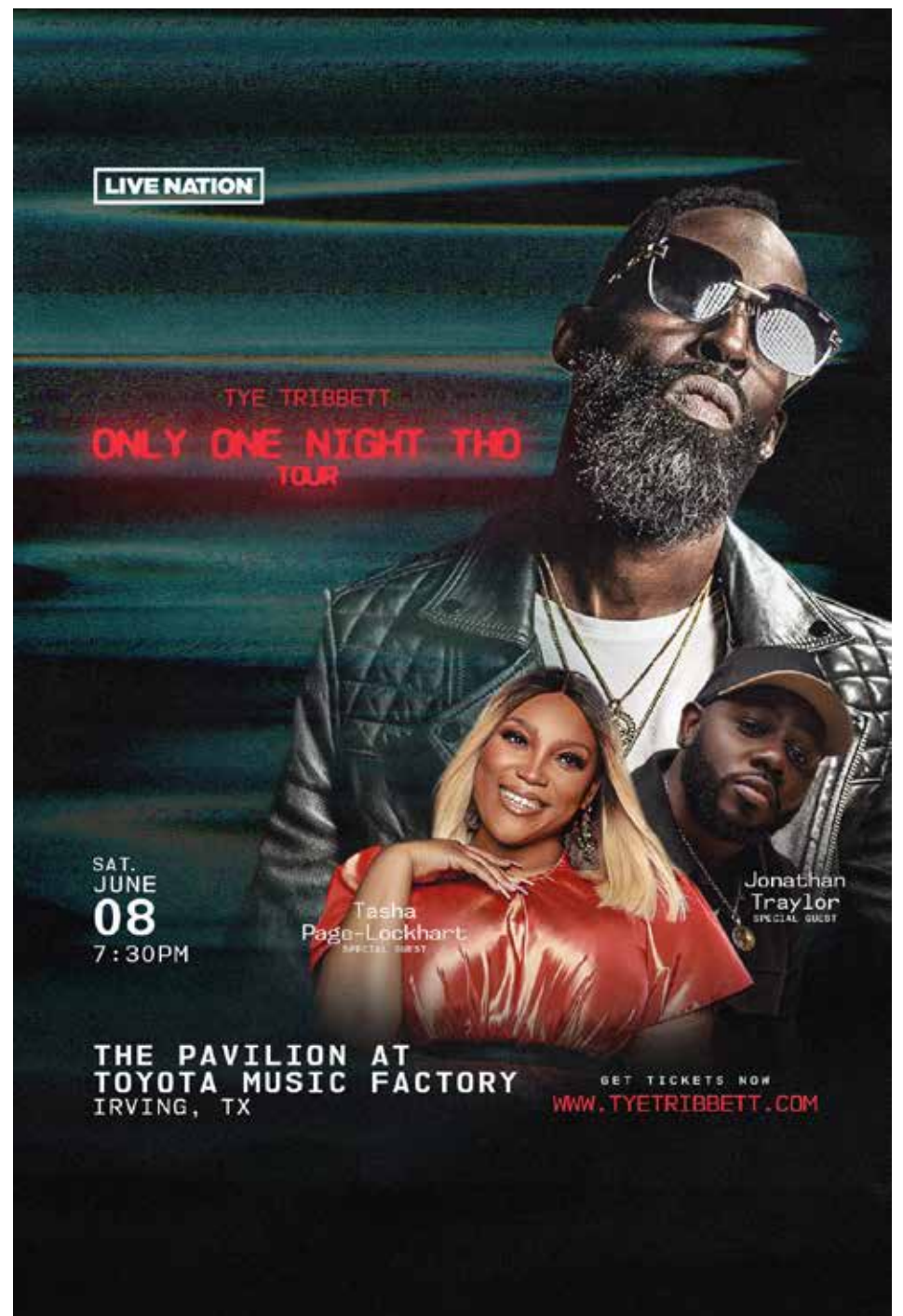
chael Regan, and Maryland Governor Wesley Moore will have all been invited to participate. NNPA President and CEO Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr. highlighted the critical nature of this year's convention. "The NNPA welcomes the upcoming opportunity to convene our 2024 annual national convention in the great city of Baltimore," Chavis declared.

"This marks the 197th anniversary of the Black Press of America. Baltimore is one of the historic cities where the Black Press continues to triumph in a transformational way. Because democracy and

freedom are on the ballot this year, we will also issue a national call to action to get out the vote across America."

As the Black Press nears its bicentennial, the NNPA is celebrating its rich legacy and charting a course for its future impact on civic engagement and social justice. "Strengthening voter turnout, supporting families, and enhancing the financial stability of Black businesses are essential steps toward fostering a more inclusive and equitable society," Henry added. "This conference

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Gov. Greg Abbott pardons convicted BLM killer, while ignoring most rehabilitated ex-felon recommended for pardon in 2019

Are pardons now reserved for the rich, politically affiliated, and well connected?

(Black PR Wire) In a controversial move, Governor Greg Abbott has granted a pardon to Daniel Perry, a former U. S. Army Sergeant who was convicted of killing a Black Lives Matter protester in Austin last year.

This decision has sparked outrage and raised questions about the governor's priorities, as Rev. Dr. Tracy Andrus, a highly recommended ex-felon, has yet to receive a pardon from Abbott, despite being recommended by the same board in 2019.

Dr Andrus, who holds a PhD from Prairie View A&M University and has served as the Director of Criminal Justice at Wiley College since 2006, is known as the most rehabilitated ex-felon in America.

He has dedicated his life to helping others and has been a role model for those seeking redemption and a second chance.

Despite his impressive track record, Abbott has not signed his pardon, leaving many to wonder why Perry a convicted killer, was granted clemency while Dr. Andrus continues to wait.

The decision has sparked accusations of racial bias and injustice.

Dr. Andrus, who has dedicated his life to helping others and has been a model citizen since his release from prison in 1994, is now a candidate for the U.S. Senate, further highlighting the irony of the situation.

Dr Andrus has received widespread support from the community. His story is a testament to the power

of rehabilitation and second chances, and his case has shed light on the flaws in the pardon process.

While Gov. Abbott has the authority to grant pardons, it is important for him to carefully consider the impact of his decisions and prioritize those who have truly turned their lives around, like Dr. Andrus.

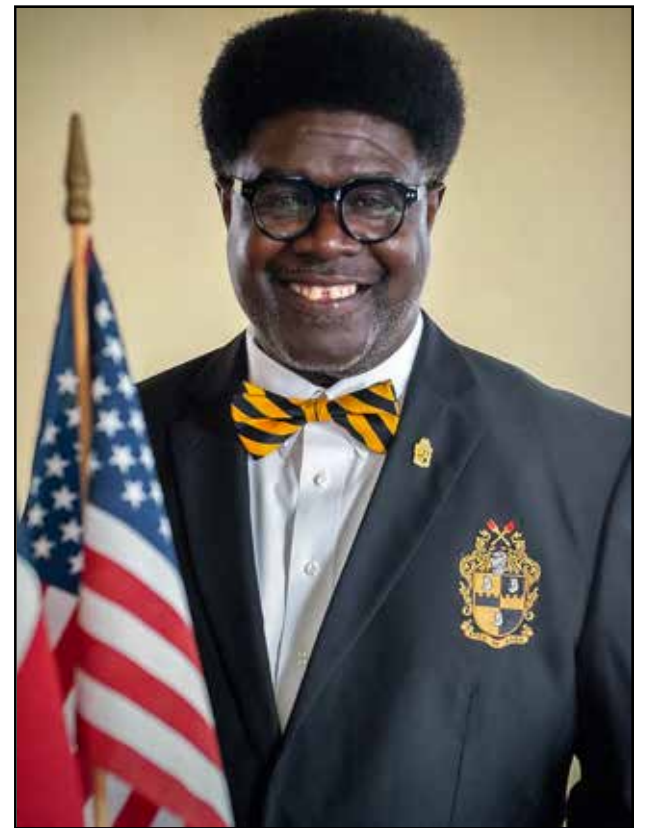
As the debate over Gov. Abbott's decision continues, many are calling for a review of the pardon process and for Dr. Andrus to finally receive the pardon he deserves.

His story serves as a reminder that everyone deserves a second chance, and that true rehabilitation should be recognized and rewarded. Dr Andrus' journey from ex-felon to respected leader is a testa-

ment to his character and determination, and it is time for Gov. Abbott to acknowledge and honor that.

The Black community, (politicians from both sides of the aisle) and advocates for criminal justice reform are calling for Gov Abbott to reconsider his decision and grant Dr. Andrus the pardon he rightfully deserves.

This pardon has once again brought attention to the flaws in the criminal justice system and the need for fair and equal treatment for all individuals, regardless of race or political affiliation. As the nation continues to grapple with issues of racial injustice, it is crucial for leaders to make decisions that promote equality and justice for all.



Rev. Dr. Tracy Andrus (Photo via Black PR Wire)

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MLB integrates Negro Leagues stats, elevating long-overlooked stars to Major League status

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

Major League Baseball (MLB) has taken a historic step to rectify a long-standing oversight by officially incorporating Negro Leagues statistics into its historical record. Starting today, the achievements of approximately 2,300 Negro Leagues players will be recognized alongside those of MLB legends like Babe Ruth and Ty Cobb.

For decades, Babe Ruth and Ty Cobb were celebrated as the greatest figures in baseball, with Ruth hailed as the best player and Cobb as the premier hitter. However, these narratives often excluded African American athletes whose contributions were underreported or dismissed. This exclusion persisted despite the talents that led to Jackie Robinson breaking the color barrier



For decades, Babe Ruth and Ty Cobb were celebrated as the greatest figures in baseball, with Ruth hailed as the best player and Cobb as the premier hitter. However, these narratives often excluded African American athletes whose contributions were underreported or dismissed. This exclusion persisted despite the talents that led to Jackie Robinson breaking the color barrier in 1947 as the first Black player in the modern Major Leagues. (Photo via NNPA)

in 1947 as the first Black player in the modern Major Leagues.

MLB Commissioner Robert Manfred announced this significant change three years ago, emphasizing the league's commitment to correcting a historical wrong by elevating the Negro Leagues to "Major League" status. John Thorn, an MLB historian,

and the Negro Leagues Statistical Review Committee have been responsible for the meticulous process of officially incorporating Negro Leagues stats into MLB records. The team has been reviewing thousands of box scores and other historical data to integrate the statistics of the seven Negro Leagues into MLB's database.

Josh Gibson, a standout in the Negro Leagues, will now lead multiple batting categories. His career batting average, slugging percentage, and OPS surpass those of Ty Cobb and Babe Ruth. While some of Gibson's legendary feats, such as the nearly 800 home runs mentioned on his Hall of Fame plaque, will not be included, many of his offi-

cial stats will now be recognized.

Thorn hailed the decision as "not only righting a social, cultural, and historical wrong, it's defining baseball as a game for Americans without exclusion." He emphasized that baseball is a sport of tradition, but its capacity for profound change is equally significant.

To honor the Negro Leagues, MLB will host a tribute game on June 20 at Rickwood Field in Birmingham, Alabama—the oldest professional baseball park in the U.S. Players will don period uniforms and pay tribute to legendary center fielder Willie Mays, an Alabama native.

With the integration of these statistics, players like Buck Leonard, Buck O'Neil, Cool Papa Bell, Doc Sykes, Monte Irvin, Leroy Satchel Paige, and

Gibson will finally receive their due recognition. Fans will now appreciate the true scope of their talents and achievements.

Sean Gibson, the great-grandson of Josh Gibson and executive director of the Josh Gibson Foundation, expressed the family's excitement over this acknowledgment. "We always considered him a major leaguer; he just didn't play in the major leagues," Sean Gibson told NBC Sports. He is eager to see how his great-grandfather's stats compare to those of other MLB legends.

Reflecting on this milestone, he added, "If Josh Gibson was alive right now, he'd be honored. He'll probably wonder why it took so long. He'll be happy for all the other baseball players, and more importantly he'll be excited for his family to carry on his legacy."

Children often exposed to problematic click bait during YouTube searches

Study suggests automated video recommendations for young users don't always filter out violence or other content that's not age appropriate

(Newswise) — ANN ARBOR, Mich. — When a child peruses YouTube, the content recommended to them is not always age appropriate, a new study suggests.

Researchers mimicked search behaviors of children using popular search terms, such as memes, Minecraft and Fortnite, and captured video thumbnails recommended at the end of each video.

Among the 2,880 thumbnails analyzed, many contained problematic click bait, such as violence or frightening images, according to the Michigan Medicine led research in JAMA Network Open.

"Children spend a significant amount of time on free video sharing platforms that include user-generated



content," said lead author Jenny Radesky, M.D., developmental behavioral pediatrician at University of Michigan Health C.S. Mott Children's Hospital.

"It's important to understand that platforms with billions of hours of content can't perform human review of everything suggest-

ed to children and use algorithms that are imperfect. Parents and children need to be aware of the risks of exposure to inappropriate content and develop strategies to avoid it."

Some research suggests children eight years and younger spend about 65% of their online time on

video sharing sites, many averaging an hour a day, Radesky says.

With hundreds of videos uploaded to such platforms every minute, most content moderation sites rely on automated systems to flag videos that violate policies or depict violent or dangerous content. In response,

some platforms like YouTube have created made-for-kids labels to identify content appropriate for younger viewers.

But recent research suggests that many young children seek out videos that don't fall in the "child-friendly" categories, searching for influencers, video games or funny videos.

Among thumbnails yielded in searches, more than half were identified as including "shocking, dramatic or outrageous" messaging, the study suggests. A little less than a third included violence, peril and pranks while 29% included "creepy, bizarre and disturbing" imagery.

Researchers flagged other content suggestions for "visual loudness," or using

attention capturing designs, as well as manufactured drama and intrigue and depictions of far-fetched luxury items, such as cars, jewelry and houses. A smaller percentage of automated suggestions included gender stereotypes.

"These findings contribute to growing research on how digital designs aim to capture and keep users' attention," Radesky said. "We need more research on children's interactions with these platforms to guide better policies that protect them from negative media experiences."

Study cited: "Algorithmic Content Recommendations on a Video-sharing platform used by children," JAMA Network Open, doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.13855

Diddy in Crisis: Abuse accusations and a strange TV appearance

By Stacy M. Brown
 NNPA Senior National
 Correspondent

Sean “Diddy” Combs’ former head of security, Roger Bonds, revealed he witnessed the hip-hop mogul being violent toward women “four or five times,” expressing no surprise at the 2016 footage of Combs brutally beating then-girlfriend Cassie Ventura.



Photo via NNPA

“It didn’t surprise me when I saw it because I’ve seen things of this nature

before,” Bonds said in a televised interview this week. “I’ve gotten in between things like this back in 2012.” He described the 2016 incident where Combs was seen shoving, kicking, stomping and dragging Ventura in a hotel hallway.

When asked how many times he’d seen Combs become violent toward women, Bonds replied, “Around four or five times.” He add-

ed, “I’ve seen him [be violent] with Cassie and Kim Porter, his kid’s mother. I’ve seen him get physical, grabbing them up and getting into wrestling and punching matches.”

Combs apologized for the 2016 incident in a recent Instagram video, calling his behavior “inexcusable” without directly addressing Ventura. “I take full responsibility for my actions in that video. I’m

disgusted,” he said.

However, Ventura’s lawyer, Meredith Firetog, criticized Combs’ apology, calling it self-serving. “Combs’ statement is more about himself than the many people he has hurt. He only apologized after his repeated denials were proven false,” she said.

In a separate incident, rapper Cam’ron, also known as Cameron Giles, appeared on CNN with

Abby Phillip to discuss the developments surrounding Combs. However, the interview went awry as Cam’ron seemed unaware of the topic and focused on promoting his product, an all-natural sexual supplement called HorsePower. After making non-committal remarks about the security footage, Cam’ron asked his team off-camera, “Who booked me for this joint?”

ESSENCE Festival of Culture celebrates 30 years with Usher and more

(Black PR Wire) NEW ORLEANS (BUSINESS WIRE) -- Legacy will take center stage as the 2024 ESSENCE Festival of Culture presented by Coca-Cola will be like no other, when it makes its return to the festival’s forever home of New Orleans from July 4-7, 2024.

This year’s festival will celebrate 30-years of loving us with a four-day event

that has spanned generations, both in-person and virtually.

To commemorate the three decades of the ESSENCE Festival of Culture presented by Coca-Cola the evening concert series at the Caesar’s Superdome will be rooted in legacy and evolution, to represent the festival’s journey throughout its rich history to today. The 30th birth-

day celebration includes a star-studded line-up with headlining performances from entertainers that have graced the stage over the years, including Usher in a special one-night only performance of the iconic album that turned 20 this year, Confessions.

Global icon Janet Jackson, 3-time Grammy-Award winner Victoria Monét, a milestone cel-

ebration with Birdman & Friends Presents 30 Years of Cash Money Millionaires and 8-time ESSENCE Festival vet, Charlie Wilson.

The four-day event will close with the return of the all-white party and a Special Tribute to Frankie Beverly & Maze and passing of the torch moment, curated by Grammy-Award winning producer & song-

writer, Bryan-Michael Cox. Attendees, fans and festival goers, are invited to join the festivities as we look at the past, present and future of the festival, originally birthed as a one-time-only event to celebrate the 25th anniversary of ESSENCE Magazine.

The 2024 ESSENCE Festival of Culture presented by Coca-Cola Evening Concert Series will be host-

ed by Keke Palmer, Pretty Vee, Big Tigger, Punkie Johnson and Kenny Burns with special DJ sets from Raj Smoove, DJ Clark Kent and DJ Beverly Bond.

As the festival has evolved and expanded from its origin as solely a music festival in 1994, so have the vast daytime experiences offered to attendees each

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Kenya and the U.S. are enhancing trade and investment through bilateral business ties aimed at strengthening their economic partnership

Special to NNPA Newswire

At the U.S.-Kenya Business Forum held at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Washington, five memoranda of understanding and business deals were signed, marking a significant milestone in their business relations.

Areas of cooperation include agriculture, cooperatives, micro, small and

medium enterprises, energy and petroleum, information, communication, and the digital, film and creative economy, among others.

At the event in Washington, DC, President William Ruto met with best-selling author, publisher, and Influential Businesswoman Lavaille Lavette, highlighting collaborations with Kenya.

President William Ruto and Lavaille Lavette, a New

York Times Best Selling Publisher, Author, and Producer, exchanged mutual admiration during the President's visit to Washington, DC. Lavette, a managing partner at the Global Services Company ROBERT COLSON, which has offices in both Kenya and the USA, discussed future collaborative projects with government officials.

Ms. Lavette, alongside

Mr. Curtis Stancil, will lead a team visiting Kenya this fall.

The team of award-winning creatives will hold meetings with Dr. Erick Rutto, President of the Kenya National Chamber of Commerce & Industry, and other authorities working to expand the entertainment industry in Kenya. Their efforts will focus on growth in publishing, film, and immersive entertainment.



Areas of cooperation include agriculture, cooperatives, micro, small and medium enterprises, energy and petroleum, information, communication, and the digital, film and creative economy, among others. (Photo via NNPA)

Sony Music West Africa launches 'She Is...' event to empower and connect female music creators

(Black PR Wire) On March 26 and 27 in Lagos, Nigeria, Sony Music West Africa held its highly anticipated event "She Is..." in commemoration of International Women's Month. The two-day summit was dedicated to empowering women across various fields, particularly in the music and creator economy, providing them with the knowledge, network, and resources necessary to thrive in the industry.

The event, which gathered creatives and music enthusiasts alike, served as a platform to glean insights from esteemed thought leaders in the industry. Day 1 commenced with engaging panel sessions, covering a spectrum of topics aimed at fostering growth and sustainability within the music business.

The first panel, moderated by Omolola Ige, Marketing Manager at Sony Music West Africa, delved into

the theme: "The Creator Economy: Stand out. Earn. Invest. Repeat." Panelists, including Ifeoma Uddoh, CEO & Founder, Shecluded; Adaora Oramah, CEO & Founder, Amaka Studios; Mary Egoro, Chief of Staff & Strategy, BellaNaija; and Ivy Ifeoma Iboko, Brand Influencer and Founder, Ivymark, shared invaluable insights from a creator's perspective, discussing opportunities, differentiation strategies, sustainable

earnings, and investment avenues.

The second panel, moderated by Princess Okereugo, A&R Manager at Sony Music West Africa, explored the theme: "Afrobeats: Past, Present

& Future." Panelists Addy Awofisayo, Head of Music, Sub-Saharan Africa, YouTube Music; Christel Kayibi, Director of Repertoire & Strategy, Continental Europe and Africa, Sony Music; Taymi B, Renowned

On-Air-Personality at Beat FM & CEO, Pitchr; and Gift Israel, Head of Content, Glitch Africa, engaged in a dynamic discussion on the evolution and commer-

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underscores the vital role of informing, educating, and mobilizing communities."

The NNPA has continued

to call for increased advertising support from businesses and governmental agencies to ensure fair and

equitable spending with Black-owned media, emphasizing the ongoing economic and social contributions of the Black Press to American society.

← VOTING, from Page 1

ty portion of Congressional District No. 1," moving 62 percent of Black voters to the Sixth District, represented by James E. Clyburn, a Black Democrat.

Republican lawmakers admitted that the district was redrawn for partisan gains, but challengers, represented by the ACLU and NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, argued that race was the primary factor. "That predominant reliance on race is impermissible even if mapmakers used race as a proxy for

politics," their brief stated.

Justice Elena Kagan, joined by the court's other liberal justices, dissented. Kagan contended that the ruling encourages state lawmakers to use race as a proxy for partisan objectives. "Go right ahead, this Court says to States today. Go ahead, though you have no recognized justification for using race, such as to comply with statutes ensuring equal voting rights," Kagan wrote. "Go ahead, though you are (at best) using race as a short-

cut to bring about partisan gains—to elect more Republicans in one case, more Democrats in another."

Due to the South Carolina case's reliance on the equal protection clause of the Constitution, it differs from a comparable Alabama case that is subject to the Voting Rights Act. Ombres underscored the broader implications, stating, "Congress must pass legislation to revitalize the Voting Rights Act to ensure that the will of American voters matters—not just the will of those already in power."



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Good Soil Forum taps into the rhythm of entrepreneurship

(Black PR Wire) T.D. Jakes Enterprises, a social impact company led by Chairman T.D. Jakes and the brainchild behind the Good Soil Movement, is looking to make North Texas home to a confluence of ideas, events and business-related social hot-spots ahead of Juneteenth and Black Music Month by bringing the annual Good Soil Forum to the AT&T Performing Arts Center in Dallas on June 13-15, 2024.

The long-time entrepreneur and faith leader is utilizing the Good Soil Forum as a moment to highlight the nation's and particularly Dallas' thriving entrepreneurial, business and cultural scene in turn bringing thousands of people and millions of dollars to the area. Dallas consistently ranks near the top of annual economic studies, across the U.S. that cite the North Texas' region as being good for small business growth,

small business employment and hourly earnings growth.

With the theme of "The Rhythm of Entrepreneurship," this year will include inspiring keynote sessions in which entrepreneurs can hear from visionary leaders and industry trailblazers for insights empowering attendees to navigate the entrepreneurial landscape with confidence and creativity. This year's featured participants, panelists in fireside chats and breakout sessions

include:

- T.D. Jakes, NAACP Image Award Winning philanthropist and CEO of T.D. Jakes Enterprises
- Tabitha Brown, Emmy Award Winning Actress and NYT Bestselling Author & Entrepreneur
- Pinky Cole, Founder & Owner of Slutty Vegan
- Arian Simone, Co-founder & CEO of the Fearless Fund
- Richelieu Dennis, Founder & CEO of Sundial

Brands

- Charles King, Founder & CEO of MACRO
 - Warren Lockett, Founder of Black Restaurant Week
- Also serving as an effort to create a convergence of minds and missions, Good Soil Forum will feature educational fireside chats, breakout sessions and hands-on workshops in which business leaders can learn and participate in key conversations on a variety of topics from business planning

and marketing strategies to financial management and leadership development, equipping them with practical skills and knowledge to elevate their business. The Good Soil Forum will also feature a vibrant marketplace with a diverse array of vendors, from tech startups to artisanal craftspeople, a unique opportunity to network, discover new products and services, and gain inspiration for attendees' entrepreneurial ventures.

ESSENCE, from Page 20

year at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center.

Music legends will hit the evening stage at the 2024 ESSENCE Festival of Culture™ presented by Coca-Cola to celebrate the annual festival that has spanned generations - with many of these artists gracing the stage over their careers.

At age 19, Usher gave his first show-stopping performance on the ESSENCE Festival stage in 1998 and as he celebrates 20 years of the musical masterpiece that is Confessions, Mr. Raymond returns to give a one-night only, never-before-seen show.

Across the festival's 30-years, the incomparable Frankie Beverly & Maze has given a showstopping closing performance and as we commemorate this year's festival, ESSENCE will give flowers to the entertainers who started the all-white Sunday-night tra-

dition and a special passing of the torch presentation by Mr. Beverly.

Global icon Janet Jackson returns to the festival stage, following her 2022 performance, which remains one of the highest-grossing nights in the festival's history. R&B icon Charlie Wilson will take the stage to perform his undeniable melodies and generation-defining songs, alongside some special friends.

For 30 years, New Orleans has and will continue to be the cultural backdrop of the ESSENCE Festival of Culture presented by Coca-Cola and like the 30-years since the festival's inception, 2024 also marks the three-decade milestone of New Orleans-own Cash Money. Birdman & Friends Presents 30 Years of Cash Money Millionaires will bring a special performance to our shared, forever home of the Crescent City, along-

side some of our favorite hometown artists and more. Grammy-nominated musical group, Tank and The Bangas, continues the New Orleans takeover with a curated performance alongside special guests & New Orleans natives, Teedra Moses, HaSizzle and Dawn Richard.

Victoria Monét joins the 2024 ESSENCE Festival of Culture presented by Coca-Cola line-up for a co-headlining and inaugural performance on the legacy stage that will for sure be a showstopper! ESSENCE couldn't celebrate a milestone birthday party without one of the best DJs of the culture, D-Nice, who will return to the Superdome stage for a special presentation of his global sensation, Club Quarantine Live.

The performance will feature icons of hip hop, latin jazz funk, R&B and soca including Method Man, Sheila E., Big Boi, Donell Jones, Tweet, Ma-

chel Montano and Lloyd. Special curated performances each night include Grammy-winning band members, The Roots & Friends featuring Ari Lennox, Mickey Guyton and special guest, T. Pain; and the reunion of R&B supergroup, TGT (Tyrese, Ginuwine & Tank). Additional evening performers include Nigerian singer & songwriter Ayra Starr, R&B songstress SWV, award-winning hip-hop artist Busta Rhymes, R&B singer Jacquees and more to be announced.

"For three decades, the ESSENCE Festival of Culture has blossomed into a pillar of our culture. It spans generations and echoes life stages, growing at the vibrant intersection of art, culture, freedom, and

justice.

As the festival approaches its 30-year milestone, we are excited to welcome and celebrate with all our closest family and friends around the world—whether it's your 30th, 11th (like me), 2nd, or even first time. It promises to be an enriching four days of daytime and evening experiences," said Hakeem Holmes, Vice President of the ESSENCE Festival of Culture.

"New Orleans is our home, my hometown, and we look forward to embracing this community once again. Last year, we proudly generated \$316 million for New Orleans and Louisiana, and we look forward to another year of new memories. This is your formal invitation to join us—bring your family,

friends, and cousins too—for a celebration of unparalleled Black joy. Don't forget to download the app for all the latest updates."

The 2024 ESSENCE Festival of Culture™ is presented by Coca-Cola and major partners, AT&T, L'Oréal Groupe, McDonald's USA, and Target Corporation. Stay tuned for all official updates for this year's festival at ESSENCEFestival.com and join the conversation on social at @ESSENCEFest on X, Facebook, and Instagram. Tickets are now available on the festival's website and for those who are not able to attend in-person, please tune-in to ESSENCE.com and ESSENCEFestival.com for a virtual viewing experience.

VEREEN, from Page 11

tice demands that this stain finally be removed."

The death of Vereen follows the recent passing of another Wilmington Ten member, James "Bun" Mckoy, in November. NNPA Chair and Westside Gazette Publisher Bobby Henry said he deeply respected Vereen's legacy. "Brother Vereen has gone on to glory, making his mark alongside other young freedom fighters,"

Henry stated. "Because of their tenacity, perseverance, courage, and steadfast belief in their innocence, the Wilmington Ten were ultimately pardoned by Gov. Beverly Perdue, a testament to the enduring fight for justice."

Chavis., who will help eulogize Vereen, reflected on their shared journey. "Willie Earl Vereen, at the age of 17, was one of the youngest members of the

Wilmington Ten," Chavis remarked.

"Yet he was a gifted and talented young freedom fighter for equal and quality education for Black public school students. He was an accomplished musician and drummer who dedicated his cultural genius to proclaiming freedom, justice, and equality for all. We were political prisoners together, and may the spirit of Willie Earl Vereen live on for future generations."

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SONY, from Page 11

cial potential of Afrobeats as a global genre, sparking insightful dialogue among attendees.

Day 2 concluded with a vibrant mixer attended by over 150 guests, who participated in activities ranging from sip & paint to karaoke and games. The evening featured captivating music performances by F3line, Salle, Elmah, and a special acoustic set by Godwin. Additionally, guests were treated to a special virtual appearance

by Aqyila, a rising TikTok sensation and Juno Awards 2024 winner.

In response to what inspired “She Is...”, lead organizer of the event, Blessing Manafa, Digital Services & Partnerships Manager, Sony Music West Africa, said, “Knowledge is power and power can be measured by your network. Women in the music industry need to foster closer and more impactful relationships between and within one another. It’s our hope

that She Is... is the start of more to come.”

The success of “She Is...” was made possible through the generous support of sponsors including AMAKA, Shecluded, Glitch Africa, Saturday’s Eve, BellaNaija, and Nigerian Breweries.

Sony Music West Africa remains committed to fostering diversity, inclusion, and empowerment within the music industry, and looks forward to future initiatives that continue to uplift and celebrate women in music.



Photo via Black PR Wire

MOSBY, from Page 2

obtained. While the government argued that Mosby should not be entitled to any of the condo’s appreciated value — it has swelled hundreds of thousands of dollars since it was purchased — she said Mosby could recover 10% since that matched the proportion of the down payment. Griggsby said there “has been a significant harm to the public because of Mrs. Mosby’s role at the time as both an elected official and an officer of the court.”

Political strategist Sherman Singleton questioned the basis of Mosby’s prosecution. “Was there a victim? Did any agency suffer financial loss? Did Mosby use public funds?” he asked, rhetorically. Answering “no” to each, Singleton argued that Mosby should not have been charged, let alone prosecuted. “I keep posting about this because this shows how screwed up our justice system is and how prosecutors have too much power and discretion,” Singleton added.

Federal prosecutors argued that Mosby deserved prison because, unlike others convicted of white-collar crimes, she expressed no remorse or contrition and tried to delegitimize the case against her. They recommended a 20-month prison sentence for Mosby, who served two terms as the state’s attorney for Baltimore and lost a reelection

bid after her 2022 indictment. Mosby’s attorneys urged the judge to spare her from prison, arguing that she is the only public official prosecuted in Maryland for federal offenses “that entail no victim, no financial loss, and no use of public funds.”

“Jail is not justice for Marilyn Mosby,” her lawyers wrote.

Mosby’s supporters said she had already lost a great deal, including her marriage, her career, her campaign for reelection as the state’s attorney, and potentially her law license. Those who testified on her behalf included Mosby’s brother and sister; her former communications director for the state’s attorney’s office; a former colleague who led the prosecution of the police officers in the Gray case; and fellow attorneys, including nationally recognized civil rights lawyer Ben Crump.

“To sentence her to prison for being convicted of minor, non-violent offenses with no victims would be a grave injustice, and it would magnify the trauma of her two beautiful daughters,” Crump argued. “The crux of the matter is (this is) ... a minor white-collar crime in which many others have been convicted of and sentenced to ... a slap on the wrist.”

Noted Baltimore Attorney J. Wyndal Gordon added, “We need Marilyn

Mosby in our community. We need her experience, her knowledge, and her training. We need her love for her community. Her love for her family. Her desire for her to become what she ought to be.”

Mosby’s two teenage daughters, both dressed in white to match their mother, walked beside her through a sea of media cameras. Her ex-husband, Baltimore City Council Presi-

dent Nick Mosby, arrived moments later. Dozens of Mosby supporters waited outside and applauded as she arrived with her family and entered the courthouse without answering questions from reporters. “We need her love for her community. Her love for her family. Her desire for her to become what she ought to be,” Gordon demanded.

Mosby applied for a presidential pardon earlier

this month. In a letter to President Joe Biden, the Congressional Black Caucus expressed support for her cause. “As a nation that leads by example, our justice system must not be weaponized to prevent progress toward a more

perfect union,” wrote Rep. Steven Horsford, a Nevada Democrat who chairs the CBC. “We share your desire for racial equity, Mr. President and this Trump-era prosecution is in direct conflict with a justice system that serves us all.”

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My Only Exercise Is Jumping to Conclusions

Dr. James L. Snyder

Over the past few weeks (or was it months?) I've been recovering from some health issues. They were not that serious, just annoying. I spent one day in the hospital and the rest of the time in bed, which is not the kind of vacation I want.

During all that time, I've not had much time to exercise. I asked about it when I was at the Doctor's for my last examination. I said, "Doctor, what should I do about exercising? I haven't been able to do much of that during my sickness."

Looking at me rather grimly, he said, "If I were you I would exercise daily."

Smiling at the doctor, I said, "Thank You, I appreciate that."

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage drove me to the Doctor's appointment

and was now driving me back to the house. While driving, she looked at me and said, "Well, do you think you're going to start exercising now? What are you going to do first?"

I just looked at her and laughed.

"What are you laughing about?" She said.

"Did you hear what the doctor said? He said he would exercise daily for me."

Looking at me with her eyes rolling in her head, she said, "This is why I have to come with you when you go to the doctors. You never hear what the doctor says. That is not what he said."

"You heard it as well as I did," I said, "he said, 'If I were you, I would exercise daily.'"

Still rolling her eyes, she said, "That is not what I heard him say."

I was still chuckling, and then she said, "I think you have some loose marbles rolling around in your head."

Smiling at her, I said, "Thank you, my dear, for recognizing that I have some activity in my head."

I glanced in her direction and noticed she wasn't laughing at all, but her eyes were still rolling.

I must say that jumping to conclusions is a great way to exercise. And it solves a lot of problems.

I had one exercise project that I wanted to do. I wanted to run to the store and get an Apple Fritter and run back. Now the problem with that is, my energy is not up to the place where I can run that far. And, sneaking out of the house at this time would not work for me at all.

I have been jumping to

conclusions for as long as I can remember. That is because I don't let people say everything on their mind. If I think I know what they're saying, I jump immediately to what turns out to be the wrong conclusion.

When I was a young kid at home, my father would often say to me, "Son, do you want a spanking?"

At the time, I never knew if it was a rhetorical question or if he was giving me a choice. That is the only time I can remember that I didn't jump to some conclusion.

If I look at my life, I can blame a lot of my problems on my habit of jumping to conclusions. If only I would just let people say everything on their mind and wait until they're done to make some kind of a decision.

I remember many years

ago when I met the young lady who is now The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. We were riding along in a van with some of the other young people at the Bible school we were going to.

Just before we got back to the dormitory, she said to me quietly, "Wouldn't it be nice to be married?"

I did not know what she was talking about because I was too naïve then, so I jumped to the conclusion and said, "That would be wonderful."

I was the last in the Bible school to know I had become engaged. I jumped to a conclusion I had no understanding about.

Under the circumstances, that was probably the best conclusion I ever reached. It just took me a long time to understand what it meant.

I jump to conclusions because I think I know what that person is talking about. I wouldn't get into so much trouble if I weren't so smart.

A dumb person would usually say, "What do you mean?" And then wait for the explanation.

A smart person would think he knows what that person is talking about and jumps to conclusions.

I come from Pennsylvania, and the Pennsylvania Dutch have a saying that goes like this: "Throw Papa down the stairs..." There's a pause, and after the pause, they finish it by saying, "His hat."

If you don't listen to the whole sentence, you're liable to throw Papa down the stairs. But if you listen to the entire sentence, you

See SNYDER, Page 15

COVID, from Page 4

VID-19 vaccine might lead to a phenomenon called T cell exhaustion, where T cells lose their ability to target a pathogen.

The researchers discovered that breakthrough infections prompted T cells to produce more types of cytokines, signaling molecules that help fight infection. Before a breakthrough infection, T cells might produce one or two types of cytokines, Grifoni explains.

"After the breakthrough infection, the same cells produce multiple types of cytokines, making them more efficacious," says Grifoni. "Not only are our T cells not exhausted, but they are actually improving their capabilities."

The "immunity wall" does seem to have limits. Following an asymptomatic breakthrough infection, T cell abilities appeared to plateau in response to a subsequent symptomatic infection. B cells continued to produce neutralizing antibodies following subsequent breakthrough in-

fections, but the researchers didn't see the same big "boost" to neutralizing antibody levels.

So should people continue to get SARS-CoV-2 booster vaccines? The LJI scientists point out that SARS-CoV-2 continues to evolve, and COVID-19 can still cause serious illness in immunocompromised people. Their advice is to follow all current CDC guidelines on who should receive booster vaccines.

Discovery may guide vaccine efforts

This research is also an important step toward the development of new vaccines against future SARS-CoV-2 variants and many other viruses with pandemic potential.

Ramezani-Rad says the study helps answer important questions about how breakthrough infections alter antibody responses. Going forward, he is curious how future SARS-CoV-2 variants—or new vaccine designs—might further tweak the immune system.

"Studies of local B cell responses in the upper airway—where the infection occurs—will also be informative on how B cells responses are induced, particularly after breakthrough infection," says Ramezani-Rad.

Sette and Grifoni are focused on how to train T cells to recognize many types of coronaviruses at once. Their research is critical for developing a "pan-coronavirus" vaccine.

In a 2023 study, their laboratories worked with scientists at the University of Genoa to show that some T cells can recognize multiple coronaviruses at once. This new study shows them how breakthrough infections can shape T cell responses to fight novel SARS-CoV-2 variants.

"We're very interested to see if this phenomenon could be exploited in general to prepare against other potential pandemic threats," says Sette. "This is a step in a journey to help us protect against viral infections and potential pandemics."

Additional authors of the study, "SARS-CoV-2 breakthrough infections enhance T cell response magnitude, breadth, and epitope repertoire," include Tertuliano Alves Pereira Neto, Yeji Lee,

Vanessa Silva-Moraes, Benjamin Goodwin, Nathaniel Bloom, Leila Sidiqui, Liliana Avalos, April Frazier, Zeli Zhang, Ricardo da Silva Antunes, and Jennifer Dan.

This study was sup-

ported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH; T32AI125179), the NIH National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (75N93021C00016, 75N9301900065, and AI142742.)

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To the Graduates on Your Life's Journey: To be successful in whatever you do, you must first have a vision of yourself as being successful.

From day to day, you must keep that vision alive, even when you feel that you have acted in ways that's antithetical (adverse) to your vision.

And, on the way to developing your own style in life, it can be very useful to study those that you admire in your field of study.

Learning all that you can about a positive role model's career path that

can give you an insight into what you may need to do to accomplish your goals.

Decide what life skills and techniques that you can adapt from successful people in your field and use them to help you gain greater strengths and abilities.

Do not strive to become a carbon copy of anyone (God made you unique) because when you do, you will lose the best part of

yourself. You are an original, made by God in His image.

It's also good to remember that Jesus Christ is the only one that is perfect. However, it will profit you to acknowledge that you can learn and benefit by the example of others.

Realize that all of us have limited time and energy. There may be times that it will be tempting to look

for short cuts on your life's journey, or to give up when things get too hard.

But going halfway doesn't do you any good nor give you much satisfaction—in the long run, it will probably make you angry that you wasted your time, and it whittles away at your self confidence when you fail.

You must learn that things seldom go the way that they are planned. You will have setbacks and stalls. Not everything is within your control.

Remember this saying, "God, help me to accept the things that I cannot change, to change the things that I can and the wisdom to know the difference."

What can you do when things don't go the way you planned? You must assess the situation and ask God

to help you figure out what changes in strategy that you will need to make in order for things to go the way you planned.

Don't allow yourself to become demoralized. Read about millionaires, many of them have had several business failures before their success.

Be flexible as well as determined. Have a plan B and a C plan, just in case plan A doesn't work.

In all of us there is the aptitude for courage. You will be courageous when you dare to grow, when you dare to change, to accomplish, to fulfill your dreams.

You will be gutsy when you risk failing, when you try new things, when you squeeze your way into places to see what it is that you need to learn and do.

You will be brave when you are persistent and undeterred by your setbacks. Courage will allow you to be yourself and to accept yourself.

And finally, "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths (your life's journey.)"

Proverbs 3:6 (KJV)

(Editor's Note: This column originally ran in May 2017, and was edited for timeliness.)

SNYDER, from Page 14

will throw his hat down the stairs.

There are times when I don't listen to the entire sentence.

In my Bible reading, I discovered a verse dealing with this.

Proverbs 25:8-9, "Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame. Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself; and discover not a secret to

another."

I get into trouble when I respond "hastily" to what I hear. I need to slow down and listen to the whole sentence, not just what I want to hear.

Dr. James L. Snyder lives in Ocala, FL with the Gracious Mistress of

the Parsonage. Telephone 1-352-216-3025, e-mail jamesnyder51@gmail.com, website www.james-snyderministries.com.

NDG Book Review: 'The Black Girl Survives in This One' is not just for teens

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

Don't go into that room. Don't start downstairs, there's something down there you don't want to meet. Don't open that door. No, NO, don't look inside the cabinet. You'll scream and you'll be sorry. Don't go into the woods alone and don't ever go into the tool shed – although, in the new book, "The Black Girl Survives in This One," edited by Desiree S. Evans and Saracicia J. Fennell, there are times when you don't have to worry so much.

Dive into your favorite scary media and you can al-



most immediately tell who will live and who will gruesomely die in each story. If there's a Black girl in the cast, well, you know what's coming next. But, says au-

thor Tananarive Due in her foreword, Black women are tired of that old trope. Rarely are fictional Black girls given a chance to "use their courage, strength, and wits to survive."

All that changes in this book.

Who among us hasn't taken a shortcut home? In "Harvesters" by L.L. McKinney, Jo's best friend and her new beau want to party back at his place. So does the hot guy Jo just met, and a quick trip through a cornfield seems like the quickest way to get there – even though word is that the cornfield is haunted.

Theater actors know that there's a certain Shakespearean play that you don't ever mention aloud, and in "Ghost Light" by Erin E. Adams, a white girl bends the rules at the worst possible time. No big deal, right? Except that it is, and the deadly mess is left up to the producer-director to fix – if she lives.

Meeting your favorite celebrity is fun, but what if they're not like you expect them to be? In "Tmi" by Zakiya Dalila Harris, the celeb in question is oddly too willing to connect with a fan, and too more-than-happy to take selfies. That can be

a lifetime memory but then again, sometimes, when someone famous shares too much, it's not a good thing at all.

The windows are open, the night is quiet. All you hear is cicadas, crickets, and... a hair-raising scream. Don't worry, though, the night sounds are normal. The scream is yours and you're reading "The Black Girl Survives in This One."

Sometimes, all you really want in a story is short. Seriously, you have a busy summer and that's where this book comes in: fifteen authors present tales to scare you good, and they

mostly succeed in their mission. Here, you'll read about a family curse, an inheritance that you wouldn't ever want, an otherworldly indication of danger and death, and a reason why you wouldn't want to have a party in a cemetery. Any of these tales might make you laugh a little, nervously.

And you'll be scared. While "The Black Girl Survives in This One" is meant for readers ages 12-to-18, it's absolutely also for adults who love a little scream in their story. Don't leave this one behind. Don't miss this book. Don't stop reading.

BROWN, from Page 2

Health & Equity, University Hospitals, Cleveland Clinic, and MetroHealth.

"Uterine fibroids are extremely common, frequently painful, and disproportionately impact Black women – yet there is no comprehensive federal program to address fibroids. That has to change. The U-FIGHT Act encourages early detection, treatment, education and research. For too long women have suffered in silence due to fibroids, I am proud to introduce the U-FIGHT Act so that women can be heard," said Congresswoman Shontel Brown.

"For too long, we have witnessed institutional neglect and intentional marginalization make Black women the tragic victims of disparate health outcomes that deliver lasting harms. And uterine fibroids are anything but the exception. It's past time to invest meaningful resources in the research and resources needed to close these gaps by centering the health of those who have been underserved and overlooked their entire lives. Through increased access and funding for early detection methods, the Uterine Fibroid Intervention and Gynecological Health and Treatment Act represents a meaningful step in our fight to give every Black woman

the healthy, happy life she deserves. I'm proud to stand alongside Congresswoman Brown to support this legislative solution that will make a real, tangible difference in the lives of Black women and countless others across the nation," said Congresswoman Yvette D. Clarke.

"The White Dress Project's support for the U-FIGHT Act stems from a profound understanding of the struggles faced by women managing life with fibroids and reproductive health challenges. This bill isn't just about legislation; it's a beacon of hope for millions of women, particularly Black women who are disproportionately affected. By spotlighting the urgency of early detection and intervention, the U-FIGHT Act not only enhances the quality of care but also addresses systemic disparities in healthcare. Together, let's champion this vital legislation and empower women to reclaim control over their health and futures," said Tanika Gray Valbrun, Founder & CEO of The White Dress Project.

"The Fibroid Foundation applauds Rep. Brown for the introduction of the U-FIGHT bill. The prevalence of fibroids, as the most frequently diagnosed gynecologic

tumor, mandates that we sustain multiple avenues of support, screening, research and funding until we find a cure. Pain and stigma can no longer be the norm. Women and menstruators deserve more," said Sateria Venable, Founder & CEO of The Fibroid Foundation.

"Our support in co-sponsoring the Uterine Fibroid Intervention and Gynecological Health and Treatment Act (U-FIGHT) is because here at Black Health Matters™, we know how critical research is needed to understand why fibroids disproportionately affect Black women. We must find methods that improve our quality of care, including earlier detection of fibroids, more effective treatments, and further research on Asherman's syndrome. We deserve good health," said Corynne Corbett, Editorial Director Black Health Matters.

"Fibroids are unfortunately quite common, particularly in women aged 30 to 40, and may negatively impact quality of life for our patients," said Verda J. Hicks, MD, president of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. "ACOG is pleased to endorse the U-FIGHT Act with the hope that it will increase access to early screening and detection and allow patients to be offered

more tailored, less invasive treatment options. This legislation is especially important and beneficial for Black women who have a 2-3 times higher prevalence of uterine fibroids compared with White women, yet they are often delayed in receiving proper diagnoses and care due in large part to systemic racism. This increased investment in research is sorely needed to better understand the causes, most effective treatments, and the disparities related to fibroids. ACOG thanks Reps. Brown and Clarke for their leadership and for introducing a bill that aims to improve access to, and reduce racial health inequities in, gynecologic care."

"We extend our sincere appreciation to Representative Shontel Brown for her leadership in introducing the U-FIGHT Act, a pivotal undertaking in women's healthcare. With millions of Ohioans grappling with uterine fibroids, this legislation signifies a critical expansion of reproductive rights. The disproportionate impact of uterine fibroids on people of color underscores the urgent need for initiatives like the U-FIGHT Act, which aims to address systemic inequities in healthcare access and outcomes. By acknowledging and addressing racial disparities in uterine fibroid prevalence,

we can work towards a more just and equitable healthcare system that prioritizes the health and well-being of all individuals, regardless of race or ethnicity," said Dr. Marcela Azevedo, Co-Founder & President Ohio Physicians for Reproductive Rights.

"University Hospitals supports the U-FIGHT Act, which will improve detection and treatment of uterine fibroids, a common condition in women that disproportionately affects African-Americans. This legislation not only supports research to help address healthcare disparities, but promotes access to earlier detection of fibroids and less-invasive treatment options, both of which lead to better outcomes and improved quality of life for patients," said Stephanie Teal, MD, MPH, Obstetrician and Gynecologist-in-Chief, University Hospitals and Chair, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, UH Cleveland Medical Center.

"MetroHealth is committed to breaking down the barriers that prevent far too many women in our community from accessing screenings and treatments that can dramatically improve their quality of life. We look forward to working with Congresswoman Brown to advance legislation that would expand access to ear-

ly screenings and detection methods for uterine fibroids, a debilitating condition that impacts millions of women, especially women of color. Together, we can create a healthier community for every woman," said MetroHealth President & CEO Airica Steed, Ed.D, RN, MBA, FACHE.

"Providing education, research, and access to screening for uterine fibroids is important to improving the quality of care for the millions of women affected by them," said Beri Ridgeway, M.D., Chief of Staff at Cleveland Clinic. "While not all fibroids require treatment, detection and intervention can reduce symptoms and complications, particularly among women of color, who are impacted by them at a higher rate."

"At Birthing Beautiful Communities, we are proud to support The U-Fight Act, which would enhance the quality of life for all women diagnosed with uterine fibroids. It is an important step forward in women's health. Unfortunately, many women, particularly Black women, are disproportionately impacted by this condition, and we want to ensure that we have the ability to change that and its impact on our communities," said Jazmin Long, President & CEO, Birthing Beautiful Communities.