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## A year after SCOTUS overturned affirmative action: what has changed?

By Lori Lee  
NDG Contributing Writer

As the conservative Supreme Court has churned out decisions over recent years, the political environment has changed dramatically. In June of 2022, with the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, support for abortion showed significant increase, reports the BBC.

The court has also been chipping away at voting rights recently. Federal courts have been involved in redistricting since the sixties, but in 2018, the Supreme Court weakened federal court oversight, granting a presumption of good faith to state legislators in redistricting. The following year, federal courts were further blocked from challenging partisan gerrymandering, meaning voters now have less power to fight back against unfairly drawn districts, as reported in *The Conversation*.

And despite that racial gerrymandering is illegal under the Constitution and the Voting Rights Act, a 2021 ruling set guideposts that promote skepticism about voter suppression. In short, after the court allowed partisan gerrymandering, thus silencing voters, it further



The U.S. Supreme Court's decisions since it has been taken over by conservatives has many worried about key civil rights and women's health issues. (NDG Composite image by David Wilfong)

weakened the oversight that would protect against racial gerrymandering, they report.

In June of this year, the Supreme Court took another step to reduce federal oversight in a ruling that stripped federal agencies of their authority to regulate based on their specialized expertise. The decision hinders the government's ability to protect health, a fundamental purpose of government under the Constitution's preamble and the state police powers of the 10th Amendment. The decision will also hurt

the Department of Transportation's ability to promote efficient transportation systems and the Environmental Protection Agency's ability to protect the environment, leaving decisions to judges with little or no expertise in these fields.

A year ago, the court further weakened protections against discrimination, making it illegal to consider race as a factor in college admissions. In the decision, Roberts said college admissions is a zero-

See SCOTUS, Page 12



### Overcoming to Trump campaign

- See Page 3



### Activism and mental health in teens

- See Page 4



### Black women rally around Kamala Harris

- See Page 5



### The growing need for Black teachers

- See Page 6



### Dallas CASA celebrates Parade of Homes

- See Page 8



### 'Twisters' storms on to the screen

- See Page 9



### When 'full time' work is not enough

- See Page 11



### Sister Tarpley: Obedience with a Cost

- See Page 14

### Inside...

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



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### People In The News ...



Sheila Jackson Lee



Dona Gassaway Mitchell

NDG Quote of the Week: "Our nation is a rainbow - red, yellow, brown, black, and white - and we're all precious in God's sight."

- Jesse Jackson

## Sheila Jackson Lee

Democratic Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, one of the longest-serving members of the Texas delegation, has died at the age of 74. In June, Jackson Lee announced her diagnosis of pancreatic cancer, yet she showed little indication of letting it interfere with her plans to run for a 16th term this November.



The fiery congresswoman disclosed her diagnosis in a written statement shortly after winning renomination in a fiercely contested Democratic primary. Known for her unwavering commitment to social justice, she was a fervent advocate for reparations for African Americans and a vocal critic of the twice impeached and 34 times convicted felon and

former President Donald Trump. Unlike some of her colleagues, she did not join the calls for President Joe Biden to step aside from the 2024 race.

As recently as Wednesday, July 19, Jackson Lee continued to champion President Biden's re-election campaign. "Something that does not get talked about enough: we were able to bring down homicides in Houston with federal investment," she wrote on X. "After President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan, we brought \$50 million to the city to take on crime—and it worked!

Local/federal partnership saved lives." She added, "This House Democrat believes Joe Biden has served us well and has the best plans for the future. I am laser-focused on beating Donald Trump and delivering for America because that's what matters." Jackson Lee also reminded her followers that America saw one of the most significant homicide spikes ever in Trump's last year in office. "He threw his hands in the air and did not know what to do," she asserted. "Since he left, I am proud that our American Rescue Plan has

done the very important work to bring these numbers down! Federal/local partnerships worked."

Jackson Lee's many legislative achievements are significant and wide-ranging. She played a crucial role in the passage of the Violence Against Women Act. She was a senior House Committee member on the Judiciary, Homeland Security, and Budget Committees. She was the first female ranking member of the Judiciary Subcommittee for Crime and Federal Government Surveillance, serving as Chair during the 117th Congress.

"The National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) extends to the family of Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee our profound condolences. May the legacy and memory of Sheila Jackson Lee be enshrined in the pantheon of global freedom fighters," said Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr., President and CEO of the National Newspaper Publishers Association. Jackson Lee was a powerful advocate for a free and energetic press — and for the Black Press of America in particular.

**See LEE, Page 7**

## Lupita Nyong'o

HONG KONG SAR - (Media OutReach News-wire) Academy Award-winning actress and De Beers Global Ambassador, Lupita Nyong'o, visited South Africa and Namibia last week as part of an immersive tour to experience the impact that natural diamonds create for the people and places they come from.



Gage Skidmore / Wikipedia

In South Africa, Ms Nyong'o visited De Beers Group's world-class Venetia diamond mine, gaining an appreciation for how every stage of the production value chain supports sustainable development for host communities. She was also

threatened and endangered species, as part of De Beers Group's wide-ranging conservation efforts.

In Namibia, Ms Nyong'o visited the NDTC (Namibian Diamond Trading Company) and Namdeb, both 50:50 joint ventures between the Namibian Government and De Beers. NDTC sorts and values rough diamonds discovered in the country and also sells rough diamonds to Namibia-based diamond polishing companies. Namdeb Holdings is Namibia's world-class diamond producer, discovering some of the highest value diamonds in the world.

During her visits to both countries, Ms Nyong'o was shown how De Beers is empowering communities local to its operations through projects that support equal opportunities for women and girls, promote education and early childhood development, advance local entrepreneurs and provide essential infrastructure support such as water and road upgrades.

A vocal proponent for women and girls, Ms Nyong'o also paid a visit to the #BeFree Campus in Namibia, a youth facility that provides reproductive health services and skills training, founded by the former First Lady of Namibia, Mrs Monica Geingos. She

also attended a gala dinner attended by the Minister in the Office of the Presidency and high-ranking business leaders. Concluding her time in Namibia, Ms Nyong'o made a courtesy visit to the Namibian President, Dr Nangolo Mbumba, who praised her efforts to

**See NYONG'O, Page 10**

## Dona Gassaway Mitchell

Dona Gassaway Mitchell is a Dallas-based author with a new book hitting the shelves right now.

'Sculpture of a Miracle' begins with a fever and a sore throat...

One night, three-year-old Shamar wakes up with a 101 temperature and a sore throat. Concerned it could be strep, Shamar's mother, Faye, ensures she sees a doctor as soon as possible. After a routine check-up and a prescription, the only thing left for the family to do is wait for their little girl to get better.



Time goes by and Shamar's condition is getting worse. Knowing there was something deeper than what the doctors could detect, Faye goes on a hunt to find a doctor who can tell her what is wrong with her daughter. She finally finds one and is given a diagnosis that she and her family could never have imagined. Shamar has Kawasaki, a rare disease of unknown cause that causes

inflammation in the walls of blood vessels in the heart. If Shamar is not neutralized within ten days, she could endure serious heart problems in the future.

Time is of the essence for the doctors to help, though knowledge of treatments for the disease is as rare as the disease itself. Hope seems to be dwindling as a miracle cure seems to be impossible to find with the passing of each day, yet the Kennel family is not ready to give up. Through love and the power of prayer, they give Shamar to God, knowing that nothing is impossible for Him. All they can do now is pray for a miracle to happen.

**See MITCHELL, Page 14**

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# How we must overcome the Trump presidential campaign



**Dr. John E. Warren**  
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Viewpoint

The timing could not be greater for the Republican Party. Their candidate survives a head shot; the Florida judge throws out the Classified Documents case on a procedural move and, with the help of Clarence Thomas from the Supreme Court, it looks like no trial before the November election even though sentencing on the 34 felony convictions in New York might come in September.

As if these things were not enough, Democrats, with the aid of the media, focused on replacing Joe Biden rather than rallying to support him and keeping the spotlight on the Project 2025 plan for a Trump Presidency which looks more likely everyday.

## Resurgence of political violence in America

By Bobby R. Henry Sr.  
NNPA Chairman  
and Benjamin F. Chavis Jr.  
NNPA President and CEO

As we approach the 200th Anniversary of the Black Press of America in 2027, the National Newspapers Publishers Association (NNPA) is obliged to speak and plead for our own cause considering the resurgence of political violence in America. The attempted assassination of former President Trump in Pennsylvania was the latest violent contradiction that, unfortunately, remains deeply embedded in American life, culture, and politics.

America is rapidly approaching another violent and counterproductive abyss of division, hatred, and anti-democratic repression.

For nearly 200 years the

News Flash! The Trump Presidential Train can be stopped. How? Every person in America who is of voting age and able to register and vote, can help stop the Trump Train.

The votes that we are able to cast must be laser focused on getting democrats and independents running for office, and also republicans elected to replace those who are a part of the Trump movement.

We need a democratically elected majority in the U.S. House of Representatives. Such a majority will ensure that the Speaker is democratic and therefore guarantee that the Electoral College counting of the votes for the Presidency allows the transition of power intended by the Constitution.

We must likewise look closely at one third of the U.S. Senate which is up for election. The democrati-

cally controlled Senate is within one or two votes of becoming Republican controlled. It was a Republican controlled Senate that twice failed to convict former President Trump, even though he was Impeached on two separate occasions.

It is both the House of Representatives and the Senate that can reverse the arbitrary and counter Constitutional Decisions of the U. S. Supreme Court on issues like Presidential Immunity while committing crimes in Office, the overturning of *Roe vs. Wade*, and the Chevron Decision impacting regulatory agencies carrying out their legal responsibilities.

There are more of us in America who believe in our democracy and the rule of law than there are those who would replace what we have with a Project 2025 Authoritarian form of government. The real issue is not President Joe Biden

or Vice President Kamala Harris. The real issue is the damage that a Trump Presidency would do.

Race is at the core of both the Republican Project 2025 and the Democrats who sought to replace Biden. Any discussion of finding someone to replace Biden other than Vice President Harris is racist and a violation of the process laid out in the 25th Amendment as mentioned above.

The time to register and prepare to vote, wherever you live, is now. The time to look at who is running for office in your City, State, or Congressional District of the Senate, is now. Your vote counts as much as those that will be cast at each convention and in November. If you don't participate, then don't complain. A "non" vote is the same as a vote for the Trump campaign.

Where do you stand?

that the current escalation of hate and outward racism comes at a time when political differences are hotly contested.

Unfortunately, the association of violence and politics is nothing new in America. However, what has changed is how political violence is reported by the so-called mainstream media and amplified across social media channels.

The Black Press has not only emerged as the trusted voice of Black America, but as an authentic voice for all Americans who demand equality over inequality, justice over injustice, freedom over bondage, and nonviolence over violence.

American journalism needs to be rescued from the fake, false, frailties of extremist propaganda and subjective refusal to courageously publish and distrib-

ute facts and truth. Millions of people throughout the nation continue to be polarized because of disinformation and misinformation.

Again, we reaffirm the value, purpose, and impact of the Black Press. We intend this year to mobilize our NNPA member publishers and constituencies across the nation to ensure the largest intergenerational Black voter turnout in America's history.

Yes, democracy is on the ballot. Freedom is on the ballot. Justice is on the ballot. Equality is on the ballot. By working together with civility and unity, we shall overcome.

*Bobby R. Henry Sr. is the chairman of the NNPA's Board of Directors and the publisher of the Westside Gazette. Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr. is the NNPA's president and CEO.*

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# Can getting involved in racial justice activism improve mental and physical health of Black and Hispanic teens?

(Newswise) — Three hundred Black and Hispanic teens in Chicago will be recruited to participate in the first clinical trial to measure the potential health benefits of youth-driven racial justice activism. The five-year study, funded by a \$3.8 million grant from the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities, will assess whether activism can lower depression symptoms in minoritized teens, as well as alter physiological factors known to be increased with exposure to racism, such as blood pressure and markers of stress and inflammation in the blood.



Josh Hill / Unsplash

Led by Nia Heard-Garris,

MD, MBA, MSc, from Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago and Elan Hope, PhD, from Policy Research Associates, the study will randomly

assign half of the participants to the intervention group and the other half to the control group. Teens in the intervention group will receive summer-long training

on the skills needed to conduct impactful advocacy campaigns, while the control group will learn what Dr. Heard-Garris calls "adulting 101" or life skills

ranging from typical adult tasks, like banking to succeeding in college. Data on psychological and physiological measures will be collected from both groups at baseline and then at six-month intervals for two years after the intervention. "This clinical trial is innovative in that it addresses activism as health promotion," said Dr. Heard-Garris, researcher and pediatrician at Lurie Children's and Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. "It is well-documented that structural racism and discrimination lead to chronic stress and health deterioration, including metabolic syndrome, obesity

and diabetes. Activism may be an untapped tool that could be utilized to improve the long-term wellbeing of Black and Hispanic youth."

The current clinical trial builds on the promising outcomes from the pilot study conducted by Dr. Heard-Garris with funding from Stanley Manne Children's Research Institute at Lurie Children's. Dr. Heard-Garris leads the ARISE (Adversity, Racism, Inequities, Structures and Empowerment) Health Laboratory at Manne Research Institute.

"The activism intervention we piloted resulted

**See ACTIVISM, Page 11**

## Brain inflammation triggers muscle weakness after infections

Newswise — Infections and neurodegenerative diseases cause inflammation in the brain. But for unknown reasons, patients with brain inflammation often develop muscle problems that seem to be independent of the central nervous system. Now, researchers at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis have revealed how brain inflammation releases a specific protein that travels from the brain to the muscles and causes a loss of muscle function.

an associate professor of developmental biology. "Our study suggests that when we get sick, messenger proteins from the brain travel through the bloodstream and reduce energy levels in skeletal muscle. This is more than a lack of motivation to move because we don't feel well. These processes reduce energy levels in skeletal muscle, decreasing the capacity to move and function normally."

— and the corresponding protein in fruit flies — reduced energy production in muscles' mitochondria, the energy factories of cells.

To investigate the effects of brain inflammation on muscle function, the researchers modeled three different types of diseases — an E. coli bacterial infection, a SARS-CoV-2 viral infection and Alzheimer's. When the brain is exposed to inflammatory proteins characteristic of these diseases, damaging chemicals called reactive oxygen species build up. The reactive oxygen species cause brain cells to produce an immune-related molecule called interleukin-6 (IL-6), which travels throughout the body via the bloodstream. The researchers found that IL-6 in mice

"Flies and mice that had COVID-associated proteins in the brain showed reduced motor function — the flies didn't climb as well as they should have, and the mice didn't run as well or as much as control mice," Johnson said. "We saw similar effects on muscle function when the brain was exposed to bacterial-associated proteins and the Alzheimer's protein amyloid beta. We also see evidence that this effect can become chronic. Even if an infection is cleared quickly, the reduced muscle performance remains many days longer in our experiments."

Johnson, along with collaborators at the University of Florida and first author Shuo Yang, PhD — who did this work as a postdoctoral researcher in Johnson's lab — make the case that the same processes are likely relevant in people. The bacterial brain infection

**See WEAKNESS, Page 5**

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# Black women rally behind Kamala Harris to save democracy after Biden steps aside

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National  
Correspondent

Democrats and the rest of the nation are once again turning to Black women to lead the charge in saving democracy, and they have again stepped to the plate and swung for the fences. Following President Joe Biden's announcement that he would not run for the Democratic nomination, the network Win with Black Women organized a Zoom call to show how prepared and determined black women were to take on this enormous challenge. The call, held on Sunday, was a powerful display of unity and determination, with Black women leaders from across the nation voicing their unwavering support for Vice President Kamala Harris.

The Zoom call reportedly drew an astounding 40,000 attendees and featured an impressive lineup of speakers, including Reps. Joyce Beatty, Maxine Waters, and Jasmine Crockett. The leaders



*The leaders passionately emphasized Black women's critical role in the upcoming election and shared personal stories about Vice President Kamala Harris that underscored her qualifications and leadership qualities. (Photo via NNPA)*

passionately emphasized Black women's critical role in the upcoming election and shared personal stories about Harris that underscored her qualifications and leadership qualities. Other notable attendees included DC Mayor Muriel Bowser, Maryland Senate hopeful Angela Alsobrooks, civil rights leader Bernice King, and Black Voters Matter co-founder LaTosha Brown.

The call highlighted the urgency of fundraising and voter registration as critical strategies for supporting Harris's campaign. The participants raised over \$1 million during the call. "We have a plan. This is not arbitrary. We are ready," asserted Holli Holiday, one of the call's moderators.

Enthusiastic attendees expressed their readiness to work tirelessly to elect

Harris. "This is work. Roll up your sleeves; we got work to do," one attendee insisted. Another attendee declared, "Fired up and ready for this moment led by an intergenerational legion of Black women. Let's get to work. Let's do what Black women do!"

After exiting the race, President Biden's made clear that his vice president

should be the party's nominee. "My very first decision as the party nominee in 2020 was to pick Kamala Harris as my vice president," Biden said. "And it's been the best decision I've made. Today, I want to offer my full support and endorsement for Kamala to be our party's nominee this year. Democrats, it's time to come together and beat Trump. Let's do this."

In the hours following Biden's announcement, Harris' campaign saw a surge of support, with about \$50 million in grassroots donations pouring in. Democratic officials nationwide quickly followed Biden's lead, voicing their endorsements for Harris. Governor Roy Cooper of North Carolina praised Harris, saying, "Kamala Harris should be the next President. I've known her since our days as AGs, and she has what it takes to defeat Donald Trump and lead our country thoughtfully and with integrity."

Governor Kathy Hochul of New York added her voice to the chorus of sup-

port: "I'm proud to stand beside Kamala Harris. She is the right candidate to unite our country; I am confident she will deliver for New Yorkers. Let's get to work."

Governors Janet Mills of Maine, Gavin Newsom of California, and Jared Polis of Colorado echoed similar sentiments, highlighting Harris's capacity and readiness to lead.

Senator Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin declared, "I'm proud to endorse VP Kamala Harris for President. Today is a new beginning for our party and our country, and I'm excited to keep working together to lower costs for Wisconsin families, grow our Made in America economy, and restore our fundamental rights and freedoms."

Harris has repeatedly stated the importance of the 2024 election. "I will do everything in my power to unite the Democratic Party—and unite our nation—to defeat Donald Trump and his extreme Project 2025 agenda," she said.

## WEAKNESS, from Page 4

tion meningitis is known to increase IL-6 levels and can be associated with muscle issues in some patients, for instance. Among COVID-19 patients, inflammatory SARS-CoV-2 proteins have been found in the brain during autopsy, and many long COVID patients report extreme fatigue and muscle weakness even long after the initial infection has cleared. Patients with Alzheimer's disease also show increased levels of IL-6 in the blood as well as muscle weakness.

The study pinpoints potential targets for preventing or treating muscle weakness related to brain inflamma-

tion. The researchers found that IL-6 activates what is called the JAK-STAT pathway in muscle, and this is what causes the reduced energy production of mitochondria. Several therapeutics already approved by the Food and Drug Administration for other diseases can block this pathway. JAK inhibitors as well as several monoclonal antibodies against IL-6 are approved to treat various types of arthritis and manage other inflammatory conditions.

"We're not sure why the brain produces a protein signal that is so damaging to muscle function across so many different disease

categories," Johnson said. "If we want to speculate about possible reasons this process has stayed with us over the course of human evolution, despite the damage it does, it could be a way for the brain to reallocate resources to itself as it fights off disease. We need more research to better understand this process and its consequences throughout the body.

"In the meantime, we hope our study encourages more clinical research into this pathway and whether existing treatments that block various parts of it can help the many patients who experience this type of debilitating muscle fatigue," he said.

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# We need Black teachers in more ways than you think

By Aziah Siid  
Word In Black  
Sacramento Observer



When it shows up in the classroom in students' oral answers and written exams, slang can leave teachers scratching their heads. (Photo: iStockphoto / NNPA)

(WIB) – For grade-school teachers, keeping up with student slang is a race as old as the teaching profession itself, and one they can never win. Changing as quickly as the weather, the hot slang word or phrase of the moment — the one that's so lit everyone in the caf is using it — is usually hella dead by the time most adults they know catch up.

When it shows up in the classroom in students' oral answers and written exams, slang can leave teachers scratching their heads. That's led some educators to take extreme measures: one teacher went viral for an outright ban on slang, while another pranks his own students with fake slang.

But some Black K-12 educators have taken a different view. They have embraced slang as a valuable teaching tool for Black students, one that celebrates their identities, culture, lived experiences, and linguistic ingenuity.

Chris Emdin, an associate professor at Teachers College, proposes a

new approach to teaching he calls Ratchetdemic. It centers the language and culture of Black students' lived experiences in a way that may not align with traditional academia.

"We don't need their permission to create language, especially as people who created hip hop. This can be a valuable teaching tool for our kids about linguistic ingenuity," he says.

### The Need for Black Teachers is Evident

Data underscores Emdin's perspective. According to the language learning website Preply, about 3 in 10 parents said slang should be allowed in school, and 40% of teachers agreed that slang could help students express themselves. Thirty-six percent

of teachers said accepting slang shows respect for students' cultural identity.

At the same time, more than half of teachers surveyed worried that slang could lead to misunderstandings or miscommunications between teachers and students, and 50% believe it could disrupt the learning process. Earlier this year, a teacher went viral for posting a list of slang words she banned from her classroom.

But Emdin believes that's the wrong approach. Students learn best, he says, when they feel comfortable bringing their whole selves to the classrooms. Acceptance of slang language on things like term peppers and in oral reports illustrates that.

"To be ratchetdemic is to have no part in starving the authentic self, while still maintaining high academic standards and high academic rigor," Emdin, who wrote a book on the subject, said in a Harvard EdCast episode.

"I chose the word 'ratchetdemic' because it's a merging of being ratchet and academic," he said. "I was intentional about utilizing a colloquial slang word and merging that with being academic. I understand that for some folks to ratchet is to be loud or to be abrasive, but there are variations in ratchet."

At the same time, many slang words are rooted in African American Vernacular English, which some

studies recognize as a legitimate English dialect with its own rules and functions.

One way to help schools achieve that level of comfort for Black students is to diversify the workforce — a longstanding problem in U.S. public schools. Study after study shows achievement among students of color rise if they are taught by a teacher who looks like them making it potentially easier to relate to or understand slang. Yet, the percentage of Black teachers working in public schools is around 7% nationwide.

Until that elusive goal is reached — and until slang is universally accepted in school — teachers are finding different ways to catch up.

Educators have taken to social media platforms, sharing ways they use to keep up with their students. Some recommend simply asking for clarification when a student says something new or unusual. Other teachers suggest keeping a weekly diary of every new word that shows up in the classroom or is overheard on campus.

If research hasn't shown enough, staying connected and in touch with your students goes beyond simply standing in front of the classroom. Learning their cultural dishes, staying up to date on their catchphrases, and countless other ways are open for teachers to show up for their students.

## Trailblazing women explain how early education fueled their success

*This week, three successful women share their stories and reflect on the role early education played in their lives. Their reflections remind us of the importance of the first years of learning.*

**Dr. Richeleen Dashield**, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), New York University Silver School of Social Work Head Start Hometown: East Orange, New Jersey  
As an advocate for

equality in higher education, Dr. Dashield knows the difference access can make. "I credit my lifelong journey with Head Start. Without it, I don't think I'd be on the same trajectory." Dr. Dashield was a voracious young learner, and when she arrived at elementary school, teachers recommended that she skip right past kindergarten and into first grade. However, her mother decided to let her remain with her age cohort. She says the early

access to education she received from Head Start is part of why she was so well prepared for success in school. As an educational leader, Dr. Dashield sees her work as part of larger efforts to advocate for educational systems that center human dignity and worth and deliver equitable access to learning.

**Drinal Foster**, Senior Vice President of Wealth and Investment Manage-

See SUCCESS, Page 13

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# The strange history of white journalists 'becoming' Black

By Alisha Gaines  
Florida State University  
The Conversation  
Word In Black  
Sacramento Observer

(WIB) – A peculiar desire seems to still haunt some white people: “I wish I knew what it was like to be Black.”

This wish is different from wanting to cosplay the coolness of Blackness — mimicking style, aping music and parroting vernacular.

This is a presumptive, racially imaginative desire, one that covets not just the rhythm of Black life, but also its blues.

While he doesn't want to admit it, Canadian-American journalist Sam Forster is one of those white people.

Three years after hearing George Floyd cry “Mama” so desperately that it brought a country out of quarantine, Forster donned a synthetic Afro wig and brown contacts, tinted his eyebrows and smeared his face with CVS-bought Maybelline liquid foundation in the shade of “Mocha.” Though Forster did not achieve a “movie-grade” transformation, he became, in his words, “Believable Black.”

He went on to attempt a racial experiment no one asked for, one that he wrote about in his recently published memoir, “Seven Shoulders: Taxonomizing Racism in Modern America.”

For two weeks in September 2023, Forster pretended to hitchhike on the shoulder of a highway in



Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Ray Sprigle documented dilapidated sharecropper's cabins, segregated schools and women widowed by lynching. His disguise consisted of a deep sultan and work clothes. (Photo via NNPA)

seven different U.S. cities: Nashville, Tennessee; Atlanta; Birmingham, Alabama; Los Angeles; Las Vegas; Chicago and Detroit. On the first day in town, he would stand on the side of the road as his white self, seeing who, if anyone, would stop and offer him a ride. On the second day, he stuck out his thumb on the same shoulder, but this time in what I'd describe as “mochaface.”

Since September is hot, he set a two-hour limit for his experiments. During his seven white days, he was offered, but did not take, seven rides. On seven subsequent Black days, he was offered, but did not take, one ride. He speculated that day was a fluke.

Forster is not the first white person to center themselves in the discussion of American racism by pretending to be Black.

His wish mirrors that of the white people featured in my 2017 book, “Black for a Day: White Fantasies of Race and Empathy.” The book tells the history of what I call “empathetic racial impersonation,” in which white people indulge

in their fantasies of being Black under the guise of empathizing with the Black experience.

To me, these endeavors are futile. They end up reinforcing stereotypes and failing to address systemic racism, while conferring a false sense of racial authority.

The genealogy begins in the late 1940s with Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Ray Sprigle.

Sprigle, a white reporter at the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, decided he wanted to experience postwar racism by “becoming” a Black man. After unsuccessfully trying to darken his skin beyond a tan, Sprigle shaved his head, put on giant glasses and traded his signature, 10-gallon hat for an unassuming cap. For four weeks beginning in May 1948, Sprigle navigated the Jim Crow South as a light-skinned Black man named James Rayel Crawford.

Sprigle documented dilapidated sharecropper's cabins, segregated schools and women widowed by lynching. What he witnessed — but did not experience — informed his 21-part

series of front page articles for the Post-Gazette. He followed up the series by publishing a widely panned 1949 memoir, “In the Land of Jim Crow.”

Sprigle never won that second Pulitzer.

## Cosplaying as Black

Sprigle's more famous successor, John Howard Griffin, published his memoir, “Black Like Me,” in 1961.

Like Sprigle, Griffin explored the South as a temporary Black man, darkening his skin with pills intended to treat vitiligo, a skin disease that causes splotchy losses of pigmentation. He also used stains to even his skin tone and spent time under a tanning lamp.

During his weeks as “Joseph Franklin,” Griffin encountered racism on a number of occasions: White thugs chased him, bus drivers refused to let him disembark to pee, store managers denied him work, closeted, gay white men aggressively hit on him, and otherwise nice-seeming white people grilled him with what Griffin called the “hate stare.” Once Griffin resumed being white and news broke about his racial experiment, his white neighbors from his hometown in Mansfield, Texas, hanged him in effigy.

For his work, Griffin was lauded as an icon in empathy. Since, unlike Sprigle, he experienced racist incidents himself, Griffin showed skeptical white readers what they refused to believe: Racism was real. The book became a bestseller and a movie, and

is still included in school curricula — at the expense, I might add, of African-American literature.

Griffin's importance to this genealogy extends beyond middle-schoolers reading “Black Like Me,” to his successor and mentee, Grace Halsell.

Halsell, a freelance journalist and former staff writer for Lyndon B. Johnson's administration, decided to “become” a Black woman — first in Harlem in New York City, and then in Mississippi.

Without consulting any Black woman before baking herself caramel in tropical suns and using Griffin's doctors to administer vitiligo-corrective medication, Halsell initially planned to “be” Black for a year. But after alleging someone attempted to sexually assault her while she was working as a Black domestic worker, Halsell ended her stint as a Black woman early.

Although her experiment only lasted six months, she still claimed to be someone who could authentically represent her “darker sisters” in her 1969 memoir, “Soul Sister.”

## Turn-of-the-Century 'Race Switching'

Forster writes that his 2024 memoir is the “fourth act” — after Sprigle, Griffin, and Halsell — of what he calls “journalistic blackface.”

However, he is not, as he claims, “the first person to earnestly cross the color barrier in over half a century.”

In a 174-page book self-described as “gonzo” with only 17 citations, Forster

failed to finish his homework.

In 1994, Joshua Solomon, a white college student, medically dyed his skin to “become” a Black man after reading “Black Like Me.” His originally planned, monthlong experiment in Georgia only lasted a few days. But he nonetheless detailed his experiences in an article for The Washington Post and netted an appearance on “The Oprah Winfrey Show.”

Then, in 2006, FX released, “Black. White.,” a six-part reality television series advertised as the “ultimate racial experiment.”

Two families — one white, the other Black — “switched” their races to perform versions of each otherness while living together in Los Angeles. While the makeup team won a Primetime Emmy Award, the families said goodbye seething with resentment instead of understanding.

## A Masterclass of White Arrogance

Believing it would distract from the findings of his experiment, Forster refuses to show readers his mochaface.

Even after confronting evidence forcing him to question his project's appropriateness, like the multiple articles condemning “wearing makeup to imitate the appearance of a Black person,” he insists his insights into American racism justify his methods and are different from the harmful legacies of blackface. As he stands on the

See JOURNALISTS, Page 8

## LEE, from Page 2

Among her notable legislative efforts were the Sentencing Reform Act, the George Floyd Law Enforcement Trust and Integrity Act, the RAISE Act, the Fair Chance for Youth Act, the Kimberly Vaughan Firearm Safe Storage Act, Kalief's Law,

and the American RISING Act. She also introduced the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant Reauthorization and Bullying Prevention and Intervention Act and the Federal Prison Bureau Nonviolent Offender Relief Act.

A staunch supporter

of women and children, Jackson Lee championed the Paycheck Fairness Act and the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act. She authored the Triple-Negative Breast Cancer Research and Education Act.

Jackson Lee was widely recognized for her effectiveness and influence. Congressional Quarterly

named her one of the 50 most effective Members of Congress, and U.S. News and World Report listed her among the ten most influential legislators in the U.S. House of Representatives. She was a founder, member, and chair of the Congressional Pakistan Caucus and the Congressional Children's Caucus.

She was chair of the Congressional Black Caucus Energy Braintrust and the Justice Reform Task Force co-chair.

A Yale University alumna, Jackson Lee earned her B.A. in Political Science with honors and later received a J.D. from the University of Virginia Law School. She is survived by

her husband, Dr. Elwyn Lee, an administrator at the University of Houston; her two children, Jason Lee, a Harvard University graduate, and Erica Lee, a Duke University graduate and member of the Harris County School Board; and her two grandchildren, twins Ellison Bennett Carter and Roy Lee Carter III.

# Parade of Homes finale marks another year of building support for DFW kids

Dallas CASA ended the 29th annual Parade of Playhouses with a grand finale, The Closing Party at Breadwinners, NorthPark Center. It was a fun way to celebrate and thank the incredible builders and architects who make this event possible. Over 100 guests joined us to enjoy drinks, snacks and a lively wine pull.

It was a pleasure to see so many familiar faces and meet new friends who share our passion for supporting children in protective care. Dallas CASA CEO Kathleen M. LaValle, expressed our deepest gratitude for the dedication of our builders, “At the end of the day, Dallas CASA’s Parade of Playhouses simply would

not happen without everyone in this room.”

The 2024 Parade of Playhouses at NorthPark Center showcased 13 stunning playhouses, drawing attention to the vital needs of children in the state’s protective care. Parade of Playhouses was presented by Crest Cadillac, with KDC as grand marshal.



Party-goers celebrating the grand finale of Dallas CASA’s Parade of Homes included: (top left, left to right) April Iseral, Sean Hurley, Amy Butscher, Dave Kroencke (at left) Mariana Cordero, Delores Cordero, Mariajose Cordero (above) Linda Swartz, Nicki Stafford (and) Tom O’Connell. (Photos by Ray Carlin Photography)

## JOURNALISTS, from Page 7

side of the road, sun and sweat compromising whatever care he took to paint his face, Forster concludes that racism can be divided into two broad taxonomies: institutional and interpersonal.

The former, he believes, “is effectively dead,” and

the latter is most often experienced as “shoulder,” like the subtle refusal to pick up a mocha-faced hitchhiker.

Forster’s Amazon book description touts “Seven Shoulders” as “the most important book on American race relations that has

ever been written.”

Indeed, it is a masterclass — but one on the arrogance of white assumptions about Blackness.

To believe that the richness of Black identity can be understood through a temporary costume trivializes the lifelong trauma of racism. It turns the complexity of Black life into a

stunt.

Whether it’s Forster’s premise that Black people are ill-equipped to testify about their own experiences, his sketchy citations, the hubris of his caricature,

or the venom with which he speaks about the Black Lives Matter movement, Forster offers an important reminder that liberation can’t be bought at the drugstore.

*Alisha Gaines, is associate professor of English, Florida State University. This article is republished from The Conversation under a Creative Commons license.*





Sasha Lane and Glen Powell in *Twister*. (Photo via NNPA)

## Film Review: 'Twisters' storms onto the big screen

By Dwight Brown  
NNPA Film Critic

(\*\*\*/2) It's like you're chasing tornados from the front seat of a roller coaster.

Watching this big tent disaster movie in a cinema is fun. In an IMAX theater it's even more amazing. But the ultimate immersion experience is viewing, hearing and feeling the whirling winds from a seat in a 4D theater. It's a form of presentation that combines synchronized physical effects with what's on screen. You're transported by motion, vibration, scents, rain, mists, fog, smoke, wind, temperatures and strobe lights. Those effects are being served with the popcorn at the world's largest 4D auditorium, the Regal Times Square, New York City. There are 790 more 4D playhouses across the globe.

Twenty-eight years ago, the original 1996 action/adventure film *Twister* garnered \$490M+ at the box office with actors Helen Hunt and Bill Paxton chasing destructive vortexes of violent rotating winds shaped like funnels. Now a new generation gets the fever. This version, unlike its predecessor, doesn't have an expert action-movie director like Jan de Bont (*Speed*) at its helm. Wisely the producers hired indie

filmmaker Lee Issac Chung (Oscar nominee 2021 Best Achievement in Directing and Best Original Screenplay for *Minari*) to give this autonomous sequel a more human approach. It's a brilliant move.

Pulling from a very gregarious and friend-orientated script by Mark L. Smith (*The Revenant*), with a story originated by *Top Gun: Maverick* director Joseph Kosinski, Chung sets up the characters first, and then the audience experiences their journey, relationships, families and love lives. By the time the tornados show up, you're so invested in the participants that everything works in concert. Inquisitive, adventurous people in jeopardy. Violent natural phenomena. Mass destruction. Hopes for the future. This isn't your typical, generic, paint-by-numbers big-budget Hollywood film. Chung shows style and heart.

As a meteorology student Kate Carter (Daisy Edgar Jones, *Where the Crawdads Sing*) had great ambitions. Tame tornados and save lives. Her initial ambitious work, on the plains of Oklahoma, with a fellow colleague Javi (Anthony Ramos, *Transformers: Rise of the Beasts*) ended in a catastrophe when a tornado proved to be more powerful and deadly than they

could have fathomed. Five years later, traumatized by that tragedy, Kate is in New York working in an office with weather forecasters. Still in the game but far removed from the playing field. Until her old pal Ravi shows up, drafting her into a project that could be a life-saving tracking system.

Kate heads back to the South-Central region. These days the field of cloud chasers has expanded with all sorts of curious folks. Including the self-centered social-media darling Tyler Owens (Glen Powell, *Top Gun: Maverick*)—aka the Tornado Wrangler. With his face constantly on camera as he streams his exploits to millions of YouTube fans, he and his wild, publicity-hungry crew are the antithesis of Kate, Javi and their mission. The two disparate teams compete, give each other misinformation and throw lots of shade. Is there room enough on the tornado trail for both groups?

The most wonderful aspect of the script and the director's approach is that you can't guess where the characters are going. Not their direction in life, relationships, careers or incentives. Often what you think will happen gets blindsided with a different reality. Distinguishing the

See **FILM**, Page 11

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# NDG Book Review: '54 Miles' is one for the historical novel fans

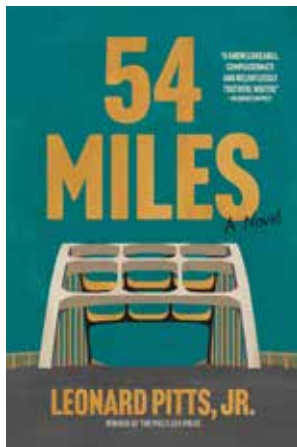
By Terri Schlichenmeyer

Deep down inside, there's a part of you that always wants to do right.

Did someone teach you that? Or were you just modeling what your elders did when they did what was true and right? Either way, your moral compass points the way, always. You do right for the world, even if, as in the new novel "54 Miles" by Leonard Pitts, Jr., it's the wrong personal decision for you.

Sitting in church, hundreds of miles from home, Adam Simon felt the distance keenly.

This surprised him. It



wasn't like he was close to his parents. No, his father, a white minister, had overpreached to Adam for too long, and his Black mother never showed Adam much warmth. With no siblings

to help soften these facts, Adam left college to head to Alabama, to work with SNCC's voter registry efforts.

That was the plan, anyhow, but down-deep, Adam had no idea what he was doing. It was a good cause, a great and righteous one, but not without danger: he was almost killed while marching across the Edmund Pettis Bridge.

And that's how his frantic parents learned where he was: alerted by Adam's parents, his Uncle Luther tracked Adam down in a Selma hospital, took the young man in, and notified Adam's parents that he was

safe

By that time, George Simon was on his way to Alabama for his son's sake.

Years ago, George and his now-wife, Thelma, had busted almost every racial law the South imposed, and they married. Shortly afterward, George's father sent the new family north, for safety. And now Adam was in Alabama, in the mouth of the dragon.

But Adam had other troubles on his mind.

He knew he shouldn't have snooped, but while staying with his Uncle Luther, he found a stash of old letters, and he read them. What he learned shocked

him, and he had to leave Luther's home immediately.

The problem was, Adam had nowhere to go.

Were you there? If not, can you imagine what it was like to live in 1965, at the height of the Civil Rights Movement? Readers who don't know or can't picture it will get an eyeful of what was possible inside "54 Miles."

In setting his novel roughly in the years 1945 to 1965, author Leonard Pitts, Jr. doesn't make reading this book easy. There are passages inside this novel that will make you want to wince and turn away and –

caution! – they're not for the weak-stomached. Just remember, they're essential to the story and to why the characters act as they do.

On that, you'll enjoy most of these characters as they look to the past and future, working their ways through personal struggles and one of the more tumultuous periods in American history. Details help, making this books' cast feel more authentic.

Be aware that "54 Miles" can be slow, at certain points, but stick with it and you won't be disappointed. Especially if you're a historical novel fan, this book will do you right.

## NYONG'O, from Page 2

learn about the positive contribution that natural diamonds make to the country's economy.

Reflecting on her visit, Ms Nyong'o said: "I've had a relationship with De Beers jewellery for a while now and I was very curious to go to the source and experience the journey a diamond makes first-hand. It was a pleasure to meet with people working in South Africa

and Namibia's diamond industries, and I was especially struck by the female staff who are breaking barriers and having real success in a sector that has traditionally been the realm of men. It was illuminating and inspiring to meet women from the surrounding communities who occupy and thrive in technical roles, as drill operators, geologists, and engineers.

"I have come to this region to observe and absorb for myself what diamonds are doing for people here and I have already witnessed how much more there is to their story. They have touched the lives of very many people and it is clear that the effects of diamonds on the society are as prismatic as the diamonds themselves."

Sandrine Conseiller, CEO of De Beers Brands, said: "We were delighted to host

Lupita in South Africa and Namibia and show her the positive impact that natural diamonds are making all the way through the value chain. There can be a lot of misperceptions about diamond mining, so it was a real pleasure to give Lupita

the opportunity to experience our world-class operations, our strong commitment to sustainability and some of the vital ways that a De Beers diamond supports and advances the people and places it came from.

"From visiting our majes-

tic Venetia Limpopo Nature Reserve to meeting some of the inspiring women enrolled in our EntreprenHER programme, she was also able to gain deeper insights into the myriad wider socio-economic benefits that natural diamonds create."

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# When working full-time is not enough: Growing numbers of side hustle jobs

## 52 percent of workers took on second jobs in past 3 years, says survey

By Charlene Crowell

For many people of modest means, taking a second job has been a go-to option for seasonal and/or short-term additional earnings. Whether planning for special holidays, noteworthy family events, or a one-time purchase, a “side hustle” has enabled many families to have a few extra comforts to make life more enjoyable.

But a new consumer survey finds that in recent years, an increasing number of workers are taking on second jobs for household needs, instead of wants. As the costs of living continue to creep upward, many working Americans are finding that one full-time job is simply not enough.

More than half of workers - 52 percent - have taken on second jobs in the past three years, and nearly one in three survey respondents believe they will always need a second income just to make ends meet, according to Bankrate.com.

“While it’s admirable that so many Americans are putting in extra time and effort on their side hustles, it’s unfortunate that most are doing so simply to fund their expenses,” noted Ted Rossman, Bankrate senior



DWG Studio

credit card analyst.

The workers who most frequently turned to side hustles were: Generation Z ages 18 to 27 (48 percent); parents with children younger than 18 (45 percent); and Millennials, ages 28-43 (44 percent). For their extra work, average monthly earnings rose from \$810 in 2023, to \$891 this year. The extra income typically is used to help pay for housing and groceries, paying down debt, or savings.

These findings follow a Bankrate pay raise survey released this spring that showed household budgets remained strained, despite the nation’s slowing inflation, particularly in the areas of housing and insurance.

“Although the much-feared recession hasn’t quite yet reared its head, three in five U.S. adults (59 percent) reported feel-

ing like the economy is in a recession toward the end of 2023,” according to the survey. Many of these workers are concerned about their ability to purchase a home.

Almost two in five (37 percent) surveyed said they would move out of state to find a home they could afford, according to Bankrate’s home affordability survey.

But move where? Housing is often the most-costly monthly household expense - whether renting or purchasing a home.

Consumers considering purchasing a home should be aware that nationwide the median price of a new single-family home is \$495,750. The median price means that half of all new homes sold in the U.S. cost more than this figure and half cost less, according to the National Association of Homebuilders (NAHB).

Moreover, 134.9 million U.S. households — roughly 77 percent — cannot afford this median-priced new home based on a mortgage rate of 6.5 percent.

For families considering purchasing an existing home, NAHB has more sobering information: 66.6 million households cannot afford a \$250,000 home.

And rising apartment rents make it even harder for some workers to save for a home. The national median rent for an apartment in March 2024 was \$1,987, \$373 higher than four years ago, according to Rent.com. On a regional basis, median monthly rents trended cheaper in the Midwest (\$1,456) and South (\$1,656), but were higher in the Northeast (\$2,504) and West (\$2,365).

As this column recently reported on The State of the Nation’s Housing 2024, the annual report published by

Harvard’s Joint Center on Housing Studies (JCHS), 22.4 million renters nationwide pay more than 30 percent of household income for housing, and 12.1 million pay more than half of their income on housing and utilities. And nationwide, renters with the lowest incomes have just \$310 left over each month to cover all their non-housing needs.

In short, household cash crunches are in large part being driven by the cost of housing. But housing is not the only factor that has consumers turning to second jobs. Other costs include:

Groceries - the average household spends \$475.25 per month for food, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, as reported by USA Today.

Student loan debt - the average monthly student loan payment for a new college graduate is \$500 with

an APR of 5.5 percent. For those who pursued graduate degrees, the monthly payment is even higher and the debt deeper, according to the Education Data Initiative. Nationwide, 43 million student loan borrowers collectively owe \$1.7 trillion.

These costs do not consider additional household expenses like transportation, health care, childcare, or insurance.

Lawmakers and other government officials must craft effective responses to these severe financial strains impacting their local communities and the nation, so that working people earn incomes that reward their toil and talents with a decent living.

Charlene Crowell is a senior fellow with the Center for Responsible Lending. She can be reached at [Charlene.crowell@responsiblelending.org](mailto:Charlene.crowell@responsiblelending.org).

## ACTIVISM, from Page 4

in clinically meaningful reductions in depressive symptoms and we observed an upward trend in measures of resilience,” said Dr. Heard-Garris. “We learned that teens loved having a safe space and learning how to help their community. We also were excited to see that these teens continued to engage with advocacy long after the end of the pilot study.”

Another unique feature of the current study is the formation of the 10-12-member Youth Advisory Board that will guide the content creation for the intervention and control groups,

help with participant recruitment and retention, as well as provide key insights into what is important to teens.

“The Youth Advisory Board will allow our research team to foster an invaluable partnership with teens,” said Dr. Heard-Garris. “Their lived experiences and perspectives are essential to the success of this project. We also plan to collaborate with community partners in our efforts to recruit study participants. We are very excited to launch this important study.”

Research at Ann & Rob-

ert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago is conducted through Stanley Manne Children’s Research Institute, which is focused on improving child health, transforming pediatric medicine and ensuring healthier futures through the relentless pursuit of knowledge. Lurie Children’s is a nonprofit organization committed to providing access to exceptional care for every child. It is ranked as one of the nation’s top children’s hospitals by U.S. News & World Report. Lurie Children’s is the pediatric training ground for Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine.



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# NBFA president calls for CEO resignation and boycott of John Deere

(BASKERVILLE, Va.) John Deere hasn't reversed or slow walked their plans to launch an autonomous tractor by 2030, completely eliminating the farmer from needing to operate the machine. Although NBFA President John Boyd, Jr. agrees that farmers need access to new technology, he believes that John Deere continues to move in the wrong direction in regards to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI).

"So much for 'Made In America' for John Deere," Boyd says. Just weeks ago, Deere announced it will lay off an additional 600 workers in Illinois and Iowa ahead of its expansion to Mexico. In June 2022, Deere announced plans to move tractor cab



Karl Wiggers / Unsplash

production from its Waterloo, Iowa plant to Mexico, with the transition slated for completion in 2024. By June 2024, Deere had also announced that it will be moving production of skid

steer loaders and compact track loaders from its facility in Dubuque, Iowa to Mexico by the end of 2026.

Last Tuesday, John Deere announced on social

media platform X it would no longer support "social or cultural awareness" events in response to customer feedback.

Deere's decision on DEI comes just one month after it agreed to pay \$1.1 million in back wages and interest to 277 Black and Hispanic job applicants after the Department of Labor alleged that it found systemic hiring discrimination at the company.

According to John C. May, Deere CEO, "A company is only as healthy as its reputation and only as good as its word. Ultimately, a company is judged by its actions. At John Deere, we rely on our core values, a set of shared beliefs, to guide our behaviors. These values show that how we

do business and treat others matters. The Code of Business Conduct is foundational to how we interact with the world around us and to all we do as an enterprise. It provides specific guidance that applies to each of us, regardless of region, department, or facility. The Code also reflects our company's higher purpose of building a better way of life for people everywhere."

Awards Deere won for its inclusiveness and the names of employee resource groups devoted to women, veterans and people with disabilities no longer appears on the company website. We will continue to see more companies downplay diversity goals and scale back DEI

programs created to encourage the advancement of marginalized groups.

John Deere is one of the largest debt holders for farmers, right beside the banks. Since the NBFA's foundation nearly 40 years ago, John Deere has failed to show its support for the organization and Black farmers.

Just as we have called for the resignation for Hal Lawton at Tractor Supply, we also call for the resignation of John C. May and boycott of John Deere.

"It is the farmer, not the machine that will take care of the crop and ensure it grows. I challenge John Deere to service all of America's farmers, including Black farmers," Boyd said.

## SCOTUS, from Page 1

sum game, meaning a game in which one party's gain is another's loss.

One might argue that where historically suppressed minority populations can be strengthened, society as a whole is better off. As John C. Yang, president and executive director of Asian Americans Advancing Justice, argues, equal access to opportunity has never been a zero sum game.

Yang urges school leaders to identify innovative and creative ways to combat discrimination as colleges struggle to develop an admissions process that responds to the ruling.

The decision has had reverberating effects that attack diversity programs outside the scope of the ruling. Forty-five such bills have been introduced post-SFFA rulings, reports education researcher Vikash Reddy. These bills target Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) programs, eliminating or creating impediments to funding DEI and related positions. The University of Utah, for example, has shuttered centers for women and Black students

despite state laws that allow such centers.

Financial aid has also been impacted at the University of Missouri, which attempted to reclassify donor-created scholarships intended for minority students, Reddy reports.

According to Thomas A. Saenz, President and General Counsel of Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), there is nothing unlawful about using pooled financial aid resources for individuals based on race. And, such centers should not be limited to people of one race. In accordance with the ruling, support centers that are open to a diversity of races remain permissible even where their name suggests they are targeting certain communities.

As a director of the Legal Defense Fund, Jin Hee Lee explains, the SFFA ruling was never just about access to elite universities. The end goal, she said, was to create a false assumption that there are no racial barriers to educational or economic opportunities.

Following this logic, any

efforts to redress discrimination is thus a form of discrimination. We are living in a time when business leaders can be accused of discrimination because of their commitment to racial equality, she said.

Education should never be a zero-sum game, Lee explains. Where equal opportunities to education are not present, it's incumbent upon society to do something about it.

If one considers a university with extreme racial disparities to be equitable, one essentially believes students of certain races are naturally more talented or qualified than others. Such a mentality demonstrates an underlying racism, said Lee.

During the summer of 2020, Americans witnessed the largest civil rights demonstration in our nation's history, said Lee. For a moment, people from all walks of life, all races, all backgrounds, came together and protested in the midst of a pandemic their opposition to inequality. In response to these protests, there have been attacks on critical race theory and DEI programs. These attacks are fueled by last year's decision from the Supreme Court.

Despite that an important tool has been taken away, Lee urges, no one ever considered affirmative action to be the only tool to ensure equal opportunity. Make no mistake, people of color will continue to suffer from the effects of racism, said Lee, and the Supreme Court's decision should not relieve us of the responsibility to ensure equitable access.

What can be done to keep admissions equitable? Efforts should include ex-

panded access to college preparatory curriculum, dual enrollment programs, and targeted outreach for students with high potential who may not know they are college material, said Reddy. Inclusive campuses that affirm a student's sense of belonging is also advised.

UC Berkeley and the University of California Los Angeles have already developed a holistic review process to allow for equitable admissions. The University

of Minnesota, University of Pittsburgh, Virginia Tech, and Wesleyan have also developed sensitive approaches that promote equity.

We must look to our universities to restore equal opportunity, while considering more than just affirmative action. We must consider overall inequalities throughout our entire educational system that have tremendous and cumulative effects on students of color from marginalized backgrounds.

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## SUCCESS, from Page 6

ment Technology, Wells Fargo

Head Start Hometown: Seattle, Washington

As Wells Fargo's Senior Vice President of Wealth and Investment Management Technology, Drinal Foster leads global, forward-leaning employee engagement and experience strategies to

build a high-performing workforce. She serves on several boards of directors centered around youth and youth development, where she seeks to make a positive difference in her community. Drinal and her mother often discuss Head Start's role in her early adjustment to school and the difference it made for her.

When thinking about Head Start's impact, Drinal says, "Head Start helped me to socially connect and learn critical skills at such a young age. My parents were blue-collar workers; early in my mother's life, she was a janitor for a local bank, and now I'm an executive of one of the top four banks in the country. That's an amazing trajectory, but what's even more

amazing is that Head Start is full of these stories!"

**Eileen Conoboy**, Recruitment Advisor, Peace Corps

Head Start Hometown: Fairfax, Virginia

Eileen credits Head Start with helping her find her superpower...reading. Head Start was part of the safety net her mother needed when she was 20 years old, widowed with

two young children, and pregnant with her third child." It's hard to know how the sliding doors of life would have turned out if I hadn't attended Head Start," she says. "But I do know it instilled in me a love of books, and that's opened so many figurative and literal doors throughout my life." Eileen is a first-generation college graduate and works as a

Peace Corps Recruitment Advisor, developing new strategies to diversify and increase international engagement through Peace Corps service.

"While at Head Start, I looked forward to the meals and found comfort in the classroom routines, but it was the books and the stories that gave me my first sense of all that was possible."

## FILM, from Page 9

good from the bad guys becomes tricky. Motives are deceptive, unsettled and unpredictable. A constant stream of surprise subplots keeps the film fresh for 1h 57m solid (editor Terilyn A. Shropshire, *The Woman King*).

Though great attention and detail has been bestowed on the characters and their arcs, the action/adventure/thriller aspects of this disaster movie are just as weighty. Visually and auditorily the effects are top notch. The wondrous shots, especially the overheads, by cinematographer Dan Mindel (*Star Wars: Episode VII- The Force Awakens*) pull you into central Oklahoma. Interior sets from old garages to fancy NYC offices are appropriate (production designer Patrick Sullivan), the colors vibrant (art director Steve Christensen) and everyone is dressed

like normal people (costume designer Eunice Jera Lee). When orchestra music crescendos and adds umph to the danger it also heightens emotions (composer Benjamin Wallfisch, *Blade Runner 2049*). All is capped by eye-popping special, visual and sound effects that make rain and wind look and sound like a monster.

There's a magical salute to film and cinemas when a movie theater becomes a shelter—a place to hide from the windy hell above. There are many daring escapes, victims sucked into updrafts and instances when the storm chasers are close to death. But the iconic visual that film lovers may love the most is the moment when Tyler tries to hold on to a crewmember who is being sucked away, out into the sky, to her doom. Hard to forget this image as it reinforces

the notion that theaters are sanctuaries. Places of refuge. So why are so many closing these days?!

The British actor Edgar-Jones makes Kate feel like an "everywoman." Like you know her. It's an endearing quality and the result of a very natural performance. One that displays deep emotions from happiness and sadness to fear. That introspective interpretation of the prime protagonist is the exact opposite of Powell's boisterous portrayal of the carnival barker Tyler Owens,

who challenges her: "You don't face your fears, you ride 'em." Again, because the script is so surprising, Owens' character becomes far more complex than his initial presentation. Ramos makes Javi the soul-searching man who's pulled in right and wrong directions. Veteran actor Maura Tierney (ER) as Kate's mom displays the right amount of humor and determination. The entire, multicultural, multigeneration cast is superb as it supports the lead roles.

Following up an iconic

blockbuster movie isn't easy. Yet *Minari* makes it look like a breeze. Credit his charming storyteller instincts and keen sensibility for depicting people struggling with inner and outer turmoil. Movie lovers of all ages will rush to their local cineplexes for this summer blockbuster. A film many will see over and over well into its afterlife on stream-

ing services and network TV.

Twisters will be revered in theaters and IMAX places. But the ultimate immersive experience will come in 4D theaters. That's where rooms full of gleeful audiences will twist and shout.

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

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# Ding-A-Ling There Goes Spring

Dr. James L. Snyder

In my life, time has a way of getting out of control. If I could control time, I would be a very happy dude. My one question in life is, where does time go? And, can I retrieve it?

The other night, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and I sat in the living room watching a little TV.

I then heard a deep sigh from the other resident in the room. Looking over I said, "Is anything wrong?"

Looking back at me with one of "her looks," she said, "Why is it so hot?"

At first, I thought she was talking about me as a hot dude. But after thinking more about it, I concluded that I was not the hot

dude she was talking about. She was talking about the weather.

Sighing very deeply she said, "I just can't stand all of this hot weather anymore."

She was born and raised in New York, and when the weather gets over her age, she can hardly handle it. The weather was not too much over her age, but it was over her age.

I waved my hand at her and said, "Oh, my dear, we are in Florida."

Scowling at me, she said, "I know that, but it wasn't this hot the other week."

Chuckling on the inside, I responded, "Well, my dear, Spring is over and Summer is here. It's the climate change, silly."

I thought about that, and it's pretty interesting that

things go as quickly as they do. Why can't Spring stay with us just a little bit longer? Why can't Summer be shortened a month or two?

Time does have a way of flying by quickly; if you don't pay attention, it will be gone before you know it.

Looking at me, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage replied, "I know Spring is gone, I know Summer is here, but why does it have to be so hot?"

Knowing her as well as I know her, I realized that was a rhetorical question. She wasn't asking me for any information and so, I wasn't going to volunteer any information whatsoever. That's what usually gets me into trouble.

But I couldn't help but think about that myself.

Lately, we've been having some very hot and humid days. It's been 100° or more almost every day. Some meteorologists are saying these are record hot days.

I don't know if the record exists, but I would rather not play those records very long.

One thing about a hot day is that you can't do very much activity, especially outside. I was outside one day doing some things, and pretty soon, I could hardly breathe, and my energy had all but disappeared. I think it went inside.

I came in after that, got a nice glass of iced tea, and sat in my easy chair.

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage looked at me and said, "So, why are you in the house?"

Without thinking, which is my usual MO, I replied, "It's just too hot outside for me."

"Oh," she said sarcastically, "so Spring has disappeared?" And then she said, "Do you think it just might be Summer?"

I hate it when what I say comes back to haunt me.

On the other hand, these hot days do have a cool element.

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage came the other day and said, "I'm going shopping, would you like to come with me?"

Usually, I have no way of getting out of going shopping with her. But the heat spell has given me a good excuse. "Oh my dear," I said rather sadly, "I would love to but it's just too hot

out there for me and I cannot handle all that heat. I'm so sorry."

Looking at me with one of her smiles, I knew what she was thinking. That was, I was using the heat spell to get out of going somewhere shopping with her. Although she loves shopping, it is certainly not one of my favorite activities.

As she went out the door, I said rather quickly, "Don't forget to get me some Klondike bars. I'm getting low on them."

Looking back at me as she walked through the door, she said, "Well, if you were with me I probably would remember."

When she left, I got a cup of coffee and went to my

See SNYDER, Page 15

## MITCHELL, from Page 2

'Sculpture of a Miracle: God's Glory' is the true story of a young child's battle against a terrible disease, the undying will of the doctors who helped her, and the incredible loving family who stayed by their child's side to raise her up when all

hope seemed lost. Mitchell is an award-winning creative artist, intrinsically gifted and talented. She specializes in Art Entertainment.

From street outreach to the stage, Dona's three decades of writing in ministry

led her to work with professional actors, network with celebrities, and have her work recognized with several awards. Her next goal is to level up in the Film Industry.

Dona's next book signing will be in Ft. Worth at the Dock BookShop, on July 28, 2024, at 3 p.m.

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# Obedience with a Cost



**Sister Tarpley**  
NDG  
Religion  
Editor

Ever since I went to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has brought trouble upon this people, and You have not rescued Your people at all. (Exodus 5:23)

Have you ever felt like you have been obedient to the Lord for something He called you to do and all you get are more roadblocks?

This is the way Moses felt. When Moses went to tell Pharaoh to release the people because God said so, Pharaoh simply got an-



gry and made the people make bricks without straw.

Moses caught the blame for this from the people. Moses was just learning what obedience really means in God's Kingdom.

You see Moses had not even begun to release plagues upon Egypt. He had not gotten started yet in his calling, and he was complaining about his circumstances.

There were many more encounters with Pharaoh to come, and many more plagues with no deliverances in sight.

Why would God tell Moses that He is going to deliver them and not do it?

It was all in God's timing.

God never said when He was going to deliver. He just said He would. In the next chapter, we find Moses arguing with God about not being capable of the job God had called him to:

But Moses said to the Lord, "If the Israelites will not listen to me, why would Pharaoh listen to me, since I speak with faltering lips?"

Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron about

the Israelites and Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and He commanded them to bring the Israelites out of Egypt (Exodus 6:12-13).

Do you get the feeling that God was losing His patience? God had a good reason for His delays.

He said, "And the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord when I stretch out My hand against Egypt and bring the Israelites out of it" (Exodus 7:5).

God not only wanted the people of Israel but, also the Egyptians to know Him. It would be the greatest show of God's power on earth.

God often causes delays

in our lives that we cannot understand. Sometimes it seems our obedience is not getting rewarded.

Jesus said He learned obedience through the things He suffered (see Hebrews 5:8). Imagine that - Jesus having to learn obedience.

What does that say for you and me? Sometimes God's delays are simply because He wants more glory in the situation, more recognition, more Christ-likeness in you and me through greater patience and obedience.

Faint not, for the promise may yet come.

## SNYDER, from Page 14

easy chair to sit and think about the morning. Sometimes, the most important thing in life is having a good excuse for not doing something.

When I think about the seasons of the year, everyone has something good to say about it. And, every one has something bad about it. I'm trying to learn to fo-

cus on the good aspects of a season. If I focus on the bad aspects, it just gets me down.

Every bad aspect has a good slant to it. My challenge is finding that good slant and using it for pleasure.

I thought of a verse in the bible that addresses this. Psalm 31:14-15 - "But

I trusted in thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my God. My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me."

No matter my circumstances, I can trust God for my time today, tomorrow and forever. Spring comes, Spring goes but nothing changes as far as God is concerned. I'm in His hands.

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.jamesnyderministries.com.

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