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## After the fires settle, who is to rebuild Los Angeles?

By Lori Lee  
NDG Contributing Writer

Millions of Americans watched in horror as fires destroyed Los Angeles homes and neighborhoods in early January. As the community now emerges from the worst disaster in its history, efforts to rebuild will surely be challenged, considering shortages of construction labor that existed prior to the fire.

Governor Gavin Newsom is attempting to pave the way for a quick rebuild, authorizing federal hazmat crews to start cleaning up immediately, waiving permitting requirements and allowing for increased availability of temporary housing.

Yet, as University of Illinois Urban Planning professor Nick Theodore explained during a January Ethnic Media Services briefing, "[t]he extent of destruction in urban areas is almost unimaginable, the



The Palisades fire viewed from the shoreline (CAL FIRE official / Wikipedia)

cost, the extent of displacement, the personal loss, and the time it takes to rebuild."

To face this task with the drastic shortage of workers that currently exists is daunting, and this will only be exacerbated considering federal government plans for mass deporta-

tion.

The construction industry is heavily dependent on foreign born labor, added Jenny Murray, President and Chief Executive Officer at the National Immigration Forum. With

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#### People In The News ...



Dr. Jamal Bryant



Jotaka Eaddy

*NDG Quote of the Week:* "The price of hating other human beings is loving oneself less."

- Eldridge Cleaver

## Dr. Jamal Bryant

Dr. Jamal Bryant, the influential pastor of New Birth Missionary Baptist Church in metro Atlanta, is leading a 40-day fast—or boycott—of Target in response to the retailer’s decision to phase out its diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. Bryant is calling for 100,000 people to sign a petition and halt their spending at Target as a direct challenge to what he describes as the company’s retreat from its commitments to Black businesses and consumers.

Target, headquartered in Minneapolis, where George Floyd was murdered in



2020, initially pledged \$2 billion in investments to Black-owned businesses. However, Bryant condemned the company’s announcement on January 24 that it would end its DEI initiatives and simultaneously abandon that finan-

cial commitment.

“After the murder of George Floyd, they made a \$2 billion commitment to invest in Black businesses,” Bryant said during an appearance on the Black Press’ Let It Be Known News. “That commitment was due in December 2025. When they pulled out of the DEI agreement in January, they also canceled that \$2 billion commitment.”

Bryant said that Target’s role in the Black consumer market makes it the logical first target of this economic protest. “Black people spend \$12 million a day at Target,” he said. “Because of how many dollars are spent there and the absence of

commitment to our community, we are focusing on Target first.”

Set to coincide with Lent, the fast is designed to leverage Black economic power to hold corporations accountable. Within just one week, 50,000 people had already signed onto the campaign at targetfast.org, which the pastor said highlighted the movement’s momentum.

Bryant’s demands go beyond reinstating DEI. “White women are the number one beneficiaries of DEI,” he said. “What I am asking for is a quarter of a billion dollars to be invested in Black banks so that our Black businesses can scale.

Target has 10 distribution centers near HBCUs, and I’m asking them to partner with the business departments of these institutions.”

Separate, the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), representing the Black Press of America, has announced a national public education and selective buying campaign in response to the corporate retreat from DEI commitments. “We are the trusted voice of Black America, and we will not be silent or nonresponsive to the rapid rise of renewed Jim Crow racist policies in corporate America,” said NNPA Chairman Bobby R. Henry Sr.

NNPA President and CEO Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr. reinforced the need for financial realignment. “Black Americans spend \$2 trillion annually. We must evaluate and realign to question why we continue to spend our money with companies that do not respect us. These contradictions will not go unchallenged.”

To offer alternatives, Bryant has partnered with Ron Busby, president and CEO of the U.S. Black Chambers, providing consumers with a directory of 300,000 Black-owned businesses. “You can’t tell people what not to

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## Jotaka Eaddy

(Black PR Wire) LOS ANGELES - Recently, the NAACP announced Founder and CEO of #Win-WithBlackWomen Jotaka Eaddy will receive the newly named Mildred Bond Roxborough Social Justice Impact Award and Essence Communications, Inc. will receive the Vanguard Award FOR FASHION at the “56th NAACP Image Awards” Creative Honors on Friday, February 21 in Los Angeles.

The NAACP Image Awards Committee also announced the renaming of the Social Justice Impact Award to honor the life and legacy of civil rights activist Mildred Bond Roxborough. Roxborough has worked with the NAACP for over 70 years, making her the longest-serving NAACP staff member. Her career began in 1954 as national staff field secretary. She has served in various roles, including administrative assistant to executive director, director of operations, direc-



JotakaEaddy.com

tor of programs, director of events, and director of development - working alongside prominent civil rights and NAACP leaders, Medgar Evers, Myrlie Evers-Williams, Vernon Jordan, Judge Constance Baker Motley, and Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall. Previous Social Justice Impact Award honorees include Benjamin Crump, Nikole Hannah-Jones, and Stacey Abrams.

“The renaming of the Mildred Bond Roxborough Social Justice Impact Award underscores the profound legacy of a trailblazer whose dedication to justice continues to inspire generations,”

said Karen Boykin-Towns, Vice Chair of the NAACP Board of Directors and Chair of the NAACP Image Awards Committee. “Jotaka Eaddy’s impact exemplifies the enduring power of Black women leading with strength, vision, and purpose. Her tireless advocacy has ignited a lasting, generational momentum, equipping the Black community - especially women, with the resources, knowledge, and freedom to thrive. Her unwavering commitment has not only paved pathways for progress but also inspired a movement that continues to transform lives and communities.”

As an award-winning strategist and advocate who is described by Forbes as the “Olivia Pope of Silicon Valley,” Jotaka Eaddy brings over 20 years of experience in policy, advocacy, and movement building. Notably, she served as the NAACP Senior Advisor to the President and CEO

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### Special Projects to the Publisher

Clinique Hill

### Published by

Minority Opportunity News, Inc.

### Production

David Wilfong

### Assistant Office Coordinator

Belda Ibarra

### Contributing Writers

Jamal Baker  
Katherine M. Brown  
Allen Gray  
Jackie Hardy  
Lori Lee  
Terri Schlichenmeyer



### Publisher's Office:

[publisher@northdallasgazette.com](mailto:publisher@northdallasgazette.com)

### Sales Department:

[marketing@northdallasgazette.com](mailto:marketing@northdallasgazette.com)

### Editorial Department:

[editor@northdallasgazette.com](mailto:editor@northdallasgazette.com)



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The North Dallas Gazette, formerly Minority Opportunity News, was founded in July 1991, by Mr. Jim Bochum and Mr. Thurman R. Jones. North Dallas Gazette is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Minority Opportunity News, Inc.

P.O. Box 763866 - Dallas, Texas 75736-3866

Phone: 972-432-5219 - Fax: 972-509-9058

# The Black Press: The last line of defense as Trump seizes control of the National Archives

By Stacy M. Brown

Donald Trump's recent takeover of the National Archives marks yet another chilling step in his broader campaign to rewrite history, erasing the truths that challenge his authoritarian ambitions. With the forced resignation of Acting Archivist William Bosanko, Trump and his allies are moving swiftly to reshape how American history is recorded, preserved, and ultimately remembered. This power grab, executed under the banner of Project 2025 and backed by figures like Elon Musk, is more than just an attack on government records—it is an existential threat to the preservation of Black history and the truth itself.

### History Under Siege

For centuries, African Americans have fought for their place in the national narrative, often relying on the Black Press as the only means to document the realities of systemic racism, discrimination, and resilience. From Ida B. Wells' fearless reporting on lynching to the Chicago Defender's pivotal role in the Great Migration, Black newspapers have long served as the voice of the silenced. With Trump's grip tightening over the agency responsible for safeguarding historical records, the need for an independent, unflinching Black press has never been more urgent.

Trump's purge at the National Archives follows a pattern of systematic erasure. His administration has already waged war on diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, gutted affirmative action, and worked to dismantle programs designed to level the playing field for marginalized communities. Now, by taking control of the Archives, he is moving to rewrite the nation's past to justify the injustices of the present and future.

The forced removal of archivists and the potential installation of loyalists like Hugh Hewitt or John Solomon—far-right operatives with no historical credentials—signal that the agency's purpose is shifting from preservation to propaganda. Reports indicate that the Archive's leadership under previous political influence had already begun censoring mentions of Indigenous land displacement, removing references to Japanese American internment, and even swapping out images of Martin Luther King Jr. for Richard Nixon and Elvis Presley in museum exhibits.

This power shift is part of a broader authoritarian trend, as seen in the elimination of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs and affirmative action. The rollback of these initiatives disproportionately affects Black Americans and other marginal-

ized communities, making the work of the Black Press more crucial than ever.

### Black Press as a Corrective Force

In a recent episode of the "Seizing Freedom" podcast, journalist Adam Serwer spoke about the historical role of the Black Press in countering misinformation. "There were whole newspapers that said the Klan did not exist," Serwer explained. "You had people who were victims of the Klan who were literally testifying in Congress about seeing people be murdered or being attacked or mutilated themselves. And you would have these Democratic-aligned papers and some Republican papers as well saying, 'Oh, you know, the Ku Klux Klan is like a fictional invention of fevered imaginations.' But it was completely made up, and Black newspapers were saying, 'This is nonsense; it's made up.'"

Similarly, Ida B. Wells was relentless in exposing racial terrorism. "She was one of the people who was primarily responsible for not only countering that propaganda that was justifying that campaign of terrorism," Serwer noted, "but for laying down a historical record that historians would use to show that it was, in fact, a propaganda campaign."

### A Dangerous Precedent

Many argue that this is not just an assault on histo-

ry; it is an assault on truth. In authoritarian regimes, controlling the historical record is a crucial strategy for maintaining power. As historian George Orwell warned, "He who controls the past controls the future." Trump's latest move places America firmly on that trajectory, echoing tactics used by totalitarian states to whitewash history, from Stalin's Soviet Union to China's suppression of 'historical nihilism.'

Onlookers have observed that Musk's control over X (formerly Twitter)—and now the government—further illustrates the danger. Politicians, historians, and others have noted that, under Musk's leadership, the platform has become a haven for misinformation, with accounts spreading white nationalist rhetoric and conspiracy theories while voices advocating for racial justice face suppression. "The Black Press remains one of the last independent institutions able to challenge these narratives," National Newspaper Publishers Association President & CEO Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr. has often declared.

### A Call to Action

Texas Democratic Rep. Jasmine Crockett remains among the few unafraid to speak truth to power, particularly when her Republican colleagues show

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# Study finds more barriers to genetic testing for Black children than white children

(Newswise) — MINNEAPOLIS — For children with signs of neurological conditions such as autism, epilepsy and global developmental delay, genetic testing can help make the diagnosis, identify possible treatments and determine whether family members could be affected, among other benefits. But a new study shows that white children were almost twice as likely as Black children to have completed genetic testing. The study is published on February 12, 2025, online in *Neurology*®, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology. The study also found that insurance coverage for genetic testing requested by pediatric neurologists was denied at higher rates for Black children.

“We were encouraged to see that pediatric neurologists’ requests for ge-



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netic tests were no different based on the patients’ racial or ethnic identity,” said study author Jordan Janae Cole, MD, of the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus in Aurora and a member of the American Academy of Neurology. “However, the Black children had a lower rate of completing the genetic tests. While they were denied insurance coverage at a higher rate, that disparity did not account for all of the difference, indicating that other potential barriers and biases need to be ad-

ressed.”

For the study, researchers looked at health records for all patients seen at pediatric neurology outpatient clinics at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis during an 18-month period. They determined which participants had genetic tests requested and completed, and they examined insurance denial data. Researchers then looked at social factors that may impact a person’s health, such as race and ethnicity, type of insurance and the level of advantage or disadvan-

tage in their neighborhood.

A total of 11,371 children were seen during that period, of which 78% were white, 15% were Black, 3% were Hispanic, 3% were listed as other, including Asian, Native American/Alaska Native and Pacific Islander, 1% were listed as “unknown” and 0.3% declined to answer. Due to the small number of children identified as Hispanic or other races and ethnicities, the researchers limited their analysis to only Black and white participants.

A total of 554 children completed at least one genetic test during the study. White children were nearly twice as likely to have a test completed, with 5.2% of white children having at least one test completed and 3.6% of Black children having at least one test completed. Cole noted that this occurred despite there being no differences in the

rate of genetic test requests by neurologists.

White children were 66% less likely than Black children to have their request for a genetic test from an outpatient neurology clinic denied, with 23% of requests for Black children denied compared to 10% of requests for white children.

Children with public insurance were 41% less likely to complete their genetic testing after a request by an outpatient neurology clinic than those with private insurance.

“The ethnic and racial inequities could not be fully explained by differences in other social factors such as socioeconomic disadvantage or living in a rural or urban area or clinical factors such as what type of diagnosis they had,” Cole said. “We suspect these disparities are due to other unmeasured impacts of systemic racism that we were

unable to measure in our study, such as wealth inequality, education inequality and implicit biases. Recognizing these inequities and barriers to genetic testing is essential for developing interventions to eliminate them. We must ensure that efforts to improve access to genetic testing keep equity at the forefront, so they don’t worsen health disparities.”

A limitation of the study was that it included participants from only one institution, so the results may not apply to the overall population.

Dr. Cole was a recipient of the 2023 AAN Health Care Equity Research Award.

The study was funded by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, the National Center for Advancing Translation-

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## ALS survival may be cut short by living in disadvantaged communities

(Newswise) — Living in a disadvantaged community may decrease the length of time a person can survive with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS, by over 30%, a Michigan Medicine-led study suggests.

ALS is a progressive, incurable condition that causes muscle wasting and loss of muscle control.

While most people survive with ALS around two to four years, some people can live significantly longer.

In the study of more than 1,000 patients with ALS seen between 2012 and

mid-2024, people from the most disadvantaged neighborhoods had up to a 37% shorter survival time compared to those from the most resourced areas.

U-M researchers used the Area Deprivation Index, a tool created at University of Wisconsin, which measures neighborhood disadvantage using factors such as income, education, employment and housing.

The results are published in *Neurology*, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology.

“Our results show a significant link between ad-

verse social determinants of health and shorter survival in patients with ALS,” said senior author Stephen Goutman, M.D., M.S., Harriet Hiller Research Professor, director of the Pranger ALS Clinic and associate director of the ALS Center of Excellence at University of Michigan.

“For years, we have defined the ALS ‘exposome’ as how environmental exposures over a lifetime affect a person’s ALS risk and survival. The lived environment — in other words, the social exposome — is a key contributor to the overall

exposome and is important to consider. Moreover, a deeper understanding of how socioeconomic factors contribute to ALS survival is important for making ALS a more livable disease and reducing the impact of health disparities.”

The cost of caring for someone with ALS is tremendous: People with ALS can pay up to \$250,000 out-of-pocket each year, according to the ALS Association.

The study design didn’t offer insight into the cause of the survival differences, but researchers note that more resourced patients

often can afford additional care to limit burnout for family caregivers.

“A person’s social determinants of health may uniquely impact ALS due to the incredible costs of care, so it is important that we consider social factors and highlight the urgent need for interventions to reduce health disparities in ALS care,” said first author Dae Gyu Jang, Ph.D., post-doctoral fellow in the U-M Health Department of Neurology.

Similar studies have shown that living in resource-deprived areas is as-

sociated with a higher burden of Alzheimer’s Disease and related dementias.

Researchers say living in a disadvantaged community is also linked to measures of inflammation and accelerated biological aging, which may affect the trajectory of ALS.

“This is a critical area that requires further attention to help improve the lives of people with ALS,” Goutman said.

“This work could also highlight necessary changes in the systems of care for persons living with ALS to ease the burden of care.”

# Banks cash in as Republicans move to kill consumer protections

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National  
Correspondent

The Biden administration's effort to rein in excessive overdraft fees is now under direct attack from congressional Republicans, who have launched a campaign to repeal the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) rule that would cap overdraft charges at \$5. The move comes as the banking industry—one of Washington's most powerful lobbying forces—pushes to preserve the estimated \$8 billion in annual revenue it collects from these fees. Republicans introduced a Congressional Review Act (CRA) resolution of disapproval on Wednesday, a legislative maneuver that cannot be filibustered and, if passed and signed into law,



Republicans introduced a Congressional Review Act (CRA) resolution of disapproval on Wednesday, a legislative maneuver that cannot be filibustered and, if passed and signed into law, would wipe out the CFPB rule. (Photo via NNPA)

would wipe out the CFPB rule. The rule, finalized in December, was designed to prevent banks from exploiting consumers through excessive fees, a practice the agency found to be rife with deceptive tactics, including manipulating transaction orders to maximize overdraft charges.

"Republicans have introduced legislation to increase your bank fees," former

Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg wrote on X. "Seriously, they are doing this. And it sounds like the Trump administration supports it." The American Prospect reported that Republicans in Congress have clarified who will gain from eliminating the rule. "The CRA has the support of key stakeholders, including the Consumer Bankers Association, Independent Com-

munity Bankers of America, American Bankers Association, and America's Credit Unions," Emma Janssen wrote for The American Prospect. These organizations are deeply entrenched in the banking industry, advocating for financial institutions rather than consumers—the Consumer Bankers Association lobbies on behalf of banks with more than \$10 billion in assets. The Independent Community Bankers of America represents 5,000 smaller banks nationwide. The American Bankers Association, one of the largest lobbying groups in the country, has made preserving overdraft fees a key legislative priority. America's Credit Unions, which claims to represent credit unions, has also sided with the banks in opposing the CFPB rule.

"It is extremely telling that the main stakeholders who want to get rid of the CFPB rule are bankers rather than regular Americans who use banks," Janssen noted. The lawmakers leading the charge—House Financial Services Committee Chairman French Hill (R-AR) and Senate Banking Committee Chairman Tim Scott (R-SC)—both have deep financial ties to the banking industry. Hill's top campaign donor last year was the Bank of New York Mellon, the 13th-largest bank in the country. Scott's biggest contributor was Goldman Sachs. Hill, a former CEO of an Arkansas community bank, has a direct financial interest in preserving overdraft fees. At the same time, Scott has taken more than \$5.3 million in campaign contributions from the fi-

ancial services industry over his career, according to The Lever. "It's up to Republicans to decide whether they will follow Hill and Scott and reveal themselves as objectively pro-junk fee by passing the resolution," Janssen declared.

Republicans defending their move claim that removing the rule is about protecting "consumer choice." Hill, in announcing the resolution of disapproval, said that the CFPB rule "[hurts] consumers who deserve financial protections and greater choice." But as Janssen asserted, "What they call 'choice' is actually taking money away from consumers and giving it over to the banks, and it represents the dubious position that banks simply have to rip off their customers, or they cannot survive."

## EADDY, from Page 2

under Ben Jealous' leadership, where she also worked alongside Mildred Bond Roxborough in the pursuit of civil rights, further cementing her commitment to social justice. At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Jotaka founded the movement #WinWithBlackWomen, an intersectional group composed of Black women leaders from business, sports, movement, politics, entertainment, and beyond, united in their support of Black women. Most recently, under her leadership, #WinWithBlackWomen organized virtual meetings, fundraising efforts, and voter mobilization activations during the 2024 presidential election - reaching over 100,000 voters and raising more than \$2.6 million.

The Vanguard Award for

Fashion will be presented to Essence Communications, Inc. for its powerful voice in championing Black women and culture for over 50 years. What started as a publication has grown into a movement and a bold affirmation of Black womanhood. Celebrating its 55th anniversary in 2025, ESSENCE magazine's first issue released in 1970 to shine a light on the achievements of Black women and amplify their voices. A legacy media giant, ESSENCE (part of The Sundial Group of Companies) has redefined beauty, style, and success on their own terms, leaving a lasting impact on culture and representation, with experiences like ESSENCE Fashion House and the coveted Best in Black Fashion Awards. Previous

Vanguard Award honorees include June Ambrose, Bethann Hardison and Ruth E. Carter.

"The Vanguard Award pays tribute to changemakers, who are making an undeniable impact on our culture. Before inclusivity became a trend, ESSENCE was already championing the strength of our community, the richness of our culture, and the women who shape it," said Karen Boykin-Towns, Vice Chair of the NAACP Board of Directors and Chair of the NAACP Image Awards Committee. "We are proud to honor ESSENCE for its ongoing commitment to amplifying Black voices. As a platform where Black women are celebrated, recognized, and elevated, ESSENCE has captured our spirit and paved the way for new opportunities for us

all."

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awards shows, the "56th NAACP Image Awards" will continue a tradition of excellence, uplifting values

that inspire equality, justice, and progressive change, and highlighting artists committed to that purpose.

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## Settling into campus life at Dallas ISD



**Joyce Foreman**  
Dallas ISD  
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Greetings, District 6!

And just like that, the second semester of the 2024-2025 school year is already in full swing! I hope you're all enjoying your time on campus. To the students of D6, I know you're learning so much. And to our teachers, administrators, and staff, I know you're working hard every day to support our students

and help them succeed. I'm truly grateful to each and every one of you.

As I reflect upon this school year, a quote from Maya Angelou comes to mind. It goes like this: "*any book that helps a child to form a habit of reading, to make reading one of his deep and continuing needs, is good for him.*" This is especially apropos, as we celebrate National Read Aloud Day this month.

Reading is such an important life skill, but it takes practice to feel confident, especially when reading to others. That's why events

like National Read Aloud Day are so valuable — highlighting these skills helps build self-confidence. Plus, reading aloud is a big part of growing up. Many of you probably have fond memories of bedtime stories read by a family member or story time at your local library with a friendly librarian. These moments are priceless, and I encourage you to take some time this February to read a story aloud!

**Dallas ISD celebrates Black History Month:** February is Black History Month, and this year, we

are celebrating with the theme "Seeds of Change: Honoring the Hands that Shaped Nations." Let's take a moment to recognize and celebrate the incredible achievements of our Black students, teachers, and team members who continue to inspire and make a difference every day. Throughout this month, we will tell their stories. I also invite you to attend any Black History Month programs and events hosted by campuses across D6 and the district.

**David W. Carter High School student making headlines:** I'd like to give

a big shoutout to Aiden A., a junior at Carter. He began boxing at just 13, and is now ranked as the No. 1 boxer in Texas. Aiden recently came in second place in his weight class at a competition in Arkansas and is now preparing for a competition in Dallas that will take place this month. Good luck, Aiden! We are all rooting for you.

**Adelle Turner Elementary School fourth grader named semi-finalist in MLK Oratory Competition:** In January, Dallas ISD and Foley & Lardner, LLP hosted the 33rd annual

MLK Oratory Competition. Eight students were chosen to present their speeches at the final competition at the AT&T Performing Arts Center, and I'm so proud to share that one of our own D6 students, Sullivan P. from Turner, took the stage. Congratulations, Sullivan! Your D6 family is proud of you!

**Spring break is coming up:** Dallas ISD campuses and offices will be closed from March 10-14 for spring break. I hope you enjoy this well-deserved time off, and I will see you again on March 17.

## FIRE, from Page 1

about 40% of the construction industry workforce in California foreign born, Murray said the area will have to depend on many, many states and potentially even neighboring countries to bring in the talent that is needed to rebuild. At the same time, folks are going to be afraid to show up, said Murray.

As Professor Theodore adds, the urgency of rebuilding quickly draws in employers and workers to recovery zones. With so much work to be done, contractors must put together crews quickly, using day laborers and whatever local help they can find.

Though immigrant populations present in the area already know how to do the work, the construction industry in Southern California has been falling short of enough house

framers, drywall installers, and roofers to meet existing needs.

Now, after the fire, workers are being drawn to the area at a more urgent pace, an urgency that puts workers, especially vulnerable immigrants, at risk.

The ash, lead and other toxins in the air, which are leaching into the ground and water in Los Angeles, necessitate environmental remediation before the rebuilding can begin, added Theodore. Yet labor protections historically break down in the wake of disasters, resulting in a shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) for people who remain living and working in the area.

Inadequate wages for the workers involved in the rebuilding effort is another result. After Hurricane Katrina, for example, L&R

Security and HKA Enterprises had to pay almost a million dollars in back wages after a Department of Labor investigation reported 382 workers were not paid according to standard.

Enforcement of labor standards has never been what it needs to be to safeguard workers, said Theodore, and provision of PPE has always been inadequate. In a climate disaster, resources are stretched even thinner, and the sense of urgency opens up avenues for exploitation of workers.

While in Florida, after Hurricane Ian, many workers refused to take associated risks, workers typically walk into rebuilding scenarios unaware of the prevailing dangers.

There are so many chemical hazards in the air, including millions of particles that are really ter-

rible, added human rights activist Pablo Alvarado and Co-Executive Director of National Day Laborers Organizing Network.

"It was day laborers who did the cleanup in New York after 9/11," Alvarado recalled, "and one of the consequences was that years later, they have cancer. We're about to face a similar situation here," he said.

I've seen so many workers without the protection that they need, and many of these are immigrant workers. As families come back to the area, their homes are full of chemical hazards, and they're going in without the proper gear.

The needs of these disaster recovery zones are partly being met by labor worker centers put in place to provide protections and PPE to workers. These centers have also grown into the place where people

who've lost their homes come to receive supplies. From baby formula and diapers to adult food and clothing, every day hundreds of cars are picking up donations, said Alvarado. The center is serving about a thousand people per day.

Anovela Bastia, who works with the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights in Los Angeles, who has assisted after the disaster, said there are so many people who have lost everything, and many of these also no longer have work. Yet, they are trying to convey the message that these people are not alone and that there are many organizations trying to help.

As Alvarado said, thousands of volunteers have taken up the cause to help the community, with 15 fire brigades removing debris from the area.

"It appears that at least with the people that have

come here, that the fire also burned away our differences," said Alvarado. "We saw folks from the MAGA crowd coming in to help and working with them hand to hand . . . And what this tells you is that in this moment, humanity is above partisanship. Humanity is above ideology."

"When the brigades went to remove the branches from driveways that were blocking people's access," said Alvarado, "they were not asking whether the owner of that home was a Republican or a Democrat . . . And the beauty of this effort is that it is immigrant workers who are spearheading [and] leading the effort."

Alvarado said he hopes this act of love, kindness and solidarity from the very same people that are being persecuted has some sort of impact in people's hearts and minds.



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# Dying to Wear the Badge: Black police recruits at risk

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National  
Correspondent

Black Americans have long feared dying at the hands of police officers. Now, they are dying while trying to become police officers. An investigation by the Associated Press has revealed a troubling and deadly reality for Black police recruits, who died during training at disproportionately higher rates than their peers. The report found that nearly 60% of re-



Image via NNPA

cruit deaths involved Black trainees, despite Black officers comprising just 12% of local police forces.

Many of the deceased

recruits carried sickle cell trait, a genetic condition that, under extreme exertion, increases the risk of severe injury or death. Up

to 3 million Black citizens in the U.S. have sickle cell trait, yet many adults with the genetic condition don't know their status, researchers say. Unlike people with sickle cell disease, they carry only one gene for sickle cell and one normal gene. The condition, diagnosed through a blood test, doesn't usually affect their daily lives. However, it can cause decreased blood flow and muscle breakdown after intense exertion, dehydration, or high body temperatures. In very

rare cases, that can result in collapse and death. Despite evidence that strenuous police training can trigger fatal collapses, the Associated Press found that few police academies screen recruits for the condition or implement sufficient safety measures to prevent deaths.

Among the recruits who lost their lives was Ronald Donat, a Haitian immigrant who had long aspired to join law enforcement. Donat, a fit soccer player with no known heart issues, collapsed during his first day

of training at Georgia's Gwinnett County Police Department Academy. Instructors ordered an intense workout, pushing recruits through grueling drills. When Donat struggled with air squats, an instructor shouted, 'You are dead!' before he collapsed.

Donat's wife, Sharline Volcy, had initially discouraged him from pursuing law enforcement, fearing for his safety. After he was declared dead at a hospi-

**See RECRUITS, Page 12**



## Black History Month

### Celebrating excellence in every community.

During Black History Month, we honor leaders who consistently dedicate themselves to uplifting and supporting their communities. Through their tireless efforts, they preserve the legacy of those who came before and pave the way for future generations to thrive.

Join us in celebrating fashion entrepreneur Ngozi Okaro, STEM leader Dr. Calvin Mackie, Jamie Aranda, a resilient Air Force veteran, and astronaut Ed Dwight as part of our Everyday Excellence campaign. Their drive and achievements inspire us all, serving as powerful reminders that success is within reach for those who strive for it.



Find career resources to support your own everyday excellence at [aarp.org/work](https://aarp.org/work)



# NBA All-Star Weekend: New format and unexpected highlights

By Jamal Baker  
NDG Contributing Writer

The NBA shook up some things at the annual NBA All-Star Game in an attempt to promote a more competitive atmosphere. The 74th rendition of the game included a mini-tournament featuring four teams—three teams of NBA All-Stars and the winner of the Rising Stars challenge. The prize pool totaled \$1.8 million—each player on the championship winning team won \$125,000 while players on the second-place team won \$50,000. Players on the teams that lost in the semifinals were awarded \$25,000. Key takeaways from the weekend where some of the greatest basketball talents in the world are celebrated:



DWG Statuto

1. The Skills challenge was a snooze fest.
  2. Can we spice up the 3-point contest? (Bring the WNBA athletes back)
  3. Mac McClung’s shoulders must be tired from carrying the dunk contest.
  4. The All-Star tournament is refreshing and much appreciated.
- Saturday night kicked off with Spurs teammates Victor Wembanyama and Chris Paul being disqualified from the NBA All-Star Game skills challenge. In a hilarious attempt to find a loophole in the skills competition, Wembanyama and Paul did not take legitimate shots by just throwing the ball toward the rim in an effort to save time.
- “I don’t regret it. I think it was a good idea,” Wembanyama said.
- All-Stars Donovan Mitchell and Evan Mobley walked away victorious in the competition—a competition that left plenty of

meat on the bone and much to be desired.

The three-point shot has revolutionized the modern NBA, and the Starry 3-point contest is a test of accuracy, stamina, and clutch. The Miami Heat’s Tyler Herro put these char-

acteristics on full display as he defeated Buddy Hield in the final round. Two-time defending champion Damian Lillard was eliminated in the first round after only making four of his nine money balls.

A three-peat was wit-

nessed Saturday night after Mac McClung put on an epic performance during the NBA Slam Dunk Contest. At this point, let’s change the name to the “Mac McClung Showcase”

See NBA, Page 9



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## 2025-2026 Dallas ISD Budget Meetings

You are invited to discuss Dallas ISD’s 2025-2026 budgeting process. Please attend any of the meetings listed here to be part of the conversation. We look forward to seeing you.

DATE	TIME	LOCATION
Tuesday, February 25	6 p.m.	Resource Center South 4401 S. Second Avenue Dallas, TX 75210
Monday, March 3	6 p.m.	Career Institute North 10115 Midway Road Dallas, TX 75229
Tuesday, March 18	6 p.m.	Environmental Education Center 1600 Bowers Road Seagoville, TX 75159
Wednesday, March 19	6 p.m.	Resource Center West 2200 Dennison Street Dallas, TX 75212
Monday, March 24	6 p.m.	Virtual



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# New film 'Godless' examines the clash between Catholicism and politics

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National  
Correspondent

Actor Harry Lennix and director-writer Michael Ricigliano are bringing faith and politics to the forefront with their latest film, *Godless*. The film stars Ana Ortiz as Governor Angela Porra and Lennix as Bishop Reginald Rowland. It tells the story of a Catholic politician facing excommunication after signing progressive legislation into law.

"The film actually began as a play nearly six years ago," Ricigliano said during an appearance with Lennix on the Black Press of America's Let It Be Known. "It was originally in Latin, depicting a tribunal within the Church. As it evolved, the story shifted to focus on the excommunication of a Catholic politician for supporting progressive legislation, particularly a late-term abortion bill."

Ricigliano explained that the bishop in the film is trying to prevent a politician from becoming the face of the Church while holding views that contradict its doctrine. "As more power



Lennix, known for his roles in "The Five Heartbeats," "Dollhouse," and "The Blacklist," brought his deep understanding of Catholicism to the role. A former seminarian, he shared that his personal background helped shape his portrayal of a bishop unwavering in his faith. (Image via NNPA)

shifts back to the states, religion plays an even greater role in shaping political decisions," he said.

Lennix, known for his roles in "The Five Heartbeats," "Dollhouse," and "The Blacklist," brought his deep understanding of Catholicism to the role. A former seminarian, he shared that his personal background helped shape his portrayal of a bishop unwavering in his faith.

"I was once studying to be a Catholic priest, so I know a lot of priests and their mannerisms," Lennix said. "The Church has been

consistent in its stance on issues like the right to life, so it wasn't difficult to find material to study."

Lennix dismissed the idea of seeking political figures for inspiration, stating that his character's convictions were clear-cut. "This character doesn't care what other priests or even the Pope says—if you're Catholic, you must adhere to its teachings," he said.

Ricigliano pointed out that despite attempts to separate the two, faith has always played a significant role in politics. "You go

my life for the last 16 years and the basketball history and culture that's here and the amazing fans that are here and the impact that the game being here has had on both cities. It was awesome from start to finish."

Curry took home his 2nd Kobe Bryant Trophy, winning the 2025 All-Star MVP. Los Angeles will host next year's All-Star festivities where NBA commissioner Adam Silver will certainly remain creative to increase fan engagement.

back to King Henry VIII, the Borgias—faith and politics have been linked for centuries," Ricigliano noted.

"At its core, *Godless* is about forgiveness and understanding. It presents both sides of the debate—how a devout Catholic politician struggles to reconcile faith with duty and how a bishop takes a hardline stance to uphold Church teachings," he stated.

Lennix agreed, adding, "Catholicism isn't a pick-and-choose faith. If you don't want to believe it, that's fine, but don't claim to be a good Catholic while

contradicting its teachings."

As discussions about the role of faith in governance intensify, Ricigliano noted how *Godless* mirrors real-world political pressures. He referenced President Donald Trump's re-establishment of a faith council and doubling down on Christian values and how such actions further intertwine religion with policy.

"Politicians, particularly Catholic ones, must now answer directly to their constituents on faith-based issues," he said. "With power shifting to state governments, voters are look-

ing at where candidates stand on moral and religious issues."

Beyond *Godless*, Lennix remains active in theater. He currently stars in *Purpose*, a new Broadway play directed by Phylicia Rashad. He sided with the stage when asked to choose between Broadway and film.

"Right now, it's Broadway for me," he said. "It demands a longer concentration span since you can't redo scenes like in film. But overall, the distinction between stage and screen

See FILM, Page 12

## NBA, from Page 8

because it just was not fair. Stephon Castle did however give McClung a run for his money by logging a score of 99.6 in the last round and barely finishing second. McClung became the only player in NBA history to win three consecutive slam dunk contest titles.

Team Shaq defeated Team Chuck in the All-Star tournament final. The new tournament format produced more competitive

basketball, but it is clear this game is too far beyond repair to ever truly bring 100 percent effort out of players.

"The hosting experience was unbelievable," Stephen Curry said of All-Star Weekend. "I'm not going to complain about being tired or exhausted. This is an honor and a blessing to be able to celebrate and share this beautiful Bay Area that's been a part of

# NDG Book Review: 'Becoming Spectacular' offers a small dose of inspiration

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

Step, step, kick. Twirl, step, and kick again. Left, right, step. The choreography is all new to you, but you'll get it eventually, no problem. You know what it takes to be a great dancer: getting enough rest, taking care of yourself, practice, and as in the new book "Becoming Spectacular" by Jennifer Jones, you'll need all the perseverance you can muster.

Born in New Jersey in 1967, Jennifer Jones had a relatively happy childhood. The daughter of an interracial couple, her parents worked hard to give their three girls good lives, fun



activities, safe neighborhoods in which to live, good schools, and a firm love of the arts.

As a youngster, Jones took twirling classes and tap lessons; she remembers seeing plays on Broadway and imagining she could be

the next Stephanie Mills in *The Wiz*. Even though Jones was a child then, Mills' iconic performance made it clear that there was a place for little Black girls on the Great White Way.

When Jones was a pre-teen, her mother paid for dance lessons and Jones found a mentor, Frank Hatchett, co-founder of the Broadway Dance Center. She also entered a pageant and got fourth runner-up but over time, her love of performing began to take a backseat to boys and drugs as she entered her teens.

It didn't help that her parents fought, and they divorced.

At seventeen, Jones expressed an interest in rekin-

dling her love of dance, but her then-boyfriend scoffed – which she took as a challenge, and she worked her way onto a music video. Seizing her passion, she took classes in Manhattan while attending college, working odd jobs to pay the bills, and attending try-outs as often as possible.

A painful break-up with a different boyfriend sent Jones back to New Jersey, but dance was still in her blood. She'd noticed a listed audition for Radio City Music Hall's Rockettes, and the ad specified that minorities were welcome to try out – so she did.

And in an instant, she was a Rockette.

And that's that, right?

Not so fast. That's what you get in the first half of "Becoming Spectacular," but author Jennifer Jones has a whole lot more to tell. Are you sure you want to read it, though?

Think twice: Jones' basic story and her perseverance are worth cheering about, but readers may sometimes feel uncomfortable in what may seem like oversharing of private matters and parent-child issues in other places in the tale. Jones rushes her early story quite a bit, sometimes

barely touching upon areas that might have served to inspire readers, and all her hard-won triumphs are often minimized – especially considering the end of Jones' story, her struggles and the difficulties she experienced as a Black woman. That makes this tale as uneven as a cobblestone street.

Overall, this quick story could've been longer and better but even so, there's inspiration here to be found, if you look for it. Know that, going into "Becoming Spectacular," and you might get a kick out of it.

## ← PRESS, from Page 3

ignorance of Black history. She recently lit into the MAGA loyalists who claimed white men are oppressed in America.

"There has been no oppression for the white man in this country," she declared in a fiery, nearly two-minute speech. "You tell me which white men were dragged out of their homes. You tell me which one of them was dragged across an ocean and told they were going to work, have their wives stolen, and have their wives raped. That didn't happen. That is oppression."

Crockett pointed out that Republicans are constantly trying to erase Black history from school textbooks. They want to keep American schoolchildren in the dark, she says, so they "can then misuse words like oppression"—just like

her House colleagues were doing at that moment.

Writing in the *Detroit Free Press*, Keith Owens asserted, "You can't erase Black history for the same reason you can't erase air; because air simply exists whether you want it to or not. It's not multiple-choice. Stop breathing, and you will find out. It's science, and it's also fact."

Owens further argued, "Any attempt to extricate Black threads from the American tapestry will result in the entire fabric becoming undone. Just to make it plain; there is no American history without Black history. That's because there is a strong likelihood that America never would have evolved into the economic powerhouse that it became – and might not have evolved much at

all – without Black Americans."

Historians warn that suppressing history is often a precursor to further civil rights rollbacks. They argue that the Black Press must be the frontline against these efforts as it has done for centuries. "It must continue reporting on the realities that mainstream media overlooks, challenge disinformation, and preserve the voices of those history seeks to erase," said self-described New York *Amsterdam News* loyalist and accountant Jonathan Ebanks.

"Silence is complicity in state-sponsored amnesia. The Black Press plays a vital role in resisting this erasure," Ebanks insisted. "The truth will not preserve itself. The Black Press must continue its mission—not just to inform but to resist."

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# Corporate America abandons DEI, but Black-owned brands are the future

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National  
Correspondent

While corporations retreat, Black entrepreneurs continue to build, innovate, and thrive. According to NBC Select, over three million Black-owned brands are in the U.S., spanning every industry imaginable. As corporate America abandons its DE&I commitments, the power shifts to conscious consumers who invest in businesses that uplift and sustain marginalized communities.

Here are just a few stand-out Black-owned brands leading the charge:

## Clothing & Accessories

- Telfar – The brand that revolutionized luxury fashion with its motto: “Not for you—for everyone.”

- Hanifa – A trailblazing womenswear brand founded by Anifa Mvuemba, known for its stunning digital fashion shows.

- Pyer Moss – Founded by Kerby Jean-Raymond, this label merges activism and high fashion.

- Grayscale – A streetwear brand bringing bold aesthetics and social commentary to the forefront.

- Sassy Jones – A stand-out accessories brand built on bold, unapologetic self-expression.

## Beauty & Skincare

- Fenty Beauty – Rihanna’s globally inclusive beauty empire that set a new standard for shade diversity.

- Mented Cosmetics – Beauty products created specifically for deeper skin tones.

- The Lip Bar – A Black-woman-owned brand disrupting the beauty industry with bold, non-toxic lipstick shades.

- Pattern Beauty – Founded by Tracee Ellis Ross, specializing in products for textured hair.

- Alikay Naturals – Natural haircare products with a devoted following.

## Home & Lifestyle

- Estelle Colored Glass – Hand-blown glassware that brings Black excellence to fine dining.

- Jungalow – A home décor brand from designer Justina Blakeney, blending culture and bohemian flair.

- Linoto – Luxury linen bedding made with sustainability in mind.

- Yowie – A modern design studio curating unique home goods from independent artists.

## Food & Beverage

- Partake Foods – A Black-owned snack company offering allergen-friendly cookies and treats.

- McBride Sisters Wine Collection – The largest Black-owned wine com-

pany in the U.S., run by two sisters redefining the industry.

- Uncle Nearest Whiskey – Honoring Nathan “Nearest” Green, the Black distiller behind Jack Daniel’s original recipe.

- Capital City Mambo Sauce – The D.C. favorite taking over the condiment industry.

Meanwhile, corporate America’s performative commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) is unraveling at an alarming rate. In the years following the murder of George Floyd, corporations made bold promises to support marginalized communities, pledging billions in investments to level the playing field. But as the political landscape shifts and accountability wanes, those commitments are being discarded. A staggering number of major corporations have scaled back or eliminated DE&I programs: Amazon, Target, Amtrak, Goldman Sachs, Disney, Deloitte, PBS, Google, Pepsi, General Motors (GM), GE, Intel, PayPal, Chipotle, Comcast, Accenture, The Smithsonian Institution, the FBI, Meta, Walmart, Boeing, Molson Coors, Ford Motor Co., Harley-Davidson, and John Deere have all abandoned or severely reduced their diversity efforts. The

their stock.”

“This is just phase one,” Bryant continued. “After the 40 days, we’ll figure out who’s next. But we have to go after Target first. Amazon and others come right after. “America has shown us time and time again: if it doesn’t make dollars, it doesn’t make sense.”

very companies that once paraded their commitment to racial equity in multimillion-dollar ad campaigns are now quietly erasing those initiatives from their bottom lines.

Not everyone is staying silent. Dr. Jamal Bryant, the influential pastor of New Birth Missionary Baptist Church in metro Atlanta, is leading a 40-day economic fast—or boycott—of Target in direct response to the retailer’s decision to phase out its DE&I initiatives. Target, headquartered in Minneapolis—the city where George Floyd was murdered in 2020—originally pledged \$2 bil-

lion in investments toward Black-owned businesses. That commitment was due in December 2025, but on January 24, Target announced it would end its DE&I efforts, effectively abandoning that financial commitment. Bryant, appearing on the Black Press’ Let It Be Known news program, condemned the move. “After the murder of George Floyd, they made a \$2 billion commitment to invest in Black businesses,” he said. “When they pulled out of the DE&I agreement in January, they also canceled that \$2 billion commitment.”

Target is just the be-

ginning. Bryant calls for 100,000 people to halt their spending at the retail giant as a direct challenge to corporate America’s retreat from racial equity. “Black people spend \$12 million a day at Target,” he said. “Because of how many dollars are spent there and the absence of commitment to our community, we are focusing on Target first.” The boycott, designed to coincide with Lent, aims to leverage Black economic power to hold corporations accountable. Within just one week, 50,000 people had already signed the

See BRANDS, Page 13



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## BRYANT, from Page 2

do without showing them what to do,” Bryant said. “If you’re not going to Target or Walmart but need essentials like toilet paper, soap, or detergent, we’ll show you where to get them and reinvest in Black businesses.”

The impact of the boycott

is already being felt, he insisted.

“Since Black people have been boycotting Target, the stock has dropped by \$11,” Bryant said. “Stockholders are now suing Target because of the adverse impact this boycott has had on

## RECRUITS, from Page 7

tal, the county ruled that he died of natural causes, citing an enlarged heart. The autopsy report did not mention sickle cell trait, but Volcy believes her husband had it, as their daughters carry the trait.

The investigation documented cases in which Black recruits in distress were denied breaks or hydration, exacerbating their risk of fatal collapse. One Texas recruit, caught on video, begged for water but was denied by an instructor who stated, ‘You can’t get water in a fight.’ He collapsed minutes later. In Arkansas, a cadet died after being forced to run in long pants under the scorching midday sun. In North Carolina, a recruit’s body temperature reached 106 degrees by the time he died, following an hour-long obstacle course with no water breaks.

Dr. Randy Eichner, a retired professor at the University of Oklahoma, has long warned of a ‘troubling spate of exertional collapse and death’ among police trainees. The National Collegiate Athletic Association and the U.S. military have taken steps to screen for sickle cell trait and imple-

ment protective measures, significantly reducing the number of deaths in physically demanding settings. However, the report found that most police academies have not followed suit.

Bill Alexander, CEO of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, acknowledged that some deaths could be prevented but insisted that fatalities will always be a risk in policing. Critics argue that such an acceptance of risk ignores systemic failures in academy training, particularly the resistance to implementing basic safeguards such as hydration breaks, heat monitoring, and immediate medical intervention.

Because most of the recruits in the investigation hadn’t been sworn in as officers before they died, their names don’t appear on the national memorial for deceased officers or some state memorials. And many of their families can’t qualify for death benefits. Aware of those stakes last year, the police chief in Knoxville, Tennessee, summoned a judge to the hospital room of unconscious recruit Wisbens Antoine.

On that February night, a fellow recruit took the oath on behalf of Antoine, who’d collapsed during training a week before graduation.

Hours later, Officer Antoine, 32, died, leaving behind a wife and two daughters.

Following Donat’s

death, Gwinnett County now requires an ambulance on-site during first-day workouts. However, it has not implemented screening for sickle cell trait. An internal investigation by the department concluded that no policy violations occurred and no disciplinary actions were taken.

The AP’s report concluded that, despite the preventable nature of these tragedies, there has been little accountability. The researchers reported that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) did not investigate Donat’s case because local government agencies are

not under its jurisdiction, a common limitation that leaves police recruits with fewer workplace safety protections.

“This sad tragedy is preventable,” Dr. Eichner insisted. “But [it] will not become so until our police chiefs begin to heed the message.”


## FILM, from Page 9

acting isn’t as pronounced as it once was.”

After a theatrical run in November, Godless will be available for streaming starting February 28 on Apple, Google Play, Fandango at Home, Amazon, and Vimeo. The filmmakers encourage audiences

to follow @GodlessMovie for updates.

“The title originally was Ipso Facto, meaning self-excommunication,” Ricigliano said. “But we eventually landed on Godless, a title that better captures the essence of the film.”



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### McKinney Housing Authority 2025 ANNUAL & FIVE-YEAR PLAN

#### PUBLIC MEETINGS NOTICE

The Quality Housing & Work Responsibility Act of 1998 requires the McKinney Housing Authority to submit an Agency Plan each year.

The PHA Plan is a comprehensive guide to public housing agency (PHA) policies, programs, operations, and strategies for meeting local housing needs and goals. There are two parts to the PHA Plan: the 5-Year Plan, which each PHA submits to HUD once every 5th PHA fiscal year, and the Annual Plan, which is submitted to HUD every year. Below is a list of meetings that are scheduled to review and discuss the Agency Plan documents for the 2025 fiscal year. Program participants, the public and staff are encouraged to attend the meetings.

#### Autoridad de Vivienda McKinney PLAN ANUAL Y QUINQUENAL 2025

#### REUNIONES DARSE CUENTA

La Ley de Vivienda y Responsabilidad Laboral de Calidad de 1998 requiere que la Autoridad de Vivienda de McKinney presente un Plan de la Agencia cada año.

El Plan PHA es una guía completa de las políticas, programas, operaciones y estrategias de las agencias de vivienda pública (PHA) para satisfacer las necesidades y los objetivos de vivienda locales. Hay dos partes en el Plan PHA: el Plan de 5 años, que cada PHA presenta a HUD una vez cada quinto año fiscal de PHA, y el Plan anual, que se envía a HUD cada año.

A continuación hay una lista de reuniones que están programadas para revisar y analizar los documentos del Plan de la Agencia para el año fiscal 2025.

Se anima a los participantes del programa, al público y al personal a asistir a las reuniones

Tuesday January 28, 2025	4:30pm	Board of Commissioners Meeting	Merritt Homes Community Center	1200 N. Tennessee St. McKinney, TX 75069
Thursday February 13, 2025	4:30pm	Public Meeting	Newsome Homes Community Center	1450 Amcott St. McKinney, TX 75069
Tuesday February 25, 2025	4:30pm	Board of Commissioners Meeting	Merritt Homes Community Center	1200 N. Tennessee St. McKinney, TX 75069

A draft of the proposed ANNUAL and Five Year Plan is available for review at the MHA main office located at: 603 N. Tennessee St. McKinney, TX.

Comments can be submitted by hand delivery, mail, or email to McKinney Housing Authority Main Office; 603 North Tennessee Street; Attn: Roslyn Miller; McKinney, TX 75069 or [info@mckinneyha.org](mailto:info@mckinneyha.org). The final public hearing for plan adoption will be held on Tuesday, March 25th at 4:30pm – Merritt Homes community center.

**BRANDS, from Page 11**

petition at targetfast.org, signaling the growing momentum behind the movement.

Bryant's demands go beyond reinstating DE&I. "White women are the number one beneficiary of DE&I," he noted. "What I am asking for is a quarter of a billion dollars to be invested in Black banks so that our Black businesses can scale." He also

called for Target to partner with HBCUs by integrating their business departments into its supply chain infrastructure. Meanwhile, the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA)—the nation's largest Black-owned media organization—has announced its own national public education and selective buying campaign in response to corporate Amer-

ica's retreat from DE&I. "We are the trusted voice of Black America, and we will not be silent or nonresponsive to the rapid rise of renewed Jim Crow racist policies in corporate America," said NNPA Chairman Bobby R. Henry Sr.

NNPA President and CEO Dr. Benjamin F. Cha-

vis Jr. reinforced the need for financial realignment. "Black Americans spend \$2 trillion annually. We must evaluate and realign to question why we continue to spend our money with companies that do not respect us. These contradictions will not go unchallenged."



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# My Tok Doesn't Always Tik

Dr. James L. Snyder

Throughout my life, I have always lived on a schedule. Every day is devoted to certain tasks, and it has worked for me so far.

I know what day it is by what I am doing that day.

Unlike The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, I cannot multitask. I have to do one thing at a time, which has to be on my schedule.

I am often impressed by my wife's ability to multitask. She can do a dozen things at once and get them accomplished the way they are supposed to be, but I have a hard time knowing what she is doing at any given time.

I plan my week in a very precise routine. I can only do one thing at a time, which must be on my schedule.

I schedule each week by assigning a particular project to each day. I spend one day doing my radio ministry, another doing my weekly column, and then several days working on my sermon for Sunday. I follow my routine very pre-

cisely each week.

Unfortunately, my schedule has been interrupted. I spent five days in the hospital and then over two weeks in bed recuperating from my health problem.

Being in the hospital is a very boring time. There is not much I can do because I have medical personnel coming in and out poking me with needles and all sorts of things. Just when I think I'm asleep someone comes.

Some even came in around 3 a.m., and unfortunately, I was not sleeping because how in the world can you sleep in a hospital with such a routine?

I never knew what day it was and was so very confused. One day was just like the other, and I was not getting anything done.

Now, I'm trying to get back on schedule. Boy, is this difficult. I guess it's because of my age I can't begin to pull everything back together again as quickly as I need to.

Every day of the week is identified by the project I'm working on. Now, I'm so confused that I have no

idea what day it is or what I should be doing.

I remember asking The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage one day, "What day is it today?"

Looking at me with one of her grimaces, she said, "What day would you like it to be?" Then she laughed and walked away.

If I had my way, today would be the day before I went into the hospital.

I had to spend some time searching my journal to figure out what I had been doing before I went into the hospital. The good thing is that I keep notes or I would be completely lost.

I spent one whole day going through four years of journals to figure out what I was doing each day. I carefully made notes and began understanding what I was doing Monday through Friday.

Going through these journals enabled me to figure out my schedule for the week. I usually don't spend much time figuring out what I'm doing; I just do it. I was getting close to the end of my research and was happy to work these out.

One morning, I got up and walked out to the kitchen, where The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage was preparing breakfast. She looked at me and said, "So, what day is it for you?"

Looking at her I said, "Today is National Apple Fritter Day."

I laughed and went to sit down in my chair, and then realized I didn't know what day it was. Now, what do I do? If I don't know what day it is, how will I know what I'm supposed to be doing today?

It could be my old age, but I'm terrible at remembering the day. If I don't know what day it is, how am I going to spend the day productively and what project I am going to be working on.

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage brought my

breakfast and a nice hot cup of coffee. Before walking away, she said, "Today is Wednesday, and it's the day you do your radio work." Then she went back into the kitchen.

Aha. That will solve my problem for today. I'll spend the morning doing my radio programs for the week. I was kind of happy to hear that. Now I know how I will spend the day.

Nothing is more satisfying than knowing what you're doing. Unlike The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, I'm not multitasking because if I was, I would never get back to my schedule like I had it before. I cannot handle 100 tasks like my wife can. I can only handle one task at a time.

I often think about what it would be like to multi-

task and juggle hundreds of tasks simultaneously. I wonder how much I could get done if I could do that. My Tok needs to Tik on time everyday.

Getting back to my regular schedule is a very relaxing thing for me.

I thought of a verse of scripture along this line. Ephesians 5:15-16, "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

Although the days are evil, each day I need to walk exactly in a way that honors God.

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

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al Sciences of the National Institutes of Health, the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases.

Discover more about brain health at Brain-andLife.org, from the American Academy of Neurology. This resource also offers a magazine, podcast, and books that connect patients, caregivers and

anyone interested in brain health with the most trusted information, straight from experts in brain health.

The American Academy of Neurology is the world's largest association of neurologists and neuroscience professionals with more than 40,000 members, the AAN provides access to the latest news, science and research affecting neurology for patients, caregivers, physicians and professionals alike. The AAN's mission is to enhance member

career fulfillment and promote brain health for all. A neurologist is a doctor who specializes in the diagnosis, care and treatment of brain, spinal cord and nervous system diseases such as Alzheimer's disease, stroke, concussion, epilepsy, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, headache and migraine.

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## Black History Facts



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Romare Bearden, an artist known as the “Master of Collage” (the art of covering a surface with fragments of pictures from magazines, drawing, painting, and whatever else the artist is inspired to attach.

Otis Boykin in 1955, created an electrical mechanism regulating unit for the first heart pacemaker. Marshall “Major” Taylor, known as “The Black Cyclone” became the first African American to win a national title in any sport in 1898.

In 1896 Taylor won the World One-Mile Sprint Championship at a Montreal meet and set a world’s record in a Chicago bicycle race. Taylor took his motto from Booker T. Washington:

“I shall allow no man to narrow my soul and drag me down.” He concluded his autobiography by asserting, “I am a Negro in every sense of the word.”

Susie King Taylor was the first Black Army Nurse. She was with the 33rd U.S. Colored Infantry and served at a laundress, cook, and nurse. She also taught classes for the men, having learned to read and write in a secret slave school.

Later in the Civil War, Taylor tended the men of the famous black regiment, the Massachusetts 54th, and she worked with Clara Barton, the woman who founded the Red Cross.

Walter S. McAfee is



the first African American mathematician and physicist who first calculated the speed of the moon.

Participating in the U.S. Army program, Project Diana in the 1940’s; McAfee made the necessary calculations and on January 10, 1946, allowed a team to send a radar pulse through a special 40-foot square antenna towards the moon. Two and a half seconds later, they received a faint signal, proving that transmissions from earth could cross the vast distances of outer space.

Frederick McKinley Jones, born in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1893 and orphaned at the age of nine, is best remembered for devising a method to refrigerate trucks carrying perishable food, an idea expanded to include air coolers for ships, planes, and trains.

As a result of this method called pre-fabricated refrigerated construction, meat, fruit, vegetable, and butter could be transported long distances.

The Institute for Colored Youth (now known as Cheyney State University) founded in Philadelphia in 1832 is the first historically Black college.

It began as a private school, but was taken over by Pennsylvania in 1921 and became part of the state system. Longer than

any other American college, Cheyney served the educational needs of the Black community.

However, Middlebury was another college teaching African Americans during this time; it was the first college to grant a degree to an African American (Alexander Lucius Twilight) in 1823.

Peter Hill, born a slave and lived in New Jersey from 1767 – 1829, was a highly skilled clock maker (at the time, a clock was a delicate mechanism, which had to be perfectly constructed for it to work. Only the most skilled craftspeople could create one), and fortunately two of the clocks Hill made still exist.

One is in the Westtown School in Westtown, Pennsylvania. The other is in the National Museum of History and Technology at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

Inventions: Shoe Lasting Machine by H.E. Matzeliger on September 22, 1891. Sugar Refinement by Norman Rillieux on December 10, 1846.

Thermostat Control by Frederick M. Jones on February 23, 1960. Egg Beater by Willie Johnson on February 5, 1884. Dough Kneader by L. Bell on December 10, 1872.

Eye Protector by P.

Johnson on November 2, 1880. Fire Escape Ladder by J.B. Winters on May 7, 1878. Fire Extinguisher by T. Marshall on October 26, 1872. Folding Bed by L.C. Bailey on July 18, 1899. Folding Chair by Purdy

& Sadgwar on June 11, 1889. Lawn Mower by L.A. Burr on May 19, 1889.

The Refrigerator by J. Standard on June 14, 1891. An Insect-Destroyer Gun by A.C. Richard on Febru-

ary 28, 1899. The Automatic Gear Shift by Richard Spikes on February 28, 1932.

*(Editor’s Note: This column originally ran in 2014. It has been edited for space.)*

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