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The abrupt end to DEI: Will it help or hurt small business?

By Lori Lee
NDG Contributing Writer

Much work has been done to improve opportunities for American minorities over the years. The 1957 and '64 Civil Rights Acts protected voter, education and worker rights. Later, in 1969, the courts handed down a ruling that would end school segregation.

Later, in 2014, the Supreme Court upheld the use of race in college admissions in Fisher v. Univ. of Texas at Austin, but in 2023, a more conservative court would only overturn the ruling, effectively ending affirmative action.

The political tide has certainly turned over the last decade. As tensions brewed amidst the economic strain of the pandemic and the murder of George Floyd, divisions ran deep, CNN reported, a Trump crack-down on protestors only deepening the divide. During this time, America embraced Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) as the right thing to do,



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion has come under attack, with opponents saying it promotes unqualified people and businesses. Meanwhile, the new normal may be a slap in the face to small businesses across the board. (DWG Studio)

a term that would quickly become a buzzword in Corporate America.

Since then, misinformation and social division have distorted the term DEI. The political climate has, in fact, changed so much since Trump's first term that leveling opportunities to support the historically disadvan-

taged are increasingly seen as means of promotion without merit.

Following decades of progress, the pendulum swung back hard, as Donald Trump on his first day issued executive orders ending federal DEI,

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Black Press, Black Church targets Target

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Aging better by eating better

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People In The News ...



Jonathan Majors



Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

NDG Quote of the Week: "If you are going to achieve excellence in big things, you develop the habit in little matters. Excellence is not an exception, it is a prevailing attitude."
- Colin Powell

Jonathan Majors

By Lauren Burke

Actor Jonathan Majors, whose career was slowed by a misdemeanor conviction in late 2024, is on the comeback trail. Last week, the film “Magazine Dreams” appeared in 800 theaters. Despite controversy in his personal life, positive reviews by movie critics and online movie buffs have hailed his performance. The independent film directed by Elijah Bynum was released on March 21. The



film focuses on a fictional bodybuilder named Killian Maddox who is struggling with mental illness. During an unpredictable two-hour ride, Majors command the screen in an intense role that deals with broad

themes of the meaning of human existence to failure and personal adversity.

Though “Magazine Dreams” originally debuted on January 20, 2023, at Sundance, it faded to black for two years after Majors was arrested on March 25, 2023, after an argument with his then-girlfriend. The two were seen in a surveillance video during the dispute which featured the girlfriend chasing the actor through the Chelsea section of Manhattan. After the actor called the police after spending the night alone in an uptown hotel shortly

after breaking up with his ex via text, Majors called police the next morning to his Manhattan residence — which his ex had locked him out of. When police arrived, they found her dazed and confused on the floor of Majors’ bathroom. Police arrested Majors.

Majors was charged with assault and would later be found guilty of a misdemeanor. The moment temporarily delayed his career. But a comeback is underway professionally and personally. As Majors enjoyed a press event that included a Q&A panel with “Selma”

(2014) star David Oyelowo it was revealed he and actress Meghan Good were married by Major’s mother, who is a pastor. His mother and Good were seen by Majors’ side during his brief trial in New York in late 2023. During an interview with Sherri Shepherd on March 21, Majors revealed that he was a survivor of sexual molestation when he was eight. When Shepherd asked Majors what got him to a place where he could share that painful private information publicly. The actor answered: “Growth.”

It was announced on

March 26 that Majors has been cast in the action film “True Threat” which will be directed by Gerard McMurray. He will portray Vernon Threat, a Special Forces officer who seeks revenge and justice after the murder of his son. Majors has also been cast in the revenge thriller “Merciless,” to be directed by Martin Villeneuve. Both McMurray and Bynum are Black directors in Hollywood that still feature few of them. Majors, 35, graduated from the David Geffen School of Drama at Yale University in 2016.

Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

Thousands of federal health employees faced sudden job losses Tuesday as mass firings and forced resignations swept through the U.S. Food and Drug Administration under a new directive from the Trump administration. According to Endpoints News, some FDA staffers arriving at the agency’s White Oak campus in Maryland discovered their employment had ended when their security badges failed to activate. Guards then escorted them to gather their belongings. Witnesses, who spoke on condition of anonymity, described a chaotic atmosphere as longtime employees were abruptly cut loose.

Those escorted out included individuals who had accepted buyouts and retirement packages, leaving them all the more perplexed and concerned about whether the Trump administration will keep its word on the separa-



tion agreements. “This is confusing,” said one individual who previously accepted a retirement package and was told their last day would be later in April. “Do I need a lawyer?” the individual wondered. Among the affected was Dr. Peter Stein, director of the Office of New Drugs at the FDA’s Center for Drug Evaluation and Research. Stein said he was presented with a reassignment to a newly created position in “patient affairs” — or the option to leave. He rejected the offer, calling it “ridiculous,” and was placed on administrative leave.

The sweeping changes

will affect roughly 3,500 FDA employees — nearly one-fifth of the agency’s workforce. The Biden-era leadership structure is being dismantled under the direction of Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who has installed new personnel and removed several high-ranking officials, including those working on cancer therapies and biologics. Dr. Peter Marks, the FDA’s top vaccine official and longtime director of the Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research, also resigned. He cited what he described as a dangerous erosion of public trust in science under Kennedy’s leadership. “If Peter Marks does not want to get behind restoring science to its golden standard and promoting radical transparency, then he has no place at FDA under the strong leadership of Secretary Kennedy,” an HHS spokesperson said.

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Black Press and Black Church unity targeting TARGET

By Dr. Benjamin F Chavis Jr.



For over 198 years the Black Press and the Black Church have joined together for causes of freedom, justice, equality, equity, and empowerment. Today more than ever before there is renewed urgency for the Black Church and the Black Press to publicly amplify our mutual interests to protect and maintain the hard-fought gains and progress that has been accomplished by African Americans in the last two centuries.

On the record, "We are not going back in America and nowhere else in the world in 2025." We have already suffered too much from the vicious unprecedented genocide, terrorism, and crimes against

humanity during the Transatlantic Slave Trade, global imperialism, racism, colonialism, neocolonialism, reconstruction and Jim Crow, mass incarceration, and present day repressive policies and Executives Orders in an attempt to erase our history and legacy with libelous actions and falsehoods.

The prophetic voice of the Black Church continues to resonate with historic and contemporary inspiration and power. Together

we are resolutely demanding respect from Target and those companies that make billions of dollars from our consumership.

We are not begging. We are demanding respect and an equitable business relationship with Target and corporate America. From executive decision makers to marketing and promotions account managers, to the shareholders of the companies, we demand economic restora-

tion and respect.

We salute the bold leadership of The Reverend Jamal Harrison Bryant and the New Birth Missionary Baptist Church in Atlanta and other Black Church leaders across the nation who are standing up and preaching liberation theology.

TARGET will continue to be our target. We in the Black Press of America will continue our public education and selective buying campaign. No respect, no buying. No justice, no peace.

May God continue to bless the Black Church and the Black Press.

Rev. Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. is President and CEO of the National Newspaper Publishers Association and BlackPressUSA

Differing ideas on Liberation

By April Ryan

"April 2 is liberation day, "proclaims Karoline Leavitt, White House Press Secretary, during Tuesday's daily press briefing. President Trump will announce the percentage of tariffs on products from targeted countries and which countries will have tariffs on imported goods at a Rose Garden event tomorrow afternoon. Leavitt inferred that the liberation was President Trump's announcement of new tariffs to get U.S. companies to keep all product production

in the United States. The presidential spokeswoman says American companies won't be subjected to tariff costs if they produce in the United States.

Democrats criticize the targeted tariffs, claiming they will impact American companies, forcing price hikes that will transfer to the pocket of the American consumer. Also, during the Tuesday afternoon White House Briefing, Leavitt affirmed that auto tariffs will go into effect on April 3. On the other side of Pennsylvania Ave., liberation had a different look. Democratic

New Jersey Senator Cory Booker has been talking on the Senate floor to thwart the Trump agenda. "I rise to disrupt the normal business of the Senate as long as I can," says the New Jersey Democratic Senator, speaking on the Senate floor for over 22 hours.

Booker's protest isn't blocking any action on the Senate floor while he is speaking, answering questions, and reciting famous works like the Negro National Anthem written by James Weldon Johnson. Since 7 p.m. Eastern Monday, Senator Booker has

discussed issues of Medicare, healthcare, education, immigration, and national security. Booker is set to make history with his protest if he can surpass the 24 hours and 18 minutes completed by then-Republican South Carolina Senator Strom Thurmond in 1957. The Thurmond filibuster was against civil rights legislation. Meanwhile, Booker's protest is not a filibuster as he is not opposing or blocking a vote or legislation. Booker is taking this exhaustive action as he says, "I rise tonight because our nation is in crisis."

Keep up with the news

O N L I N E

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Study illustrates how eating well leads to aging better

(Newswise) — Maintaining a healthy diet rich in plant-based foods, with low to moderate intake of animal-based foods and less of ultra-processed foods, is linked to a higher likelihood of healthy aging, a new international study led by an Université de Montréal dietitian suggests.

Published today in *Nature Medicine*, the study was co-authored with colleagues at Harvard University's T.H. Chan School of Public Health, in the U.S., and the University of Copenhagen, in Denmark.

It's among the first to examine multiple dietary patterns in midlife in relation to overall healthy aging, defined as reaching age 70 free of major chronic diseases and with cognitive, physical, and mental health maintained.

"Our findings also show that there is no one-size-fits-all diet," said lead author Anne-Julie Tessier,



DWG Studio

an assistant professor in UdeM's Department of Nutrition, researcher at the Montreal Heart Institute, and visiting scientist at Harvard Chan School.

"Healthy diets can be adapted to fit individual needs and preferences," said Tessier.

She and her colleagues used data from the U.S. Nurses' Health Study and the Health Professionals Follow-Up Study to examine the midlife diets and eventual health outcomes of more than 105,000 American women and men ages

39-to-69 over the course of 30 years.

Eight dietary patterns Participants regularly completed dietary questionnaires, which the researchers scored on how well participants adhered to eight healthy dietary patterns: the Alternative Healthy Eating Index (AHEI), the Alternative Mediterranean Index (aMED), the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH), the Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay (MIND), the healthful plant-based diet (hPDI), the

Planetary Health Diet Index (PHDI), the empirically inflammatory dietary pattern (EDIP), and the empirical dietary index for hyperinsulinemia (EDIH).

Each of these diets emphasizes high intake of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, unsaturated fats, nuts and legumes, and some also include low to moderate intake of healthy animal-based foods such as fish and certain dairy products. The researchers also assessed participants' intake of ultra-processed foods, which are industrially manufactured, often containing artificial ingredients, added sugars, sodium and unhealthy fats.

The study found that 9,771 participants—9.3 per cent of the total—aged healthfully. Adhering to any one of the healthy dietary patterns was linked to overall healthy aging and its individual domains, including cognitive, physical

and mental health.

"Studies have previously investigated dietary patterns in the context of specific diseases or how long people live," said co-corresponding author Frank Hu, a professor of nutrition and epidemiology and chair of the Department of Nutrition at Harvard Chan School.

"Ours takes a multifaceted view, asking, how does diet impact people's ability to live independently and enjoy a good quality of life as they age?"

Two healthy diets stand out

The leading healthy diet was found to be the AHEI, which was developed to prevent chronic diseases. A higher score for the diet was associated with an 86 per cent greater likelihood of healthy aging at 70 years and 2.2 times higher likelihood at 75 years compared to those in the lowest quintile of the AHEI score. The AHEI reflects a diet rich in

fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, legumes and healthy fats, and low in red and processed meats, sugar-sweetened beverages, sodium and refined grains.

Another leading diet for healthy aging was the PHDI, which considers both human and environmental health by emphasizing plant-based foods and minimizing animal-based foods.

Higher intake of ultra-processed foods, especially processed meat and sugary and diet beverages, was associated with lower chances of healthy aging.

"Since staying active and independent is a priority for both individuals and public health, research on healthy aging is essential," said co-corresponding author Marta Guasch-Ferré, an associate professor in the Department of Public Health at the University of Copenhagen and

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DEI, from Page 1

with private sector programs soon to follow.

The sudden absence of DEI, which had benefited minority populations, women, and veterans, and the disabled, will certainly hurt business growth. This, considering over 20% of small business owners are racial minorities, *Forbes* reported, and more than 40% are women--this, up from 4% in 1972, according to Guidant Financial.

The attack on DEI is actually an attack on small businesses, expressed Dilawar Syed, former Deputy Administrator of the Small Business Administration (SBA), in a March American Community Media

briefing.

"American leadership in the world, our economic might, our competitiveness, is directly tied to immigrants pursuing their entrepreneurial dreams. When you attack these programs and you try to push back on their aspirations, you're actually pushing back on American leadership," he said.

Syed, citing Biden Administration inclusion of DEI in the Bipartisan Infrastructure and CHIPS Acts, notes the added inclusion of minorities does not come at the expense of other segments of society. With DEI policies, the country saw a massive rise in female,

Black and veteran entrepreneurs, Black women remarkably starting businesses at four times the rate of other Americans.

The new administration is now rolling back to 5% the former administration's goal of 15% of contracts going to minorities, he added. This means hundreds and hundreds of minority, women and veteran businesses will shut down.

During this time of heightened DEI access, the country was meeting the pent-up demand for commerce in its historically disadvantaged communities, these programs offering access to SBA loans and capital through regional and community banks and serving the fastest growing seg-

ment of U.S. entrepreneurs, he said.

"I just cannot, for one understand how this is ushering in a new golden age in America, said Syed. It is actually setting us backward, not forward."

Trump Administration cuts to SBA means the organization will no longer show up in communities of color, spreading awareness about SBA programs to help people grow small businesses and access SBA loans.

As a former tech entrepreneur turned public servant, Syed said he shares the impatience of folks who want more efficiency. "We all share that goal."

Yet laying off 20% of the SBA workforce without

ever stepping foot inside the agency will not result in efficiency, nor shutting down SBA offices in the country's major cities. The latter will only negatively affect people needing help in urban areas, where people of color often reside.

President, CEO and founder of multicultural marketing agency BARU, Elizabeth Barrutia, said, it will now be up to individuals and the private sector to maintain a "moral compass" aligned to help small and minority owned businesses.

Our nation is becoming more diverse, but policy is negating cultural diversity, she said. Target and Walmart used to have collaborative partnerships

with artisans that offered products targeted to communities of color, but these companies are now walking away from this segment-based approach. These independent entrepreneurial efforts will no longer be nurtured, she said, losing this innovation and dollars for the American economy.

American pop culture is driven by multicultural audiences, she added, and we're already seeing a brand backlash on TikTok and Instagram.

"For brands that turn away, it's going to boomerang, she added. If we aren't marketing to our community culturally and linguistically, and we're not hiring

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Signal Gate followed Project 2025 protocol

By April Ryan

“I hope by getting busted and the only reason they were busted is because they were stupid enough to include a journalist in the text chat that they won’t do this again,” says a “concerned” former National Security Advisor and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Susan Rice on Signal-gate. The vice president and high-ranking Trump administration cabinet members, including the Secretary of



Image via NNPA

Defense, CIA chief, and the head of DNI, used the phone app Signal to discuss an attack on the Houthis that occurred on March 20th.

Rice spoke exclusively with Black Press USA, explaining why she thinks

they did what they did. Rice believes the use of the phone app by the Trump officials is a matter of thwarting laws to provide information about the attack, which they were traditionally supposed to communicate in a

secure location. “In Project 2025, which recommended that US National Security and other officials use commercial applications so that they don’t have to make them presidential records.” Rice added, “These deliberations, by law, as any in any presidential administration, have to be preserved provided to the national archives and retained to not retain these conversations as a violation of the Federal Records Act.” Traditionally, in past administrations, there

was an attempt to “preserve presidential records.”

It is unknown how often the National Security Council held discussions involving national security officials, cabinet members, or any other executive branch officials using the Signal messaging service or any other application not approved for transmitting classified information. However, Rice emphasizes that the United States has created a chasm with its foreign allies, “not just how

they fail to conduct proper deliberations, but how they recklessly and negligently treat classified information.” Rice offers a drastic shift in our foreign posture. “It’s that they’re radically realigning the United States away from our historical traditional allies in Europe, in Asia, and Canada, turning us into adversaries with our traditional allies and getting in bed with Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping, of China and Russia,” says the intelligence expert.

Judges from both parties blocked Trump’s policies 46 times — maybe it’s not the judges

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National Correspondent

During President Donald Trump’s administration, federal judges blocked his policies 46 times. The rulings came from 39 different judges across 11 U.S. District Courts and seven judicial circuits. The judges were appointed by five dif-

ferent presidents, both Democratic and Republican. The blocked policies involved immigration restrictions, environmental rollbacks, healthcare mandates, and civil rights regulations. Many of the judges who ruled against the Trump administration were Republican appointees.

In one notable case, Department of Homeland Se-

curity v. Regents of the University of California, U.S. District Judge John Bates—appointed by President George W. Bush—ruled that the administration’s attempt to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program was “arbitrary and capricious.” The U.S. Supreme Court later upheld the decision in a 5-4 ruling. Trump’s travel

ban, which targeted several majority-Muslim countries, was blocked by U.S. District Judge James Robart, also a Bush appointee. Trump responded by calling Robart a “so-called judge.” His remarks drew backlash and concerns about his public attacks on the judiciary.

Throughout his presidency, Trump frequently questioned the legitimacy of rul-

ings that didn’t favor him. In 2018, after a judge appointed by President Obama ruled against a Trump asylum policy, the former president referred to the judge as an “Obama judge.” That prompted a rare response from U.S. Chief Justice John Roberts, who issued a public statement rejecting Trump’s claims. “We do not have Obama judges or

Trump judges, Bush judges or Clinton judges,” Roberts said. “What we have is an extraordinary group of dedicated judges doing their level best to do equal right to those appearing before them.”

Despite losing dozens of legal battles in court, Trump installed more than 200 fed-

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Leading and learning, thanks to Head Start

By Hon. Ashley Kearney

I attended Head Start at Ferebee-Hope Elementary School in Ward 8 in Washington, D.C., and I am one of five children. There were many challenges: my mother was a recovering addict completing workforce development training and my father was re-engaging as a citizen after a time of incarceration. However, both of my parents were very active in my life and instilled the importance of education. They wanted my siblings and me to do our very best and get the best education possible. My mother's belief in the importance of education was so strong that I don't think she ever let me miss a school day!

I remember feeling secure at Head Start. My memories include my teacher, Ms. B., and the school secretary at the front desk, who always dressed



“The atmosphere at Head Start was welcoming and loving. The teachers seemed like celebrities to me. They exuded a sense of family that I remember vividly.”

in one color from head to toe. The atmosphere at Head Start was welcoming and loving. The teachers seemed like celebrities to me. They exuded a sense of family that I remember vividly. Head Start always dealt with my family from a place of concern, and the

staff made sure our family was ok. I look back on that and realize how special it was that Head Start didn't diminish my mother as a parent because she was working through substance dependency. Instead, they operated from the assumption that she loved her chil-

dren and wanted the best for them.

The years following Head Start were marked by stability and upheaval. My mom finished workforce training, married, bought a home, and the family relocated to the Southeastern U.S. My school experi-

ences there didn't have the same level of community that I felt at Head Start or in the D.C. schools I had attended. Though the differences were challenging, I excelled academically, taking honors-level and dual-enrollment courses. In high school, I was elected class president all four years. I considered college a “must-do” action item, and I attended and graduated magna cum laude from the University of Tampa. While there, I volunteered all four years with a middle school academic program through my sorority's youth outreach. This service prompted me to become an educator. As a first-generation college student and mathematics educator, I'm motivated by the belief that all students deserve a quality education, the power of empowered educators, and the importance of mathematics edu-

cation in intergenerational mobility.

In early 2020, I was teaching at a high school and had been recently named Standing Ovation D.C. Public Schools Teacher of the Year. During that year's collective pause, I rediscovered my “why” as an educator and my desire to connect policy and practice. This newfound sense of purpose prompted my decision to apply for the Albert Einstein Distinguished Educator Fellowship (AEF). My fellowship assignment was the U.S. House of Representatives. One of my passions is to elevate the teacher's voice, engage students, parents, and community members in advocacy, and work across sectors to ensure better outcomes for students.

Kearney serves as an at-large council member in Seat Pleasant, Maryland.

KENNEDY, from Page 2

Marks, who led the FDA's biologics division since 2016, played a central role in the U.S. response to the COVID-19 pandemic. He oversaw emergency use authorizations for the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines and was instrumental in Operation Warp Speed — the Trump administration's public-private partnership to develop

and distribute vaccines. In his resignation letter to acting FDA Commissioner Sara Brenner, Marks condemned what he called the promotion of misinformation from the agency's top levels. “Undermining confidence in vaccines is irresponsible, detrimental to public health, and a clear danger to our nation's health, safety, and secu-

urity,” he wrote.

Marks said he had initially hoped to collaborate with Kennedy on efforts to improve vaccine transparency but became disillusioned. “It has become clear that truth and transparency are not desired by the secretary,” Marks wrote. “Rather, he wishes subservient confirmation of his misinformation and lies.” Kennedy, a prominent vaccine skeptic, has

questioned the safety of widely used immunizations and filed a 2021 petition to revoke FDA authorization of COVID-19 vaccines, calling them the “deadliest vaccine ever made.” He has also made misleading claims about the MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine, telling Fox News host Sean Hannity that it “does cause deaths every year.”

According to the Infec-

tious Diseases Society of America, no deaths have been linked to the MMR vaccine in healthy individuals. The vaccine is not recommended for immunocompromised individuals. Marks' resignation also pointed to the current measles outbreak in the U.S., which is especially severe in Texas, as a direct consequence of the growing distrust in science. “The ongoing multistate measles

outbreak that is particularly severe in Texas reminds us of what happens when confidence in well-established science underlying public health and well-being is undermined,” Marks wrote. “Measles, which killed more than 100,000 unvaccinated children last year in Africa and Asia owing to pneumonitis and encephalitis caused by the virus, had been eliminated from our shores.”



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Black History Under Fire: Trump's executive order puts Smithsonian's future at risk

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

The memo from Lonnie G. Bunch III, the first African American to lead the Smithsonian Institution, was as much a message of reassurance as a call to vigilance. Following President Donald Trump's sweeping executive order targeting what he labeled "anti-American ideology" in cultural institutions, Bunch acknowledged the growing uncertainty and laid out a path forward. "We remain steadfast in our mission to bring history, science, education, research, and the arts to all Americans," he wrote to staff. "We will continue to showcase world-class exhibits, collections, and objects, rooted in expertise and accuracy."

Trump's order casts a long shadow over the Smithsonian, which, while not a federal agency, is a trust instrumentality of the U.S. government and operates under the guidance of a Board of Regents, including the Chief Justice, Vice President, and members of Congress. The order directs Vice President J.D. Vance, an ex-officio regent,



Trump's order casts a long shadow over the Smithsonian, which, while not a federal agency, is a trust instrumentality of the U.S. government and operates under the guidance of a Board of Regents. (Photo via NNPA)

to work with the board on content oversight—an unprecedented move that has left many within the institution and across the Black community alarmed. The National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC), opened in 2016 under Bunch's leadership, was directly criticized in the executive order. Its mission to unearth and share America's untold Black history once praised as groundbreaking, is now being reframed by Trump as an example of what he sees as divisive, anti-patriotic content.

Bunch's memo doubled down on the Smithsonian's long-standing commitment to truth, transparency, and historical scholarship. "As an Institution, our com-

mitment to scholarship and research is unwavering and will always serve as the guiding light for our content," he stated. "For more than 175 years, the Smithsonian has been an educational institution devoted to continuous learning with the public in mind and driven by our most important mission – the increase and diffusion of knowledge," Bunch added. "We remain committed to telling the multi-faceted stories of this country's extraordinary heritage." That commitment is under direct threat, Black scholars argue.

Writing for The Medium, education expert Dr. Jerry W. Washington called the order part of "the fight over American memory," a political war that has increasingly targeted race-based

historical narratives. "Over months of discussing cultural memory wars, the removal of DEI content, and the nuances of racial dialogue, I've seen this gap widen," Washington wrote. "It highlights a fundamen-

tal divergence not just in policy preference, but in how we interpret history, power, and truth itself." Washington and others see the executive order as an extension of Trump's 2020 directive banning diversity training in federal agencies—an action that set the stage for a conservative backlash against critical race theory (CRT) and racial equity initiatives. "CRT became a catch-all term—a manufactured villain used to silence any acknowledgment of systemic racism, white privilege, or the real struggles of marginalized communities," Washington noted. "It was never about theory. It was

about control."

That control has since expanded. Dozens of states have enacted vague educational gag orders aimed at stifling classroom conversations about race and history. DEI programs have been dismantled across colleges and public institutions. Now, with the Smithsonian—the keeper of the nation's collective memory—under the microscope, Black historians and curators fear a broader erasure. "The campaign effectively poisoned the well," Washington wrote. "Making any substantive discussion of systemic rac-

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adjunct associate professor of nutrition at Harvard Chan School.

"Our findings suggest that dietary patterns rich in plant-based foods, with moderate inclusion

of healthy animal-based foods, may promote overall healthy aging and help shape future dietary guidelines."

The study had some limitations, notably that the

participants were made up exclusively of health professionals. The researchers noted that replicating the study among populations with diverse socioeconomic statuses and ancestries would offer further insights.



Texas Rangers begin the 2025 season with series victory over Boston

By Jamal Baker
NDG Contributing Writer

The Texas Rangers had a successful opening weekend at Globe Life Field against the Boston Red Sox—winning three of their first four games. After starting the season with a heartbreaking loss, the Rangers quickly regrouped and strung together three consecutive wins. Fans have legitimate reasons to be excited for the 2025 version of the Texas Rangers who will look to put their 2024 injury riddled season in the rearview mirror. Let's walk through each game in the opening series for the Rangers.

Game 1 March 27, 2025

Opening day starter Nathan Eovaldi pitched a great game for Texas—striking out nine batters without a walk while allowing two runs in six innings. Boston's Willyer Abreu hit a three-run home run in the ninth inning to lead the Red Sox to a 5-2 victory over Texas. Eovaldi's nine strikeouts tied a record for the most by a Texas pitcher on opening day.

"I mean we want to win the series, so it's a 4 game series, that starts with tomorrow. The only way we're going to win the series is by getting tomorrow and that's the attitude I'm going to bring," Rangers second baseman Marcus Semien stated postgame.

Game 2 March 28, 2025

Jack Leiter allowed one run across five innings of work for his first major league win as Texas beat Boston 4-1 on Friday night. Rangers' catcher Jonah Heim hit two solo home runs to give Texas some offensive firepower. Heim hit his first homer of the season leading off the third inning against All-Star Tanner Houck. His second homer was blasted 417 feet and gave Texas a 2-1 lead in the fifth. Leiter struck out four batters with one walk and looked more commanding



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on the mound compared to last season. The second overall pick in the 2021 draft went 0-3 with an 8.83 ERA in nine games (six starts) last season. Leiter is now coming into his own and pitching with more confidence.

Game 3 March 29, 2025

Adolis "El Bombi" Garcia was the star of the show as the Rangers defeated Boston 4-3 on Saturday night. Garcia chipped in a two-run double in the first inning to give the Rangers a 2-0 lead to open the game. He also launched his first homer of the season in the fourth 414- feet to left field against Walker Buehler to give Texas a 3-2 lead. Pitcher Hoby Milner, the third of six Texas

pitchers, worked 1 1/3 innings for the win. Arlington native Chris Martin pitched a perfect ninth with two strikeouts to notch his first save of the year.

Game 4 March 30, 2025

The Texas Rangers bested the Boston Red Sox 3-2 in the series finale. Garcia and Wyatt Langford each hit solo home runs in the sixth inning en route to the victory. Rangers ace Jacob deGrom got the start on Sunday and accomplished all three goals manager Bruce Bochy wanted from him—five innings, 75 pitches, and no injuries. deGrom gave up no runs and two hits in

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Film Review: 'The Woman in the Yard' makes a respectable attempt

By Dwight Brown
NNPA Film Critic

(**1/2) The chickens are dead in their bloodied coop. The dog is gone, too. Is the woman in the yard messing with 'em? Yep.

A widowed mom, Ramona (Danielle Deadwyler, Till) can't get past the tragedy she's experienced. Her husband (Russell Hornsby, Fences) is gone, and she lives with that sorrow every day. Mornings start curled up in bed watching a smartphone video with him in happier times. When they got their dream home, a farmhouse in rural Bishop, Georgia. She's lost in that old memory. Oblivious to present day.

Romona's kids are in need. Taylor (Peyton Jackson), her 14-year-old son, tries to be the man of the house to his little sister Annie (Estella Kahiha): "Mom hasn't really been mom lately, but I'm here." Ramona's depression is causing delusions, neglect and forgetfulness. They're out of dogfood, groceries, their Jeep doesn't work, and her smartphone isn't charged. All fixable problems until one day when there's a power outage and they lose their electricity. Then a mysterious woman (Okwui Okpokwasili; The Exorcist: Believer), draped in black, appears and sits on a chair in the front yard. Uh, oh.

Ramona, on crutches and nursing a severe knee injury, approaches the mystery lady. Asking polite questions in the most attentive way. Her concern is not returned. Scared, Ramona lies and says her husband will be home soon. The woman sees through the ruse. "Your husband's not com-



ing home," she chides. The lies are over. A head game is on. The witch moves closer and closer to the house. The family is scared. They should be.

First-time screenwriter Sam Stefanak knows how to set up a horror/thriller. Create the most vulnerable protagonists in the world, then a demon antagonist. Great premise. If horror genre expectations are met, this film will find its audience. That's his logic and also that of Jaime Collet-Serra (Orphan, Carry-On), the director who's quite familiar with the genre. He can creep out an audience but is less deft with freak-me-out horror. There's some blood, but no onslaught of gore.

That means the pressure is on for sound director Erik Aadahl (A Quiet Place) and Collet-Serra as the VFX supervisor to scare the living daylights out of fright film fans. The former's work is more calculated and better dispersed than the latter's. As the chair keeps getting closer to the house, the dread factor ramps up. Credit the jerky, sporadic sounds for fraying nerves. Not the visuals. Not the interloper.

Anyone watching this story unfold will hope that nothing bad happens to this family. But you know

it will. Standard ghoulin-the-house gimmicks would work well here. Give the stranger fangs, pointed ears, bulging eyes—something to distinguish her from humans. Instead, the script decides to make this a mind game. Eerie but not scary enough to make you want to run for the exits, which is the mark of a great horror film.

If the aberration was a leftover from the old farmhouse days gone by, like a slave from the 1800s seeking revenge, or an old tenant settling a score, that would be an accepted genre device. Instead, the storyline becomes more and more internal. Ramona sees reflections of her deep grief. It's an innovative choice. One that will freak out sophisticated audiences. But a wisdom that might be over the heads of regular genre fans who love bloodletting and violence.

As a director, Collet-Serra is best with the intimate family moments. The power play between Ramona and her teenage son is one that may parents will relate too. That threshold when kids stop listening to "Don't do that," and go on their own path, wrong or right. He's very good at directing children. He also sets and sustains a haunted feel that will

stick with audiences. But not in the strongest way.

Viewers will love Annie and Taylor because Kahiha and Jackson are so adorable and headstrong, respectively. Hornsby is only in a couple of frames but establishes the dad's presence quite well. Okpokwasili, as

the evil house guest, is a bit too reserved. Too understated. She needed to be evil beyond redemption and create inescapable terror. Needed to look more crazed and less like a Grace Jones clone.

No doubt the director and producers felt very lucky that Deadwyler, who right-

fully should have won an Oscar® by now for Till or The Piano Lesson, took this role. She's excellent as the imperfect mother caught in a soul-wrenching struggle. Bullied by regret. Barely hanging in. Barely manag-

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NDG Book Review: A pair to make you question, 'Who are you?'

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

Who do you think you are?

That's a question that can be taken a multiple of ways. It's in-your-face, aggressive, angry. Or it's inquisitive and open, asking for introspection. Where did your family come from, and who do you think you are? Or, as in these books, is that question to be answered?

For author Martha S. Jones, issues of identity were already understood: she'd grown up knowing that there were Black ancestors in her lineage, full-stop. She never thought it was anything but obvious — until a college classmate questioned Jones' heritage.

In her book, "The Trouble of Color" (Basic Books, \$30), Jones writes of untangling her truth. Color obvi-



Terri Schlichenmeyer

ously mattered differently to Jones' three-times-great grandmother than it did for her parents. Color didn't draw a smooth line through history, it didn't stay in one

place or even in one century. The story of living as someone of color weaved all along Jones' family tree, often revealing nuggets of pride, strength, and of sur-

prise.

There's a journey inside this book that begs readers to go along — and you'll be glad you did. It takes you from city to country to find Jones' ancestors, and it's both comfortingly familiar and quite astounding. If you've ever delved into your own heritage, had your DNA tested, or looked into your ancestry and discovered unexpected things, this is a book to read.

If you've done those things, then you know the delight you feel when you found someone who was lost — and you'll understand the heavy sadness and urgency inside the stories in "Last Seen: The Enduring Search by Formerly Enslaved People to Find Their Lost Families" by Judith Giesberg (Simon & Schus-

ter, \$29.99).

One of the most heinous practices of slave-owners in America was the separating of families. Children were divided. Husbands and wives were sold apart, with no idea if or when they might see one another again. After Emancipation, it was common to see advertisements in newspapers, classified ads, editorials, and posters in search of missing loved ones and separated relatives.

In this heart-wrenching, sometimes happy, always powerful book, Geisberg profiles a tiny handful of those stories. Once he found them, for instance, Tally Miller changed his surname so that no one could ever take his fam-

ily away from him again. Hagar Outlaw struggled to find as many of her nine children as she could, once she was freed. Time never stopped husbands from looking for their wives (or the other way around), or siblings from finding each other.

This book explodes the imagination, and it'll make you glad for the research methods we have at our disposal today. Readers who've hit a dead-end on their own genealogical searches will want to read this important slice of devastating American history.

Of course, these books will make you want more, and you'll get it by heading for your favorite bookstore or library. There, you'll find what you need, and who maybe you think you are.

Jubilee Theatre presents 'Thunder Knocking at the Door'

FORT WORTH, TX — Jubilee Theatre invites you to surrender to the spell of Thunder Knocking at the Door, a mesmerizing musical fable written by Keith Glover and infused with the unforgettable music of five-time Grammy Award winner Keb' Mo'. Under the visionary direction of Charles Jackson Jr., this blues-soaked tale promises to enchant hearts, ignite spirits, and awaken the soul.

Set in a small Alabama town, the story unfolds when a mysterious blues guitarist, Marvell Thunder, appears at the home of the Dupree family, issuing a challenge to the children of his late rival. As secrets



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surface and stakes rise, what begins as a supernatural bargain transforms into an epic story of love, legacy, and redemption. With humor, heart, and a transcendent score, Thunder Knocking at the Door fuses myth and music into a theatrical experience that lingers long after the curtain falls.

The show runs April 4 through May 11, 2025 at the Jubilee Theatre (506

Main Street, in Fort Worth). Tickets are available now at <https://www.jubileetheatre.org>.

Thunder Knocking at the Door exemplifies Jubilee Theatre's continued commitment to bold Black storytelling, centering the rich musical and cultural traditions of the African-American South. Join us for this unforgettable production — part family reckoning, part epic romance, and all blues.

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FCC chair launches investigation into Disney and ABC over DEI practices

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent



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Federal Communications Commission Chairman Brendan Carr has ordered an investigation into The Walt Disney Company and its subsidiary ABC, alleging potential violations of the agency's equal employment opportunity (EEO) regulations stemming from the companies' diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. In a letter to Disney CEO Robert A. Iger, Carr stated that the FCC's Enforcement Bureau would examine whether Disney and ABC engaged in what he described as "invidious forms of DEI discrimination" in violation of federal regulations that prohibit discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, age, or gender. "While I

have seen reports that Disney recently walked back some of its DEI programs, significant concerns remain," Carr wrote. "I want to ensure that Disney ends any and all discriminatory initiatives in substance, not just name."

Carr pointed to internal and public-facing initiatives within Disney, including mandatory inclusion standards at ABC and the company's "Reimagine Tomorrow" campaign. He cited whistleblower ac-

counts and media reports suggesting Disney employed race- and gender-based criteria in hiring, production, and executive compensation decisions. Among the practices under scrutiny are reported requirements that "50 percent of regular and recurring characters" be from underrepresented groups, and that "50% or more" of writers, directors, crew, and vendors also meet demographic criteria. Carr also flagged fellowships

and hiring databases that he claimed were restricted to select racial or ethnic groups. Carr, a Trump-appointed commissioner who now chairs the FCC under the former president's administration, said President Trump's recent executive order banning federal DEI programs prompted the agency's broader rollback of similar initiatives. He wrote that the FCC has already moved to eliminate its internal DEI efforts and expects regulated entities to do the same. "As I have made clear, promoting invidious forms of discrimination cannot be squared with any reasonable interpretation of federal law,"

Carr stated. "Doing so only deprives Americans of their rights to fair and equal treatment under the law." A Disney spokesperson said the company was reviewing the letter and looked forward to answering the commission's questions. The crackdown on diversity is part of a broader Trump and Project 2025 initiative that seeks to erase the history of underrepresented groups, particularly Black Americans. Trump's second term has been marked by sweeping actions against marginalized communities as the president and his supporters work to whitewash U.S. history and drive the

country back beyond the Jim Crow era. Last month, Axios reported that Disney had made some policy changes, including eliminating a website highlighting personalities and stories from underrepresented communities. The company also softened messages that appeared before showings of older films like "Dumbo" and "Peter Pan." Instead of previous warnings that the films include "negative depictions and/or mistreatment of peoples or culture," the updated messages now read: "This program is presented as originally created and may contain stereotypes or negative depictions."

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AARP pushes back as Social Security Administration slashes services and staff

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

The Social Security Administration (SSA) is moving forward with a sweeping overhaul of its operations, including plans to slash its workforce by 12 percent, shut down six regional field offices, and eliminate key phone services—changes that have sparked fierce opposition

from AARP and alarmed millions of older Americans. Beginning March 31, the SSA will require that individuals applying for or managing their Social Security benefits confirm their identity online or in person at a local office, effectively ending the ability to complete specific critical tasks by phone. The new rule impacts retirement, disability, and other benefit applications and alters how indi-

viduals change their direct deposit information. Acting SSA Commissioner Lee Dudek said the move is designed to combat a surge in fraud, stating, “Social Security is losing over \$100 million a year to direct-deposit fraud.”

However, the shift has drawn sharp criticism from AARP, which represents more than 100 million Americans over age 50. In a March 19 letter to

Dudek, AARP Executive Vice President Nancy LeMond wrote that requiring in-person verification or internet access will create “undue hardship” for millions, particularly those in rural areas, without reliable transportation, or who lack internet access. She called on the SSA to immediately reverse a “rash decision.” “It is outrageous that under this new policy, older Americans will have to call, wait

on hold for possibly hours, make an appointment, or even take a day off work to claim the benefits they have earned,” LeMond wrote. “There is nothing ‘efficient’ about creating more confusion and disrupting the lives of millions of hardworking American taxpayers with such short notice and no input from the public”.

LeMond and AARP argue that this change—announced only two weeks

before implementation—compounds an existing customer service crisis. SSA is already plagued by long phone wait times, with more than half of callers reportedly hanging up before reaching a representative. Those who do get through often face callback delays of two hours or more. The SSA’s restructuring plan includes cutting its workforce

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FILM, from Page 9

ing her kids. Her Ramona has a lesson to learn before she can unburden herself. Deadwyler pulls the audience into her fight for life.

A somewhat respectable

horror/drama/thriller that doesn’t truly distinguish itself. Superb sound effects. Deadwyler’s angst is real. Love the isolated, all-Americana location. A weird,

haunted, head-spinning aura resonates. Not sheer terror. In that way, *The Woman in the Yard* messes with your mind. But not enough.

Visit Film Critic Dwight Brown at DwightBrownInk.com.

DIVERSITY, from Page 4

diverse employees, we’re forcing assimilation, and we are going back to sixties again,” said Barrutia.

The policies alienate diverse audiences, creating a distrust already found within these communities.

It is a problem that will only grow, she said, predicting a growing lack of commitment from the workforce, disproportionate declines in education and negative financial and health outcomes.

Hard and fast racial quotas are already a thing of the past, added Thomas Saenz, President and General Counsel of Mexican-American Legal Defense and Education Fund, and there is nothing the current administration is doing that is illegal.

Yet, recalling a time when discrimination was more widespread, he said “DEI programs rose up to stop the widespread discrimination . . . ensuring

people of color and women receive[d] a fair shake in competing for employment, contracts or admission.

The attack on DEI will only take us backward.”

The current political rhetoric is saying that all DEI efforts have been radical and wasteful, added former diplomat, best-selling author, and founder of Be Act Change, Dr. Esther Zeledon. This is just one of many new policies that will end in hurting the economy.

The policy puts mistrust into people who have even benefited from these programs.

Zeledon cites 2020 studies by McKinsey that show investments in DEA create financially stronger businesses, but the people have to work twice as hard and take extra steps to be considered.

DEI was helping to undo those wrongs, she said.

People of color, women, people with disabilities do

not have access to the same information or opportunities, she explained. DEI just allows these people to knock on the door.

“I got in because of merit,” she explained. “I had all the merit, but it gave me the in, the knock.”

I was giving pro bono work to the pipeline, helping other students of color, giving free coaching and workshops and creating a trickle-down effect, she said, but I won’t be able to continue helping advance the pipeline.

Ending these programs also effectively makes DEI advocates fearful so that universities interested in continuing programs, which they know will benefit their students, will result in their losing federal funding.

“We need to move from a scarcity to a growth mindset,” she said.

“There is space for all of us to thrive. There’s a space for all of our businesses—all of our voices.”

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AARP, from Page 12

from 57,000 to 50,000 and reducing its number of field offices from 10 to just four. AARP says these actions will worsen already deteriorating services. “Older Americans have paid into and earned their Social Security after a lifetime of hard work—not just their checks, but top-notch customer service as well,” LeaMond wrote.

The organization has sent letters to both chambers of Congress, urging immediate oversight. In letters dated March 24 to the House Ways and Means Committee and Senate Finance Committee, Lea-

Mond asked lawmakers to hold hearings and intervene to stop the changes before they cause what she termed “serious harm”. “These abrupt changes, made with no public input or adequate notice, will force many Americans—especially those in rural areas or without internet access—to wait on hold for hours, make appointments, or take time off work simply to access their earned benefits,” she wrote. “This is unacceptable.”

AARP has mobilized its vast membership in response, with over a million emails and calls to

Congress in the past few weeks. The group has adopted what it describes as an “all-hands-on-deck” strategy, engaging directly with SSA leadership, educating lawmakers, and urging the public to act. John Hishta, AARP’s senior vice president of campaigns, said the organization is determined to protect Social Security for current and future generations. “We remain steadfast in our commitment to ensuring that older Americans continue to see no disruption in their payments and receive the information they need to stay informed and take action on changes at SSA,” he said.

JUDGES, from Page 5

eral judges during his four years in office, including three U.S. Supreme Court justices. Legal scholars note that some of his appointees have at times ruled against policies or legal theories advanced by Trump or his allies. The consistent rulings against Trump’s policies across judicial appointments suggest the decisions were rooted in legal reasoning. In one 2019 opinion, a federal judge wrote: “The government’s position lacks a factual basis and rests on legal conclusions that are contrary to settled law.”

MUSEUM, from Page 7

ism politically toxic.” For many Black Americans, the concern is deeper than academics. It’s personal. The Smithsonian’s inclusive storytelling—exemplified by the NMAAHC—has provided generations with a long-denied mirror to see themselves in the Ameri-

can narrative. To have that narrative constrained or rewritten at the behest of political power is to have identity and truth under siege.

“As we have done throughout our history,” Bunch wrote, “the Smith-

sonian will work with the Board of Regents, including the Chief Justice, Vice President, and our congressional and citizen Regents.” But he made clear that the Institution’s compass remains unchanged: “The board understands and appreciates the Institution’s mission, as well as

the importance of scholarship, expertise, and service to the American public.” Still, the fight over who gets to define America’s story is far from over. “The consequences are real,” Washington warned. “This is about more than exhibits. It’s about erasing the truths that make America whole.”

RANGERS, from Page 8

those five innings while walking two and striking out six. He proved he has even more in the tank as he works his way back from his Tommy John surgery in May 2023.

Bottom Line

The Texas Rangers have the potential to feature three aces on their pitching staff barring health and the impressive development of Leiter. Although it is just the first series of many across a 162-game season, the Rangers are off to an ideal start.



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Money, Money, Money, Where's All The Money?

Dr. James L. Snyder

I can't keep count of all the phone calls informing me that I won millions of dollars and a brand-new Mercedes-Benz. All I have to do is send them \$15,000 to cover the income tax and processing fee, and they will be able to send me millions of dollars.

I grew up in the Pennsylvania Dutch area, and I would be the last person to fall for that kind of scam. If I won money, why do I have to pay money?

Growing up, my father was very frugal with money. If you could get money out of him, you were a magician of the top order.

When we would go to a restaurant, he was very frugal, but he did tip the waitress. The only thing about that tip was it was only \$0.25. He thought she earned every penny of that quarter.

He died in 2010, so he won't hear about this, but many times after lunch, we were going out to the car; one of us would have to go to the bathroom, and so the rest would go out to the car.

Actually, the guy going to the bathroom was the one we had assigned to put a tip on the table. All of us, except for my father, contributed to that tip. As far as I know, he never found out about that.

However, I learned a lot about money from my father. He never spent a nickel if he didn't have to. He loved to get his monthly bank statement so that he could see his money and study it for days.

My father did have money. He was a successful building contractor, but very few people knew he had a dollar bill on him. If you met him, you would not know he had an extra dollar in his pocket.

They would be a genius if they could scam him out of a dollar.

Money meant a lot to my father, especially in his pocket. He was never out to scam anybody or buy a lottery ticket. In fact, he thought lottery tickets were the worst scam in the world. I lean towards that thought myself.

One of the things I learned from my father was

that it's not so much how much money you have as what you do with it.

I was a small-town pastor in Maryland one year, and one of my friends spread a rumor my first year that I was the poster child for the baby Gerber. I'm not sure where he came up with that scam, but he did.

I didn't know he did it, and all of a sudden pastors came to me and told about some of the ministries they were involved in and they needed to raise money to do them.

At first, I didn't understand why they were telling me this. Why did I need to know what their ministry was and how much money they needed?

After several months of this, somebody spilled the beans and told me what my so-called friend had done, why these people were telling me about their ministries, and how much money they needed for those ministries.

If I had the money he was talking about, I would probably have given money to their ministries. But all those pastors were talking

to someone who was simply broke. I didn't have the money they thought I had, just enough to get by week by week.

What I do with my money is really important, but I won't let my money, which I don't have much of, define who I am.

There's nothing wrong with being frugal. I've been pretty much frugal all my life because I've never made much money. I just tried not to spend money that I don't have.

Money has a way of influencing people. If someone knows that someone has a lot of money, they're going to approach them to see how much they can get for themselves.

I have no problem giving to charities and to people who really need help. But

I'm very careful about that because I want to make sure I help people who actually need help. That's a hard decision to make. Who really needs my money more than me? That's the question.

Many years ago, a friend of mine wanted me to invest in some investment program that he was involved with. He had given them well over \$65,000. According to the investment, he would be getting interest every month. The one thing that sort of ticked me off was that the \$65,000 had to be in cash. If that isn't a red flag, I don't know what is.

It turned out to be one of those Ponzi schemes. I'm not sure how they work, but I guarantee they will never work with my money.

The only investment I have made was to good

old Uncle Sam. Now, I get a monthly salary from my Uncle, of which I am thankful.

I couldn't help but think of a verse of scripture that is so often misquoted.

1 Timothy 6:10, "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

Money is NOT the root of all evil like so many people think. Rather, it's the LOVE of money that is the "root of all evil."

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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Your Defining Moment with God



Sister Tarpley
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Religion
Editor

Every believer in Jesus Christ must have a defining moment in their life; a friend and I were discussing this fact one day because a man that we both know personally is fighting a drug and alcohol problem.

My mind began to reminisce of my defining moment, when I came face to face with God. I went to church regularly but something was missing from my life and I didn't know

what.

However, I knew that my oldest sister, Eloyd, had been praying for me all through my college years that I would come to the Lord, confess my sins and seek His guidance for my life.

What made this moment so different? I began to think of how good God had been to me and to my family. I began to count my blessings one by one and I realized that only a God that loves me so unconditionally understood my misery and only He could help me and give me His peace.

The last time that Jacob, in the Bible, saw his brother Esau after years

of separation was when he manipulated the birthright from Esau. Jacob assumed that his brother was going to try and kill him.

Jacob sends gifts ahead as a peace offering. He spends a restless night in prayer asking God to spare his and his family's life when he met his brother.

Jacob had lived a life of control and manipulation. Yet, there is something in Jacob God finds worthy of redemption (only God knows the mind, thoughts and motive of any man.)

Jacob now has a heart that wants to serve and be used of God. But God must do something in Jacob to carve away the bad traits in his life.

God sends an angel in the form of a man to wrestle away the ruthlessness in Jacob. "When the angel saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that the hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the

man." Genesis 32:25 & 26. Jacob's natural abilities were so great that God literally had to make him a weaker man, physically, in order for God's power to be manifested in his life. I believe that this was Jacob's defining moment; he came

face to face with God.

If you let God do the work needed in you, even your enemies will be at peace with you.

(Editor's Note: This column originally ran in June 2016. It has been edited for space.)

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Notice

Draft Environmental Assessment and Virtual Public Hearing with In-Person Option
 INTERSTATE 345 (I-345) CONNECTS PROJECT
 From I-30 To Woodall Rodgers Freeway (Spur 366)
 CSJ: 0092-14-094
 Dallas County, Texas

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is proposing to reconstruct I-345 from I-30 to Woodall Rodgers Freeway (Spur 366) in Dallas County. This notice advises the public that a draft environmental assessment (EA) is available for public review and that TxDOT will be conducting an online virtual public hearing on the proposed project with two in-person options. The same information will be available at the in-person and virtual hearings. The hearing dates and times are listed below.

In-Person Hearing 1

Tuesday, April 22, 2025
 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. (Open House)
 Live presentation at 5:30 p.m.
 Pilgrim Rest Missionary
 Baptist Church
 1819 N. Washington Avenue
 Dallas, TX 75204
 Served by DART bus routes 003, 023, 207

In-Person Hearing 2

Thursday, April 24, 2025
 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. (Open House)
 Live presentation at 5:30 p.m.
 St. Philip's School and Community Center Gymnasium
 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
 Dallas, TX 75215
 Served by DART bus route 13,
 104 or the South Dallas GoLink

Virtual Hearing*

Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at
 5 p.m. through Friday, May 9, 2025, at 11:59 p.m.
www.345connects.com

*This is not a live event. A pre-recorded presentation will be posted online.

The virtual hearing will consist of a pre-recorded presentation and will include both audio and visual components. The materials will be posted online by Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 5 p.m., and will remain online for at least 15 days. To view the virtual public hearing, go to the following web address at the date and time indicated above: www.345connects.com. Please note, the virtual public hearing is not a live event and can be viewed at your convenience. If you do not have internet access, you may call (214) 320-6100 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, to ask questions and access project materials. Please note hearing materials will not be available until Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 5 p.m.

The existing I-345 facility is an elevated, urban highway that consists of six 12-foot-wide mainlanes (three in each direction) with 10-foot-wide shoulders on each side. The existing facility is an elevated steel structure over all cross streets between I-30 and Spur 366. Existing discontinuous frontage road lanes are 12-foot-wide with two and three lanes in each direction. Discontinuous sidewalks are located within the project limits.

The proposed improvements would consist of depressing six 12-foot-wide mainlanes (three in each direction) with 10-foot-wide shoulders. Discontinuous frontage roads would be constructed along the facility between Pacific Avenue and Ross Avenue. The project would include bicycle and pedestrian accommodations at cross streets and frontage roads. The project would include rebuilding the interchange at I-30/I-345, connections to Spur 366, and a Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) connection.

All improvements would occur within existing right-of-way (ROW) which varies in width from approximately 280- to 635- feet. No relocations or displacements are anticipated and surplus ROW would result from the proposed project.

The proposed project is anticipated to impact the following property protected under Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966: Carpenter Park, located at 2201 Pacific Avenue, which is a City of Dallas public park. TxDOT anticipates making a *de minimis* determination for this use under Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966. Public comment on the effects of the proposed project on the activities, features, or attributes of Carpenter Park may be submitted as described below.

The draft EA, any maps and drawings showing the project location and design, tentative schedules, and other information regarding the proposed project will be on file and available for inspection Monday through Friday between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. at the TxDOT Dallas District Office at 4777 East US Highway 80, Mesquite, TX 75150-6643. Please call (214) 320-6100 to make an

appointment. Project materials will be available online at www.345connects.com and in hard copy form for review at the in-person options.

The virtual public hearing and in-person options will be conducted in English. If you need an interpreter or document translator because English is not your primary language or you have difficulty communicating effectively in English, one will be provided to you. If you have a disability and need assistance, special arrangements can be made to accommodate most needs. If you need interpretation or translation services or you are a person with a disability who requires accommodation to attend and participate in the virtual public hearing or in-person option, please contact TxDOT Dallas District Public Information Office at (214) 320-4480 no later than 4 p.m., Tuesday, April 15, 2025. Please be aware that advance notice is required as some services and accommodations may require time for TxDOT to arrange.

La audiencia pública virtual y opciones en persona se llevarán a cabo en inglés. Si usted necesita un intérprete o un traductor de documentos porque su lenguaje principal no es el inglés o tiene alguna dificultad para comunicarse eficazmente en inglés, se le proporcionará uno. Si usted tiene alguna discapacidad y necesita ayuda, se pueden hacer arreglos especiales para atender la mayoría de las necesidades. Si usted necesita servicios de interpretación o traducción o usted es una persona con alguna discapacidad que requiera una adaptación para asistir a y participar en la audiencia pública, por favor póngase en contacto con la Oficina de Información Pública de TxDOT, al número (214) 320-4480, a más tardar las 4 p.m. hora central, antes del martes 15 de abril del 2025. Tenga en cuenta que se requiere aviso previo ya que algunos servicios y adaptaciones pueden requerir tiempo para que TxDOT los organice.

Comments from the public regarding the proposed project are requested and may be submitted by mail to the TxDOT Dallas District Office, Attention: Grace Lo, P.E., 4777 East US Highway 80, Mesquite, TX 75150-6643 or by email to 345connects@txdot.gov. Verbal comments may be submitted by calling (903) 329-9307. All comments must be postmarked or received by 11:59 p.m., Friday, May 9, 2025.

If you have any general questions or concerns regarding the proposed project or virtual hearing or in-person option, please contact Grace Lo, P.E., TxDOT Project Manager, by phone at (214) 320-6100, or by email at 345connects@txdot.gov.

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried-out by TxDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 9, 2019, and executed by FHWA and TxDOT.