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Talent Over Tokenism: Black mayors slash crime despite media silence

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National Correspondent

While cable news pundits and national newspapers often fixate on urban dysfunction, Black mayors across America are delivering measurable, record-breaking progress in public safety—and getting almost no credit for it.

Baltimore Mayor Brandon Scott and Birmingham Mayor Randall Woodfin have overseen some of the steepest reductions in violent crime their cities have experienced in decades.

But they are far from alone.

From New York to Los Angeles to Chicago, Black mayors are proving that talent, vision, and a relentless focus on evidence-based policy—not tokenism—are transforming communities. Yet their achievements have largely been ignored by mainstream media outlets that rarely look past sensational headlines.

Baltimore, long branded one of



Governor Moore Attends a Press Conference with Mayor Brandon Scott on Public Safety in Baltimore. Black mayors are proving that talent, vision, and a relentless focus on evidence-based policy—not tokenism—are transforming communities. (Pat Siebert/ Wikimedia Commons, Maryland GovPics)

America’s most dangerous cities, released midyear crime data showing a 22% drop in homicides compared to the same period last year. Nonfatal shootings are down 19%, and juvenile homicide victims have declined by an astonishing 71%. Police are solving more crimes, with a homicide clearance rate of 64% and a nonfatal shooting clearance rate 20 percentage points above the department’s 10-year average.

“These historic lows are the result of a comprehensive, evidence-based

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If marchers would only vote

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Non-smokers can’t escape pollution

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Trump makes big shift in federal priorities

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People In The News ...

Sen. Tim Scott

Dr. Rebecca Harris-Smith

NDG Quote of the Week:
"Have a vision. Be demanding."
- Gen. Colin Powell

Sen. Tim Scott

The legislation President Donald Trump signed into law on July 4—celebrated by Republican Sen. Tim Scott as a milestone of “fiscal responsibility” and “opportunity”—is, in fact, a sprawling blueprint for further concentrating wealth, destabilizing public schools, and stripping resources from Black communities.

While Scott touted the bill as a transformative achievement for American families, independent analyses paint a different picture. The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget projects the law will add trillions to the deficit over the next decade, driven by permanent corporate tax cuts and expanded defense



spending.

That debt load will almost certainly trigger future demands to slash Medicaid, SNAP, and housing assistance programs essential to millions of Black families.

Scott, who is Black, repeatedly claimed that the law delivers tax relief to working people; however, the Tax Policy Center es-

timates that the wealthiest 1% of households will collect the majority of tax benefits, averaging more than \$60,000 per year.

By contrast, the average middle-income household—where most Black families fall—will see only temporary, modest reductions, many of which expire in five years.

Among the most dangerous provisions is the permanent expansion of the Opportunity Zone program, which Scott called “maximizing community impact.”

Multiple studies, including those by the Government Accountability Office and the Brookings Institution, have found that Opportunity Zones have largely failed to reduce poverty

or lift incomes for residents. Instead, they have accelerated gentrification, pushing long-time Black families and small businesses out of their neighborhoods as investors rush in to extract profit.

The law’s new permanent school choice tax credit has been framed as a lifeline for low-income children, but the reality is that it primarily benefits those who are already able to afford private school tuition. Public

education researchers have warned that this diversion of public funding will deepen educational disparities that trap Black students in under-resourced schools while wealthier families receive tax subsidies.

The repeal of Section 899, a tax provision that imposed penalties on certain foreign-owned corporations, was labeled by Scott as a job creator. Yet tax policy experts agree there is no evidence this giveaway

will generate employment. What is certain is that multinational corporations will pocket billions in tax savings, while Black workers are left to hope for trickle-down benefits that rarely materialize.

Even as lawmakers made corporate tax cuts permanent, they allowed the expanded Child Tax Credit—responsible for record reductions in Black child

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Dr. Rebecca Harris-Smith

(Black PR Wire) The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has awarded Dr. Rebecca Harris-Smith the Florence Nightingale Medal, the highest international distinction a nurse can receive. Dr. Harris-Smith, EdD, MSN, BA, RN, FADLN, is one of only 35 recipients worldwide to be honored this year, selected from 17 countries for her extraordinary service and unwavering dedication to the nursing profession.

The Florence Nightingale Medal recognizes nurses who demonstrate exceptional courage and commitment in caring for victims of armed conflict and natural disasters, as well as those who have made lasting contributions to public health and nursing education. This year marks the 50th awarding of the medal, with the Commission paying special tribute



to healthcare workers who lost their lives while serving on humanitarian missions.

Nominated by the American Red Cross, Dr. Harris-Smith was honored for her exemplary leadership and pioneering contributions to nursing education and public health. She has served for many years as the official representative of the National Black Nurses Association (NBNA) to the American Red Cross National Nursing Committee. In this capacity, she worked closely with the Red Cross to organize the

annual blood drive at the NBNA Institute and Conference. Her efforts have significantly impacted underserved communities and advanced global health initiatives through both direct care and policy advocacy.

“We are incredibly proud of Dr. Rebecca Harris-Smith and her well-deserved recognition with the Florence Nightingale Medal,” said Dr. Sheldon D. Fields, President of the National Black Nurses Association. “Her selfless service and innovative spirit embody the true essence of nursing and humanitarianism.”

Recipients of the Florence Nightingale Medal are selected by an esteemed commission composed of representatives from the ICRC, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and the International Council of Nurses.

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If the millions marching would only vote



**Dr. John E.
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Viewpoint

As we look at the cornerstones of our democracy and the extent to which the separation of powers under the Constitution have been held captive by the holder of the Executive Office of the Presidency, we see an outpouring of protest throughout America.

Last week, over 5 million people in more than 2000 protest demonstrations, took to the streets against the policies of this

President. But that is not enough.

Question: How many of those 5 million are voters? Why? Because it will take voters to stop the assault on democracy.

If we had voter registration at each protest site and a list of those local elected officials who remain silent, we could initiate Recall Petitions for failure to uphold the Oath of Office that each of them to "To Uphold And Defend The Constitution of The United States."

The failure we have seen with each and every Republican in the House of

Representatives and the Senate more than provide grounds for recalls. Successful recalls will trigger the need for special elections, all of which probably could take place before the scheduled 2026 Midterm election. America does not have time to wait for the Midterm elections.

Millions of people showing up with voter registration cards at each of these protests will deliver a message that is always missing.

That missing element, which all politicians understand, is the difference between marching in pro-

test and actually going to the polls to vote. The latter is what every elected person, including the President, really cares about.

Only regaining control of the House of Representatives, which the Republicans only hold by about five votes, will give us the opportunity to re-establish the separation of powers provided in the Constitution as a means of stopping the authoritarian efforts of this President and those who silently appear to agree with him. Let's get about the business of making some life and death changes.

Planned Parenthood Action Fund to President Trump: Every undetected cancer is on you

By Alexis McGill Johnson
President and CEO
Planned Parenthood
Action Fund

The man who claimed he would 'leave abortion to the states' has just signed a backdoor abortion ban. This law will make it harder for everyone, everywhere to get an abortion, even in states where abortion is legal. It puts as many as 200 Planned Parenthood health centers at risk of closure, pulls the rug out from under people who rely on Medicaid to get basic health care, and immediately threatens to leave more than a million Planned Parenthood patients without access to the high-quality care and trusted providers they've

depended on for years.

Make no mistake, this bill is President Trump's proudest achievement, and Planned Parenthood Action Fund is going to make sure he owns the harm it causes every day for the rest of his term. President Trump and his backers in Congress are responsible for it all: Every cancer that goes undetected, every STI that goes untreated, every patient who can't get birth control or abortion care when they need it. It's all on them.

When we say 'care, no matter what', we mean it. President Trump and his buddies in Congress may think they've won, but we have news for them: The fight is just beginning. For 108 years, Planned

Parenthood has shown up for communities. One in three women has been to a Planned Parenthood health center for care. And the 19 million Planned Parenthood supporters across the country will never stop working to win back their reproductive freedom. We won't stop fighting for access to care."

Here are the consequences of President Trump and his GOP backers "defunding" Planned Parenthood:

- Nearly 200 Planned Parenthood health centers in 24 states across the country are at risk of closure. More than 90% of those closures would occur in states where abortion is legal.

- These closures could eliminate one in four abor-

tion providers nationwide, and threaten to shut down half of abortion-providing Planned Parenthood health centers.

- More than 1.1 million patients could lose access to care including birth control, cancer screenings, STI testing and treatment, and more.

- A majority (60%) of Planned Parenthood health centers at risk of closure are located in medically underserved areas, primary care health professional shortage areas, or rural areas.

- The Congressional Budget Office released an estimate that "defunding" Planned Parenthood for one year would cost taxpayers \$52 million over the next ten years.

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Study finds air pollution may contribute to development of lung cancer in never-smokers

(Newswise) — A new study reveals that air pollution, traditional herbal medicines and other environmental exposures are linked to genetic mutations that may contribute to the development of lung cancer in people with no or hardly any history of smoking.

Lung cancer has long been thought of as a smoker's disease. But as tobacco use has declined in many parts of the world, a troubling trend has emerged: lung cancer in people who have never smoked is proportionally on the rise. Moreover, this form of cancer disproportionately affects women, particularly those of Asian ancestry, and tends to be more prevalent in East Asian than in Western nations.

Now, a study published on July 2 in *Nature* has uncovered compelling genomic evidence that points to air pollution—and other environmental exposures—as a potential major factor behind this growing public health concern. The study was jointly led by researchers at the University of California San Diego and the National Cancer Institute (NCI), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

"We're seeing this problematic trend that never-smokers are increasingly getting lung cancer, but we



DWG Studio

haven't understood why," said study co-senior author Ludmil Alexandrov, professor of bioengineering and cellular and molecular medicine at UC San Diego, and member of UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center. "Our research shows that air pollution is strongly associated with the same types of DNA mutations we typically associate with smoking."

"This is an urgent and growing global problem that we are working to understand regarding never-smokers," said Maria Teresa Landi, epidemiologist in the Division of Cancer Epidemiology and Genetics at the NCI and co-senior author of the study. "Most previous lung cancer studies have not separated data of smokers from non-smokers, which has limited insights into potential causes in those patients.

We have designed a study to collect data from never-smokers around the world and use genomics to trace back what exposures might be causing these cancers."

And while previous studies in the literature have shown an epidemiological link between air pollution and lung cancer in never-smokers, this new research goes further by showing a genomic link.

Mutational effects of air pollution

The team analyzed lung tumors from 871 never-smokers living in 28 regions with different levels of air pollution across Africa, Asia, Europe and North America. Using whole-genome sequencing, the researchers identified distinct patterns of DNA mutations—known as mutational signatures—that act like molecular fingerprints of past exposures.

By combining these genomic data with pollution estimates based on satellite and ground-level measurements of fine particulate matter, the researchers were able to estimate individuals' long-term exposure to air pollution. They found that never-smokers living in more polluted environments had significantly more mutations in their lung tumors, particularly driver mutations—which directly promote cancer development—and mutational signatures linked to cancer—which serve as a record of all past mutagenic exposures. For example, these individuals had a 3.9-fold increase in a mutational signature linked

to tobacco smoking and a 76% increase in another signature linked to aging.

This doesn't mean that pollution causes a unique "air pollution mutational signature" per se, noted study co-first author Marcos Díaz-Gay, a former postdoctoral researcher in Alexandrov's lab who is now a junior group leader at the Spanish National Cancer Research Center (CNIO) in Madrid, Spain. Rather, it increases the overall number of mutations, particularly in known pathways of DNA damage. "What we see is that air pollution is associated with an increase in somatic mutations, including those that fall under known mutation-

al signatures attributed to tobacco smoking and aging," said Díaz-Gay.

The researchers also noted a dose-response relationship: the more pollution someone was exposed to, the more mutations were found in their lung tumors. These tumors also had shorter telomeres—the protective caps on the ends of chromosomes—which is a sign of accelerated cellular aging.

Surprising finding from secondhand smoke exposure

In contrast, the researchers did not find a strong genetic correlation with secondhand smoke. Lung

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poverty in recent years—to remain expired. In its place, the law provides structural tax advantages to investors and business owners, making it more difficult for Black families to build wealth or afford rising

housing costs.

The result is a sweeping law that strengthens systemic inequities under the banner of prosperity.

House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries put it bluntly: "The One Big Ugly

Bill hurts everyday Americans and rewards billionaires. It's the largest attack on healthcare in American history. More than 17 million people will lose their healthcare as a result... folks are going to die across the United States of America."

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Billions for ICE, Cuts for the Poor: Trump's bill redefines federal priorities

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

Donald Trump's massive new spending measure, known by Democrats as the "One Big Ugly Bill," is set to dismantle central pillars of the American social safety net and create the most expansive immigration enforcement system the country has ever seen.

The legislation advances \$1 trillion in cuts to Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act over the next decade, threatening health coverage for millions of low-income Americans. However, among the least discussed aspects of the measure, it effectively turns America into a police state.

The bill devotes more than \$150 billion to expand the detention, surveillance, and deportation operations of Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Under the bill, ICE's detention budget alone would explode from \$3.4 billion this year to \$45 billion by 2029, surpassing the combined funding of all federal prisons.

Public records show that ICE's arrests of immigrants without criminal records have surged by more than 1,400% in the past year. The agency has repeatedly deployed masked officers and National Guard troops



Public records show that ICE's arrests of immigrants without criminal records have surged by more than 1,400% in the past year. The agency has repeatedly deployed masked officers and National Guard troops in workplace and community raids, tactics critics say resemble authoritarian crackdowns. (iStockphoto / NNPA)

in workplace and community raids, tactics critics say resemble authoritarian crackdowns.

The spending package also authorizes the creation of a federal citizenship registry, combining Social Security and immigration data into the first centralized list of U.S. citizens.

Officials claim the database will help election authorities verify voter eligibility, echoing Trump's unsubstantiated claims of widespread immigrant voter fraud. Privacy experts have warned that this system amounts to a national surveillance apparatus launched without any public debate or congressional hearings.

"This level of integration among federal agencies handling sensitive personal data has never existed before," NPR reporters Jude Joffe-Block and Miles Parks reported.

They noted that privacy advocates and even some conservatives have long opposed a government-run citizenship roster.

Polling from Pew Research shows that most Americans oppose several core pieces of Trump's immigration agenda. Sixty-one percent reject the deportation of immigrants to prisons in El Salvador.

Fifty-four percent disapprove of increased workplace raids. Yet a growing share—56%—now sup-

ports expanding the border wall with Mexico, a rise from 46% in 2019.

Inside the Republican Party, support for Trump's enforcement push is nearly unanimous. Eighty-eight percent of Republicans favor expanding the border wall. Eighty-one percent back using state and local police to help deport immigrants. Among Democrats, overwhelming majorities oppose the policies, with only 27% supporting any expansion of the wall.

The bill's most controversial provisions have drawn condemnation after Trump visited a new detention facility in the Ever-

glades, where he joked that alligators and snakes would attack any immigrant attempting to escape. The Florida Republican Party has since begun selling "Alligator Alcatraz" merchandise. Historians have noted that such imagery recalls Jim Crow-era propaganda depicting Black children as bait for alligators—a tactic used to dehumanize and terrorize Black communities.

Despite widespread criticism, Trump has pressed forward with the measure, calling it a fulfillment of his long-standing promises.

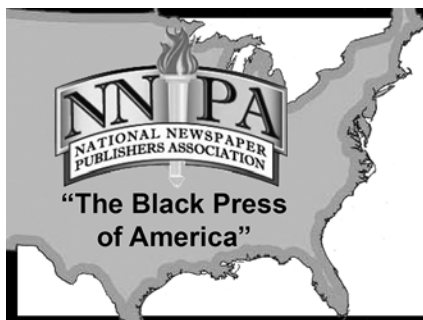
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Dallas College students bring home gold in national SkillsUSA competition

Dallas College students earned a total of 18 medals at the SkillsUSA National Leadership & Skills Conference, held June 23-27 in Atlanta. Forty-six students represented the college after qualifying by winning gold at the state level earlier this year.

"These outcomes reflect the powerful, real-world impact of SkillsUSA and

the vital role of career and technical education (CTE) at Dallas College," said Dr. Maria Boccalandro, dean of special academic programs at Dallas College.

The U.S. Department of Labor reported 7.4 million job openings in April 2025, including more than 596,000 in Texas alone. With CTE careers in high demand, opportunities for

Dallas College students continue to grow — underscoring the relevance and necessity of CTE in driving economic development.

Among the top winners was Minh Kieu, a recent graduate with an associate degree in digital art and design. Kieu took home gold in advertising design, where he was challenged to create six deliverables,

including a logo, within six hours. One judge, a comic book publisher, was so impressed with his work that he expressed interest in a future collaboration.

"I'm grateful that Dallas College provided me the opportunity to participate in SkillsUSA and network with likeminded people,"

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SkillsUSA advisor Ayaz Ismail (left) celebrates with recent graduate Minh Kieu, who took home gold in advertising design. (Dallas College)

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public safety strategy that we have implemented in partnership with residents," Mayor Scott said. "But our work is far from over—68 lives lost to violence is 68 too many."

The progress didn't happen by chance.

Under Scott's leadership, the Baltimore Police Department has combined targeted enforcement with offers of help.

Commissioner Richard Worley described how the Group Violence Reduction Strategy works: "We go out and give them a letter and basically say, 'Listen, we know you were doing the shooting. We want you to put the guns down, or we will take you and your entire drug operation off the street. But here are the services—job training, educa-

tion, relocation.'"

Meanwhile, in Birmingham, Mayor Woodfin has led an aggressive, community-driven approach that's paid off. The city's homicide rate has fallen 52% compared to last year, and the clearance rate for homicides has surged to 79%, a level rarely seen in major cities.

"The Birmingham Police Department is extremely aggressive in what they're doing and how they're taking a different approach in policing our community," Woodfin said.

He credited a blend of new technology, such as the Real Time Crime Center, and grassroots cooperation.

"When you share information, it doesn't allow the criminal element to be emboldened and hide behind

fear of people," Woodfin explained. "Those who are killing people are not just walking our streets."

Birmingham Police Chief Michael Pickett said the city's street outreach teams are also preventing retaliatory shootings before they happen.

"We are really, really hammering at it," Pickett told the City Council. "I am very appreciative of all the men and women in the Birmingham Police Department who are leading our fight."

While total violent crime in Birmingham has edged up slightly, the plunge in homicides shows that sustained focus and coordination can work—even if major media don't bother to cover it. State and federal partners in Maryland have also acknowledged Baltimore's progress.

"Baltimore City released a midyear report showing the fewest homicides ever recorded at this point in a single year," Maryland Governor Wes Moore's office said in a statement.

Across the country, other Black mayors are driving similar results.

In New York City, Mayor Eric Adams has presided over a 24% drop in shootings and a 14% decline in murders so far in 2025, the fewest shooting incidents recorded in more than a decade. Robberies and burglaries are also down, with NYPD data showing consistent reductions across nearly every major crime category.

On the West Coast, Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass saw homicides fall 14% in 2024 and gang-related killings drop nearly 45% in areas targeted by community

safety programs. Overall violent crime declined by 3%, and property crimes like burglary and auto theft dropped by thousands of incidents compared to the prior year.

In Chicago, Mayor Brandon Johnson has overseen a 22% decrease in murders and a 31% drop in shootings through early 2025, reaching the city's lowest homicide totals in over a decade.

Officials credit community-based outreach and investments in neighborhood violence prevention. And in Atlanta, Mayor Andre Dickens announced that violent crime was down nearly 16% in 2024, with homicides decreasing and property crime dropping as well. The city has invested in hiring more officers while expanding the At-Promise Centers that connect youth with educational and mental

health resources.

In both large and mid-sized cities, the results are undeniable: fewer families burying loved ones, more cases solved, and more residents willing to engage with police.

But to hear much of the national narrative, you'd never know it. As several social media users have pointed out, in Baltimore, Birmingham, New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Atlanta, Black leadership is not a box to check or a headline to boast about. It's what drives real, life-saving change—whether the national media notices or not.

"While we acknowledge the historic lows we are experiencing, we must simultaneously acknowledge that there is much more work to do," Scott stated. "And our success makes me commit even further to doing it."



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MAGA turns on Trump's DOJ after Epstein records vanish

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

For years, MAGA influencers have demanded the unsealing of Jeffrey Epstein's files, convinced they would deliver explosive revelations about Democrats like Bill Clinton, Barack Obama, and other figures they've branded enemies of the state.

But after the Justice Department under Donald Trump declared there is no Epstein client list and promised "no further disclosure," some in Trump's base might be asking an



Photo via NNPA

unthinkable question: Was their own hero's name among the records they fought to expose?

The Justice Department and FBI announced last week that the Epstein ma-

terials contain no evidence of additional perpetrators, prompting furious backlash

from the same pro-Trump media personalities who had championed transparency as a rallying cry.

Chad Prather, who was invited to the White House in February and handed a binder of so-called Epstein evidence by Attorney General Pam Bondi, demanded to know why Americans were misled.

"Where is the Epstein info the American people were promised?" Prather wrote. "You handed us a notebook and promised

more was on the way. You told us it existed, and now you say it doesn't?"

The world of MAGA angrily chimed in.

Jack Posobiec called the entire process "incredible" and accused the DOJ of gross mismanagement.

Savanah Hernandez condemned the announcement as "a slap in the face," while Paul Syzputa insisted no one should accept any conclusion without the full, unredacted files.

Robby Starbuck deliv-

ered the most pointed rebuke, writing on X, "This new DOJ memo admits there are countless victims of Epstein on video but no client list or evidence of other rapists they can charge. So, Epstein was trafficking these underage girls to nobody? Is Pam Bondi serious? No one who has followed this for years believes that everyone who went to Epstein's Island was just there to catch some waves and relax."

STUDY, from Page 4

tumors of never-smokers exposed to secondhand smoke showed only a slight increase in mutations, along with shorter telomeres, but no distinct mutational signatures or driver mutations. While exposure to secondhand smoke is a known cancer risk, its mutational effect was far less pronounced than that seen with air pollution. "If there is a mutagenic effect of secondhand smoke, it may be too weak for our current tools to detect," said study co-first author Tongwu Zhang, an Earl Stadtman Investigator in the Biostatistics Branch of the NCI. "However, its biological effects are still evident in the significant telomere shortening."

The researchers acknowledged that their analysis could be further limited by the complexity of measuring secondhand smoke exposure. "It's difficult to get that kind of information because it depends on various factors such as amount of

time one was exposed; how far one was from exposure; and how often one shared a space with someone else who smoked, for example," said Diaz-Gay.

Risk found from herbal medicine

In addition to air pollution, researchers identified another environmental risk: aristolochic acid, a carcinogen found in certain traditional Chinese herbal medicines. A specific mutational signature linked to aristolochic acid was found almost exclusively in lung cancer cases of never-smokers from Taiwan. Though aristolochic acid has previously been linked to bladder, gastrointestinal, kidney and liver cancers from ingestion, this is the first study to report evidence that it may contribute to lung cancer. The researchers suspect that these cases may arise from inhalation of traditional Chinese herbal medicines, but more data are needed to support their hypothesis.



Hoops heat up in Dallas: Paige Bueckers' historic all-star nod and Frank Vogel joins Mavericks

By Jamal Baker
NDG Contributing Writer

The professional basketball scene in Dallas is filled with excitement as the Wings and Mavericks are two franchises with hopeful futures.

Dallas Wings guard Paige Bueckers has been named an All-Star starter for the 2025 WNBA All-Star Game—earning the honor in her rookie season. She will be the first rookie to start the All-Star Game in Dallas Wings history.

The 23-year-old guard currently ranks 11th in the league in scoring (18.4 points) and sixth in assists (5.8)—leading all rookies in both categories.

The WNBA announced the full list of All-Star starters, with Bueckers joining fellow backcourt starter Caitlin Clark, who was named team captain after receiving a record-breaking 1,293,526 fan votes. 2024 WNBA Defensive Player of the Year Napheesa Collier was also selected as a team captain in her fifth All-Star nod.

Bueckers received the sixth-most votes from fans and was second in voting for guards, behind only Clark.

Bueckers will be the sixth No. 1 pick to start in the All-Star Game as a rookie, joining Clark (2024), Aliyah Boston (2023), Maya Moore (2011), Sue Bird (2002) and Chamique Holdsclaw (1999).

Bueckers and Clark are joined in the backcourt by the New York Liberty's Sa-



brina Ionescu, making her fourth All-Star appearance, and the Atlanta Dream's Allisha Gray, a three-time All-Star who will be making her first career start in the game.

Perennial All-Stars like Las Vegas Aces' A'ja Wilson, the Liberty's Breanna Stewart, and Seattle Storm's Nneka Ogumike were also announced as starters.

Clark and Collier will draft their teams during "WNBA Countdown" on July 8 and the 2025 WNBA All-Star Game will be held July 19 at Gainbridge Fieldhouse in Indianapolis.

The Dallas Wings also announced Monday that their Aug. 1 matchup against Caitlin Clark and the Indiana Fever will be played at American Airlines Center, setting the stage for a highly anticipated sequel to 'A Night in Dallas.'

In front of a crowd of 20,409 at American Airlines Center, the Fever defeated the Wings 94-86 in their first matchup of the season June 27, despite Clark being sidelined with a left groin injury.

Notable athletes in attendance were nine-time NBA All-Star Kyrie Irving of the Dallas Mavericks,

superstar Dallas Cowboys pass rusher Micah Parsons and Cooper Flagg, the No. 1 overall pick in the 2025 NBA draft by the Mavericks last month.

The game was originally scheduled to take place at the Wings' home arena, the 7,000 seat College Park Center in Arlington.

Women's basketball fans will now have another opportunity to see Paige Bueckers and Clark square off in Dallas as tickets go on sale July 11.

The first matchup between the WNBA's two most recent No. 1 picks could come on July 13 if Clark is healthy, when Dallas travels to play Indiana at Gainbridge Fieldhouse.

Clark is arguably the league's most popular player and has been since she stepped into the WNBA.

However, Bueckers is also emerging as a face of the league after receiving more All-Star votes than any other rookie in WNBA history with 805,471 votes.

Although Bueckers is having an impressive rookie campaign, averaging 18.7 points, 4.3 rebounds and 5.7 assists, the Wings (6-13) have the worst record in the Western Conference

and will look to turn their season around sooner rather than later.

On the NBA side of things, the Dallas Mavericks are bolstering their coaching staff for the 2025-26 season by bringing in NBA championship-winning coach Frank Vogel as their new lead assistant coach.

Life truly is full circle.

Dallas head coach Jason Kidd served as an assistant under Vogel on the Los Angeles Lakers' 2019-20 championship team. Kidd recruited Vogel to join the Mavericks last season as adviser, and Vogel will now replace Sean Sweeney, who left for the San Antonio

Spurs to become their associate head coach.

As a head coach, Vogel holds a career record of 480-422, with previous stops at the helm of the Indiana Pacers, Orlando Magic, and Phoenix Suns.

Vogel enters a situation in Dallas where he will get to work with a solid core ready to compete right away. The coaching staff will be tasked with developing No. 1 overall pick Cooper Flagg who projects as the new cornerstone of the Mavericks' future.

Vogel, 52, is a defensive minded coach who emphasizes physicality and strong rim protection. With a roster that features Anthony Da-

vis, Dereck Lively II, and Daniel Gafford, the Mavericks will have no shortage of rim protection.

Vogel will be stepping into his first assistant role since 2011, when he was a member of Jim O'Brien's staff on the 2011-12 Pacers.

It will be interesting to see how defensive-minded coaches Vogel and Kidd utilize the Mavericks' versatile group of defenders, including P.J. Washington, Cooper Flagg, Naji Marshall, Caleb Martin, and Max Christie.

With Vogel on board, the Mavericks are doubling down on defense as they look to take the next step toward championship contention.





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Film Review: Stunning visuals drive 'F1: The Movie' into the spotlight

By Dwight Brown
NNPA Film Critic

(***) It's a Tom Cruise kinda movie, but it stars Brad Pitt. He's the protagonist in this tale about an ageing, washed-up race car driver who everyone's counted out. Except for a dear friend and the driver, himself: "If the last thing I ever do is drive that car, I will take that life man, 1000 times."

So, what are the Cruise/Pitt common denominators in this production? Director/screenwriter Joseph Kosinski also helmed Top Gun: Maverick, a \$1.49B juggernaut, which broke a global total box office record for Cruise. That film's producer Jerry Bruckheimer and screenwriter Ehren Kruger are onboard too. Together they evolve the TG:M formula: Add a worldwide movie star who's never headlined a film that made that much bank. Toss in a multicultural cast, underdog challenges, lots of action and stir.



Image via NNPA

Then create a big-budget extravaganza that should become a big-box-office summer movie.

After an accident in the 1990s, former Formula 1 racer Sonny Hayes (Pitt) keeps to himself. Still driving and winning for various NASCAR teams, but his personal life is under the radar. The loner lives in a van and goes from place to place, like a nomad. Things change the day his old buddy Ruben Cervantes (Javier Bardem) looks him up and begs him to join his floundering Formula 1 racing team, APX. Begs is an understatement.

The day the wrinkled and

weathered Sonny shows up for onboarding the rest of Ruben's team is in shock. Especially his young, star driver Joshua Pearce (Damson Idris, Farming). Sparks fly between the cocky twentysomething and the older man. Other kinds of sparks fly between the team's tech expert Kate (Kerry Condon, Better Call Saul) and Sonny. Can they all just box up their feelings and win a damn race?

It's rare that a film's score and playlist rivals the lead actors for the spotlight. But whether it was musical composer Hans Zimmer (Dune: Part One) or someone else, who-

ever wrangled the hits for this movie, was feeling it. Opening scenes get the party started with Led Zeppelin's "Whole Lotta Love." Lead vocalist Robert Plant screeches his heart out as Jimmy Page shreds his lead guitar:

"You need coolin', Baby, I'm not foolin'. I'm gonna send ya, Back to schoolin." In due time blues guitarist extraordinaire Gary Clark Jr. warns those who doubt him on the song "Bright Lights:" "You gonna know my name by the end of the

night." And if there are any questions left, Chris Stapleton set's everyone straight as he bellows over a groove-setting rhythm guitar and a whiny lead guitar: "I bet you thought

See FILM, Page 16

AWARDS, from Page 6

Kieu said. "It taught me a lot and gave me the confidence to launch my career."

Dallas College medalists at the 2025 SkillsUSA national competition:

Gold

- Minh Kieu – Advertising Design
- Khai Huynh, Moise Steeve, Saho Zabzi and Mohammed Khan – Chapter Display
- Caleb Giddings and Harrison Nguyen – Community Action Project

Silver

- Brook Tilahun, Jason

Tejeda, Ryan Lee, Noor AlRubaye and Kent Ho – Chapter Business Procedure

• Norma Salinas – "Facilitation" Leadership in Facility Management

Bronze

- Courtney Chaney, Eboni Johnson, Ariana Ross and Morgan Deanna Barnes – Entrepreneurship
- Rosemary Pate – Restaurant Service

"Over the past four years, since the SkillsUSA program has been under my leadership, our students

have consistently excelled on the national stage, demonstrating exceptional talent, professionalism and career readiness," said Boccalandro. "Some students received job offers on the spot from industry judges, highlighting the quality of our training programs and the workforce preparedness of our students. Others earned full-ride scholarships to four-year universities, while many were awarded professional tools, equipment and resources from industry sponsors in recognition of their skills and potential."

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LA Dodgers owner's ties to private prisons and surveillance spark backlash from Latino Fans

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

As thousands of Latinos and immigrant families pack Dodger Stadium night after night, the team's billionaire owner has faced growing scrutiny over financial connections to companies profiting from the detention and surveillance of immigrants.

Mark Walter, principal owner of the Los Angeles Dodgers, also serves as CEO of Guggenheim Partners, a financial firm that manages over \$325 billion in assets. Guggenheim holds a 0.38% stake in the GEO Group, a private prison corporation that operates U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention centers. Based on GEO Group's current valuation of \$3.39 billion, Guggenheim's share amounts to more than \$12 million invested in the company's operations. In addition, Walter leads TWG Global, which recently announced a partnership with Palantir Technologies, the data analytics firm that ICE paid \$30 million to build ImmigrationOS. That platform uses facial recognition, predictive algorithms, and data fusion to track immigrants and support deportation ef-



Wikimedia Commons

forts.

These financial ties came to light as ICE raids swept through Los Angeles earlier this year. Despite mounting calls from community groups to speak out, the Dodgers remained silent for nearly two weeks before announcing a \$1 million donation to organizations supporting those affected by the raids. During that same period, Walter's group closed a \$10 billion deal to acquire a stake in the Los Angeles Lakers. Critics compared the donation to token damage control. The Dodgers have also faced criticism for historical displacement. Before Dodger Stadium was built, the land belonged to the Mexican-American neighborhoods of Palo Verde, La Loma, and Bishop. In the 1950s, hundreds of families were forcibly removed under the

promise of public housing that never materialized.

Today, some advocates say the tools have changed but the impact remains. "It's not bulldozers now—it's surveillance contracts and ICE beds," said a community organizer who has protested outside the stadium. Walter's organizations have also been drawn into legal battles over diversity initiatives. America First Legal, a right-wing group founded by former Trump White House policy director Stephen Miller, filed a federal complaint accusing the Dodgers and Guggenheim of illegal discrimination under the guise of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies.

The complaint states:

"The Los Angeles Dodgers and Guggenheim Partners have represented to the public that they have engaged — and continue to engage — in unlawful employment discrimination under the guise of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. It is unlawful — even when using inclusive terminology — to segregate or classify employees or applicants for employment in ways that would deprive, or tend to deprive individuals of employment, training, or promotions because of their race, color, sex, or national

origin."

The Dodgers declined to comment on the allegations. Guggenheim Partners did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

In a separate incident, the Dodgers said they turned away ICE officers who tried to enter stadium grounds during the immi-

gration sweeps. ICE initially denied this account, but a Department of Homeland Security spokesperson later confirmed that Customs and Border Protection vehicles were briefly in the parking lot "unrelated to any operation or enforcement."

Many fans and civil rights advocates see a con-

tradiction between the organization's community messaging and its financial interests.

"People need to understand that behind the baseball nostalgia and feel-good slogans, there are powerful money streams connected to incarceration and surveillance," the organizer said.

BILL, from Page 5

"This is going to be the bill that finally puts America first," Trump said during a rally in Florida. "No excuses."

Nevada Democratic Rep. Steven Horsford called the

legislation a direct attack on the health, safety, and dignity of Black communities across this country.

"Stripping away Medicaid coverage while throwing billions into an unac-

countable immigration dragnet is not fiscal responsibility—it's reckless extremism," Horsford stated.

"We will not be silent as this Congress tries to reverse decades of progress and push people further into poverty and fear."

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Kaleidoscope Park welcomes Comerica Bank as presenting sponsor of vendor market series

New partnership supports small businesses and local entrepreneurship

FRISCO – Kaleidoscope Park, the 5.7-acre signature park in Frisco, is proud to welcome its newest partner, Comerica Bank, as the presenting sponsor of the Park's Vendor Market Series. Through this partnership, Comerica Bank continues its strong commitment to empowering small businesses and fostering community vibrancy by supporting opportunities for local and youth makers, artisans, and entrepreneurs to thrive. This announcement comes on the heels of Comerica Bank's grand opening of its Preston John Hickman banking center on June 25, further highlighting its investment in the Frisco community.

"Comerica Bank's sponsorship directly supports our mission to provide accessible, community-driven programs," said Shawn Jackson, Executive Director of Kaleidoscope Park. "We're grateful for their partnership in bringing these markets to life, uplifting small and child-led businesses and encouraging visitors to shop local."

Comerica Bank's sponsorship makes it possible for the nonprofit organization Young Tech Pioneers to participate in each Shop Local Vendor Market. Young Tech Pioneers brings child-led businesses to the Park, offering young innovators the opportunity to sell their products and share their ideas with the community. Funds raised directly support the organization's mission to empower the next



Courtesy photo

generation by fostering creativity, leadership, and real-world business experience among local youth.

"As the leading bank for business, it is imperative that we invest in entrepreneurs and small business owners at every stage of their journey," said Jim Weber, Comerica Bank Chief Experience Officer. "This meaningful collaboration with the Kaleidoscope Foundation reflects our ongoing efforts to support small businesses in an innovative way, while positively impacting the local economies and communities we collectively serve."

Kaleidoscope Park's 2025 Vendor Markets include:

- Shop Local Summer Market: Saturday, July 19 | 10 AM – 2 PM - Soak up the season while browsing sunny-day essentials and summertime finds.

- Hispanic Heritage Celebration Market: Saturday, September 6 | 10 AM – 4 PM - Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month by browsing goods from Hispanic owned businesses.

- Shop Local Fall Market: Saturday, September 20 | 10 AM – 4 PM - Embrace cozy

weather with fall-themed treasures, warm scents, and rustic décor.

- Shop Local Holiday Market: Saturday, November 29 | 10 AM – 4 PM - Discover festive goods, winter treats, and handcrafted gifts.

To help keep visitors cool and refreshed—especially during the warmer months—Comerica Bank will host a hospitality tent at each vendor market, generously offering complimentary beverages for shoppers.

Vendors interested in participating can apply at kaleidoscopepark.org/vendor-opportunities. There is a \$25 application fee, which will be applied toward the booth fee, now reduced to \$200 thanks to Comerica Bank's generous sponsorship. Participating vendors keep 100% of their sales.

As a non-profit public space, Kaleidoscope Park is able to offer free, year-round programs and experiences for the public through partners like Comerica Bank. The Park continues to welcome sponsors interested in supporting an event or series that aligns with its mission to expand arts, culture, and community in North Texas. For information on sponsor-

ship opportunities, contact Director of Development & Relationships Cara Dudley at cdudley@kaleidoscopepark.org.

Kaleidoscope Park is a dynamic, innovative arts and culture destination for North Texas that celebrated its Grand Opening in October 2024. The Park is home to free, year-round public programming, including markets, diverse musical and dance performances,

and a variety of health and recreational activities. The Park features monumental works of public art, architecture, and gardens set among a children's play area, dog park, performance lawn, outdoor workspaces, and shaded promenades and plazas. Learn more at kaleidoscopepark.org.

Kaleidoscope Park Foundation is a nonprofit public-private partnership between Communities Foundation

of Texas and the City of Frisco. The Foundation's mission is to thoughtfully engage the diverse and rapidly growing communities of North Texas through free public arts and culture programming that is genuine, inclusive, and accessible. Operating as a Foundation supported by private donations, financial support for development, operations, and programming is always welcome.



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Congressional Black Caucus challenges Target on diversity

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

Target is grappling with worsening financial and reputational fallout as the national selective buying and public education program launched by the Black Press of America and other national and local leaders continues to erode the retailer's sales and foot traffic. But a recent meeting that the retailer intended to keep quiet between CEO Brian Cornell and members of the Congressional Black Caucus Diversity Task Force was publicly reported after the Black Press discovered the session, and the CBC later put Target on blast.

"The Congressional Black Caucus met with the



Thomas De Wever via NNPA

leadership of the Target Corporation on Capitol Hill to directly address deep concerns about the impact of the company's unscionable decision to end a number of its diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts," CBC Chair Yvette Clarke stated. "Like many of the coalition leaders and part-

ner organizations that have chosen to boycott their stores across the country, we found that the explanations offered by the leadership of the Target Corporation fell woefully short of what our communities deserve and of the values of inclusion that Target once touted."

"Black consumers contribute overwhelmingly to our economy and the Target Corporation's bottom line. Our communities deserve to shop at businesses that publicly share our values without sacrificing our dignity. It is no longer acceptable to deliver promises to our communities in private

without also demonstrating those values publicly."

Lauren Burke, Capitol Hill correspondent for Black Press of America, was present when Target CEO Cornell and a contingent of Target officials arrived at the U.S. Capitol last month.

"It's always helpful to have meetings like this and get some candid feedback and continue to evolve our thinking," Cornell told Burke as he exited the meeting and walked down a long hallway in the Cannon House Office Building. "We look forward to follow-up conversations."

When asked if the issue of the ongoing boycott was discussed, Cornell's response was, "That was not a big area of focus — we're focused on running a great

business each and every day. Take care of our teams. Take care of the guests who shop with us and do the right things in our communities."

A national public education campaign on Target, spearheaded by Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr., president and CEO of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), the NNPA's board of directors, and with other national African American leaders, has combined consumer education efforts with a call for selective buying.

The NNPA is a trade association that represents the more than 220 African American-owned newspapers and media companies known as the Black Press

See TARGET, Page 13



City of Dallas

2024 Drinking Water Quality Report

The City of Dallas' Drinking Water Quality Report is produced annually to provide information about the City's water system including source water, the levels of detected contaminants and compliance with drinking water rules. The report is also produced to answer your water quality questions.

The 2024 Drinking Water Quality Report shows that the levels of contaminants in Dallas' water meet or are below the amounts allowed by law.

A copy of the 2024 Drinking Water Quality Report can be downloaded from the City website at www.dallaswqr.com or obtained by calling Dallas' 3-1-1 information line.

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Disney Dreamers Academy now taking applications for mentorship program at Walt Disney World

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. – Teens from across the country can apply, or be nominated, for the 2026 class of Disney Dreamers Academy.

The signature mentorship program at Walt Disney World Resort in Florida annually selects 100 high school students for a transformative experience. Students can apply or be nominated at www.DisneyDreamersAcademy.com.

The 2026 event will be the 19th year of the Disney mentoring program, which has become a tangible

example of Walt Disney World's commitment to supporting diverse communities.

The program aims to inspire teens from varying backgrounds by encouraging the next generation to think big and to use what they learn in their relentless pursuit of their dreams.

Over the years, the program has inspired more than 1,700 students from across the country.

Graduates have gone on to become doctors, engineers, performing artists, entrepreneurs and more, and some have transitioned

into mentors to the Disney Dreamers who followed them.

The 100 students are selected from thousands of applicants who share their personal stories and future aspirations through essay submissions.

These students, along with a parent or guardian, are invited on an all-expenses-paid trip to Walt Disney World for an inspiring, multi-day experience that provides them with valuable life tools such as leadership skills, effective communication techniques and networking strategies.

Students participate in interactive workshops in a variety of disciplines aligned with their dreams. These workshops introduce the Disney Dreamers to diverse career paths within business, entertainment and sciences, including career opportunities within The Walt Disney Company.

For more information, visit DisneyDreamersAcademy.com. Regular updates about Disney Dreamers Academy are also available at Facebook.com/DisneyDreamersAcademy and Instagram.com/disney-dreamersacademy.

TARGET, from Page 12

of America, the voice of 50 million African Americans across the nation. The coalition has requested that Target restore and expand its stated commitment to do business with local community-owned businesses inclusive of the Black Press of America, and to significantly increase investment in Black-owned businesses and media. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), Black-owned Banks, national Black Church denominations, and grassroots and local organizations committed to improving the quality of life of all Americans, and especially those from underserved communities. According to Target's latest earnings report, net sales for the first quarter of 2025 fell 2.8 percent to \$23.85 billion compared to the same period last year. Comparable store sales dropped 3.8 percent, and in-store

foot traffic slid 5.7 percent.

Shares of Target have also struggled under the pressure. The company's stock traded around \$103.85 early Wednesday

afternoon, down significantly from roughly \$145 before the controversy escalated. Analysts note that Target has lost more than \$12 billion in market value since the beginning of the year.

"We will continue to inform and to mobilize Black consumers in every state in the United States," Chavis said. "Target today has a profound opportunity to respond with respect and restorative commitment."

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Skilled Hands Training Center, Incorporated of Dallas, Texas shall recruit and admit individuals of any race, color or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities. The Corporation shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin to the administration of charitable, educational, community, and other administered programs.

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The Older I Get The Younger I Feel

By Dr. James L. Snyder

I like celebrating anything and everything. After all, who doesn't like party time?

Thinking along this line it occurred to me this month I will be celebrating my birthday. I pondered this for a while and was trying to figure out which birthday I should celebrate.

After all, if it's my birthday, I should be the one to choose which birthday to celebrate. I'm thinking, for example, that this year I'll celebrate my 16th birthday.

On my 16th birthday, I was not in a state to really celebrate it to its fullest. My only concern at that time was I'm old enough to get my driver's license. That's the only thing I was even thinking about. Looking back on that day, I lost a lot of celebration.

So, this year, I might just celebrate my 16th birthday.

Then I think of my 21st birthday. I didn't do very much to celebrate that birthday then. I was just so excited to become an official adult that nothing else really mattered. I didn't have to get my parents' permission to do anything. Oh boy, that was a great day in my life.

I didn't celebrate it to the fullest extent. I was too excited to become an adult, so I didn't do much celebrating.

I'm still in a quandary as to which birthday I should be celebrating this year.

The other morning, I was shaving in the bathroom.

As I looked in the mirror, I gasped. Is that my grandfather in the mirror? Or, have I become my grandfather?

Up to this time, I didn't realize how old I really was.

The other day I was in the shopping mall with The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. When we were there, she would usually go one way, and I would go to the coffee shop to get coffee.

As I was walking to the coffee shop, a bunch of young boys looked at me and started laughing. Finally, one of them said, "Hey, grandpa. Where's your cane?" And then, in hysterical laughter, they ran away from me.

They can be very thankful I didn't have a cane at that time or I would have put it to good use, if you get my drift.

Being a little agitated, I walked, got my coffee and then sat down to drink it. As I was drinking it, I began to realize that at one time in my life, I was like those kids who were making fun of me. I thought my grandfather was just an old geezer. I never knew how he had become so old, but at the time, I wasn't asking him any questions.

A few years ago, I retired, which sent me off on a new direction in life. Certainly I continue much of my ministries but I don't have a schedule to follow. I can do whatever I want, whenever I want, for as long as I want.

The only catch to that was The Gracious Mistress

of the Parsonage.

She never lets me get away with anything that's rather stupid or crazy. The fact that I'm not that crazy today is a tribute to her oversight. If it wasn't for her I would be the craziest person in town.

Thinking about that, what would be wrong with that?

Several years ago we celebrated our birthdays at a restaurant. Our birthdays are two days apart and also two years apart. I won't go any further than that.

When the waitress approached our table, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage mentioned we were celebrating our birthdays.

The waitress, trying to be funny, looked at me and said, "So, what does it feel like to be older?"

I smiled at her. Then, I reached across the table and gently squeezed my wife's arm. I looked at the waitress and said, "It feels rather good."

Both the waitress and I were laughing, but the other person at the table was not laughing at all. It concerned me a little because I wouldn't know what was going to happen until we got home.

Being old has many advantages. I may stumble around and get confused, and people will say, "That's okay. He's just old."

Maybe this year for my birthday I should celebrate the fact that I've lived this long. Both of my grandfathers died when they were 70. This month I will turn

74. So, I've outlived my grandparents. My father, however, lived to be 78. So, I've got four years ahead of me to catch up with my father.

The only thing that really concerns me about getting old is on top of my head. Every year a significant number of hairs retire and go on vacation never to be seen again. I have more hair today than I did when I was born, if that means anything.

Another thing is, the older I get the more my brown hair has been replaced with grey hair. Where do these grey hairs come from?

I then read a verse that gave me some comfort. "The hoary (grey) head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness" (Proverbs

16:31).

If this is true, and it is, my grey hair is my "crown of glory" I never thought of that way, but now I'm going to. The older I get the bigger my "crown of glory." I'm going to use it to the best of my personal

advantage.

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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Fears That Keep Us from His Presence



Sister Tarpley
NDG Religion Editor

“Then all the people of the region of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them, because they were overcome with fear. So He got into the boat and left.”

St. Luke 8:37

Jesus did many miracles when He lived on earth. One of those miracles involved the deliverance of a demon-possessed man. The people of the community witnessed this awesome demonstration of God’s

power when Jesus commanded the demon spirit to come out of the man and go into the herd of nearby pigs. The man was healed and sat at Jesus’ feet.

You would expect the people who witnessed this to embrace Jesus as one performing good deeds and to honor Him. The opposite was true. Instead, they were overcome with fear. Why?

Many of us respond the same way to Jesus when He does an out-of-the-ordinary act among His people. We are fearful because we have never personally experienced this before. So, we draw wrong judgments. The result is that Jesus removes Himself from us.

The Lord is able to do far exceeding above what we think. Jesus does not remain in the places where there is fear of His goodness. It is often subconscious fears that prevent us from going to a deeper level with Him.

The people in Gerasenes could not benefit from Jesus’ presence because of their fears. Have you feared Jesus because of what He might require of you?

Have you feared that He might ask of you something you are not prepared to give? Do not let your fears drive Him from your presence.

All that is necessary is that you understand His roadblocks for you.

“And Joshua said, ‘Ah, Sovereign Lord, why did You ever bring this people across the Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us? If only we had been content to stay on the other side of

Jordan!’” Joshua 7:7


Have you ever felt like you were doing what God wanted you to do, but your plans were totally frustrated? This was how Joshua felt. The Lord had been with the people of Israel as

they entered the Promised Land. They defeated every enemy because of God’s blessing and protection. They had just taken the city of Jericho. The next battle

See TARPLEY, Page 16

Inspiring Body of Christ

Pastor Rickie G. Rush



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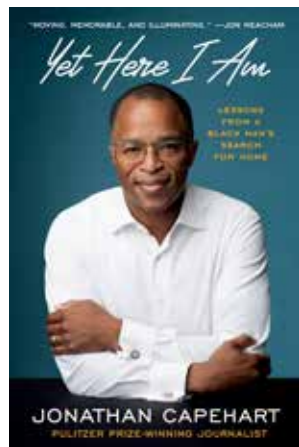
NDG Bookshelf: 'Yet Here I Am' is a great read for the right reader

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

One hand over the other. That's how you climbed to where you are now. One rung at a time, hand over hand until you reach the intended goal. Yes, sometimes you went backward before you ascended again or you had to move sideways past a barrier. And sometimes, as in the new memoir, "Yet Here I Am" by Jonathan Capehart, you got a hand up.

His mother refused to talk about it.

When little Jonathan Capehart inquired about his father, who died just months after Capehart was born, he was met with a



look that told him not to ask again. He didn't learn the truth until he was well out of childhood: his father had left Capehart's mother long before Capehart's birth, and though the man visited afterward, "he

didn't stay long...."

The loss stung but things turned out well anyhow. Capehart had many father figures throughout his life, paternal relatives who kept him in the family loop, and his maternal grandpa who played a big part of Capehart's upbringing. Young Capehart spend his summers in Severn, North Carolina, playing, visiting, gathering lessons and wisdom from his mother's parents and aunts. In Severn, extended family was everywhere, and it's where many of Capehart's best childhood memories spring.

He also has many cherished memories of his

mother, and books. He was always a reader, and schoolmates recognized it. They also "knew I was a little 'funny,'" he muses because, at ten years old, he knew he was gay. His mother had had to teach him the hard truths in "how to be Black in white spaces" but college friends gave him safety for "self-discovery."

Also at the tender age of ten, Capehart became fascinated with electronic media, and decided that he wanted to work at NBC, later interning at the Today show for two summers. At nineteen, he met a mentor who demanded excellence, and who shaped Cape-

hart's career.

Twelve years later, that same mentor offered Capehart his own MSNBC show...

As memoirs go, "Yet Here I Am" is a solid okay.

It's not earth-shattering, nor is it wildly fascinating. It's not exciting or heart-wrenching or even all that emotional, but it's not terrible, either. Overall, it's smack-center, a "5" on a one-to-ten scale, and there we are.

Moving from his middle-class childhood in which he vaguely understood the racism present in his mother's hometown, to a wildly successful career in media and the mentors who

helped him get where he is, author Jonathan Capehart shares his story with a casual tone that's calm and matter-of-fact. Readers get a nice look at the workings of journalism and what it's like to win a Pulitzer Prize, but if you're expecting the kind of excitement you want in a deadline-racing newsroom, it's not here; instead, Capehart writes in a decidedly unruffled manner that's really pretty tame.

Still, Capehart fans will absolutely want to read this memoir for its thoughtfulness and its satisfactory ending. Not a fan? Then "Yet Here I Am" could be a long climb.

FILM, from Page 9

you'd seen the last of me. I can't change the way I am, you see. I think it's my responsibility. To tell you I'm just as bad as I used to be!"

Those songs, with their lyrics, capsule Sonny's journey and attitude. There he is, in his 60s, trying to convince a crew half his age that he can lead them to a checkered flag win. He schools 'em, demands respect and show's them how badass he can be. That

spirit propels the movie forward as the rest of the characters follow him, albeit cautiously, wherever he leads them.

Kosinski uses Kruger's screenplay to guide him as he creates a story that is compelling for 2h 35m, straight (editors Stephen Mirrione and Patrick J Smith). Scenes either have action, drama, laughter, flirtations, anger or fear. Rivalries are exacerbated, romance kindled, and

teammates encouraged. Some sequences will surprise audiences as they expose the kind of foxy strategy race car drivers use to win, when winning may look like it will never happen. The machinations on view are as cunning and cutthroat as those of a pool shark.

Pitt works the Cruise-type persona like a champ. Smart mouthed, mature in areas where others aren't. He flirts well and uses his megawatt smile to tame the masses. Idris makes a

great counterpart, giving lip service as well as he gets it. With smirks that warrant responses, Joshua challenges: "When was the last time you won a race!?" Sonny, gives it back: "Same as you!" Both actors had experiences driving in cars reaching nearly 200mph, and it shows in their performances. Sara Niles (Ted Lasso) as Joshua's mom has the right amount of strength and concern. Hard to believe that Kerry Condon is the same actor who played the crime abetting

girlfriend in Better Call Saul. She exhibits a nice blend of brainy nerd and woman in need of love.

The visuals help this \$200M movie become all the action and verve a summer audience could want. Claudio Miranda's (Life of Pi) clear and colorful cinematography captures the driver's point of view, overhead big picture shots and the intimacy of ice baths too. Does the footage distinguish itself greatly from other recent car race films like Gran Turismo

(2023), Ferrari (2023) or Ford v Ferrari (2019)? Not much. Except it might be slicker and feel bigger. Credit the dazzling production design by Ben Munro and Mark Tildesley and the contemporary costumes by Julian Day (Bohemian Rhapsody) for that assist.

F1: The movie has the formula for success. It's got the fuel. Cruise must be smiling as Pitt takes the checkered flag.

Visit Film Critic Dwight Brown at DwightBrown-Ink.com.

TARPLEY, from Page 15

was the city of Ai.

They scouted the enemy and determined it would require only 3,000 men to defeat them. They attacked, and soon the reports came back that they were being routed. Joshua could not understand this. He cried out to God asking why this was happening.

The Lord said to Joshua, "Stand up! What are you doing down on your face? Israel has sinned; they have violated My covenant, which I commanded them to keep. They have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, they have lied, they have put them with their own possessions. That is why the Israelites can-

not stand against their enemies; they turn their backs and run because they have been made liable to destruction. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction." **Joshua 7:10-12.**

Whenever we open ourselves up to sin, we become liable. God removes His protective shield from our lives in order for the sin in

our lives to be purged out. He often uses the enemy of our souls to accomplish the task. If you feel you are being thwarted in some way, examine your life to see if there is any sin that is the cause of the problem. Adversity is not always due to sin, but it can be. Ask God; He will show you. As with Joshua,

God immediately answered this prayer when

Joshua asked. He desires for His children to live in a right relationship with Him. Opportunities abound. Ask God to help you to discern when an opportunity is something He has placed before you and when it is something that would be contrary to His will for you. Ask God to stir your conscience and bring questions, examples and Scripture to your mind that will

guide you in this process. Ask for help to consider biblical values; ethics; the gifts, skills, and abilities that He has given you; your family and other commitments; and anything else that may open your eyes to the truth. Seek encouragement to grasp the opportunities that God gives you and to turn from the opportunities that you should not touch.