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National Urban League declares 'State of Emergency' for Black America in 2025 report

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

In its most urgent warning to date, the National Urban League has declared a "state of emergency" for democracy and civil rights in the United States.

The organization's 49th annual State of Black America report, unveiled at its conference in Cleveland, Ohio, outlines what it describes as a deliberate, coordinated campaign to reverse decades of progress for Black Americans.

"A democracy willing to destroy itself rather than deliver justice is a democracy in crisis," the report states.

"The work is difficult. The road is long," National Urban League President Marc H. Morial added. "But we know from experience that the arc of history does not bend toward justice on its own—it must be bent by those with the strength and will



The report also warns of a rise in digital extremism. "During the 2024 election cycle, accounts supporting progressive candidates also saw their accounts blocked and shadow-banned without explanation," the report documented. (Clay Banks / Unsplash)

to see it through."

This year's report, titled "State of Emergency: Democracy, Civil Rights, and Progress Under Attack," sounds the alarm over efforts to dismantle civil rights protections, suppress voting access, and strip away

diversity initiatives.

"The notion that we are living through a 'state of emergency' is not rhetorical flourish. It is an honest reckoning with a government

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People In The News ...



Malcolm-Jamal Warner



William Lacy Clay, Sr.

NDG Quote of the Week:

"The battles that count aren't the ones for gold medals. The struggles within yourself--the invisible, inevitable battles inside all of us--that's where it's at."

- Jesse Owens

Malcolm-Jamal Warner

Malcolm-Jamal Warner, the actor best known for his role as Theo Huxtable on the groundbreaking NBC sitcom *The Cosby Show*, has died at the age of 54.

Warner reportedly drowned while on a family vacation in Costa Rica, according to a family source cited by *People* magazine.

His death was confirmed on Sunday, July 21. Warner's sudden passing has stunned fans and colleagues alike. He is survived by his wife and daughter, whose identities have been kept private throughout his career. Au-



Sean Coon / Wikimedia

thorities in Costa Rica have not released additional details, but Warner's death is being described as a tragic accident.

Warner became a household name in the 1980s as the wisecracking middle child of Cliff and Clair

Huxtable on *The Cosby Show*, one of the most successful and influential sitcoms in television history.

His portrayal of Theo earned him an Emmy nomination and endeared him to millions of viewers during the show's eight-season run from 1984 to 1992.

After *The Cosby Show*, Warner continued to build a diverse and acclaimed career. He starred in the UPN sitcom *Malcolm & Eddie* from 1996 to 2000, and held recurring roles in numerous TV dramas and comedies, including *Major Crimes*, *Suits*, *Community*, *The Resident*, *Reed Between the Lines*, *Jeremiah*,

and *9-1-1*. He also voiced "The Producer" on the popular animated series *The Magic School Bus* and served as an executive producer on the show.

Warner's talents extended well beyond acting. In 2015, he won a Grammy Award for Best Traditional R&B Performance for his work on the song "Jesus Children" with Robert Glasper Experiment and Lalah Hathaway.

He was also a published poet, musician, and director, and in recent years had become an outspoken advocate for mental health, particularly in the Black community. Just days be-

fore his death, Warner released what would be his final episode of his podcast *Not All Hood*, a series focused on unpacking generational trauma, wellness, and healing within marginalized communities.

Fans and celebrities flooded social media on Sunday, expressing shock and heartbreak.

One longtime fan, 43-year-old Jalen Cooper of Washington, D.C., said, "He was more than Theo to us—he represented a generation of young Black men who finally saw themselves reflected on TV. His voice will be missed."

Warner's enduring pres-

ence in American pop culture spanned four decades, and he remained active in film, television, music, and podcasting until his final days.

As tributes continue to pour in from across the entertainment industry and beyond, many are remembering Warner as a trailblazer who helped redefine Black manhood on screen. Actor and director Keegan-Michael Key posted simply, "Rest easy, King. You gave us more than you know."

Warner's family has asked for privacy during this time of grief. Funeral arrangements have not yet been made public.

William Lacy Clay, Sr.

William Lacy Clay, Sr., a civil rights leader, legislative powerhouse, and one of the 13 founding members of the Congressional Black Caucus, has died. He was 94.

"The National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) extends heartfelt condolences to the family of Congressman William Clay Sr.," NNPA President and CEO Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr. stated.

The NNPA is the trade association of the more than 200 African American-owned newspapers and media companies that comprise the 198-year-old Black Press of America.

"He was a freedom fighting member of the Congressional Black Caucus and a staunch supporter of the Black Press of America."

Clay made history in 1968 when he became Missouri's first Black congressman, representing St. Louis in the U.S. House of Representatives. His election marked a turning point for Black political representation in Missouri and nationally, as he



Missouri Public Affairs Hall of Fame

joined the House alongside former Reps. Shirley Chisholm (D-N.Y.) and Louis Stokes (D-Ohio) laid the groundwork for the Congressional Black Caucus, which was formally established in 1971.

"Congressman Clay helped build the CBC into a force for equity and accountability in American Democracy," CBC Chair Yvette Clarke (D-N.Y.) said Thursday. "As a member of Congress, he was a fierce defender of labor rights, education, and social justice."

Clay served for 32 years in the House, where he spent his entire tenure on the Education and Labor Com-

mittee.

He pushed landmark legislation, including reforming the Hatch Act, which restricts political activities of federal employees, and helped usher in the Family and Medical Leave Act, which President Bill Clinton signed into law in 1993.

In his final term, Clay was also a cosponsor of H.R. 40, the federal bill that calls for a commission to study reparations for slavery and racial discrimination. After his retirement in 2001, his son, William Lacy Clay Jr., succeeded him and continued representing Missouri's 1st District until 2021.

"William Lacy Clay Sr. was a giant—not just for St. Louis, not just for Missouri, but for the entirety of our country," said Missouri Rep. Wesley Bell. "I counted Mr. Clay as a grand mentor, as a trailblazer, and as a dear friend. But more than that, I carry his example with me every time I

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Alpha Phi Alpha voices opposition to redistricting efforts in Texas

Washington D.C.— The General President of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity released the following statement in response to redistricting efforts in Texas that would intentionally gerrymander the state and weaken voting populations of color:

"Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity condemns in the strongest terms the unjust and undemocratic redistricting proposal currently under consideration in the state of Texas," said Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. General President Brother Lucien J. Metellus, Jr. "This blatant power grab by Republican lawmakers threatens to disenfranchise millions of Black and Latino voters, undermining the principle of fair and equal representation that is the bedrock of American democracy. The proposed congressional map is nothing more than a modern-day form of voter suppression — strategically drawn to dilute the political power of communities of color across the state. Through the use of racial and partisan gerrymandering, Republican legislators are manipulating district lines to maintain control, silence dissenting voices, and cement minority rule. This is not governance; it is an abuse of power.

"For over a century, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. has stood on the front lines of the struggle for civil rights and justice, said

Brother Roy Tatem, Alpha Phi Alpha General Chairman of Political and Civic Engagement Committee. "From the courtrooms of Thurgood Marshall to the march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., our legacy is one of resistance, advocacy, and ac-

nize, educate, and activate your communities.

- Voter Education: Host town halls, teach-ins, and digital campaigns to educate citizens about the impact of redistricting and how to fight back.

2. Demand Accountability:

- Call Your Legislators:

Texas Civil Rights Project, and others in filing legal challenges and amplifying grassroots resistance.

4. Elevate the Issue Nationally:

- Urge federal elected officials to pass the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act and The Freedom to Vote Act to restore and protect voting rights nationwide.

5. Prepare for the Ballot Box:

- Ensure that every eligible voter is registered and ready to vote in every local, state, and federal election.

- Train poll watchers and support voter protection hotlines to monitor and report irregularities.

This is not just about Texas, this is about the future of democracy in America. If unchecked, this redistricting scheme sets a dangerous precedent for other states to follow.

Alpha Phi Alpha will continue to fight with vigilance and vision until all voices are heard, and all votes are counted equally. We urge every Alpha man and every defender of justice to stand up, speak out, and organize.

The Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., the first intercollegiate Greek-letter fraternity established for African American men, was founded on December 4, 1906, at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY and is headquartered in Baltimore, MD.



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tion. We will not remain silent as the fundamental rights of Black and Latino Texans are threatened. Our committee has outlined the immediate action steps below."

We Call for

Immediate Action:

1. Mobilize the Brotherhood and Communities:

- Brothers in Texas: Convene emergency meetings in every chapter to orga-

Flood the offices of Texas state representatives and senators with phone calls, emails, and letters demanding the rejection of the discriminatory map.

- Public Testimony: Show up and speak out at redistricting hearings. Make your voices heard.

3. Partner with Civil Rights Organizations:

- Join forces with the NAACP, MALDEF, the

Keep up with the news

O N L I N E

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Alcohol-related liver disease has more than doubled in the last 20 years

(Newswise) — LOS ANGELES — Americans who drink heavily are more than twice as likely to develop significant liver disease compared to 20 years ago, according to a new Keck Medicine of USC study published today in Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology.

“Alcohol-related liver disease is the main cause of liver-related death and these results are a major wakeup call to the dangers of drinking,” said Brian P.



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Lee, MD, MAS, a hepatologist and liver transplant specialist with Keck Medicine and lead author of the

study.

The study also sheds light on the demographics of American drinkers, uncov-

ering that four groups make up a greater share of heavy drinkers than they did 20 years ago — women, adults 45 and older, those living in poverty and people with metabolic syndrome, a cluster of conditions that together raise the risk of coronary heart disease, diabetes and stroke. Previous studies have already associated these groups with a higher risk of liver disease when exposed to alcohol.

“These findings — the first comprehensive look at

the demographics of heavy drinking and their relation to liver disease since the 1990s — provide important new information about which population groups may need more intervention to curb alcohol use and may also explain the rise in liver disease over the years,” said Lee.

Additionally, the study showed that the average drinking rate in America was unchanged over the last 20 years before the COVID-19 pandemic, sug-

gesting that factors beyond alcohol quantity, such as changing health and demographic profiles, may be contributing to the rise in liver disease.

“Our results show that the makeup of the American public with heavy alcohol consumption has changed compared to 20 years ago,” said Lee.

Lee and his fellow researchers analyzed data from the National Health

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increasingly determined to sacrifice its founding principles—equality, liberty, and justice—rather than accept the truth of a diversifying nation and deliver equitable opportunity to all,” Morial wrote in his foreword.

Among the most pressing threats detailed in the report is the systematic rollback of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

“Almost daily, since January 20, 2025, the federal government, at the direction the White House, has set fire to policies and entire departments dedicated to protecting civil and human rights, providing access to an equal education, fair housing, safe and effective healthcare, and ensuring that our democratic process is adhered to across the nation,” the report authors wrote.

It also describes the radical transformation of the U.S. Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division.

“Under its new leadership, the Civil Rights Division has been hollowed out and repurposed, transforming from a guardian of justice into a tool for political

retribution,” the report said. Within weeks of the new administration taking power, “cases against election deniers who’ve tampered with the election equipment were dismissed and January 6th rioters were pardoned.”

The report also warns of a rise in digital extremism. “During the 2024 election cycle, accounts supporting progressive candidates also saw their accounts blocked and shadow-banned without explanation,” the report documented.

It calls this “a digital rollback of rights mirroring what’s happening in courts and legislatures.”

Describing the coordinated backlash against diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts, the report stated: “Following the murder of George Floyd, far-right extremists seized an opportunity to stop the calls for racial equity by reframing the policies as ‘woke’ and anti-American.”

The American Alliance for Equal Rights, led by Edward Blum, “continued its assault on organizations with ‘unfair,’ ‘race-based’ diversity and equity programs.” In one high-profile

case, the group sued the Fearless Fund, “forcing it to suspend its \$20,000 grant program for women of color entrepreneurs, claiming ‘anti-white’ bias.”

The National Urban League’s response, detailed in the report, includes a broad campaign of legal challenges, advocacy, and community organizing.

It has launched the Equitable Justice and Strategic Initiatives division, established the 21 Pillars for Public Safety framework, and coordinated the Fair Budget Coalition to push for a “just and inclusive FY2026 federal budget.”

The League also filed suit, alongside Lambda Legal and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, challenging executive orders that target diversity and equity.

“This is not business as usual,” Morial said. “This is an emergency. The National Urban League urges vigilance, mobilization, solidarity, and support. This year’s State of Black America is a call to action to stand together as we defend our rights and the principles of American democracy in our courts, our communities, and our coalitions.”

Contributors to the report

include civil rights leaders, attorneys, and elected officials such as Damon Hewitt, Kristen Clarke, Janai Nelson, LaTosha Brown, U.S. Representatives Steven Horsford and Hakeem Jeffries, and others committed to defending democracy.

“We are witnessing something more than policy shifts. We are watching an attempt to turn back the clock to an era when the full humanity of all Americans was not recognized—when the idea of true equality was treated as a threat to the social order,” the report

authors concluded. “What we face today is a deliberate, coordinated effort to deny the future of a more just and inclusive America.”

The full report, essays, and resources are available at www.stateofblackamerica.org.

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From eggs to hotels, prices soar as inflation redefines daily life

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

Prices across the United States are about 26% higher than before the COVID-19 pandemic, pushing everything from a weekend hotel stay to a simple cup of coffee out of reach for many families. A budget hotel room in Nashville can now cost \$500 for the weekend—without breakfast—and a single cup of coffee can cost \$7. Rental cars are also commanding premium rates, with four days in a midsize Toyota Camry easily topping \$670.

It's so bad in America that a foreign news organization dug into the pricey details. The Times of Lon-



Image via NNPA

don reported that inflation, which began accelerating in 2021, has left American consumers grappling with the most persistent cost increases in decades. According to NerdWallet data cited in the report, the impact has been felt across

every income bracket, fueling a growing sense that even basic experiences are becoming unaffordable.

Travel and Lodging: Soaring Costs

Hotel rates have climbed 24% over the past decade, The Times reported. In

Manhattan, the average nightly rate hit a record \$417 in September 2024, according to real estate analytics firm CoStar. Miami Beach hotels averaged

\$283 a night last year, up from \$230 in 2019, while Las Vegas rooms rose to \$198, up nearly 41% over the same period. Rental car prices surged early in the pandemic and remain high. While rates stabilized over the past year, costs have increased 29% since 2015.

Airfares are technically down 18.5% compared to 2015, but The Times noted that this decline reflects airlines' "unbundling" services to show lower headline fares while tacking on fees. Southwest Airlines, for example, ended its "bags fly free" policy and now charges \$35 for the first checked bag and \$45

for the second.

Dining and Groceries: Everyday Pain Points

Eating out has become markedly more expensive, with restaurant prices up 49.3% in the last ten years. Fast food chains have been forced to raise prices due to wage increases, higher energy costs, and supply chain problems. A dozen large Grade A eggs averaged \$6.23 in March before dipping to \$4.55 by May, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The Waffle House restaurant chain temporarily imposed a 50-cent surcharge per egg.

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and Nutrition Examination Survey, which assesses the health and nutritional status of adults and children in the United States, from 1999-2020, the most recent year for which complete data was available.

They tracked the total increase in significant liver disease — a stage of liver disease when the liver forms scar tissue that impairs liver function that is often caused by heavy drinking. The study examined the demographic and health profiles of adults 20 or older who drank heavily.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, heavy drinking is considered eight drinks per week for women and 15 for men.

Lee believes that the study results will provide physicians with necessary updates to better treat patients and hopes they will lead to more screenings and interventions for high-risk populations.

Jennifer Dodge, MPH, assistant professor of research medicine and population and public health sciences with the Keck School

of Medicine of USC, was also a study author.

The study was supported by a grant from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, grant number K23AA029752.

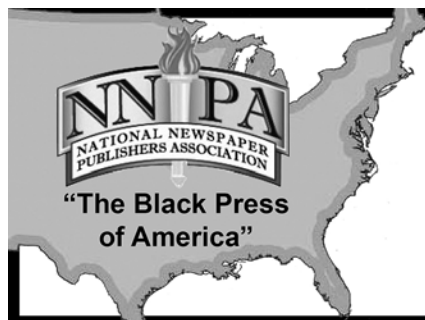
These findings build on Lee's previous work, including a February 2025 study that found heavy drinkers with diabetes, high blood pressure or increased waist size had double the risk of advanced liver disease, and a November 2024 study revealing that heavy drinking rose during the COVID-19 pandemic peak and continued for two years afterward.

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Dallas College launches Federal Health Care Workforce Initiative in partnership with area community colleges

A transformative \$5.7 million federal investment is set to reshape health care education and workforce development across North Texas. Funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, the PATH (Partners in Advancing Talent in Healthcare) Project unites Dallas College with Tarrant County College, Navarro College, Hill College and the Dallas-Fort Worth Hospital Council in a bold effort to expand access, improve equity and meet the growing demand



Leaders of the participating community colleges celebrate at a signing ceremony for the PATH Project.(Dallas College)

for skilled health care professionals.

“This is what barrier-busting business looks like:

collaboration across institutions, innovation in workforce development and a shared commitment to equi-

ty and access in health care,” said Dr. Justin H. Lonon, Dallas College chancellor. “We’re not just training tomorrow’s workforce — we’re investing in the health and vitality of our communities.”

The four-year grant will deliver targeted training, build innovative career pathways and directly support students through more than \$1.3 million in tuition assistance. Funded by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Ad-

ministration, this grant will serve thousands of students across North Texas, particularly low-income individuals, first-generation college students and aspiring health care professionals from historically underserved areas.

“The PATH Project gives our students more than just access, it gives them direction, support and a clear path into health care careers that are deeply needed across our communities,” said Dr. Tetsuya Umabayashi, vice provost of the School of

Health Sciences at Dallas College. “It’s about building programs that meet students where they are and equipping them with the skills to thrive in a fast-changing industry.”

This week, Dallas College hosted a formal signing ceremony with all partner institutions to launch the PATH Project, highlighting a shared commitment to workforce development and regional collaboration. The PATH project will run through 2029.

Students in the Texas A&M Engineering Academy at Collin College earn a spot among top competitors in the Lean Six Sigma Competition

Students in the Texas A&M Engineering Academy at Collin College are turning up the heat this summer! Noah Noronha, David Kadari, and Ibrahim Amin – students entering their sophomore year – won third place in the Lean Six Sigma Competition at the 10th North American Conference on Industrial Engineering and Operations Management (IEOM) held in Orlando, Florida, last month.

“We are immensely proud of our academy students and delighted to see their hard work and dedication pay off,” said Dr. Neil Matkin, Collin



Texas A&M Engineering Academy at Collin College, third-place winners of the Lean Six Sigma Competition from left to right: Noah Noronha, David Kadari, and Ibrahim Amin (Nick Young / Collin College)

College district president. “The academy has demonstrated consistent success since its inception in 2024,

and the students’ participation in the conference is a testament to the academy’s academic rigor and the fac-

ulty’s mentorship and commitment to student development.”

Noronha, Kadari, and Amin participated virtually in the Lean Six Sigma Competition, which recognizes outstanding Lean and Six Sigma case studies. The students’ “Lean Six Sigma in Radiology” paper was judged based on technical content and presentation. The competition rubrics included overall content, data analysis and results, presentation skills, knowledge of the topic, and question responses.

“What these students have been able to accomplish as rising sopho-

mores in the Texas A&M Engineering Academy at Collin College is nothing short of remarkable,” said LaTasha Starr, professor of practice at the Texas A&M Engineering Academy at Dallas College. “As their undergraduate research advisor, I am honored to help them establish a legacy of engineering discovery, conference presentations, and peer-reviewed publications they will be able to leverage throughout their academic and professional journey for years to come.”

According to the IEOM Society, the conference’s mission is to provide a forum for academics, re-

searchers, and practitioners to exchange ideas and recent developments in the field of industrial engineering and operational management. It aims to foster networking, collaboration, and joint effort among participants to advance the field’s theory and practice.

Brian Zornig, another professor of practice at the Texas A&M Engineering Academy at Collin College, shared his excitement about the academy students’ participation at the conference.

“Their willingness and ability to successfully

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Spelman College helps shape future women changemakers

By Marlena Chertock

(Black PR Wire) Logan Smith, a rising junior at Spelman College, a UNCF member institution, wants to make healthcare more accessible and equitable for all.

“I’ve become passionate about addressing healthcare disparities and improving access for underserved communities,” said Smith, who is majoring in health sciences and wants to pursue public health and health communications. “My goal is to work at the intersection of medicine, policy and advocacy—whether through direct patient care, public health initiatives or opening a private practice that centers on equity and culturally competent care.”

At Spelman, Smith received the Slater-Millner Scholars Fund. In partnership with UNCF, Dr. Nancy Slater and Dr. Alan Millner developed the scholarship to provide financial assistance to sophomores who are on a pre-med track with a demonstrated interest in serving underserved communities. The program, administered by UNCF, also offers mentorship and advising services through the Ascension Medical Educators – Aspiring Physicians Program.

“The Slater-Millner Scholars Fund from UNCF has been a meaningful affirmation of both my goals and the work I’ve committed to along the way,” Smith said. “While I’ve been fortunate to have consistent support throughout my education, this award was a part of the impact



Broadmoor / Wikipedia (CC BY SA 4.0)

that made it possible for me to fully engage in academic and professional opportunities. It served as a reminder that my efforts and aspirations are seen and supported.”

Beyond the financial contribution, the scholarship reinforced a sense of purpose and belonging, “reminding me that I’m part of a broader legacy of excellence and empowerment,” she shared. “That encouragement continues to motivate me as I strive to make meaningful contributions in my field and community.”

Now, Smith is entering her final year at Spelman. After graduation, she plans to pursue a master of public health and then attend medical school.

She is glad to have found a community of likeminded peers and a strong group of friends in her college journey. “My friends and I have stood by each other through every triumph and challenge,” she said. “We are a passionate and determined group, and it’s in those moments of unwavering support, when we lifted each other up during both victories and setbacks, that I was so happy to be a part of a community that

brought me closer to these particular people. Those shared experiences of re-

silience and loyalty have shaped not only my college journey but also who I am

becoming.”

Smith was drawn to Spelman College for the school’s “commitment to shaping women who are not only academically accomplished but also deeply prepared to lead and create change in the world,” she said. “I wanted to be part of a community that challenges me intellectually while grounding me in a greater sense of purpose.”

“At Spelman, I found an environment that pushes

me to grow holistically, academically, personally and ethically, so I can step confidently into the future I aspire to build,” Smith said.

UNCF is proud of our students and alumni who have received scholarships that help them continue their education and graduate. These scholarships are invaluable to students, and UNCF is accepting donations to support students like Logan Smith in their academic endeavors.



Cooper Flagg's versatility on full display in NBA Summer League

By Jamal Baker
NDG Contributing Writer

Dallas Mavericks general manager Nico Harrison has made his team-building philosophy clear—prioritize players who can make significant contributions on both ends of the floor.

Now, with the addition of No. 1 overall pick Cooper Flagg, a potential game-changing two-way talent, the Mavericks may have found the final piece of their championship puzzle.

Flagg showed signs of elite defensive traits throughout his collegiate career at Duke and in his two games at the Las Vegas Summer League. Flagg had three steals and one block in his summer league debut against the Los Angeles Lakers.



“Flagg’s upside as an All-NBA defender is evident. Again, it might not happen in his rookie season, but it would be shocking if he isn’t on the All-Defensive Team within the next three seasons. His basketball IQ is off the charts, and he’s going to make an impact immediately as a wing-stopper. The Mavericks organization and their fans should be satisfied with

what they saw from Flagg, even though his summer league stint was short,” CBS Sports contributor Cameron Salerno wrote.

The 6-9 rookie wing boasts a 7-foot wingspan and plus athleticism, giving him the tools to be a versatile defender capable of guarding positions one through four.

Flagg’s defensive versatility will fit beautifully

in the Mavericks’ new defensive scheme where he will be playing alongside other high impact defenders such as Anthony Davis, P.J. Washington, Dereck Lively II, Daniel Gafford, Max Christie, Caleb Martin and Naji Marshall.

With his blend of size, instincts and defensive versatility, Flagg adds a dynamic new layer to an already formidable Mavericks roster ready to compete right away.

Flagg showed flashes of greatness during the NBA Summer League in Las Vegas—showcasing the versatile skillset that made him the No. 1 overall pick in the 2025 NBA Draft.

“He’s a complete stud,” Mavs guard Nolan Hickman said. “He was the No. 1 pick for a reason.

“I saw that when we were back in training camp. I saw a little bit of it in summer league this week. He’s a total stud, man. He’s going to be real good.”

The Mavericks are looking to get the most out of their young phenom and challenged him to run actions as the team’s point guard during his two Summer League games. Flagg served as the primary decision-maker in pick-and-roll situations and consistently brought the ball up the floor, even against defenders who picked him up full court.

“I think I’ve been solid,” Flagg said about playing point guard in Summer League. “I think I’m exhausted. You know I’m not used to bringing the ball up like that and every time I’m getting the ball full court,

it’s somebody on my hip playing 94 feet, so definitely not used to that but I think I did a solid job of bringing it up against pressure and trying to set up our different actions.”

Mavericks head coach Jason Kidd used a similar strategy with a young Giannis Antetokounmpo back in 2016 during his time with the Milwaukee Bucks.

Putting the ball in Antetokounmpo’s hands early in his career paid great dividends, and the Mavericks are hoping for a similar return on investment with Flagg.

The Mavericks aren’t trying to place Antetokounmpo-level expectations on Flagg just yet, but with his unique skillset and early poise, the sky is undoubtedly the limit.

Georgia HBCUs rally to support students left unhoused by Job Corps shutdown

By Aria Bell

(Black PR Wire) After students were forced out of their homes and communities due to the U.S. Department of Labor’s interruption of operations, two HBCUs in Georgia are coming together to assist those heavily impacted.

As Blavity reported, many Job Corps enrollees depend on their centers for more than just hands-on training in fields like welding, nursing and carpentry. They count on on-campus housing, meals and medical care. When these sites were forced to shut their doors overnight, over 29,000 students were left with an uncertain future, according to Axios.

Shorter College shows up with tuition, housing and heart

According to Black Enterprise, Shorter College, an HBCU located in Rome, Georgia, quickly mobilized to offer displaced Job Corps students an opportunity to enroll in summer courses. The college leveraged state and federal scholarship funds to provide free tuition to students in need, but securing housing and meals required an even broader, community-driven response.

“And so therefore, these individuals would have a place to lay their heads,” Shorter College President Jeffery Norfleet told NPR via Black Enterprise.

He added, “They would receive at least three meals

a day, possibly snacks and more. The staff, the faculty, and the administration are willing to make this a success because we do believe in the future for these individuals.”

Morris Brown College extends a lifeline to Job Corps students in crisis

Additionally, Morris Brown College, another celebrated HBCU in Georgia, is also actively encouraging displaced students to apply. Kevin James, Morris Brown’s President and a proud Job Corps alumnus, expressed deep concerns over the implications these closures have for Black and brown students.

“Some of the changes that have been made have

See HBCU, Page 12



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Film Review: 'I Know What You Did Last Summer' features the usual suspects

By Dwight Brown

(**) They had it coming. The negligence and callousness they showed that night set them up for a karma payback. Evil sought them out.

That was the premise of the first *I Know What You Did Last Summer*, which dates back to 1997 and starred Jennifer Love Hewitt, Sarah Michael Gellar, Ryan Phillippe and Freddie Prince Jr. They were reckless teenagers covering up a car accident in which someone died. A slasher stalked and killed them in return. Several follow-up films later, the franchise gets a reboot with writer/director Jennifer Kaytin Robinson (*Do Revenge*) at the helm. What's on view seems vapid and stale, but scary too. It's like watching *Beverly Hills, 90210* with a killer on the loose, trickles of blood staining main street and everyone is frightened.

Attention-hungry Ted (Tyriq Withers, Atlanta) and self-involved Danica (Madelyn Cline, *Glass Onion*) are engaged. Their gaggle of friends reunite one night in Southport, North Carolina, for a bridal shower and then go for a ride. She drives, he's in the passenger seat, and drunk. In the back seat are Milo (Jonah Hauer-King, *William Tell*), his ex, Ava (Chase Sui Wonders) and a girl who was on the outs with the group but is now back in their good graces, Stevie (Sarah Pidgeon).

The car stops on a bend in the road, and the group gets out. Ted is horsing around in the middle of the lane,



Chase Sui Wonders stars in *I Know What You Did Last Summer*. (Photo via NNPA)

when out of nowhere a car swerves around him and goes off a cliff. Responsible twentysomethings would stay at the scene of the accident until the police arrived. They don't and their actions haunt them. One year later, a raincoat, rain-hat wearing slasher, whose favorite weapon is a hook, stalks them. Bludgeoned, bloody bodies pile up. Those who walked away that fateful day are being gored. Danica wonders, "You think this is some kind of Karma for what we did?" Read the room! You're being hunted. The better questions? Whodun-it? Who's surviving?

The director, cinematographer (Elisha Christian), editor (Saira Hader, *Creed II*) and composer (Chanda Dancy, *Blink Twice*) combine forces to scare the f— out of audiences. You may know how this is going to go down, based on the film's history. Yet, as the murders mount and friends are slaughtered, it's traumatic to watch, regardless.

Audiences who come with a pack of buddies or on a date night holding hands will jump when the sound effects dictate it and shield their eyes when someone's body is being pierced like a trout on a hook. With a little more forethought and better writing, what's on view might have felt like it was more than a film that belongs on the CW network. There was a great opportunity to create murder scenes that boggle the mind and few to none do that. Except the sequence with Danica in a filled tub with red bath salts upstairs while her beau downstairs is being turned into a pin cushion with arrows.

The way the characters are written and presented, they're largely unsympathetic, oblivious and self-centered protagonists. People who don't deserve to breathe another breath. Even the killer sees it that way. Adding a link to the past is a nice break from the predictable and uninvolved storyline. When some

of the stalked seek advice from Julie (Hewitt) and Ray (Prince Jr.), who endured similar circumstances years ago, it's a welcomed diver-

sion. Especially for those who are nostalgic. Surprisingly, Prince Jr. is the best actor in the bunch. His interpretation of Ray seems more rounded and crucial. He gives that survivor more depth than the rest of the cast gives their characters. Ray, "This isn't the first time something like this has been done in Southport. It's not going to stop!" Thanks, dude, for sounding the alarm.

As audiences try to figure out who knows this friend group well enough to track them down and knock them off, the film finds better footing. That kernel of intrigue is sustained, surprisingly so, until the final reveal when viewers find who's behind it all. Proving horror mixed with mystery

is more potent than either genre alone.

This particular chapter is not a credit or detriment to the franchise. Largely because the franchise was never that stellar. Just pop culture lore. So, bringing any of these characters forward in an upcoming movie becomes iffy, unless the box office dictates otherwise.

Serviceable horror. Nothing that memorable. Nothing that awful. Stay for the credits, the filmmakers are trying to milk this franchise down to its last drop.

In the end, some won't care what they did last summer. Or autumn, winter or spring.

Visit Film Critic Dwight Brown at DwightBrownInk.com.



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Beyoncé's tour spurs Black western fashion revival

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

Beyoncé's Cowboy Carter tour isn't just making musical headlines—it's transforming the way Black communities express themselves through fashion.

With each city stop, the tour has reignited interest in Western style, with Black fans reclaiming and redefining a genre long associated with whiteness.

As the tour nears its close on July 26, fans across the country have turned out in droves, wearing rhinestone-studded cowboy hats, bold denim-on-denim ensembles, fringed jackets, and satin sashes.

Concert parking lots and arenas have become makeshift runways of Black cowboy and cowgirl style, blending tradition, swagger, and reinvention.



Ben Terret via NNPA

"This ain't just a concert—it's a statement," said 26-year-old Mia Jackson of Atlanta, who wore a leather corset, flared denim pants, and custom boots to the tour's stop in her city. "We've always been part of

the Western story. Beyoncé just made it undeniable."

Black-owned fashion brands have experienced a surge in sales, particularly those that incorporate Western aesthetics. Designers like Dymond Taylor of

Houston's Bstone Western Wear have seen record demand. Her brand, which blends traditional rodeo gear with modern silhouettes, reported a 212% increase in online traffic since the tour began.

"This movement is changing lives," Taylor said. "People want something real, something rooted. And Beyoncé put that on stage in a way that gave us all permission to shine."

Retail data supports the trend. In the U.K., where Cowboy Carter recently wrapped a leg of its tour, PrettyLittleThing reported a 622% spike in searches for cowboy jackets, with cowboy boots and hats rising by 53% and 85%, respectively.

Vinted reported that searches for "Western" fashion increased by 16%, and "denim" by 8%, in the days following the con-

certs. "It's about taking something that's always belonged to us but wasn't seen that way," said 33-year-old Marcus Thompson from Chicago. "My granddaddy was a Black cowboy in Mississippi. When I put on this hat, it ain't just for show—it's heritage."

The fashion surge goes beyond commercial appeal—it's also a form of cultural reclamation. For decades, the image of the cowboy in America has largely erased the presence of Black cowboys who helped shape the West.

Beyoncé's visual narrative, tour wardrobe, and intentional inclusion of Black Western symbolism have brought that buried history back into the spotlight.

"This is the first time I've seen so many of us rocking cowboy boots and fringe jackets and not feel like it's costume," said 22-year-old

Nia Roberts of Dallas. "It feels like we're wearing ourselves."

Major fashion houses have also taken note. Calvin Klein collaborated on bedazzled tour pieces worn by Beyoncé, while brands like Levi's have seen increased foot traffic tied to her influence.

Stylists say the tour has helped shift trends toward elevated denim, metallic accents, and bold silhouettes—many of them now signature pieces in the Cowboy Carter visual identity.

"I ain't never worn a cowboy hat in my life," said 28-year-old Jordan Banks from Detroit. "But standing in that stadium with thousands of other Black folks dressed like this? I felt powerful. Like we were finally being seen on our own terms."

HARLEM WEEK 2025: A Celebration of Culture, Legacy, and Community

Harlem's largest annual celebration returns this summer as the 51st edition of HARLEM WEEK kicks off on August 1 and runs through August 17. This year's theme, "Celebrate Our Magic," pays tribute to the enduring cultural, spiritual, and historical legacy of Harlem, while spotlighting a lineup of events designed to inspire, uplift, and engage residents and visitors alike.

Founded in 1974 as a one-day event by the late Hon. Percy Sutton to revitalize Harlem during a period of economic despair, HARLEM WEEK has grown into a 17-day global celebration with both live and virtual experiences.



NYC Tourism & Conventions

Co-founder and current chairman Lloyd Williams emphasized the event's enduring power: "Our rich history and culture is just that, magic. From the cultural revival that was the Harlem Renaissance to institutions like the Apollo

Theater and the National Jazz Museum in Harlem, this year's theme embodies that despite challenges we may face, our creativity and our joy is magic." This year's programming features over 100 events across arts, music, health,

business, technology, and education, while honoring icons such as civil rights trailblazer Hazel Dukes, Rep. Charles Rangel, music legends Kool & The Gang, Roberta Flack, Quincy Jones, Angie Stone, DJ Clark Kent, and

the centennial of Malcolm X. The life and legacy of Harry Belafonte will also be honored with a street renaming ceremony.

HARLEM WEEK 2025 officially begins with Senior Citizens Day on August 1 at the Adam Clayton Powell Jr. State Office Building. Attendees can expect health screenings, tech panels, and performances tailored to Harlem's elder community. The following weekend, on August 2 and again on August 9 and 16, "Summer Streets Celebrating HARLEM WEEK" will transform Harlem's blocks into car-free zones for live music, biking, roller-skating, and dancing, offering

what organizers call the "hottest block party in the nation". On August 9, Harlem's streets will fill with runners and walkers for the Percy Sutton Harlem 5K Run and the Hazel Dukes Memorial Family Health Walk, followed by "Great Jazz on the Great Hill" in Central Park, featuring performances from renowned jazz musicians.

The festival continues on August 11 with the HARLEM WEEK Youth Conference, followed by Economic Development Day on August 12, and the NYC Jobs & Career Fair on August 13 at City College, where over 40 employers

See HARLEM, Page 13

AI isn't killing jobs—yet. but entry-level workers and middle managers should be watching closely

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent



Despite relentless corporate hype and rising concerns about mass unemployment, artificial intelligence has yet to lead to widespread job losses. Reports from Goldman Sachs, Brookings, CNN, the World Economic Forum, and tech industry analysts all point to the same conclusion: AI is changing the workforce—but the doomsday scenario hasn't arrived. According to Goldman Sachs' Q2 2025 AI Adoption Tracker, AI usage among U.S. firms rose from 7.4% to 9.2% in just one quarter. Yet the research found “no sign of a significant impact on most labor market outcomes.” Job growth, wage trends, unemployment, and layoff rates in AI-exposed industries remain consistent with those in less-exposed sectors.

Brookings reached a similar conclusion. In a July report, researchers Tania Babina and Anastasia Fedyk found that “AI adoption is associated with firm growth, increased employment, and heightened innovation.” A one-standard-deviation increase in

AI investment resulted in a 2% annual increase in both sales and headcount after two to three years. But the disruption is already visible in certain roles. Call center employment is slowing, and AI-related job postings now account for 24% of all IT openings—even if they still make up only 1.5% of total job ads. “We’re looking at a complex reshaping, rather than a straightforward elimination,” said Gaurab Bansal of Responsible Innovation Labs.

Goldman's analysis found that productivity is where AI is already leaving its mark. Firms that fully integrate generative AI report labor productivity gains between 23% and 29%. Tech giants like Amazon and Microsoft confirm those numbers. Amazon saved \$250 million after deploying AI agents to upgrade 30,000 internal apps. Microsoft

now uses AI for up to 30% of its code development. But AI's reach goes beyond code. According to a 2025 survey from Howdy.com, 79% of U.S. tech workers are using AI more than they were six months ago. Workers report AI helping with code generation, data analysis, cybersecurity, and documentation. Yet 38% believe their companies will replace jobs with AI within five years.

That concern is acute for early-career workers. The World Economic Forum warns that “entry-level roles could be increasingly at risk.” Their Future of Jobs Report 2025 showed 40% of employers plan to cut jobs where AI can automate tasks. Market research analysts and sales representatives could see up to 67% of their tasks replaced by AI, according to data cited in the Forum's analysis

from Bloomberg. Brookings found that AI-adopting firms are actively reshaping their labor force. The share of college-educated workers increased by 3.7%, and those with STEM degrees are in higher demand. At the same time, the number of non-college-educated workers fell by 7.2%. Companies are also flattening their hierarchies, reducing the need for middle management in favor of highly skilled, independent contributors.

“Most tasks for most

jobs can't be automated,” wrote Meta's Chief AI Scientist Yann LeCun, echoing a sentiment across the industry. But that doesn't mean the changes won't be profound. As Brookings notes, the shift favors highly-skilled workers and larger firms with the resources to build and deploy custom AI tools—possibly exacerbating inequality. CNN's reporting also noted skepticism about corporate motivations. “AI is so good, it's going to put humans out of jobs” may serve as

a convenient cover for executives looking to cut staff, said some insiders. Pew Research found that more than half of Americans are worried about AI's impact on the workplace. For now, mass layoffs may be overstated—but entry-level workers, mid-tier managers, and policymakers alike are on notice, experts declared.

What's clear is that the workforce is in transition. “We're entering a decade-ish, maybe more, period of uncertainty,” said Bansal.

COLLIN, from Page 6

compete in a national ‘real-life applications’ competition while balancing the rigors of a top-notch, first-year engineering program is nothing short of amazing,” Zornig said. “These students have very bright engineering futures.”

The research paper will

be available in the IEOM Conference Proceedings and accessible through academic databases and indexing services. The proceedings will be submitted for evaluation in the Web of Science Conference Proceedings Citation Index.

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NAACP and advocacy groups appeal permit for xAI’s South Memphis Data Center, decisions around unpermitted methane gas turbines

(Black PR Wire) MEMPHIS, Tenn. — The Southern Environmental Law Center, on behalf of the NAACP and Young, Gifted & Green, filed an appeal with the Memphis and Shelby County Air Pollution Control Board, challenging the Shelby County Health Department’s decision to issue an air permit to xAI as well as the department’s decisions related to the operation of unpermitted methane gas turbines.

The permit, which was issued on July 2, would allow xAI to run 15 polluting methane gas turbines at the site 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In granting the permit, The Shelby County Health Department (SCHD) failed to address the dozens of unpermitted gas turbines that were installed at the xAI data center over the last year and ignored hundreds of comments opposing the draft permit.

While responding to those comments, SCHD wrongly claimed that the federal Clean Air Act didn’t apply to xAI’s unpermitted gas turbines, citing an exemption for “nonroad engines” — typically defined as things like construction equipment, smaller backup generators, or lawn mowers. However, the Clean Air Act specifically says that turbines as large as the ones at the xAI site do not qualify for this exemption.

The health department’s flawed narrative creates an extremely concerning precedent that would allow xAI or other companies to disregard federal and local law and operate large polluting turbines without any permits or penalties. This precedent is even more troubling after recent reported statements from an xAI representative that the company is “copying and pasting” what it did at its first data center at its second South Memphis data center in the Whitehaven neighborhood.

“We will persist until the health department and every other agency follow the law, and we will ensure that the safety and well-being of Black people are not treated as secondary to the profits of Elon Musk’s xAI,” said NAACP President and CEO Derrick Johnson. “Our health shouldn’t be threatened at the hands of billionaires who circum-

See xAI, Page 16

HBCU, from Page 8

affected negatively Black and brown students directly,” James said, per Black Enterprise. “Job Corps is just one example that many students of color will negatively be impacted.”

Despite the challenges ahead, James and fellow HBCU leaders remain determined to protect students from becoming casualties of federal budget decisions.

“So we’re not just going to throw you in the deep end of the pool,” James said. “We’re going to make sure that you have all the resources that you need to be successful.”

Although Georgia’s proactive response provides hope for some, thousands of other Job Corps students and faculty across the country still face an unpredictable fate without alternative options.

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PRICES, from Page 5

Grocery essentials have spiked in price, The Times reported. Baby wipes that cost \$4.99 four years ago now average \$6.63, while a unit of dog food jumped from \$5.78 to \$8.42, according to NielsenIQ.

Lindsay Owens, executive director of the Groundwork Collaborative, said some companies have exploited the situation for profit. “They decided to see if they could pass along all of their rising costs so that their margins wouldn’t be

eaten into,” Owens told The Times. “And when they realized that they could, they decided to go for more.”

Entertainment and Theme Parks: A Luxury for the Wealthy

The price of live entertainment has soared. NerdWallet figures show concert and theater tickets are up 39% since 2015. The most recent Broadway season was the priciest on record, averaging \$129 per ticket, and top shows often exceed \$1,000 a seat. Dolly Par-

ton’s December Las Vegas shows sold out in minutes, with resale prices climbing to \$1,600. At Disney parks, costs have risen steeply. A four-day Walt Disney World trip for a family of four, including a Disney hotel, cost \$4,266 last year, more than \$1,000 from five years earlier, The Wall Street Journal reported.

What Comes Next

While inflation has retreated from its 9% peak in 2022, The Times cautioned that Americans shouldn’t expect relief anytime soon. New tariffs introduced by

the Trump administration are expected to drive prices even higher in the months ahead. With costs still climbing, many households are left with tough decisions about which necessities—and experiences—they can continue to afford. “We’re often seeing the highest demand in the luxury space,” Sally French, a NerdWallet finance expert, said. “People want the hotel that’s going to make for an amazing photo... People are spending more on higher-end things they wouldn’t have done in the past.”

HARLEM, from Page 10

across various industries will recruit talent and host development workshops. Black Health Matters and HARLEM WEEK will host a major health summit on August 14 at Riverside Church, offering wellness panels, screenings, and community engagement focused on health equity.

That evening, food lovers will gather for the Uptown Night Market, a celebration of global cuisines, culture, and family activities. One of HARLEM WEEK’s most anticipated days—“Summer in the City”—takes place August 16, featuring Harlem Broadway Row performances, a fashion show, health screenings, and hundreds of vendors.

The day concludes with the HARLEM WEEK/IMAGENATION Outdoor Film Festival screening of Wicked at St. Nicholas Park. Children and families will enjoy the Alex Trebek Harlem Children’s Spelling Bee on August 16, as well as the NYC Children’s Festival at Howard Bennett Playground on August 16-

17, featuring arts & crafts, face painting, double dutch, and performances.

HARLEM DAY, the grand finale on August 17, will take over 135th Street from Fifth Avenue to St. Nicholas Avenue. Featuring three entertainment stages, Harlem Health Village, and musical genres ranging from jazz to gospel

to soca, HARLEM DAY reflects the vibrancy and global influence of Harlem itself.

“Harlem Week celebrates that talent in all its various aspects,” said Vincent Boudreau, President of City College of New York. “It’s a joy for us to be part of the celebration.” HARLEM WEEK is presented by The Greater Harlem Chamber of Com-

merce and supported by sponsors including Amazon Access, City College of New York, and Chase Bank. Nancy Dalton, Director of Amazon Access, noted, “Together, we’re creating more effective pathways to affordable, nutritious food.”

For more information and a complete schedule of events, visit harlemweek.com.

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One More Candle On Another Cake

By Dr. James L. Snyder

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and I were finishing our supper. If anyone can put together a marvelous supper, it is she. If anybody can eat a marvelous supper, it is me.

As we were finishing, she looked over at me and said, "My dear, do you know what we will be celebrating next week?"

She caught me off guard because I had no idea what holiday was coming up. I'm not a holiday person. I don't mind celebrating holidays, but I can't keep up with them.

Rubbing my chin, I said, "Well, we just celebrated the 4th of July a week ago, so I'm not sure what that next holiday is."

"Oh, you silly boy," she said, laughing at me. "Just think for a while and maybe you'll come up with the right idea."

At my age, it's tough to think, even for a while. I had no idea what she was talking about, so I just inserted, "Is it one of our grandchildren's birthday?"

I couldn't think of anything else at the time. I know we have a bunch of children and grandchildren, and so I was suspecting that one of them was having a birthday. But, for the life of me, I couldn't tell her which one was having a birthday.

"No, no, no," she said, laughing at me. "None of our children or grandchildren are having birthdays

rather, it is someone sitting here at our table."

"Oh," I said, "so you're having a birthday next week. How old are you going to be?"

"You're right about that," she said, "but somebody else is having a birthday next week. You have any idea who that might be?"

I thought for a moment, and then it finally hit me. "Do you mean I'm going to have a birthday next week?"

I looked at her and said, "But how is that possible? I just had a birthday not long ago."

"That was 12 months ago now you're facing another birthday." She looked at me and laughed.

I had a hard time coming to terms with the fact that I was having another birthday. Why is it that birthdays come so fast the older you get?

When I was young, I could hardly wait for my birthday. When you're young, a birthday means a whole lot more than when you get older.

I remember my 16th birthday; I was thrilled because I could now get my driver's license.

I looked back and thought of all my birthdays and what they meant to me. It wasn't until a few years ago I realized that having a birthday meant you were one year older. Getting older has many positive aspects, but it also has some less desirable aspects.

Two days after my birthday The Gracious Mistress

of the Parsonage has her birthday. If my birthday was not two days before hers, I probably would never remember when her birthday was. Because she reminded me of my birthday by giving me a birthday card and gift, I remember her birthday was in two days.

I married the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage for many reasons. The best part of marrying her was that her birthday was two days after mine. That would enable me to keep up with my birthday.

One thing I have learned in my marriage is that women, especially wives, remember birthdays. She knows every birthday of every person on her side of the family, as well as all of our kids, grandkids, and great-grandkids. I don't know how she can remember all those birthdays, but she does, and that's a good thing.

With another candle on my birthday cake, I now celebrate the fact that I am older today than yesterday. That has some benefits associated with it. I just can't think of any.

The older I get, the less I can remember things. It's interesting; I can remember things that happened in my childhood, but who's to say they actually did? When you get old, you can do that sort of thing, and nobody is going to correct you. I make up my memories when I need to know them.

The best thing about my birthday being two days

ahead of hers is that once my birthday is celebrated, I can then go out the next day and get a birthday card and present for The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. If it were the other way around, she would never get a birthday present on time from me.

I have a hard time remembering my age.

I checked my driver's license to find out how old I am this year. I never thought I would reach 74 years of age. My father was 78 when he died. In September, my mother will turn 95. I may have inherited my father's age or my mother's age. Only time will tell.

Getting old is a blessing in many ways. One of the blessings is memory failure. There are some things that I don't want to remember, and at my age, I'm not able to.

At my age, I have discovered that the only important thing is today. Not yesterday or tomorrow, but today.

I was reminded of one of my favorite Bible verses. "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it"

(Psalm 118:24).

I can't change yesterday or predict tomorrow, but I can rejoice in Today.

Dr. James L. Snyder lives in Ocala, FL with the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, www.jamessnyderministries.com.

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CLAY, from Page 2

walk onto the House Floor. My heart is with his family, with Lacy, and with every person whose life was better because Bill Clay chose to serve."

Roy Temple, a former

chair of the Missouri Democratic Party, recalled working closely with Clay during Mel Carnahan's 1992 campaign. "He was probably one of the three most influential people in Mel's primary

win," Temple said. "Learned a ton in every single interaction. He was an icon." "His work laid the foundation for future generations of Black leadership in public service," Clarke wrote. "May he rest in power and everlasting peace."

Christians who Please the Lord



Sister Tarpley
NDG Religion Editor

“Prepare it with oil on a griddle; bring it well-mixed and present the grain offering broken in pieces as an aroma pleasing to the Lord.” Leviticus 6:21

There is a requirement to be blessed at a deeper spiritual level by God. Christ requires it of each of His servants. He required it of Paul when He struck him down on the Damascus Road.

He required it of Joseph

when he was left in the pit and then sold into slavery. He required it of Jacob when he left his homeland penniless and needy. He required it of most every major leader that He used significantly - brokenness.

Brokenness cannot be achieved on your own. It is something God does Himself. We cannot determine that we are going to be broken, but we can refuse to become broken.

When God begins this deeper work in our lives, we can kick and scream and refuse the process. We can manipulate and strive to stay on top, but this only delays His work.

Pride and mammon are

ruling strongholds of the workplace. Brokenness is considered a weak position in the workplace. However, God says until we are broken we cannot be an aroma pleasing to the Lord.

God wants you to be an aroma in the workplace and in your neighborhood. In order for this to happen, you and I must be a broken vessel in His hand. Pray that God would allow you to become a pleasing aroma to Him no matter the cost.

Therefore, the goal of the Christian life is death, not success. A popular teaching says that if we follow God, we will prosper materially. God may, in fact, bless His

people materially, but few can make this claim among third-world countries.

Wealth must never be the goal of a person’s life, only a by-product. *“I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground*

and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.” - John 12:24

It has been told that a missionary to a Middle-Eastern country has shared a motto among their minis-



try team: “God does not require success, but radical, immediate obedience.”

Jesus’ obedience gained Him the cross. It did not gain Him popularity among

See TARPLEY, Page 16

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NDG Bookshelf: 'Joy Goddess' provides a bit of inspiration

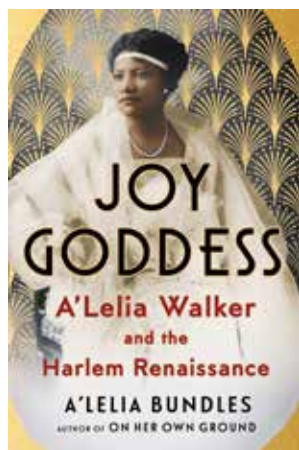
By Terri Schlichenmeyer

Mama said.

Mama said to be nice to others. Stand up for yourself, she said. You can do whatever you put your mind to. Stay out of trouble. Take care of yourself and those you love. Mama said a lot of things that shaped your life, and in the new book "Joy Goddess" by A'Lelia Bundles, Mama left a huge legacy.

She remembered a time before, and a time after.

In the before, Lelia Walker and her mother had little-to-nothing. Lelia's father had died when she was very young, and it was up to her mother, Sarah, to



put food on the table and a roof over their heads with her hard work. There was simply no room for extras.

In the after – after Sarah had become Madame C.J. Walker, head of a beauty empire that catered to

Black women – there was money, mansions, and a certain kind of fame. There was still hard work, too, but Lelia embraced it because she was proud of her mother's acumen – maybe more so, in fact, after Madame made young Lelia a "full partner" with the responsibility to run some of the farther-flung accounts.

It was true that mother and daughter didn't always see eye-to-eye. Because she'd worked away from Madame for years, Lelia felt emboldened to speak her mind but Madame often shut her down. Lelia wanted to choose her own husband, but Madame let her feelings about the

beau be known. They argued fiercely, then acted like there was never any problem. They loved one another, says Bundles, but they were "fire and ice."

Lelia, Bundles says, sought her mother's opinion on all matters, but she didn't often heed her mother's words. Madame didn't like that but as the years passed, she gave more and more of the business up, confident that Lelia (later, A'Lelia) would take care of things – and she was, overseas, as her mother's health began to fail...

Filled with lush word-painted images of opulence and wealth and a

sometimes-reverential tone, "Joy Goddess" is a biography that covers a lot of territory: because author A'Lelia Bundles is A'Lelia Walker's great-granddaughter, it's part family history, as well as Black history. It's a business biography, too, in a large way. And it's a love story, pure and simple, one that will appeal to any headstrong mother-daughter pair.

It's that last part that features most strongly and builds to break hearts, even though readers are never unaware of what's to come. Bundles is honest about how the Walker women changed surround-

ing lives – Madame had "adopted" a daughter with mixed outcome – and how their beauty empire positively affected Black business and culture for decades but she seems to push racism aside somewhat in the telling here.

Instead, Madame and A'Lelia's accomplishments and the world they lived in take front-and-center, and you'll appreciate that.

This is a book for readers who want a wide-reaching biography with hints of inspiration. It'll make a great book club book or mother-and-daughter tale to share. Read "Joy Goddess."

Mama would approve.

XAI, from Page 12

vent the law."

"We hope the Shelby County Health Department sees this appeal as a second chance to prioritize the health of the people in the community," said NAACP Director of Environmental Justice Abre' Conner. "The NAACP and community members have repeatedly shared concerns that xAI is causing a significant increase in the pollution of the air Memphians breathe. The health department

should focus on people's health — not on maximizing corporate gain."

"The Shelby County Health Department's decision to grant this permit not only violates federal law, it goes against the department's own regulations," SELC Senior Attorney Amanda Garcia said. "The health department failed to hold xAI accountable for unlawfully installing 35 polluting methane gas turbines at the site before

getting a permit, setting a dangerous precedent that opens the door for xAI or other companies to run any number of new polluting turbines at any time without any public oversight or approval."

"As a Black woman born and raised in Memphis, I know firsthand how industry harms Black communities while those in power cower away from justice," LaTricea Adams, CEO and President of Young, Gifted & Green, said. "Young, Gifted & Green is standing

on environmental justice business and is challenging Shelby County's reckless approval of xAI's air permit. The Shelby County Health Department needs to do their job to protect the health of ALL Memphians, especially those in frontline communities like 38109, that are burdened with a history of environmental racism, legacy pollution, and redlining."

SCHD's decision to ignore xAI's existing unpermitted turbines also led the agency to issue the wrong

type of permit for the facility. Since the facility was already running and emitting pollution, it required a permit for a major modification — but SCHD instead wrongly classified the data center as a new minor source of pollution. This move allows xAI to avoid key oversight provisions that would better protect nearby communities.

Methane gas turbines release smog-forming pollution and harmful chemicals like formaldehyde. The pollutants are tied to asthma,

respiratory illnesses, heart problems, and even certain types of cancer. The Memphis area is currently not meeting national standards for smog and neighborhoods in South Memphis face elevated asthma rates and cancer risks four times the national average.

The appeal asks the Memphis and Shelby County Air Pollution Control Board to declare that large gas turbines cannot qualify for the nonroad exemption and to vacate the air permit for the xAI data center.

TARPLEY, from Page 15

the heathen, the religious or financial success, or a life of pleasure.

His obedience resulted in His death on the cross. This is the same goal Christ has for each of us--death of our old nature so that He might live through us.

That may not sell well among outcome-based

Christian workplace believers, but it will result in an eternal reward that far exceeds any earthly reward. "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with Me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done." **Revelation 22:12.**

The Christian life is a

paradox--the first will be last, death in return for life, and we are encouraged to offer praise to God to overcome a spirit of heaviness.

It requires faith in a God who operates from a different set of values that are sometimes difficult to measure from human standards. Let death work in you a life that only God can raise up.

Today is a great day to

thank our Lord and Savior. Thank Him for this day. Thank Him that you are able to see, to hear, to speak, to move about. You are blessed because a forgiving and understanding God has done so much for all of us.

We, as Christians have witnessed His hand of blessing, His miraculous power in the lives of those

we love, and He just keep on blessing us.

There may be times when you find it hard to manage your time well. There seems to be so much to do. Ask God to help you to prioritize your daily activities to align with His will, His plan, His purpose, to do what is most important.

As well as the little

mundane tasks that must be done. As Him to help you to know when to say "no" to projects and requests that come along that would overwhelm you or take away from what He want you to do.

Ask God to help you to always love and care for those lives that He has entrusted to your care and circle of influence.