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End of an Era: Farewell to Rev. Jesse Jackson

The Rev. Jesse L. Jackson Sr., a towering figure in American civil rights, politics and social justice who rose from humble Southern roots to become a protégé of Martin Luther King Jr. and a two-time presidential candidate, died Tuesday at his home in Chicago. He was 84.

Jackson was born on Oct. 8, 1941, in Greenville, South Carolina.

He excelled as a student-athlete and class president in segregated public schools. He turned down a baseball contract offer to attend the University of Illinois on a football scholarship in 1959, but transferred the following year to North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro, earning a sociology degree in 1964.

There, amid the burgeoning civil rights movement, Jackson joined sit-in protests and became active with the Congress of Racial Equality.

He married Jacqueline Lavinia Brown in 1962; the couple had five



The Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Sr., seen by many as the "last of the great civil rights warriors of the 1960s" passed away on Tuesday morning after a lengthy period of declining health. (Composite of photos by U.S. Mission Geneva and John H. White / Wikimedia)

children, including sons Jesse Jr. (a former congressman) and Jonathan (an activist and politician).

Jackson began theological studies at Chicago Theological Seminary but left to pursue full-time activism, earning ordination as a Baptist min-

ister in 1968 and later a Master of Divinity degree in 2000.

Jackson's national prominence began in the mid-1960s when he joined the Southern Christian Leadership

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People In The News ...



Jason Kidd



Daniel Diaz

NDG Quote of the Week:

"I have learned over the years that when one's mind is made up, this diminishes fear; Knowing what must be done does away with fear." — Rosa Parks

Jason Kidd

Jason Kidd is expanding his commitment to girls youth basketball with the launch of Jason Kidd Select South, a North Texas-based program designed to develop and elevate elite female athletes while expanding access and opportunity across the region.

A Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Famer, 10-time NBA All-Star, NBA Champion, and current head coach of the Dallas Mavericks, Kidd has long been regarded as one of the game's elite leaders. In recent years, he has increasingly focused his efforts on supporting the women's



Keith Allison / Wikimedia

game, using his platform and experience to create pathways for young female athletes to succeed.

Launching in partnership with longtime North Texas club True Texas Hoops, Jason Kidd Select South will include fully

subsidized elite "Select" teams supported directly through the Jason Kidd Foundation, along with a broader program structure that will include additional teams for high school and younger athletes.

"This is about expanding opportunities for girls and investing in the future of women's basketball," Kidd said. "We're bringing a proven program model to the South, led by strong female leadership, and creating a platform for athletes to grow on and off the court."

Following the death of Kobe Bryant, Kidd made a deliberate commitment to invest in girls basketball,

motivated by the desire to carry forward Bryant's visible support of the women's game and expand opportunities for young female athletes.

That commitment is rooted in the success of JK Select Girls Basketball, Kidd's elite Bay Area-based program now entering its sixth year. The program has produced 45+ NCAA Division I athletes, four State Gatorade Players of the Year, and international medalists, serving as a proven model for how elite coaching, structure, and access drive long-term athlete success — a philosophy that will guide the launch and growth of Jason Kidd Select

South.

Program leadership will be anchored by Kim Lummus Crabtree, founder and head coach of True Texas Hoops and a respected leader in Texas girls basketball. A Texas High School Basketball Hall of Fame inductee, Crabtree led Cleburne High School to a 1995 Class 4A State Championship, starred at The University of Texas as a four-year letter winner, and later student coached under Hall of Fame coach Jody Conradt before spending five seasons as an assistant at UC Irvine. She returned to Texas to build one of North Texas' most respected girls develop-

ment programs.

"This partnership is about purpose," Crabtree said. "We've invested years into developing girls as athletes and as people. To have Jason Kidd believe in that vision — and to intentionally support a female-led program — is powerful for our players and for the future of the women's game."

The expanded program will serve athletes spanning 4th through 8th grade and high school, with plans to field approximately 12 to 15 total teams across age levels. While the organization's foundation is in Texas, the program is designed to be

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Daniel Díaz

After an extensive nationwide search, Dallas College is pleased to announce the appointment of Daniel Díaz as the institution's next vice chancellor of external affairs, effective today.

In his new role, Díaz will lead efforts to enhance the institution's visibility and reputation; guide comprehensive internal and external communications; expand partnerships with government leaders and civic organizations; and support Dallas College's crisis preparedness and response.

He will also provide strategic counsel on public perception, issues management, and stakeholder engagement to ensure alignment with the institution's mission and long-term priorities.

"I am honored to join Dallas College at such a pivotal moment for the institution and for the region," Díaz said. "The college's commitment to



Dallas College

busting barriers, transforming lives and expanding opportunity is truly inspiring. I look forward to partnering with the Chancellor, the Board of Trustees, and community leaders to advance this important work."

Díaz joins Dallas College with a distinguished record in global communications, public affairs, and enterprise-level strategy.

He has held senior leadership roles at major multinational organizations across the telecommunications, financial services, and consumer sectors, including Verizon and Citi-group.

"Daniel brings a breadth of global expertise and engagement experience that will strengthen our efforts to engage communities, elevate our brand, and support the evolving needs of Dallas County," said Dallas College Chancellor Justin H. Lonon. "We are excited to welcome him to Dallas College and look forward to the impact he will have on our students, partners and the communities we serve."

Over the course of his career, Díaz has guided large international teams, built integrated communications frameworks, strengthened reputation and media visibility, and shaped organizational narratives across diverse markets.

His portfolio also includes experience in Washington, D.C., where he supported national issues management, stakeholder engagement, and public affairs initiatives through the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute.

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Court ruling forces Trump to restore CFPB funding

Consumers lost more than \$15 billion in 2025 due to weakened agency oversight

By Charlene Crowell

Over the past year, the Trump administration took a series of steps to weaken the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). Despite broad and bipartisan legislative and consumer support for the agency's efforts that delivered transparency in financial transactions for consumers, these reversals also ended the kind of data collection, research, and investigations of consumer complaints that together held violators accountable, while making defrauded consumers financially whole.

Russell Vought, appointed to serve as both Secretary of the Office of Management and Budget and CFPB's Acting Director, ordered the agency to close its offices early last year and then months later, chose not to request any funding from the Federal Reserve. Unlike many federal agencies subject to annual congressional appropriation, the CFPB receives its funding directly from the Federal Reserve. Caught up in this

agency role reversal were an estimated 1,400 employees left uncertain whether their jobs could be retained or their collective mission continued.

But on December 30, a federal district judge issued a series of rulings that made clear that no administration could ignore or eliminate what Congress previously enacted into law, clearing the way for the Bureau to continue its important work.

In just two consumer categories – fees for late credit card payments and overdraft – an estimated \$15 billion were taken from the pockets of consumers. Overdraft regulation that was set to take effect last year was scuttled at a cumulative consumer cost of \$5 billion, while \$32 monthly credit card late fees took another \$10 billion from the pockets of everyday working people.

"By stopping virtually all work at the Consumer Bureau, President Trump is giving financial companies a green light to cheat working Americans out of their hard-earned money," said

Mike Calhoun, President of the Center for Responsible Lending.

Speaking directly to the administration's refusal to request agency funding, Judge Amy Berman Jackson's 32-page ruling wrote in part:

"The defendants' interpretation of the Dodd-Frank Act is contrary to the text and intent of the statute and the way it has been consistently interpreted by both the Federal Reserve and the CFPB... [N]ot one penny of the funding needed to run the agency that has returned over \$21 billion to American consumers comes from taxpayer dollars. The only new circumstance is the administration's determination to eliminate an agency created by Congress with the stroke of pen, even while the matter is before the Court of Appeals."

The ruling also itemized the duties CFPB "shall" perform:

- Reinstatement of all probationary and term employees terminated between February 10, 2025 and December 30, the date of this order,

including but not limited to the Private Student Loan Ombudsman.

- No termination of any CFPB employee, except for cause related to the individual employee's performance or conduct; nor issue any notice of reduction-in-force to any CFPB employee.

- Ensure that employees can perform their statutorily mandated functions, the defendants must provide them with either fully equipped office space, or permission to work remotely and laptop computers that are enabled to connect securely to the agency server.

- Ensure that the CFPB Office of Consumer Response continues to maintain a single, toll-free telephone number, a website, and a database for the centralized collection of consumer complaints regarding consumer financial products and services, and that it continues to monitor and respond to those complaints.

- Rescind all notices of contract termination is-

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To the editor,

While the topic has faded from public discussion, the threat remains of another pandemic, à la COVID-19, spreading around the globe and leaving devastation in its wake. To help prevent this possi-

bility, our political leaders should support state and federal funding of cultivated-meat research. The new protein is grown from livestock cells, without slaughter. Animal agriculture is a frequent cause of zoonotic diseases making the jump to humans.

While growing cultivated meat is now technologically feasible, it's too expensive to mass produce. Further study will fix this. Let's build facilities like the Tufts University Center for Cellular Agriculture at schools across the country. I have no doubt that, work-

ing together, researchers can overcome the remaining scientific barriers to making cheap, slaughter-free meat. Among other things, this will be a significant boon for public health.

Jon Hochschartner

Keep up with the news

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Front Row Seat To History

Personal Filmmaker and Technical Director Saddened by the Passing of Rev. Jesse Jackson

Following the announcement of the passing of civil rights titan Reverend Jesse Jackson, Eric LeMonte Williams—veteran international filmmaker, photo-journalist, business owner, and Texas political figure—reflects with profound sadness on the loss of the man whose global journey he documented for over a decade.

Williams' history with Reverend Jackson is expansive and historic. Not only was Williams Jackson's personal filmmaker, but he also served as the Technical Director for the Reverend throughout the Clinton administration. In this dual capacity, Williams held a front-row seat to the shaping of the 21st century. As the Technical Director for the television program



Eric LeMonte Williams and Rev. Jesse Jackson at the Cannes Film Festival (Courtesy photo)

“Jesse Jackson Speaks to the Nation,” Williams was responsible for the visual broadcast of Jackson's message to millions of households.

During this pivotal era, Williams' lens captured the intimate brotherhood be-

tween Jackson and former President Nelson Mandela, documenting numerous historic visits to South Africa to meet with both Nelson and Winnie Mandela. Beyond the halls of diplomacy, Williams accompanied Reverend Jackson into

the world's most volatile regions.

He famously documented the war in Liberia, standing as a first-hand witness and documentarian of the peace settlements that brought a critical, albeit brief, end to the conflict. His global travels with the Reverend also included high-profile international delegations to Italy and France, frequently accompanying cultural icons such as Steven Spielberg and Quincy Jones.

“Reverend Jackson's impact was never confined to a single pulpit or nation; I watched him command the attention of world leaders and icons alike,” said Williams. “From the streets of Monrovia to the meetings in Pretoria, documenting his journey was more

than a professional assignment—it was witnessing history in real-time. I am deeply saddened by the loss of a man who was a mentor, a subject, and a monumental force for peace.”

As a business owner and filmmaker, Williams' professional path with Jackson was also marked by a significant 2004 legal settlement regarding his film, “The Country Preacher.” The documentary, which showcased the life works of Reverend Jackson, gained international acclaim when it premiered at the Cannes Film Festival as part of the Agora Film series, making Williams the first documentary filmmaker to showcase in that category.

Following a dispute concerning his extensive work—originally valued at

\$550,000—the settlement resulted in Williams obtaining the full legal rights to the footage. This landmark acquisition allowed Williams to preserve an unparalleled archive of Jackson's global mission.

Eric LeMonte Williams remains a prominent figure in Texas politics and the arts. He made history in 1987 as the first African American to win the National College Photographer of the Year award.

As the world mourns, Williams continues to utilize his extensive portfolio—including “Haiti Cries Out” and the three-part series “Three-Fifths”—to ensure that the nuanced, global story of the civil rights movement and the Jackson era is preserved for future generations.

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Conference.

He led Operation Breadbasket in Chicago, pushing for economic opportunities for Black communities, and was in Memphis with King at the Lorraine Motel on April 4, 1968, when the civil rights leader was assassinated.

In 1971, Jackson founded Operation PUSH (People United to Save Humanity) in Chicago, focusing on economic empowerment, education and moral leadership. He merged it in 1996 with the National Rainbow Coalition to create the Rainbow PUSH Coalition, advocating for a multiracial “rainbow coalition” of the poor, workers, women and minorities under the slogan

“Keep Hope Alive.”

Jackson's 1984 and 1988 Democratic presidential bids were historic: He won multiple primaries and caucuses, garnering millions of votes and energizing Black and progressive voters, though he fell short of the nomination.

His campaigns highlighted issues like poverty, apartheid, Middle East peace and voting rights.

Internationally, Jackson negotiated the release of hostages and prisoners in places like Syria, Cuba and Iraq.

President Bill Clinton awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2000, and South Africa honored him with its

Companion of OR Tambo award.

Jackson's legacy endures as a bridge between King's era and modern movements, inspiring generations with impassioned oratory and unrelenting pursuit of justice, equality and human dignity.

Simmons College of Kentucky (home of The Reverend Jesse Louis Jackson, Sr. Center for Racial Justice) and its President, Kevin W. Cosby, Ph.D., D.Min., issued the following statement:

“We are deeply saddened by the passing of Reverend Jesse L. Jackson, Sr., a towering figure in the American civil rights movement and a lifelong champion for justice, equity, and human dignity.

“Reverend Jesse Louis Jackson was the last of the great civil rights warriors of the 1960s who emerged from the radical Black liberation church, a tradition shaped by Frederick Douglass and the abolitionist movement of the nineteenth century. That stream of faith and freedom also produced pioneers such as William J. Simmons. As scholar and Grawmeyer Award winner Gary Dorrien has noted, William J. Simmons stood among the early architects of that movement. Simmons College of Kentucky proudly bears his name, linking our institution to that enduring legacy of prophetic witness and intellectual leadership.

“As a protégé and student of Dr. Martin Luther King

Jr., no one advanced Dr. King's agenda of social justice with more persistence and public visibility than Reverend Jackson. From the Poor People's Campaign to Operation PUSH and the Rainbow Coalition, he translated moral vision into political action. He pushed this nation to expand voting rights, increase economic opportunity, and defend the dignity of the poor and marginalized.

“Simmons College of Kentucky and the Reverend Jesse Louis Jackson, Sr. Center for Racial Justice are united in honoring and advancing his legacy. With Reverend Jackson's help and support, we established and named the Center in his honor as a living commitment to the work he

championed. Together, Simmons and the Center will continue to educate communities about social and systemic racism, advocate for just laws, policies, systems, and structures, and challenge those who legislate by working to improve public policy so that our nation moves from disparity to equity. In doing so, we carry forward the moral clarity and courage that defined his life.

“We extend our deepest condolences to the Jackson family and to all who were shaped by his leadership. His life strengthened the moral spine of this nation. His voice stirred conscience. His example will continue to guide our work at Simmons College of Kentucky and beyond.”

In Voting, the Only Thing to Fear is Fear Itself

By Lori Lee
NDG Contributing Writer

As the polls look less and less hopeful for Republicans, the federal government is attempting to yield greater influence over the elections process, this though U.S. elections are intended to be run by the states.

According to Section 4, Clause 1 of the U.S. Constitution, The Times, Places and Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by Law make or alter such Regulations, except as to the Places of choosing Senators.

The president is trying to project power that he simply does not have, said Justin Levitt, Loyola Law School professor and former White House Senior Advisor on Democracy and Voting Rights.

"We're used to, unfortunately, now describing things that the president can't do and then watching him do some of them without the authority to do those things."

Yet, when it comes to elections, he is limited by important legal and operational constraints, said Levitt.

The most important efforts to date have come through redistricting, he said. Texas led the way in this effort, followed by other partisan efforts.

As more district lines shift, he noted, voters may find themselves in new areas electing new representatives. Yet, given the number of voters and the



Unseen Histories / Unsplash

variety of voting modes, voters have agency, he said, especially considering the signs pointing to extraordinary turnout this Fall.

Voters exercising rights at the ballot box may very well be the strongest push back the country has, he said.

"The system actually works with a lot of belts and suspenders to make sure that people aren't unduly disenfranchised," he commented. And there are already quite a few safeguards to prevent fraud.

One way to fight back is just to allow poll workers and election skeptics to see up close how things actually work.

"I think that you can view most of the actions that the Trump Administration has taken through the lens of marketing," added Levitt, based on stirring up fears surrounding potential fraud. Take the Georgia FBI raid, for example, which has threatened suspicions about the 2016 election despite repeated disproven challenges to the state's processes.

The states are defending themselves against Department of Justice attempts to seek voter rolls, added Vice President for Voting Rights and the Rule of Law at the

Campaign Legal Center, Danielle Lang. As lawyers protect voter data, the courts have ruled that the Department of Justice has no basis for voter data collection.

Representing the League of Women Voters, Lang's organization is suing the Citizen and Immigration Services because it has banned voter registration activity at naturalization ceremonies. The Campaign Legal Center is on the front lines doing important work to protect voting rights.

Those discouraged by recent Supreme Court rulings and abuses of executive power, should know it won't be the same story when it comes to elections, Lang assured.

In March 2025, for example, the President came out with a lengthy executive order purporting to involve federal agencies with elections while threatening states into making changes to their systems. Nothing has come of the order, said Lang.

The most immediate threat came in a request for changes to requirements for the federal voter registration form, created by the 1993 National Voter Registration Act, she said.

Though most voters use the state forms, the fed-

eral form can make registering easier, especially for those who don't speak English—an achievement by the League of United Latin American Citizens, she noted.

Yet, the president tried to add new requirements to provide multiple forms to be mailed along with the registration card. Yet, since the card doesn't come with an envelope, the district court ruled it out.

This decision has become very important, she noted, by affirming the U.S. president has no constitutional power over elections, every court order since parroting the language, she said.

Similarly, regarding attempts to prevent voters from using absentee ballots, Lang said those rules are set by the vast majority of states. Only Congress and the states can set such voting rules.

Yet, the Campaign Legal Center is prepared for

any executive orders that may be coming, she added, though she does not expect attempts to take away absentee voting.

The President has also mentioned canceling or nationalizing elections while requiring proof of citizenship. Yet, though Americans support some sort of verification of voters identity, voters would likely not support an act that would disenfranchise millions of married women to prove eligibility.

"We stand ready to oppose that bill because we know that it's bad for voters, and we know that if voters know the facts, they will know that it's bad for them," added Lang.

There's so much work going on right now but our organization is forward-looking, prepared for any attempts at interference.

To the extent there are real threats, an incredibly dedicated force of voting rights lawyers will ensure

the law is followed, she assured.

"I really believe in the election officials across this country that they will not sit back and have their power taken from them," said Lang.

Added John C. Yang, President and Executive Director of Asian Americans Advancing Justice, many of these efforts are racially motivated.

Laws that limit the ability of voters to vote by mail, limit accessibility, he said. Having the ballot at home allows additional time to translate and think through the issues, noted Yang.

One solution our community has offered is a toll-free number to help Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) navigate language issues.

Such efforts affect Latino voters as well, added Andrea Centeno, DC Regional Counsel for the

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Legacies of Black History in Dallas ISD



Joyce Foreman
Dallas ISD
District 6

Many of our schools are a reflection of the mission of leaders throughout the Black community in Dallas who have supported education.

Among them is Kathryn Joy Gilliam Collegiate Academy, an A-rated campus in District 6, named in honor of the civil rights activist and educator whose deep love for South Dallas guided her lifelong commitment to service. For

more than 80 years, Kathryn Joy Gilliam was an advocate for public school desegregation and worked to strengthen and beautify the community she called home.

Gilliam was the district's first Black woman elected to the Dallas ISD Board of Trustees, serving for 23 years beginning in 1974, and the first Black board president from 1980 to 1982. Her leadership continues to inspire me, and I strive to honor her legacy through my own commitment to our students, educators, and community.

As we honor a century of Black History Month cel-

ebrations, I am reminded of the words of civil rights leader John Lewis: "Every generation leaves behind a legacy. What that legacy will be is determined by the people of that generation. What legacy do you want to leave behind?" Each day we answer that question through the way we serve our students and support their families. They are Dallas ISD's legacy.

A lifetime champion: At Justin F. Kimball High School, legacy is more than a word, it is a lived commitment. Longtime head wrestling coach Devon Fortson is a proud Kimball alumnus and athlete who

returned home to serve the community that helped shape him. He will now be inducted into the Texas High School Wrestling Coach Association's Hall of Honor. Affectionately known as "Coach Buck," Fortson founded Kimball's wrestling program in 1998, building a championship team that develops student athletes of character and purpose.

Judge Louis A. Bedford Jr. Law Academy opened the doors to its new campus in January, marking an important moment for our community. This campus stands as a tribute to the legacy of Judge Bedford,

whose life's work was defined by service, justice, and a deep commitment to mentoring young Black lawyers and advancing voting rights. He embodies values of integrity, fairness, and public service that remain at the heart of Bedford Jr. Law Academy, guiding the future leaders being prepared within its school walls.

An example of the creativity and leadership that the school is cultivating can be seen in Xavier C., a student at Bedford. He earned first place in the Individual Documentary category at the **2026 National History Day Junior Division com-**

petition. Responding to the theme, "Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History," Xavier demonstrated both intellectual curiosity and a deep respect for history through his thoughtful documentary. Throughout Dallas ISD, students are given the opportunity to engage deeply with history and rise to the occasion as scholars and storytellers.

This generation of students and educators are the voices of the next 100 years of Black History. Each accomplishment is a reminder that greatness is happening everyday and I am proud to be a part of this legacy in Dallas ISD with you.

Dallas College Launches 'The Texas Ticker' a Bloomberg-Powered Trading Initiative as 'Y'all Street' Takes Root in Dallas

As Dallas emerges as the epicenter of the nation's next financial frontier, Dallas College today announced the launch of The Texas Ticker, a hands-on trading and market analytics initiative built around the Bloomberg Global Trading Challenge and the college's Bloomberg Finance and Investment Labs.

The Texas Ticker is the flagship program within the Dallas College Y'all Street Market Experience, a broader initiative designed to connect students, industry partners and the



Dallas College

community to real-world market activity through applied learning, professional

tools, workshops and seminars focused on the financial sector.

"The Texas Ticker gives students hands-on experience with the same market tools used by financial professionals," said Dr. Justin Lonon, Dallas College chancellor. "As 'Y'all Street' takes shape and the Texas Stock Exchange grows, our students won't just learn how markets work — they'll actively participate in them."

The initiative launches as North Texas experiences rapid growth in its financial sector, driven in part by the establishment of the Texas Stock Exchange (TXSE) and the relocation of ma-

nor financial firms to Dallas — a movement increasingly referred to as "Y'all Street."

The Bloomberg Global Trading Challenge is one of the world's largest student investment competitions, placing teams in a live market simulation with a \$1 million portfolio. Participants respond to real market conditions, track performance and make investment decisions in real time.

"When students gain hands-on experience with real-time market data, it changes how they see

both their education and their career possibilities," said Elizabeth Casserino, Bloomberg AMER head of university relations. "By embedding Bloomberg technology into the student experience, Dallas College is helping develop a new generation of talent equipped to analyze markets, understand global capital flows and contribute to Texas's evolving financial ecosystem."

For more information about The Texas Ticker visit: <https://www.dallas-college.edu/schools/business/bloomberg>.

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Mexican-American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MELDEF).

The proposed proof of citizenship to vote and recent calls for ICE at the polls suppress voters of

color disproportionately, she said. Voters of color are less likely to have these documents, and often have a harder time obtaining them. These efforts produce confusion and fear,

based on false narratives about the security of elections.

The efforts also create risks of harassment and intimidation for citizens at the polls, said Senteno. A lot of that is due to attributing fraud to non-citizen

immigrants, connected to the growing numbers of non-white voters in the electorate.

"All of that likely deters eligible voters from casting their ballots," she said.

Other tactics used to deny access to the ballot

or to dilute the Latino vote include restrictions on language assistance and unlawful voter purges.

These citizens need to be informed of their rights and of what to expect at the poll site, said Senteno.

"It's important for peo-

ple to recognize what their rights are to go into the ballot box," added Yang.

"Our democracy is just too important for us not to care about and not to stay informed about, and not to exercise that right to vote," Yang said.

Glenn Heights Mayor Appointed Chair of National League of Cities Council on Youth, Education, and Families

GLENN HEIGHTS – Mayor Sonja A. Brown has been appointed Chair of the 2026 Council on Youth, Education, and Families (YEF Council) of the National League of Cities (NLC), marking a significant national leadership milestone for the City of Glenn Heights and the State of Texas.

The appointment was announced on behalf of NLC President Kevin Kramer, recognizing Mayor Brown's longstanding commitment to equity, education, and family-centered public policy. In her new role, Mayor Brown will lead national efforts focused on strengthening communities and advancing outcomes for children and families across the country.

Mayor Brown will serve as Chair through November 2026, concluding at NLC's City Summit.

"I am deeply honored by this appointment and grateful for the confidence placed in me," said Mayor Brown. "This work is personal. Every policy we shape and every partnership we build must reflect our responsibility to protect opportunity, dignity, and hope for every child and every family."

Under Mayor Brown's leadership, the YEF Council will operate under the 2026 theme,



Mayor Sonja A. Brown
(Courtesy photo)

Building Resilient Families in Uncertain Times, a vision she developed to guide the council's work in addressing economic, social, and educational challenges facing communities nationwide.

"Families are navigating unprecedented pressures," Brown added. "Resilience does not happen by accident. It is built through intentional leadership, compassionate governance, and courageous collaboration. That is the work we are committing to do."

In addition to her appointment as Chair, Mayor Brown has also been selected to serve on the National League of Cities Small Cities Council, further strengthening her voice in shaping national policy for small and mid-sized municipalities.

Mayor Brown currently serves as Mayor of Glenn Heights, where she has championed initiatives centered on youth development, educational access, civic engagement, and community empowerment. Her national appointment reflects her growing influence as a leader who bridges local experience with state and national advocacy.

"From the classroom to City Hall to the national stage, my mission remains the same," said Brown. "I serve to listen, to lift, and to lead with integrity. Our communities deserve nothing less."

With this appointment, Mayor Brown now serves in leadership and advisory roles at the local, state, and national levels, reinforcing her commitment to ensuring that community voices are represented wherever decisions are made.

Her work continues to center on building systems that are inclusive, responsive, and rooted in justice, particularly for historically underserved families.

The YEF Council's initial virtual meeting will take place on February 23, 2026, followed by the first in-person meeting during the Congressional City Conference in Washington, D.C., on March 16, 2026.

Zemill Hits the Stage in Irving Benefit

Spoken word artist and musical innovator Zemill will headline a scholarship fundraising concert March 28 aimed at blending poetry, jazz and community impact into one evening of performance and purpose.

Titled "A Snazzy Sneakers & PoJazz Affair," the event will run from 6 to 9 p.m. at PRISM Las Colinas, 350 E. Royal Lane, Suite 123, in Irving. General admission tickets are \$45, and VIP tables seating eight are

\$400, which include two complimentary bottles of wine.

The concert is presented by Attention Required Entertainment and The Elevating Minds Fund. Proceeds will support scholarships awarded through The Elevating Minds Fund, organizers said.

Billed as an immersive cultural experience, the program will feature Zemill's signature "PoJazz Experience," a fusion of spoken word and live music

that blends smooth jazz, neo-soul, R&B and blues. Known for emotionally charged performances and socially conscious themes, Zemill said the event reflects his longstanding commitment to using art as a vehicle for empowerment.

"This event is very personal to me," Zemill said in a statement. "A Snazzy Sneakers &

See DMA, Page 13

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Avoid the Drama and Extend George Pickens

By Jamal Baker
NDG Sportswriter

The Dallas Cowboys are in the midst of a pivotal off-season—one that starts with resigning their All-Pro wide receiver George Pickens.

Dallas is expected to place the franchise tag on Pickens to maintain team control and will have until July 15 to negotiate a contract extension with the former Georgia Bulldog. While the franchise tag will be worth around \$27-28 million, the Cowboys should learn from their previous mistakes of dragging their feet to negotiate a long-term deal with key players.

In 2024 we watched CeeDee Lamb hold out until he received his own contract extension, and he plans to speak with the front office in effort to help get Pickens' deal done.

Last offseason, star pass rusher Micah Parsons was present at team facilities but did not participate in on-field work as his contract talks dragged on.

The Parsons saga eventually ended in trading him to the Green Bay Packers and we can only hope contract negotiations with Pickens are much smoother.

"I didn't necessarily learn," Jerry Jones said just



before Super Bowl LX. "I say that because hopefully you learn something all the way. But what I would say is that the reason those talks didn't work was not the talks or the personalities or not talking to the agent. The reason it didn't work is Micah got priced away from us. It was just worth more to us to have the picks than to have him. I'm serious."

Dallas got two first round picks and defensive tackle Kenny Clark in the Parsons trade and flipped one of the picks for Pro Bowl defensive tackle Quinnen Williams.

Can an offseason full of distractions be avoided by re-signing Pickens? Absolutely. Both parties would have to be willing to meet in the middle, which is easier said than done in business—but certainly doable.

With the NFL Combine

starting next week in Indianapolis, Pickens' agents are looking to open contract discussions.

Having two elite receivers in the same offense is a luxury that causes opposing defenses to roll coverage to one wideout while the other feasts on one-on-one matchups.

However, you have to pay the cost to be a boss and does Jones worry about paying Lamb and Pickens top dollar?

"Absolutely. A lot of the reasons that I did some of the things that I did last year was to retain some players that if it would have gone in a different direction, I couldn't have retained, Jones said."

There is precedent the Cowboys can reference when it comes to paying two wide receivers top of market value.

The Cincinnati Bengals have two wide receivers—Ja'Marr Chase and Tee Higgins—each on contracts worth more than \$100 million, while the Detroit Lions have Amon-Ra St. Brown and Jameson Williams earning \$30 million and \$27.6

million per year, respectively.

The Cowboys can create nearly \$100 million in cap space by restructuring contracts and cutting ties with some players.

Pickens is coming off a career year in which he to-

taled 93 catches for 1,429 yards and nine touchdowns, and Dallas is simply a better team with him on the roster.

Here's to hoping the Cowboys do the right thing and pay Pickens what he deserves—sooner rather than later.

CFPB, from Page 3

sued on or after February 11, 2025, and they may not reinitiate the wholesale cancellation of contracts.

For Congresswoman Maxine Waters, Ranking Member of the House Financial Services Committee and a long-time CFPB champion, reacted to the court ruling saying, "Let's be clear, the Trump Ad-

ministration's efforts to defund or dismantle this agency are not about fiscal responsibility, they are about shielding their allies on Wall Street and other powerful corporate interests from oversight while working families are left to fend for themselves."

"At a time when families are already being squeezed

by the Trump Administration's reckless economic agenda, weakening the CFPB only makes it harder for people to keep up with rising costs, avoid financial abuse, and stay afloat", Waters concluded.

Charlene Crowell is a senior fellow with the Center for Responsible Lending. She can be reached at Charlene.crowell@responsiblelending.org.

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Film Review: 'Crime 101' makes a decent case for entertainment

By Dwight Brown

(***) “I need to be in your line of work,” she says coyly. Then she warily observes, “But you can’t seem to look me in the eye.” So, what’s with this dude?”

In an era of superhero movies, family animation films and blockbuster sequels, it’s nice when adults get a smart crime/thriller thrown their way. That’s what writer/director Bart Layton has in mind. He’s fully digested author Don Winslow’s noir novella *Crime 101*. Fully understands the plot and assignment. A chain of jewel-heists in Southern California baffles the L.A.P.D., now what? Layton, who finetuned his thievery chops with his 2018 film *American Animals*, seems quite skilled at turning the book into a tense, slick thriller: Meet genre expectations, create three-dimensional characters with twisted lives, add plot surprises, stir and pour.

Davis (Chris Hemsworth) has a secret. He’s robbing jewelers of their precious gems and not leaving much of a trace. Before they leave their store laden with baubles, he’s two steps ahead ready to pounce. His crimes don’t go unnoticed by cops, but they’re confounded. Detective “Lou” Lubesnik (Mark Ruffalo) notices a pattern. The heists are taking place along Route 101, aka the Ventura Highway. Parts of it are a major commuter artery connecting greater Los Angeles to the San Fernando Valley. His superiors, and most disappointingly even his partner Tillman (Corey Hawkins, *The Piano Les-*



Merrick Morton and Dean Rogers / Courtesy

son), are skeptical of his findings.

Meanwhile on the other side of the crime spree, a high-end insurance firm specializes in protecting extremely wealthy clients, their expensive property, valuables and jewels—or reimbursing. Sharon Coombs (Halle Berry) is a claims adjuster at the company. A woman of color, middle-aged and trying to stay relevant in a business that has a glass ceiling for maturing people who look like her. Sharon’s years of experience merits a coveted partnership. But there’s someone younger than her waiting in the wings to be the “new” Sharon.

All the stealing, dealing, investigating, car chasing and double crossing provide enough constant tension to keep what’s on view alluring from beginning to end. Mix in glamour, the jewelry trade and a handsome cast and L.A. comes alive. Hemsworth and Berry have chemistry. Berry and Ruffalo have chemistry. Ruffalo and Hemsworth have chemistry. The triad’s intertwining lives and professions are intriguingly pulled together in ways one might not expect. Layton weaves their narratives into a bejeweled production. A dazzler polished by a savvy behind-the-camera crew

who make touring around the City of Angels and gawking at its privileged inhabitants fun.

The classy homes and sleek offices (production designer Scott Dougan, *Bridge of Spies*) and clothes that look like they were snatched off of shelves from Rodeo Drive stores (costume designer Jenny Eagan, *KnivesOut*) speak volumes. The city hasn’t glistened this brightly since the ‘90s. Traffic jams, downtown skyscrapers and sunny beaches appear to be under a California halo (director of photography ErikAlexander Wilson). Electronic, bass-heavy music pulsates softly or loudly depending on the mood (composerBlack Mass). And smooth editing (editors Jacob Secher Schulsinger and Julian Hart) helps the 139 minutes roll by as pleasantly and precariously as a drive down Santa Monica Blvd to the beach—while being followed by a cop car.

The very photogenic Hemsworth isn’t Thor this time. He’s a very tidy, nattily dressed and calm crook who plans his robberies down to the last detail. Threatening violence more than actually doing it. His steely manner is balanced by a loneliness he can’t cure. Swiping right and left

on call-girl sites indicates an issue with intimacy and normal relationships. Something’s wrong with him. He’s wounded inside. Hemsworth gets to the heart of this lost soul with a vulnerability that makes him accessible and audience friendly.

Berry has some scenes in the movie sans makeup. She’s unmarried, still has a hot body, getting older and trying to stay relevant. Facing issues women of her ilk encounter in business. Female audiences of a certain age will relate to her drive, feel her hurt as she’s demeaned by young-

er-than-her executives and love her grit. Especially when she tells her boss off in one of the movie’s most emotionally explosive scenes. Ruffalo brings his guy-next-door charm to a detective who looks like he hasn’t bathed in days. The “cop alienated from his department” gimmick is a fragmented cliché. But the way Lou is developed by Ruffalo makes the man feel whole. Other cast members (Hawkins, Barry Keoghan, Nick Nolte and Monica Barbaro) complete a very talented ensemble.

Layton is the puppeteer pulling the strings. Not

ashamed to give genre fans what they want. He doesn’t break the mold, he cements it. In a very retro way, like the 1995 hit *Heat*. This glossy rendition is nearly as entertaining as that Michael Mann classic. Only spawning a few questions: In the movie’s opening crime, Davis is in a vehicle trying to escape. Driving recklessly down streets, cutting off cars, dodging and weaving through traffic. But there are no cops in pursuit. Wouldn’t a smart thief want this escape to be unobtrusive? Lou meets Sharon in

See FILM, Page 13

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Redrawn District Lines Heat Up 2026 Midterm Primaries

By David Wilfong
NDG Contributing Writer

Dallas County voters are already casting ballots in the March 3 primary elections, with early voting underway since Feb. 17, to select party nominees for statewide offices in the Nov. 3 general election.

One of the most high-profile primaries is for the U.S. Senate, where incumbent Sen. John Cornyn faces challenges from Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton and U.S. Rep. Wesley Hunt on the GOP ticket. Some polls actually show Paxton leading among likely GOP voters, with a potential runoff if no candidate secures a majority.

Democrats vying for the U.S. Senate seat features a heated contest of its own. U.S. Rep. Jasmine Crockett and Texas Rep. James Talarico are making waves in the media. Crockett is a nationally-known and highly-popular swordbearer for the Democratic party, while Talarico has also gained some popularity in national media (most recently as a “banned guest” on Stephen Colbert’s talk show), and as a candidate who may draw in some anti-Trump votes from the GOP side in the general election. Also running is Ahmad R. Hassan, veteran of numerous campaigns.

For governor, Republican incumbent Greg Abbott seeks an unprecedented fourth term against 10 challengers.

In the Democratic primary for governor, state Rep. Gina Hinojosa has emerged as the frontrunner following businessman Andrew White’s withdrawal and endorsement of her in early January. She faces a field including former U.S. Rep.



DWG Studio

Chris Bell, (previously ran for governor in 2006), Angela “TiaAngie” Villescaz, Bobby Cole, Zach Vance, Jose Navarro Balbuena, Patricia Abrego, and Carlton W. Hart. A runoff appears possible if no candidate reaches 50% on March 3.

Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, the powerful presiding officer of the Senate, seeks reelection in the Republican primary against three challengers; Esala Wueschner, Timothy Mabry and Perla Muñoz Hopkins.

Three Democrats are vying for the Lt. Governor’s post: state Rep. Vikki Goodwin, a four-term legislator on the House Appropriations Committee; labor advocate Marcos Vélez; and software company manager Courtney Head.

The attorney general race is open after Paxton chose to run for Senate. Republicans feature a four-way race including U.S. Rep. Chip Roy, state Sen. Mayes Middleton, state Sen. Joan Huffman and former federal prosecutor Aaron Reitz, with Roy polling ahead in early surveys.

The Democratic primary for attorney general features state Sen. Nathan Johnson of Dallas, who leads early polling and stresses reforming the office after Paxton’s scandals; former Galveston Mayor Joe Jaworski and

Tony Box are also in this highly-contested primary. Poll watchers see a likely runoff in this race.

Other statewide executive offices up for vote include comptroller of public accounts where Democrats will choose from Savant Moore, Sarah Eckhardt and Michael Lange. On the GOP side; Michael Berlanga, Don Huffines, Christi Craddock and Kelly Hancock are vying for the office.

Commissioner of the General Land Office sees Jose Loya and Benjamin Flores competing on the Dem side while the office is uncontested in the GOP.

Agriculture commissioner is contested on the Republican ticket by Nate Sheets and Sid Miller.

The railroad commissioner (which regulates oil and gas) is heavily contested in the Republican primary with five contenders.

No major statewide office is uncontested in at least one party’s primary, reflecting intra-party debates over issues like education, energy and immigration. Runoffs, if needed, are set for May 26.

There’s going to be a lot of attention paid to the upcoming races for the U.S. House of Representatives after a controversial move by the Texas GOP to re-

draw district lines in a bid to deliver more Republican seats in congress. The effort came at the behest of President Donald J. Trump and spawned reactionary moves by Democrats in blue states like California.

In Texas’ U.S. House District 24 primaries (covering parts of the Dallas-Fort Worth area), Republican incumbent Beth Van Duyne faces no challengers in her primary, positioning her strongly for renomination in this GOP-leaning district after recent redistricting. On the Democratic side, three candidates; Jon Buchwald, Kevin Burge, and TJ Ware are competing to face Van Duyne.

For District 30 (a solidly Democratic seat in Dallas after Rep. Jasmine Crockett’s Senate run left it open), the Democratic primary features a competitive field of Barbara Mallory Caraway, Frederick Haynes (a prominent pastor endorsed by some as Crockett’s preferred successor), and Rod-

ney LaBruce.

The Republican primary includes four candidates—Sholdon Daniels, Gregor Heise, Everett Jackson, and Nils Walker—vying for a long-shot nomination in a heavily blue area.

In the newly redrawn District 32 (shifted to favor Republicans by extending from Dallas into East Texas, making it a top GOP pickup target), Democrats have a primary between Dan Barrios and Anthony Bridges.

The Republican primary is crowded with nine contenders, including notable names like Ryan Binkley (a 2024 presidential candidate), Jace Yarbrough (Trump-endorsed attorney), Darrell Day, Paul Bondar, and others such as James Ussery, Gordon Heslop, Monty Montanez, Abteen Vaziri, and Aimee Carrasco, likely heading to a runoff given the fragmented field.

The District 33 Democratic primary (a Dallas-area seat drawn to remain blue) pits incumbent Rep.

Julie Johnson (after redistricting displaced her from the old 32nd) against former Rep. Colin Allred, plus Zeeshan Hafeez and Carlos Quintanilla, creating a high-profile matchup between two well-known figures.

Republicans have four candidates—Patrick Gillespie, Monte Mitchell, Kurt L. Schwab, and John Sims—competing in a district unfavorable to their party. All primaries are set for March 3, 2026, with potential runoffs on May 26.

In the Republican primary, there is a contested race for State Senator, District 2 with Bob Hall facing challenger Jason K. Eddington. On the Democratic side Keenan Colbert runs unopposed.

The Democratic primary has only one State Representative race with multiple candidates. In District 100 there is a three-way contest between Amanda Richardson, Justice McFarlane and

See MIDTERM, Page 11

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House District 30 Race Brings Stiff Competition with Three Strong Candidates

By Lori Lee
NDG Contributing Writer

Democratic Congresswoman Jasmine Crockett has brought national attention to local U.S. House District 30. Her dynamic, sometimes confrontational remarks have led to her portrayal on Saturday Night Live and to a number of appearances on national news programs and late night comedy hours.

Now that she has decided to make a move for Senator John Cornyn's Texas Senate seat, voters will need to decide who will fill her very prominent shoes. Crockett currently represents U.S. House District 30, which includes much of Dallas, Seagoville, Cedar Hill, Duncanville, DeSoto, Glen Heights, Hutchins, Lancaster, Wilmer, Grand Prairie, and parts of Arlington.

Candidates who signed up for the challenge include former Dallas City Council member, Barbara Mallory Calloway, and two long-time Dallas pastors, both in churches falling within

District 30. They include Pastor Rodney LaBruce of Second Generation Fellowship Church and Jasmine Crockett's very own pastor, Dr. Frederick Haynes, III, of Friendship West Baptist.

Calloway is passionate about education, emphasizing her commitment to



U.S. Representative, District 30 candidates (L-R in ballot order) are; Frederick D. Haynes III, Barbara Mallory Calloway, and Rodney LaBruce. (Photos via campaign and church websites)

providing a fair and quality education for everyone. She aims to stabilize the Department of Education while actively supporting initiatives that enhance earnings and promote youth programs that foster development of productive citizens. She also supports policies that encourage innovations in science and a healthier quality of life.

Mallory's other priorities include affordable healthcare, Medicare, and Social Security.

She said she will communicate with her constituents through traditional town hall meetings and social media, she said.

"Citizens deserve accountability and responsiveness ... They deserve civility from public officers to make sure elected officials are promoting their interests."

Calloway is the candidate that brings legislative experience to the table, as Dallas City Council member of the Sixth District from 1993 to 2001 and as representative for the Texas House 110th District from 2007 to 2013.

"I can hit the ground running, said Calloway ... The work I do will be measured by my ability to successfully introduce and pass legislation on policies that affect my constituents."

Yet, while Rodney LaBruce doesn't have legislative experience, he has devoted his life to public service. As founder of the Unified Advocacy and Leadership Coalition, he has sought to identify and dismantle root causes of economic hardship, which as his website states, he largely attributes to housing debt and incarceration.

underway and will continue through Feb.27. Election Day is March 3 with polls open from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. Early voting times and voting locations, as well as sample ballots and more detailed information is available at www.dallascountyvotes.org.

Sanjay Narayan. In District 112 there is a four-way race between Perry E. Barker, Sr., Chad Carnahan, Angie Chen Button and Tina Price. The Democratic primary is uncontested in these races.

Early voting is already

He thereby supports expansion of affordable housing and judicial reform, with an

increased focus on rehabilitation and equity, his website shows.

LaBruce also favors redirecting wealth by reforming the tax code, closing trillion-dollar loopholes used by the top 1%, he said. Doing so would create a system that finally rewards work instead of just wealth with real tax relief for small businesses, this building wealth within District 30 instead of sending it to corporations outside the district.

LaBruce has lived in U.S. District 30 all his life and has a vision for the district that includes com-

munity-rooted basketball tournaments that generate revenue for scholarships and neighborhood investment funds, his website states.

Pastor Frederick Haynes, III, has also served working families and communities as a faith leader and advocate. Though he lacks direct legislative experience, he has developed cross-sector partnerships with multimillion-dollar initiatives, securing public and private funding, while working with civic, labor, education, and healthcare

See DIST30, Page 16

MIDTERM, from Page 10

Venton Jones. The winner will face Republican Jordan Scott Hoffnagle who is unopposed in the primary.

The GOP primary has two contested State Representative races. In District 108 Morgan Meyer faces



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**McKinney Housing Authority
2026 ANNUAL PLAN
PUBLIC MEETINGS NOTICE**

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

The PHA Plan is a comprehensive guide to public housing agency (PHA) policies, programs, operations, and strategies for meeting local housing needs and goals. There are two parts to the PHA Plan: the 5-Year Plan, which each PHA submits to HUD once every 5th PHA fiscal year, and the Annual Plan, which is submitted to HUD every year.

Below is a list of meetings that are scheduled to review and discuss the Agency Plan documents for the 2026 fiscal year. Program participants, the public and staff are encouraged to attend the meetings.

**Autoridad de Vivienda McKinney
PLAN ANUAL 2026
REUNIONES DARSE CUENTA**

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

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

A continuación hay una lista de reuniones que están programadas para revisar y analizar los documentos del Plan de la Agencia para el año fiscal 2026.

Tuesday January 27, 2026	4:30pm	Board of Commissioners Meeting	Newsome Homes Community Center	1450 Amcott St. McKinney, TX 75069
Tuesday February 24, 2026	4:30pm	Board of Commissioners Meeting	Merritt Homes Community Center	1200 N. Tennessee St. McKinney, TX 75069
Tuesday March 31, 2026	4:30pm	Board of Commissioners Meeting	Newsome Homes Community Center	1450 Amcott St. McKinney, TX 75069

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

Comments can be submitted by hand delivery, mail, or email to McKinney Housing Authority. Main Office; 603 North Tennessee Street; Attn: Roslyn Miller; McKinney, TX 75069 or info@mckinneyha.org. The final public hearing for plan adoption will be held on Tuesday, March 31st at 4:30pm – Newsome Homes community center.

Economic Empowerment Has Always Been a Part of Black History

By Louis J. King II
President & CEO
OIC of America



By Louis J. King II
(OIC of America)

As we celebrate the 100th anniversary of Black History Month, I'm reflecting on the century of economic volatility and roadblocks that have often defined the experiences of disenfranchised communities.

Our collective legacy is marked by resilience to overcome the economic challenges faced while trying to achieve the American dream.

For the last 50 years, many have pushed a single narrative: success can only come from a four-year col-

lege degree. While this opened pathways to education, access, and wealth creation, this singular focus doesn't account for the diverse ways people work to make our world function.

That path doesn't fit everyone, and it doesn't have to. Check the news: the best-kept secret is out, and it is a career in the trades.

Starting a career in the skilled trades now means entering an industry with financially rewarding, in-demand careers that are essential to the future of our economy. Skilled trades — like construction, plumbing, electrical work, carpentry, masonry, and HVAC — are not only in high demand, but they're also recession-resistant. As America rebuilds its infrastructure, provides disaster relief, and moves toward a greener economy, these

trades are leading the way. And at OICA we are building America's workforce to rebuild America by enrolling thousands of people per year to start their careers in the skilled trades.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than 500,000 skilled trade workers are needed each year to fill open positions.

With roughly 40% of skilled trades workers expected to retire over the next decade, demand will continue to grow, and more pathways to the middle class will open. These are careers that can't be outsourced and that AI won't

replace. They require technical know-how, problem-solving skills, and hands-on training. Another pathway to build a financially stable life.

At OIC of America, along with our affiliates across the country, we're working to dismantle the negative assumptions around vocational careers and open doors for young people and adults alike to explore these life-changing opportunities. We're also making sure women, returning citizens, multicultural and multigenerational folks are at the table — and in the field — where these good-paying

jobs are waiting. By 2030, we're on track to place over 50,000 people in the skilled trades per year — a pivot that opens up a world of economic potential they were previously locked out of.

A career in the skilled trades is not just about working with your hands. It's about building an economic future — for yourself, your family, and your community. In my view, that's truly one of the best ways to honor the legacy of Black History Month.

For more information, or to be connected to a training program near you, visit www.oicofamerica.org.

ZEMILL, from Page 7

PoJazz Affair represents everything I believe in — using creativity to uplift, educate and empower. Through PoJazz, I've always aimed to speak to the heart while feeding the

soul, and this night is about pouring that love back into our community."

He added: "This night is about using art to uplift our community and invest in the future."

FILM, from Page 9

a yoga class. Coincidence? Is it the only mind-body exercise class in all of L.A.? Was he tracking her? It isn't clear. Even these foibles don't tarnish this thriller's patent leather sheen.

Theater audiences and Prime Video streaming fans' eyes will be glued

to the screen for the duration. They'll become so enthralled they'll wonder how they can get into Davis's line of work, get involved in a \$11M payday—and not get caught.

Visit *Film Critic Dwight Brown* at DwightBrownInk.com.

KIDD, from Page 2

inclusive of the bordering states — including New Mexico, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Louisiana — creating a central hub in Dallas-Fort Worth for regional talent.

Tryouts for the program are currently underway, with recruitment and evaluations expected to continue through early March. For more information, visit jkselectsouth.com.

The evening will feature a full band under the direction of musical director Joel McCray, joined by Fulton Turnage, Jaquita Jones, Deon Q, Will Brooks and Mark Harper.

Organizers say the goal

of the evening is not only to showcase artistry but also to generate tangible support for students seeking educational opportunities.

Tickets are available in advance, and seating is limited.



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Valentine's Day, Just Another Day on the Calendar?

Dr. James L. Snyder

The older I get, the more I have to forget, and believe me, I don't forget to forget. I can't keep up with dates, holidays, or even my birthday. I believe a day is a day, and that should be the end of it.

As I was drinking my morning coffee, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage entered and said, "Do you know what day Saturday is?"

I didn't know what kind of question this was, because she always throws me questions that confuse me, just to see if I can be confused. Looking at her, I said very seriously, "I believe that it will be Saturday." Then I looked at her and smiled.

"Oh, you silly boy. This Saturday is February 14. You do know what day that is."

I had to admit to her that I had no idea what she was talking about. I thought about it and then said to her, "Is it one of our granddaughter's birthday?" We always like to celebrate these birthdays, and I had no idea which of our granddaughters had a birthday this week.

"You sure don't keep up with the times, do you?" She said rather snickerly. Looking at me with one of her serious looks, she said, "This Saturday is February 14 and that is Valentine's Day. Remember what Val-

entine's Day is?"

I had to think for a moment, and then it came to me, another holiday that I can't keep up with.

"Don't you remember we became engaged on Valentine's Day 55 years ago?"

Looking at her, I said, "No way it's that long!"

I had to give this a lot of thought, and I began to remember that 55 years ago, on Valentine's Day, we became engaged. Then six months later, we got married. My, oh my, how time flies when you're getting old.

That sure was a long time ago, and it has gone by rather quickly. I never thought I would live to be this old. But here I am, celebrating 55 years of being engaged.

I remember meeting The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage six months before our engagement. And then six months later, we were married.

We were at Bible school together, where we met. One Sunday, a bunch of us went to a church to sing. We did that often during our school time. I lip-synched while the others actually sang.

On our way home, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and I were sitting towards the back of the van. We were talking about this and that and everything. Then she asked me a question, which I assume was rhetorical.

She said, "Wouldn't it be

wonderful to be married?"

Not knowing that it was not rhetorical, I smiled and said, "Yes, it would be wonderful to be married someday."

That was the end of that conversation. She was smiling all the way back to the dorms.

The next day, as I walked down the school hallway, everyone looked at me, smiled, and said, "Congratulations." I smiled back and thanked them. I thought I had finally passed one of my tests, and they were congratulating me. But everybody I passed congratulated me.

Not knowing what was going on, I stopped one of them and said, "What are you congratulating me for?"

"Oh, you know. You're getting married."

I was getting what? I had no idea where that was coming from. But the rhetorical question was, in fact, a real one. I was the last one at school to find out I was getting married.

At first, I thought it was some prank that people were playing on me. I went along with it, not wanting to look stupid.

I met with the former Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and wanted to get things straightened out. I didn't want to take anything for granted; what I really wanted to know, was this the truth?

We went to a little restaurant down the street, and

as we were sitting there, I looked at her and said, "Did you hear the rumor that you and I are getting married?" I then laughed quite hilariously.

She smiled and said very enthusiastically, "That's not a rumor it's true. You and I are going to get married."

Well, there wasn't anything more I could do about that.

55 years later, as I thought of Valentine's Day, I remembered that inci-

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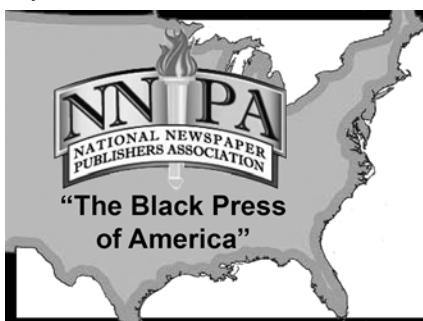
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Black History Month - Dr. Robert Tanner Freeman



Sister Tarpley
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Editor

This week I will highlight Robert Tanner Freeman, D.D.S. Dr. Freeman was the first professionally trained Black dentist in the United States in 1869.

Freeman was born in Washington DC in 1846. He was the son of slaves who had bought their freedom in the 19th century.

In the very early days, many dentists learned their profession, truthfully, more properly thought of as a trade at that time, as apprentices and laboratorians. This "preceptorial system" was criticized by those who believed that

theory, as well as practice, was vital in the education of a dentist.

The first three formal dental schools created in response to this need were the Baltimore College of Dental Surgery founded in 1840, the Ohio College of Dental Surgery founded in 1845, and the Michigan School of Dentistry.

These were all standalone schools, however, the medical schools and universities of the time refused to let dentistry become a part of their curriculum. They viewed dentistry as a trade rather than a profession requiring a university-based education.

The first university-based dental school in the United States was Harvard Dental School, founded in 1867. Two other dental schools soon opened.

Robert Tanner Freeman had a strong interest in the health professions, and he sought work as a dental assistant and clerk from Dr. Henry Bliss Noble, his white dentist who tutored Freeman and encouraged him to pursue his own career in dentistry.

Dr. Noble hired Freeman to work in his office in the 1500 block of Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, DC. At this time it is estimated that there were a total of 120 Black dentists in the entire United States.

Dr. Noble encouraged Freeman to pursue a dental career.

Freeman applied to two of the independent dental schools. He was rejected on racial grounds. Dr. Noble set about the process of lobbying his colleagues for them to accept Freeman in

the first class of their new Harvard Dental School.

On May 18, 1869, Dr. Freeman, became the first Black graduate of a U.S. dental school in history. He became a pillar in the D.C. Black community because of his commitment to mentoring other Black youth interested in the medical profession.

Dr. Freeman's death in 1873 at 24, came only four years after dental school. He contracted one of the water-borne diseases so common at that time, most probably cholera; and, the American Civil War ended four years before his graduation.

His grandson, Robert C. Weaver, Ph.D., became the country's first Black presidential cabinet member, serving as Lyndon B. Johnson's Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

It has been said that the success of Dr. Weaver probably would not have happened without a small group of dentists listening to a few influential members who stood up for something that must have been exceedingly unpopular at the time.

It is also interesting and inspiring that the decisions of a relatively small circle of people in the 1860s could come down through

time and influence a choice at the presidential cabinet level. Dr. Weaver would not have been able to reach his own success without building on that of his grandfather.

Dr. Freeman was honored by the National Dental Association, the all-Black dental group founded in 1913 and is headquartered in Washington, D.C.

In 1907 the predecessor organization to the National Dental Association called itself the Robert T. Freeman Dental Society.

(Editor's Note: This column originally ran in February 2015. It has been edited for space.)

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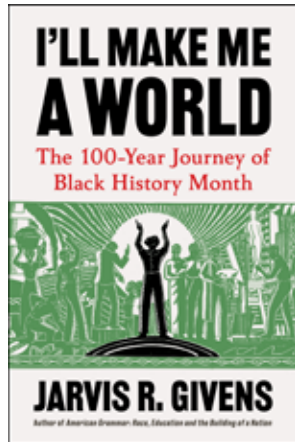
NDG Bookshelf: 'I'll Make Me a World' is a Timely Tome for February

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

You gotta start somewhere.

First, you crawled, then you toddled before you ran, which is exactly how most things are. There's a foundation from which to spring, a base from which to jump, and you need to figure out how to best proceed so you can succeed. You gotta start somewhere, and in the new book "I'll Make Me a World" by Jarvis R. Givens, it started with racism.

James McCune Smith was just fourteen years old the day New York passed its Emancipation Act. Smith had been born into slavery



but was officially freed that July 4 of 1827. He later wrote about the celebration. He never forgot it.

Neither did those who learned of their freedom in Texas on June 19, 1865, or William Cooper Nell, who

is credited with the first Crispus Attucks Day. And yet, these were early parts of the foundation of Black History Month.

In February 1926, public school teacher Carter G. Woodson, in conjunction with the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History in Washington D.C., established the first Negro History Week. Givens says that it was an entirely political move, meant to call Americans' attention to black life and culture. Black newspapers picked up the story, and spread it around the country to Black readers and Black churches. By 1935, the Negro History Week was celebrated

widely in Black schools and communities.

In the fall of 1975, esteemed members of the renamed Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History gathered in Atlanta to celebrate Woodson's birthday and to change things up. With America's bicentennial coming the following summer, and considering all that had happened since Negro History Week was founded, it seemed that a Black History Month was appropriate. The members asked the White House for a proclamation, but President Ford could only send a customary "presidential message" because he didn't

have congressional support. Ford's letter, says Givens, did not acknowledge historical suffering.

It was not until 1986 that President Ronald Reagan issued a proclamation for Black History Month...

Black History, says author Jarvis R. Givens, is much more than what has been written. So is "I'll Make Me a World," in that it's considerably more than what its subtitle seems to offer.

That's not necessarily a good thing.

Packed with a timeline that runs longer than a century on both sides, Givens includes so much Black history here that it becomes

overwhelming at times. Readers are taken back to the 19th century quite often and, as such, it generally takes awhile to wind back to the hundred year window that you're expecting. That might not be a bad feature but strictly speaking, this book is an abundance of history but not as much Black History Month history as it promises. More of the latter, slightly less of the former, would have made this book stellar.

As it is, though, it's a worthwhile read, informative, and eye-opening, but just know what you're getting. Do that, find "I'll Make Me a World," and get started.

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leaders to deliver measurable impact.

"That background gives me the practical knowledge to translate community needs into policy solutions, said Haynes, the leadership skills to build coalitions across differences, and the accountability mindset to ensure results."

His policies will be inclusive, he noted, because he will engage directly with impacted communities before legislation is drafted, not afterwards. And this will include structured lis-

tening sessions, advisory councils, trusted community-based organizations, and equity impact assessments for major policy proposals.

"Protecting civil rights, voting rights, workers' rights, and due process will remain nonnegotiable guardrails," he added.

When it comes to the cost of living, Haynes said he would protect collective bargaining rights to raise wages, while prioritizing prescription drug and childcare affordability. He would also support expan-

sion of affordable housing incentives, Child Tax and Earned Income Tax Credits, he said.

To improve access to quality healthcare, Haynes said he would expand Medicaid in non-expansion states while supporting "Medicare for All" and strengthening the Affordable Care Act. He would also increase funding for community health centers, ensure mental and physical health parity, and advocate for preventive care investments to reduce long-term costs, he said.

Haynes laid out robust

evaluation criteria to determine whether his policies would translate to relief, measuring district reductions in housing, healthcare and childcare costs against median wages and other stability measures. He would also monitor health policies for effectiveness by tracking medical debt and insurance coverage rates against criteria such as care wait times and prescription affordability, he explained, this while measuring improved health outcomes across all income and racial groups.

"Healthcare policy must

be judged by access, affordability, and equity," Haynes concluded.

The winner of the March

3 primary will face the Republican nominee in November, though District 30 remains solid blue.

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dent. Looking back over the years, I couldn't help but think what a wonderful time that has been.

Now that I'm old, I can say that Valentine's Day 55 years ago was probably the best day of my life, and it was all because of The Gracious Mistress of the Par-

sonage.

I looked back at The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and said, "Valentine's Day is one of the best days of the year. Don't you agree?"

In pondering this I was reminded of what King Solomon said, "Live joyfully

with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 9:9).

This August we will celebrate our 55th wedding anniversary and I intend to fol-

low King Solomon's advice to "Live joyfully with the wife." Why change when it's working just fine so far?

Dr. James L. Snyder lives in Ocala, FL with the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. Telephone 1-352-216-3025, e-mail jamesnyder51@gmail.com, website www.jamesnyderministries.com.

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