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Ed. Dept. Dismissed 90% of Discrimination Cases, Report Says

By Alvin Buyinza
Word In Black

(WIB) – The Education Department office responsible for protecting the rights of marginalized and minority students in the nation's K-12 public schools dismissed nearly every discrimination complaint it received last year, due to the Trump administration's massive reduction in force, according to a new government watchdog report.

At the same time, the Government Accountability Office found that the administration's attempt to lay off about half of the department's Office for Civil Rights — a move that was challenged in court — may have cost taxpayers as much as \$38 million over the nine months it took to resolve the case.

The volume of discrimination cases the civil rights office dismissed and the price tag for gutting the office highlight the dramatic effects of the Trump administration's twin goals for public education: dismantling the Education Department and



the Government Accountability Office found that the administration's attempt to lay off about half of the department's Office for Civil Rights — a move that was challenged in court — may have cost taxpayers as much as \$38 million over the nine months it took to resolve the case. (NDG Composite)

waging a so-called "war on woke" that would end federal enforcement of civil rights law.

The Office of Civil Rights Is In "Turmoil"

Katy Neas, CEO of The Arc of the United States, said in a statement that the GAO report shows how the

civil rights office has been "thrown into turmoil" even as discrimination complaints compound and vanish from the public eye.

"Families have a right to turn to OCR when a child is denied ac-

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People In The News ...



Bryan Schwalb



Raymond Rivas III

NDG Quote of the Week:

"Whatever is bringing you down, get rid of it. Because you'll find that when you're free . . . your true self comes out." — Tina Turner

Bryan Schwalb

By Stacy M. Brown
The Washington Informer

The District of Columbia filed a sweeping civil racketeering lawsuit Thursday seeking to dismantle what Attorney General Brian Schwalb described as a decade-long real estate fraud enterprise that left hundreds of tenants living in hazardous conditions while siphoning tens of millions of dollars from lenders and city housing programs.

“Today, we’re dismantling the Razjooyan slumlord empire,” Schwalb said in announcing the lawsuit against Ali “Sam” Razjooyan, his brother Eimon “Ray” Razjooyan, and their mother Houri Razjooyan.



Roy Lewis / Wash. Informer

“D.C. has a serious housing affordability problem, and slumlords like the Razjooyans make things worse by decreasing the available housing supply and forcing tenants to live in horrific conditions.”

The 112-page complaint filed in D.C. Superior Court accuses the family of operating a criminal enterprise

in violation of the federal Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, the District’s Consumer Protection Procedures Act, and the District’s False Claims Act. It alleges the defendants built a network of more than 40 single-asset limited liability companies controlling over 70 apartment buildings and more than 600 rental units across the city, primarily in Wards 7 and 8.

Neither Ali, Ray, nor Houri Razjooyan could immediately be reached for comment. Court filings didn’t list an attorney.

According to the complaint, the enterprise acquired distressed, rent-controlled properties and secured loans far exceeding the purchase prices by

promising lenders that the buildings would undergo major renovations and be leased at higher rents to tenants receiving government housing subsidies. Instead, prosecutors allege, the promised capital improvements never materialized, and loan proceeds were diverted to purchase additional properties, pay off prior debts, and enrich the defendants.

The District alleges that from 2015 to the present the enterprise obtained more than \$16 million in housing subsidy payments while falsely certifying that units complied with federal Housing Quality Standards and D.C. Housing Author-

ity requirements. Inspectors documented more than 4,000 housing code violations across enterprise properties, including missing smoke alarms, unsafe electrical wiring, severe mold, rodent and insect infestations, flooding, trash accumulation, and gas leaks.

One property at 4559 Benning Road SE was evacuated in August 2025 after inspectors found severe electrical hazards and an active gas leak. The complaint states that tenants were displaced to emergency housing at significant cost to the District after the building was declared uninhabitable.

“Working with many residents from Razjooyan-affiliated properties around the District, Legal Aid has seen firsthand how this sprawling web of businesses has been built at the expense of tenants’ safety, health, and most basic rights,” said Megan Browder, legal director for systemic advocacy and law reform at Legal Aid DC. “Residents deserve better.”

The lawsuit contends the defendants repeatedly refinanced properties using falsified rent rolls and inflated occupancy figures. In one instance cited in the complaint, the enterprise allegedly represented

See Schwalb, Page 5

Raymond Rivas III

The City of Mesquite has promoted Raymond Rivas III to Deputy City Manager.

Rivas, who started the new position on March 1, is an Assistant City Manager with the City of Mesquite overseeing Neighborhood Services, Public Works, Neighborhood Services, Grants Compliance, Solid Waste and Equipment Services, and Planning and Development.

He will continue to oversee these departments as Deputy City Manager. This new role also more clearly defines the chain of command in the City Manager’s office.

“Raymond Rivas has demonstrated exceptional leadership and management skills in every role he has held with the City,” said City Manager Cliff Keheley. “He has a great understanding of the organization and how to meet our mission of serving the commu-



nity.”

Rivas has more than 20 years of experience in crisis management, emergency management and city administration. He came to the City of Mesquite in 2011.

Before he was an Assistant City Manager, Rivas was the Neighborhood Services Director and Emergency Manager Coordinator. He served as an Emergency Management Specialist for the City of Dallas and as an Emergency Management Officer for the City of Fort Worth. Rivas started his career as

an Emergency Management Specialist for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Rivas earned a bachelor’s degree in emergency administration and planning from the University of North Texas and a master’s degree in public affairs from the University of Texas at Dallas. He is a graduate of the National Fire Academy Executive Fire Officer program.

Rivas’s professional awards and honors include the National Eagle Scout Association Outstanding Eagle Scout Award in 2020, Leadership North Texas (Class 11), membership in Pi Alpha Alpha and earning the rank of Eagle Scout in 1996.

He is an active member of the Mesquite Rotary Club, Mesquite Independent School District Education Foundation board, Mesquite Chamber of Commerce board and Scouts BSA Rising Sun District.

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Special Projects to the Publisher

Clinique Hill

Published by

Minority Opportunity News, Inc.

Production

David Wilfong

Editorial Assistant / Writer

De'Shane Frye

Contributing Writers

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



Publisher's Office:

publisher@northdallasgazette.com

Sales Department:

marketing@northdallasgazette.com

Editorial Department:

editor@northdallasgazette.com



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

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

Remembering the legacy of Rev. Jesse L. Jackson: 'You Hold On, and Hold Out'

By Charlene Crowell

The nation's long farewell to the late Rev. Jesse Jackson mirrors his six decades of service to our country and the world. During the first week of March, in cities across the country, celebrations of Rev. Jackson's remarkable life of service will be observed as he lies in honor at the South Carolina State House before continuing on to our nation's capital and then returning to his beloved Chicago.

As we continue to hold dear Rev. Jackson's innumerable contributions, it is also important to thank his family for generously sharing their husband and father. A life dedicated to service inevitably leads to personal sacrifices. Just as Mrs. Coretta Scott King bore that family responsibility, so has Mrs. Jacqueline Jackson. Both ladies have earned our collective respect and appreciation. We must also embrace the children who no doubt missed their father over the years, but accepted and shared his vision for a better America.

"Freedom and economic justice are two sides of the same coin," noted Mike Calhoun, president of the Center for Responsible Lending. "Rev. Jesse Jackson stood and tirelessly fought for both. Our nation was emboldened by his courage and enriched by his vision. We now must now gather strength to carry on as he would urge for

the many battles that still remain."

Today's financial struggles are real and cannot be denied. Affordability is not a 'catch word' but the challenge confronting millions of American families just to provide for their families. Tax policies that favor the wealthy now burden America's working families. Prices on everyday goods continue to skyrocket and generate billions of dollars in debt for those who have no ready cash.

Rev. Jackson understood and fought to meet these challenges head-on, often against seemingly insurmountable odds. And through the years, his heartfelt remembrance of how his life began gave strength to those with few or none of life's comforts.

In his 1988 nationally televised speech before the Democratic National Convention, Rev. Jackson spoke not to a partisan party but to all of America:

"I know abandonment, and people being mean to you, and saying you're nothing and nobody and can never be anything...I wasn't born in the hospital. Mama didn't have insurance. I was born in the bed at [the] house. I really do understand. Born in a three-room house, bathroom in the backyard, slop jar by the bed, no hot and cold running water. ...I was born in the slum, but the slum was not born in me. And it wasn't born in you, and you can make it."

The truth of those words

is reflected in the success he notably forged in 1966 as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's Chicago campaign director for Operation Breadbasket, which championed economic development and empowerment.

In its first 15 months of its operation, Operation Breadbasket won 2,000 new jobs worth \$15 million a year in new income for Chicago's Black community. Weekly Saturday workshops drew thousands to hear Jackson preach in person and on the radio. Jackson was named the program's national director in 1967 by Dr. King, who later remarked, "We knew he was going to do a good job, but he's done better than a good job." Soon thereafter, Jackson was promoted to SCLC's national leader of Operation Breadbasket.

Although largely known for advocacy in domestic policy, Rev. Jackson also successfully used his persuasive negotiating skills in global diplomacy from 1984 to 1999, taking him to Cuba, Iraq/Kuwait, and Yugoslavia, where in 1999 he secured the release of Army Sergeant Andrew Ramirez from enemy capture in Yugoslavia. In the ensuing years, Ramirez kept in touch with Jackson, flying out to Chicago to introduce him to his newborn son and occasionally seeing him at events around the country.

In a recent interview with BBC News, Ramirez's appreciation still looms large.

"He did something for us. He didn't have to do that. I truly believe he did it because he saw somebody in need and thought he could intervene. He did it for us and for our families. We're forever appreciative of him."

Similarly in a 2014 interview with USA Today, Rev. Jackson recalled how he tried in 1984 to secure support from President Ronald Reagan for the release of Lt. Robert Goodman, a U.S. Navy pilot who for 30 days was held as a prisoner of war during a retaliatory strike against Syrian anti-aircraft positions in Lebanon.

"I think the Civil Rights Movement in America has moral authority in the world community," Jackson continued. "Our authority may not have an official office, but there's a certain moral authority that the Civil Rights Movement has."

In 2026, America must step up and step out on that same moral authority. In Rev. Jackson's own words in 1988:

"Don't you surrender. Suffering breeds character, character breeds faith. In the end faith will not disappoint. You must not surrender. You may or may not get there but just know that you're qualified. And you hold on, and hold out."

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

Keep up with the news

O N L I N E

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ADHD, Social Confidence, and Risk of Alcohol Problems

(Newswise) — Young adults with ADHD who are less confident in social situations may be more likely to use alcohol as a coping mechanism, which puts them at higher risk for problem drinking. This was one of the findings of a study exploring the role of social functioning in drinking behaviors of young adults with ADHD. The findings, published in *Alcohol: Clinical and Experimental Research*, suggest that helping youth with ADHD learn healthy coping skills may prevent them from developing problems with alcohol use.



DWG Studio

Young adults with ADHD are more likely, even twice as likely, according to one study, to experience alcohol use problems compared to peers without ADHD, and social functioning may play

a role. Children and teens with ADHD are more likely than peers to be neglected or rejected, to have fewer friends, and to be identified as having poor social skills. These challenges carry over

into adulthood, where many people with ADHD experience challenges in personal relationships and the workplace, and problems with substance use.

The current study explored whether the way individuals with ADHD perceive their social functioning might contribute to whether or not they develop problems related to alcohol use. Researchers analyzed data from 333 young adults, about half with ADHD, who reported their sociability, social and coping motives for drinking, and alcohol use between ages 18 and 21

years old, and their alcohol use and related problems at age 23.

They found that childhood ADHD was directly associated with lower self-reported sociability, and lower sociability was associated with greater motivation to drink in order to cope. Of those who experienced any alcohol-related problems, those who drank to cope experience more problems.

Childhood ADHD also predicted lower motivation to drink to be more social, which then predicted a lower frequency of heavy

drinking at age 23 and fewer alcohol related problems among those who did experience alcohol problems.

These findings suggest that individuals' own perceptions of their social functioning and their comfort in social situations play a role in their motives for drinking, which in turn can predict their likelihood of developing problematic alcohol use. They further highlight an opportunity to help young people with ADHD improve coping strategies and social confidence to reduce the risk of developing alcohol problems.

Blood Test Can Predict Dementia in Women as Many as 25 Years Before Symptoms Begin

(Newswise)— Researchers from the University of California San Diego have found that a novel blood-based biomarker can predict a woman's risk of developing dementia as many as 25 years before symptoms appear. The study, published on March 10, 2026 in *JAMA Network Open*, shows that higher levels of phosphorylated tau 217 (p-tau217) — a protein linked to the brain changes seen in Alzheimer's disease — were strongly associated with future mild cognitive impairment and dementia among older women who were cognitively healthy at baseline, meaning at the start of the study before any memory or thinking problems were detected.

“Our study suggests we may be able to identify women at elevated risk for dementia decades before symptoms emerge,” said Aladdin H. Shadyab, PhD,



DWG Studio

MPH, first author of the study and UC San Diego associate professor of public health and medicine at the Herbert Wertheim School of Public Health and Human Longevity Science and the School of Medicine. “That kind of long lead time opens the door to earlier prevention strategies and more targeted monitoring, rather than waiting until memory problems are already affecting daily life.”

The findings are based on data from 2,766 participants

in the Women's Health Initiative Memory Study, a large national study that enrolled women ages 65 to 79 in the late 1990s and followed them for up to 25 years. All women were cognitively unimpaired when they entered the study. Blood samples collected at baseline were analyzed years later to measure p-tau217, a form of tau protein that reflects early brain changes associated with Alzheimer's disease.

Over the years of follow-

up, researchers identified women who developed memory or thinking problems, including dementia. Those who had higher levels of p-tau217 in their blood at the start of the study were much more likely to develop dementia later in life. In fact, as levels of this biomarker increased, so did dementia risk. Women with the highest p-tau217 levels faced the greatest likelihood of developing dementia over the long term.

However, the researchers also found that risk of cognitive impairment or dementia associated with higher levels of p-tau217 was not the same for everyone. For example, higher p-tau217 levels were more strongly associated with poorer cognitive outcomes among women over age 70 than those younger than 70 years at baseline and among those with the

APOE ε4 genetic risk factor for Alzheimer's disease. The study also found that p-tau217 was more predictive of dementia among women who had been randomized to estrogen plus progestin hormone therapy versus placebo. The strength of the association also differed between white and Black women, but combining p-tau217 with age improved dementia prediction similarly in both groups.

“Blood-based biomarkers like p-tau217 are especially promising because they are far less invasive and potentially more accessible than brain imaging or spinal fluid tests,” said Linda K. McEvoy, PhD, senior author of the study, senior investigator at Kaiser Permanente Washington Health Research Institute and professor emeritus at the Herbert Wertheim School of Public Health. “This is important for ac-

celerating research into the factors that affect risk of dementia and for evaluating strategies that may reduce risk.”

Currently, blood-based biomarkers are not recommended for clinical use in people without symptoms of cognitive impairment. The authors note that additional studies are needed to determine how p-tau217 testing might be used in routine clinical care and whether early identification can meaningfully change outcomes. Future research will also explore how factors such as hormone therapy, genetics and age-related health conditions interact with plasma p-tau217 over the course of someone's life to affect dementia risk.

“Ultimately, the goal is not just prediction,” Shadyab added, “but using that knowledge to delay or prevent dementia altogether.”

Community Resistance, Not State Cooperation, Ends ICE Surge

Officials confirm ICE Metro Surge Minnesota will scale back after months of heightened enforcement and community resistance

By Izzy Canizares
Minnesota
Spokesman-Recorder

For over three months, more than 2,000 Immigration and Customs officers have occupied Minnesota, terrifying residents and leading to fatal consequences. Now, an end appears to be in sight, at least on paper, a feat that would not have been possible without residents who refused to stay silent.

Border czar Tom Homan announced on Feb. 12 that Immigration and Customs' "Metro Surge" would soon wrap up operations, stating that DHS has arrested around 4,000 undocumented immigrants. The operation has faced nationwide criticism due to the violence it has brought to Minneapolis streets, including the deaths of two Minnesota residents at the hands of DHS agents.

"I have proposed, and



Gage Skidmore / Wikimedia

President Trump has concurred, that this surge operation conclude," Homan said. The news has been corroborated by state leaders, including Governor Walz and Mayor Frey.

"They thought they could break us, but a love for our neighbors and a resolve to endure can outlast an occupation," Mayor Frey wrote on Facebook. "These patriots of Minneapolis are showing that it's not just about resistance — standing with our neighbors is deeply American."

"Minnesotans are decent, caring, loving neighbors,

and they're also some of the toughest damn people you'll ever find. And we're in this as long as it takes," Governor Walz said during a press conference on Feb. 12, shortly after Homan's remarks.

Homan said a "significant drawdown" of officers could begin as early as this week. He has not confirmed how many will leave, saying only that he will remain in the state "for a little longer" as operations wind down. Governor Walz said officers are expected to depart as soon as this week, with staffing returning to

the original 150 agents who were in Minnesota before the "surge."

Many who have watched neighbors live in fear for the past three months may feel inclined to breathe a sigh of relief and celebrate a job well done. But despite the rhetoric, the fact that Minnesota law enforcement and leaders are "cooperating" with ICE officials should not go unnoticed.

Homan attributed the alleged drawdown to "unprecedented cooperation" among state law enforcement, claiming the state "is less of a sanctuary state for criminals." One example of this cooperation involves law enforcement transferring inmates wanted by ICE into federal custody upon release. A practice that has drawn criticism.

"While I don't agree with Governor Walz and Attorney General Ellison on everything, I appreciate

the support the government gives to state agencies who coordinate with us in a manner intended to promote public safety," Homan said. "We now have the ability to arrest criminal aliens in the safety and security of jails throughout the state."

Homan also took final shots at Minnesota community members who, for the past 70 days, have resisted the ICE presence by patrolling neighborhoods and fulfilling mutual aid requests. According to Homan, more than 200 "agitators" were arrested by DHS for allegedly attacking ICE agents.

"We will not tolerate unlawful actions committed by agitators who are just causing havoc; this is not the way to express your disagreement," Homan said. His comments came 24 hours after an ICE-related pursuit ended in a three-car crash in St. Paul, leaving one man injured. Despite Homan's efforts to portray

these residents negatively, leaders in Minnesota and across the nation have praised the work residents have done to protect one another, with "The Nation" nominating the city of Minneapolis for the 2026 Nobel Peace Prize in a historic first.

"He picked the wrong state to make an example of, and that is where things sit today. We're certainly not going to celebrate something that should have never happened," Governor Walz said. "Stand up for your neighbors, speak out when you need to speak out, and do so peacefully, because as I said then, and every one of you proves the fact is, at the end of the day, that will win out. That is the way a democracy should function."

Izzy Canizares is a freelance journalist and contributing writer for the Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder.

Schwalb, from Page 2

a building as fully occupied and generating \$90,000 per month in rent when bank records showed significantly lower housing subsidy payments. Prosecutors further allege the use of forged bank statements and straw purchasers to secure additional multimillion-dollar loans.

The complaint describes tenants living without heat during winter months, enduring chronic water leaks and elevated mold levels, and facing emergency evacuations because of structural instability or fire hazards. At some properties, inspectors deemed buildings unfit

for human occupancy.

"For years, my neighbors and I have been living with issues no one should have to deal with in their homes," said Earnest Wilkerson, president of the Minnesota Commons Tenant Association. "My neighbors and I are grateful that the Office of the Attorney General is filing this lawsuit to put a stop to all of this."

District of Columbia Department of Buildings Director Brian J. Hanlon said that the lawsuit aligns with the office's purpose of advocating for D.C. residents. "The DC Department of Buildings' core

mission is to make sure that District tenants have safe, habitable housing — and that means holding landlords accountable who fail to meet their legal obligations," Hanlon said.

Schwalb said the city would no longer pursue a building-by-building approach.

"Instead of addressing each building individually, we're attacking the very foundation of their illegal operation," he said. "As the District's independent attorney general, I am committed to using the law to put an end to such fraud and exploitation and to protect affordable housing in the District."

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Dallas College Leads Coalition to Strengthen College Student Mental Health

Dallas College leads coalition to strengthen college student mental health, at a time when more than one-third of Texas college students report symptoms of depression and nearly half report anxiety.

Dallas College, in partnership with Alamo Colleges District, The Hope Center for Student Basic Needs, Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, Texas State University System and Trellis Strategies, has released “Strengthening College Student Mental Health: A Practical Playbook for the State of Texas.” The Texas-focused resource provides higher education leaders with a practical, scalable roadmap to expand access to mental health services, reduce stigma around seeking help

and build campus systems that support student success.

“These numbers are not abstract — they represent the daily reality for students across our state,” said Dr. Justin Lonon, Dallas College chancellor. “Mental health is directly tied to student persistence, completion and workforce readiness. This playbook reflects our commitment to busting barriers that stand between students and the support they need to meet their educational goals. By tackling stigma, increasing awareness and expanding access, we are building systems that empower students to thrive.”

The playbook is grounded in the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute’s Minding College Minds

framework and informed by data from colleges and universities across the state. It includes real-world examples from coalition partners, including Dallas College, demonstrating how strategies can be implemented effectively on diverse campuses.

“This playbook reflects what’s possible when institutions come together around a shared commitment to student success,” said Dr. Beatriz Joseph, vice chancellor of student success. “By aligning research, policy expertise and real-world campus strategies, we are equipping colleges across Texas with actionable solutions to support student well-being.”

The release comes amid stark findings about student mental health in Texas:

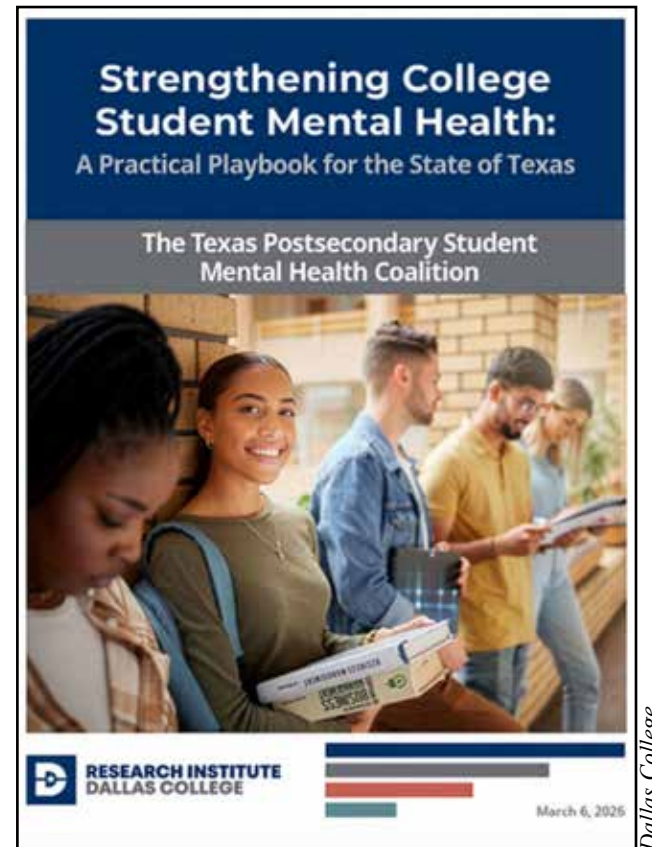
- 34% of Texas community college students report symptoms consistent with major depressive disorder, and 45% report symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder (Student Financial Wellness Survey, 2024).

- 74% of Texas students experiencing depression or anxiety also face food insecurity, housing insecurity or homelessness (Hope Impact Report, 2024).

- 39% of Texas community college students are unaware that mental health services are available on their campuses (Student Financial Wellness Survey, 2024).

- 64% of currently enrolled students say emotional stress or mental health concerns were a sig-

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Dallas College

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commodations, pushed out of class, harassed, or disciplined unfairly because of disability,” said Neas, whose organization protects disability rights. “When those complaints aren’t addressed, schools lose clear direction, families lose answers, and students live with the consequences for years.”

“Rights are only meaningful when enforcement exists,” she said.

On the campaign trail, President Donald Trump promised to shutter the Education Department. In March, Trump laid off nearly half of the OCR staff and shuttered seven of the department’s 12 regional offices. But a federal judge blocked the move last summer.

While the case was ongoing, the Trump administration put the employees on

administrative leave and told them not to report to work. That meant taxpayers were still paying their salaries, even though they were not actually working.

Between March 11 and September 23, 2025, the department’s Office of Civil Rights received over 9,000 complaints alleging discrimination, according to a report from the Government Accountability Office. More than 7,000 of those complaints — around 90% — were dismissed.

In 2025, OCR, under the Trump administration, only reached a resolution agreement in just two out of 14 racial harassment cases, according to the OCR.

What Is The Office of Civil Rights?

The Education Department’s OCR is the sector that handles cases of discrimination against race,

sex, disability, religion and age in schools and colleges. The office investigates these complaints and sends out guidelines to the respective institution to comply with civil rights law.

Complaints can be dismissed for a variety of reasons, the report says. In the GAO’s 2021 report on school bullying, for example, changes to OCR’s guidance led to a sharp uptick in dismissals of bullying complaints. The dismissal rate also jumped from 49% of resolved complaints in the 2010-2011 school year to 81% in the 2019-2020 school year.

But compared to prior years and administrations, the department, under Trump’s second term, is dismissing far more complaints and issuing fewer resolutions. Experts say this could lead to more civil rights abuses going unnoticed.

Even with its workforce slashed by half, the OCR is still receiving discrimination complaints.

Discrimination Complaints Are Worsening

Beth Gellman-Beer, who led the OCR’s regional office in Philadelphia before being laid off in March, says her office had 1,000 cases on the docket when her team received notice that it would be cut. Under the Trump administration, the bigoted behavior her office investigated had become more egregious.

She cited a case from 2024 concerning students at a Pennsylvania high school who wore Confederate flag attire during the school’s homecoming week.

The students posted on social media that anyone who had a problem with the Confederate flag should “go down south and call a white person racist and see what happens.”

Parents, teachers and community leaders alerted school officials, according to the complaint. Although school administrators forced students to remove their attire, they also insisted they didn’t believe the behavior amounted to racial harassment.

Gellman-Beer says she often thinks about that case and similar cases. Without a robust OCR workforce, there’s virtually no one available to ensure schools comply with civil rights laws.

“No one’s following up on those cases. That’s what keeps me up at night,” she says.

Millions of Dollars Spent on Mass Layoffs

The GAO report found that the mass layoffs Trump called for may have cost up to \$38 million in salaries and benefits for OCR workers who weren’t work-

ing between March and December.

The Education Department also failed to account for all possible costs and savings associated with its mass layoffs and reorganization, according to the report. Furthermore, the department didn’t detail its analyses despite direction from the Office of Management and Budget and the Office of Personnel Management.

“Without fully accounting for costs and savings and documenting its analyses, [the Education Department] lacks reasonable assurance that its actions achieved the stated goal of reforming its federal workforce to maximize efficiency and productivity, including whether such actions improved service to the American people, increased productivity, or saved taxpayer dollars.”

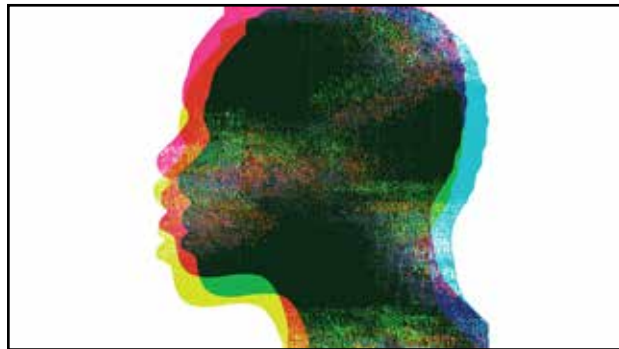
One Hundred Years of Black Workers Telling the Truth

By Fred Redmond
Secretary Treasurer
AFL-CIO

In 1917, A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen launched *The Messenger*, a pro-labor, anti-war magazine that connected racism to exploitation and demanded justice for Black workers. Two years later, the federal government responded with tactics of targeted censorship—surveillance, harassment and threats of prosecution—and branded a small Black labor magazine “the most dangerous” publication in the country simply for encouraging Black workers to organize.

More than a century later, two highly respected Black journalists—Don Lemon and Georgia Fort—are handcuffed and indicted for filming a protest inside a church. The tools have changed, but the oppressive government playbook has not.

That continuity matters as we mark 100 years since the launch of Negro History Week, founded in February 1926 by Carter G. Woodson. Negro History Week rejected the lie that Black people had no history worth teaching and no role worth remembering. It challenged an education system that erased Black achievement and a public narrative that treated Black people as a problem, not a people. What later became Black History Month grew from that project of memory and resistance. From its earliest days, Black history celebrations were about



iStockphoto / NNPA

more than remembrance. They also were acts of resistance, challenging the ongoing use of law, fear and surveillance to silence Black workers and suppress the truth about power in this country.

That pairing matters: The birth of Negro History Week alongside the rise of an apparatus built to monitor and suppress Black labor dissent. The same government that denied Black people their history also treated them as a threat when they spoke collectively as workers. When Black workers asserted their right to organize and be heard, they faced not just employer retaliation, but state repression.

Randolph went on to organize the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the first major Black-led union, and was under constant federal surveillance. As Black workers organized in factories, on farms and in service jobs across the country, local police and FBI “Red Squads” and federal counterintelligence programs infiltrated meetings, built massive files, and worked to neutralize leaders who linked racial justice to workplace democracy.

That history provides a

framework for understanding what happened in Minnesota this January, when Black journalists Don Lemon and Georgia Fort were arrested after covering a protest inside a church opposing U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement activity in the area. The message was unmistakable: documenting dissent can itself be treated as a crime.

At the same time, major media outlets are shrinking their newsrooms and walking away from race coverage. The Washington Post recently laid off some 300 journalists, including race and ethnicity reporters. In late 2025, NBC News shuttered entire teams dedicated to covering Black, Latino and Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander stories. In Pittsburgh, the 240-year-old *Post-Gazette* is being shut down by its owners, who responded to a court order requiring them to honor The NewsGuild-CWA (TNG-CWA) journalists’ contract after years of striking. When powerful newsrooms dismantle the very beats created after 2020 to cover racism and inequality, they send a different version of the same message:

See TRUTH, Page 10

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Dallas Makes Statement With Busy Start To Free Agency

By Jamal Baker
NDG Sportswriter

The Dallas Cowboys wasted no time making moves to improve their roster on the first day of legal tampering during the NFL free agency period.

The first domino to fall involved the restructuring of offensive tackle Terence Steele's contract to keep him with the Cowboys and free up more cap space. Steele is entering his seventh year with Dallas, and the Cowboys have the utmost confidence in him.

"I just think that there's a ton of good things that



he's doing," Dallas offensive coordinator Klayton Adams said of Steele at the NFL Combine. "The margins are smaller as you get later in your career for the type of improvement that you specifically want to be

able to make, but we've got an improvement plan ready for him for probably seven or eight different things that maybe he hasn't worked on in his career. And so I can certainly see some of the benefits of the way that the

guy works. He's an absolute pro, and we're gonna continue to find ways to help him get better."

Dallas also was able to strike a deal with the Green Bay Packers to acquire former Pro Bowl defensive end Rashan Gary for a 2027 fourth-round pick.

At 28 years old, Gary is in the prime of his career and will have a new NFL home with the Cowboys after spending all seven years of his NFL career in Green Bay. He has recorded 46.5 career sacks and earned Pro Bowl honors in 2024.

Gary joins a Cowboys unit that features Quinnen Williams, Osa Odighizuwa, Donovan Ezeiruaku, newly re-signed Sam Williams and former Packers teammate Kenny Clark to form a solid foundational group to build around.

The Cowboys remained busy on day one of free agency by agreeing to terms on a three-year deal with former Cardinals safety Jalen Thompson. The 27-year-old defensive back has started in 87 of his 99 games and spent the last seven years of his career in Arizona.

Thompson will be a welcomed addition to the Dallas defense as he reunites with Cowboys secondary coach Ryan Smith, who served as the cornerbacks coach in Arizona from 2023-2026.

Thompson's career numbers are impressive to still be a young player—recording 502 combined tackles, eight interceptions, 37 pass breakups and eight quarterback hits. The duo of Thompson and veteran leader Malik Hooker provides a quality starting safety pair

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HEALTH, from Page 6

nificant reason they considered stopping out (Gallup-Lumina, 2024).

• 246 of Texas' 254 counties are designated Mental Health Professional Shortage Areas (Texas Department of State Health Services, 2024).

"These data make it clear that student mental health is directly tied to student persistence, completion and workforce readiness," said David Mahan, executive director of Dallas College's Research Institute. "Colleges are not just responding to a crisis — we are part of the solution."

A Practical Roadmap for Institutions

The playbook outlines five strategic recommendations to transform student mental health systems statewide, including:

- Adopt a public health approach to overall well-being
- Develop a data-driven mental health ecosystem
- Close gaps in student access and outcomes

- Cultivate caring campuses and communities
- Maximize the mental health care workforce

Each recommendation is supported by research and illustrated with implementation examples from coalition institutions. Dallas College's contributions highlight scalable models that can be replicated across Texas and beyond.

Dallas College Leading the Way

As one of the largest community college systems in the state, Dallas College is uniquely positioned to lead large-scale change. Through its collaboration with the coalition and its Research Institute, the college is helping translate data into actionable strategies that institutions of all sizes can adopt.

The playbook also creates opportunities for Dallas College to provide training, technical assistance and capacity-building support to other institutions seeking to strengthen their

mental health systems. By sharing lessons learned and implementation strategies, Dallas College is helping shape a coordinated, state-wide response.

"As Texas faces a shortage of licensed mental health professionals, colleges and universities must play a greater role in early intervention, prevention and connection to care," said Dr. Carlos Cruz, associate vice chancellor, well-being and social support at Dallas College. "Through this coalition effort, Dallas College is demonstrating that higher education institutions can lead systemic change."

The playbook is available to higher education leaders, policymakers and community partners committed to improving student outcomes and advancing mental health across Texas. To learn more, join Dallas College and coalition leaders as they present their findings during a webinar, From Playbook to Practice, hosted by Trellis Strategies on April 23, noon-1 p.m.

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Film Review: 'Jane Elliott Against the World' is Stellar at Sundance

By Dwight Brown

(***/2) Sometimes you have to clean your own house first. That's what anti-racism activist and diversity educator Jane Elliott has been doing for decades. At age 92, she ain't stopping. This probing doc is telling audiences why.

Elliott has reasons, lessons and successes in changing stubborn bigoted mindsets. Guidance that should be captured, repurposed and taught for decades to come. Thankfully, documentarian Judd Ehrlich (*The Price of Freedom*) sees the necessity and urgency and focuses on truth-telling by observation and display and not confrontation. He's more an archivist than an interventionalist, a passive documentarian who lets the people, facts and life story do the heavy lifting. Hence this extremely educational film teaches a lesson that may be even more important today than it was in the late '60s. With Jane as the sun and family, friends and former students as the stars around her, this doc tells the story of a small but hugely brave schoolteacher who discerned a moral urgency in 1968

After the assassination of Martin Luther King, how do you channel shock and grief into a teachable moment for a third-grade class in nearly all-white Northeast Iowa? Elliott found a way. She created, and still conducts, a blue eyes/brown eyes exercise. Divide the room into these two categories. Let one side abuse or deprive the other. When that's over, give the other side the opportunity to do the same to the other group, if they will. And some wouldn't. The in-



Peter Eliot Buntaine via Sundance

stant result was empathy, a distaste for injustice based on experience and a moral to the story that changed her students' attitudes about bigotry for a lifetime.

Simple, easy, educational and appreciated tool? Not hardly. That landmark day in education came with a price. Elliott and her family were harassed for teaching fairness, equality and mutual respect among races. Yet the exercise was repeated in classrooms around the country, regardless. It led Jane to appearances on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson* and other showcases. But wherever she sought to level the playing field, anger from racists followed her. These days, her thoughts are more controversial than ever. Her views are demeaned by the federal government, the Education Department—or what's left of it. She's banned from some schools, as if wanting equality for all was a disease.

The timing for this very inquisitive and enlightening doc couldn't be better or more needed. Elliott, emphatically and almost saintly, still communicates the importance of teaching fairness in schools: "Educators lead people out of ignorance. Teachers teach stuff so kids pass a grade." That said, the camera doesn't shy away from the less socially

conscious parts of Elliott's life. She's the daughter of a racist dad and was once reluctant to sell her house in an all-white neighborhood to a Black person back in the day. It's a background and set of mistakes she owns. "Wish I hadn't never done that" moments that changed her forever. Hearing her past, knowing her imperfections and seeing her change—for the better—is compelling cinema.

Outlining the previous events is interesting but when the film switches to present-day challenges it becomes even more engaging. A sequence that depicts Elliott helping teachers and students recall a school board director who is a white Christian nationalist and racist shows her and like-minded people in action. Modern-day Temecula, California is on view. Books by Black authors are being taken out of libraries. Black activist teacher Dianne Solomon Cox, Black students and Elliott are on the frontlines. She's still giving fiery speeches: "There is no gene for racism, sexism or antisemitism. I will never get along to go along with racism!" This section of the film is like a call to action. It's invigorating.

For 99 minutes, a genius anti-racism educational theory is applied in ways that are quite immersive. Clips, old footage, TV shows and

press conferences are aptly assembled. Cinematographers Peter Eliot Buntaine and Sean Hanley catch the action like it's an episode of TV's *60 Minutes*. All those willing to comment on race relations, do. From equality advocates like Ibram

X Kendi and Killer Mike to those who question the merits, like Donald Trump and Kash Patel. The subject matter is debated and expanded on well.

Some of the doc's length could use a clipping (editors Max Powers, Leah Goud-

smit and Albin R. Pepe). Once Elliott's past is established, present day and future thoughts seem more important for maintaining an audience's attention. On-lookers may wonder, "How

See FILM, Page 13



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FueLFest Returns to DFW at Texas Motor Speedway on April 25

FueLFest is set to open gates for their at the Texas Motor Speedway on Saturday, April 25, located at 3545 Lone Star Cir, Fort Worth, TX. Gates for the event open from 1-8pm. Admission tickets start at \$35 per person and kids 12 and under are free. Visit www.FueLFest.com for ticket information.



Courtesy photo

Now in its eighth year of hosting events globally from Los Angeles, West Palm Beach, Tampa, New Jersey, Chicago, San Francisco, Arizona, Tokyo and Qatar - the long awaited return to Dallas is almost here. FueLFest blends the enthusiast's passion for the automotive world with appearances by Fast & Furious franchise stars, Tyrese Gibson, Cody Walker and live action drifting featuring professional drivers, live concert with multiple sets on the SPARQ Festival Stage, a record setting car show, automotive culture, dozens of custom exhibits, car reveals, and more. NEW at FueLFest this

year - Lucha Libre Wrestling, a high-flying, acrobatic form of Mexican professional wrestling characterized by masked luchadores, rapid-fire sequences, and theatrical matches.

This year, the show will feature more than 700 top custom, exotic, rare and exclusive cars and trucks, plus drift ride alongs by pro drivers, Fast and Furious screen used movie cars, various interactive fan racing activities and attractions. The Fitment Industries drift pits are open access, allowing fans to get up close to their favorite race cars and see what these amazing ma-

chines are all about. FueLFest also features the all new popular showcase area: C4 Energy Taste of Tokyo, giving fans a Japanese underground car meet vibe with a variety of cars you're likely to see lurking in the streets of Tokyo. Fans can register their car in the People's Choice Paddock, a limited fan judged section where the best cars compete to be crowned People's Choice on the Festival Stage.

For those looking to elevate the thrilling experience, FueLFest offers VIP access with a

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TRUTH, from Page 7

some truths about power are no longer welcome.

The National Writers Union said the arrests "set a disastrous precedent for press freedom in the United States," and the National Association of Black Journalists called on the government to "halt all retaliatory posture toward journalists." SAG-AFTRA has condemned the arrests of Fort and Lemon, a member, and unions like TNG-CWA are warning that union-busting, mass layoffs, and criminal charges against journalists are part of the same effort to make it dangerous for workers to tell the truth.

This Black History Month, the labor movement must be clear: the right to organize and the right to dissent stand or fall

together. There is no freedom of association if workers cannot gather, speak and be heard. When Black journalists are criminalized for documenting protest, the real target is the possibility of multiracial worker power. If true worker power and economic dignity are to have a future, it will be because the labor movement continues to refuse that silence.

The AFL-CIO recognizes that the same tactics used to quash Black voices are used to suppress all our voices—on shop floors, in independent media, in the streets, on picket lines and in places of worship. We stand with our union brothers, sisters and siblings in insisting that the First Amendment is a right and a core worker protection, not a

luxury.

A century ago, Woodson insisted that Black people had a history worth telling and Randolph told Black workers they deserved more than exploitation. The government tried to silence them. This Black History Month, the question remains the same: Will Black truth tellers be honored or handcuffed?

The labor movement's answer must be clear. We stand with Black workers and Black journalists in their right to dissent, to document, and to demand a better future.

Fred Redmond, the highest-ranking African American labor official in history, is the secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO, the nation's largest labor federation, representing 64 unions and nearly 15 million workers.

Having a 'Growth Mindset' Helps Entrepreneurs Adapt to Setbacks

By Matt Shipman

(Newswise) — A new study underscores the importance of a “growth mindset” in entrepreneurs when faced with business challenges. Specifically, the study shows that entrepreneurs who think they can change their views on conserving or spending business resources are more resilient when faced with venture-related setbacks.

“Entrepreneurs face setbacks, but we don’t know a lot about what influences how entrepreneurs respond to those setbacks,” says

Jeff Pollack, corresponding author of the study. “We also know that some people believe frugality is a fixed personality trait that doesn’t change, while other people have more of a growth-oriented mindset — meaning they think individuals can become more frugal over time.

“We wanted to see if people’s beliefs about frugality affect how they respond to setbacks that are related to their venture experiences — particularly with regard to their subsequent negative feelings, future optimism and coping,” says Pollack, who is the Lynn T. Clark

II Distinguished Professor of Entrepreneurship in the Poole College of Management at North Carolina State University.

“Our findings suggest that people who believe they can change with regard to frugality are better able to adapt to setbacks than people who believe that their personality traits associated with frugality are fixed and can’t be changed,” says Jon Carr, co-author of the study and the Jenkins Distinguished Professor of Entrepreneurship at NC State.

To explore the issue, the researchers recruited 709

entrepreneurs to participate in an online survey. Study participants were told the definition of frugality and answered a range of questions designed to capture their baseline views on frugality. Participants were then asked to remember a time when their entrepreneurial venture faced a setback, after which they were asked a series of questions designed to capture how they responded to that setback in terms of how they felt, thought and coped with the challenge.

“We found a strong as-

sociation between growth mindset and the ability to adapt to challenges,” says Pollack. “The stronger someone’s growth mindset with regard to frugality, the more optimistic they were about future success, the less discouraged they were, and the more effort they put into identifying solutions to their setback.”

“In short, the growth mindset of frugality was associated with adaptability and a desire to make positive adjustments, as opposed to feeling miserable and getting stuck,” says

Carr.

The researchers replicated the study with an additional 281 study participants. The second study’s findings were consistent with the first study.

“Mindsets really matter when we face setbacks — and everyone faces setbacks,” says Pollack. “But mindsets can be changed. Entrepreneurs and organizations that support entrepreneurs should be aware of mindsets and take steps to improve mindsets in a

See ADAPT, Page 13



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Research Offers Businesses a Playbook for Surviving Social Media Firestorms

By Anthony Borrelli

(Newswise) — This was how critics labeled a 30-second Peloton holiday ad in 2019 that featured a man giving a woman an exercise bike as a gift. Backlash was so severe that Peloton's stock fell by about 9%, after social media erupted over perceived outdated gender roles and body image standards.

Researchers describe this kind of reaction as online social disapproval (OSD) — the public expression of criticism against businesses on digital platforms — which can rapidly escalate into bursts of public responses with significant reputational and financial consequences. For instance, in 2023, Bud Light faced boycotts and sales declines following backlash over its partnership with a transgender influencer.

In response, new research co-authored by Associate Professor Jinglu Jiang from the Binghamton University



Pixels via Newswise

School of Management introduces a digital toolkit designed to help organizations anticipate, interpret, and respond to social media backlash more effectively. The conceptual paper, "Bursts of online social disapproval: leveraging analytics for comprehension and detection," (opens in a new window) was published in the *Journal of Business Strategy*.

The toolkit, developed by combining a review of existing research with real-world cases, identified four phases of OSD — preburst,

initial burst, spreading and contagion, and recalibration — that explain how backlash emerges and evolves over time.

"The whole point is that online social disapproval is different from traditional crisis management. It's not linear; it's more like a cycle, because of how the internet and social media algorithms create different bursting patterns affecting how these kinds of responses can spread," Jiang said. "Negative opinions become a battlefield in the spreading phase, and sometimes

one perspective emerges as more dominant. When things settle down and get back to normal, that's when management should revert to prebursting monitoring practices, rather than just waiting for it to happen again."

Using the four phases, the study offers guiding questions and analytical indicators to give managers more robust capabilities for early detection, response, and recovery:

- **Preburst:** Is there a process to monitor emerging trends within your firm?

- **Initial burst:** Have you identified indicators for OSD popularity?

- **Spread and contagion:** Is a company-specific business threshold defined? Is a structured procedure in place to monitor OSD burst trajectories?

- **Recalibration:** Have situational and long-term impact measures been defined?

For the final phase, researchers said the critical question is not simply whether online activity has subsided, but what lasting imprint the OSD burst has left on the organization.

"In the short term, firms can track immediate market and financial responses, such as sales fluctuations, stock price volatility, or shifts in customer traffic. These indicators provide situational feedback on the material consequences of the burst," the study stated. "However, analytics also structure longer-term interpretations by highlighting enduring reputational shifts.

Measures such as customer satisfaction, online review trends, survey-based reputation indices, and social media engagement reveal whether stakeholder trust is recovering or whether skepticism persists."

Each business needs to define its own baseline "normality" for how the public responds on social media to different events or situations for this type of toolkit to be effective, Jiang said. The study also cautions that older events can resurface unexpectedly, triggering renewed backlash as past news and content are rediscovered online.

"The moment you observe that initial burst online, you need to be cautious and strategic about how you respond," Jiang said, "because once it enters the spreading and contentious phase, it can become a social media battlefield that's more difficult to contain. That's something any business would want to avoid."

FUELFEST, from Page 10

private lounge, premium benefits, early admission access, limited edition merchandise, free swag, auctions, and more.

Event sponsors and custom exhibits include Gazoo Racing, SPARQ, Meguiar's, C4 Energy, Fitment Industries, Liqui Moly, XComp

Tires, US MARINES, 303/Stabil, O'Reilly and more to be announced!

A portion of the event's proceeds benefit Reach Out WorldWide (ROWW), the non-profit charity founded by Paul Walker and continued by his brother, Cody Walker. Founded in 2010,

the organization was created by the late actor and producer after a massive earthquake devastated Haiti with the inspiration to organize a relief team that responded to the disaster. ROWW's mission is to fill the gap between the availability of skilled resources in post-disaster situations. As of 2024, ROWW has raised

over \$750,000 through the partnership with FuelFest to benefit those in need and has deployed resources to several disaster areas including recently Asheville, NC & Englewood, FL following hurricanes Helene and Milton, Los Angeles wildfires, Lahaina, Hawaii, Jamaica and more. Additionally, Cody and Felicia

Walker collaborated with The Weather Channel in 2022 on a new series Fast: Home Rescue, to help rebuild homes across the United States that were impacted by natural disasters.

Keep on the lookout for more surprise locations internationally.

Event information, car registration and tickets can

be found now at www.FuelFest.com, as well as on social media channels, including Facebook, Instagram and TikTok.

Founded by Cody Walker in 2018, FuelFest is his vision of creating a unique world-class automotive celebration that incorporates live action motorsports and music..

COWBOYS, from Page 8

heading into next season.

To conclude the first day of legal tampering, the Cowboys agreed to terms with defensive end Sam Williams on a one-year deal to keep him in Dallas for his

fifth season. Williams will be 27 at the beginning of the 2026 season and has shown flashes of being a productive pass rusher and special teams player.

The Cowboys carried

their day one momentum to day two on Tuesday by securing high-caliber depth pieces on both sides of the ball.

Dallas agreed to terms on one-year deals with former Broncos safety P.J. Locke, former Chargers defensive

tackle Otito Ogbornia and former Eagles quarterback Sam Howell.

In what has been a revelation for the Cowboys, who are hardly ever this active early in free agency, you have to give them credit for seeing obvious holes on

their defense and doing their best to shore them up before the draft.

However, there is still a long way to go before anyone can say they have confidence in a defense that was one of the worst in franchise history last season. Still,

Dallas has certainly taken several steps in the right direction.

Time will tell if the Cowboys continue to add pieces in free agency, but for now, they've made it clear they intend to address their defensive issues head-on.

Obama Presidential Center Hosts Grand Opening Celebrations June 18-21

(Black PR Wire) The Obama Foundation announced today that the Obama Presidential Center's grand opening celebrations will begin on June 18 and last through June 21, with a series of events that bring together the changemakers, community members, volunteers, and supporters who made the Obama presidency a reality and that welcome visitors to celebrate the power of hope and change.

• June 18: Dedication Ceremony on the John Lewis Plaza, with global livestream featuring legendary performances by global icons and powerful remarks

from today's most prominent voices

• June 19: Campus and Museum Open to the Public

• June 20 and 21: Community Celebrations Throughout Campus

President Obama shared the announcement this morning in a video on social media and the Foundation will celebrate in person tonight with hundreds of community members.

He says: "It is easy to look around right now and feel like the challenges we face are simply too big. But hope is not about ignoring the hard stuff. It is that thing inside us that insists some-

thing better awaits if we are willing to work for it. Here on the South Side of Chicago, hope is getting a permanent home. Starting on June 19, you can visit the Obama Presidential Center. This is not a monument to the past; it is a living destination for people who refuse to accept the status quo. If you feel that way, this is your invitation to join us."

This day, March 7, holds special meaning as the anniversary of the civil rights marches from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. President Obama marked the 50th anniversary of the marches in one of his most

cherished speeches, with the resounding call to advance the "glorious task we are given to continually try to improve this great nation of ours." Those very words are inscribed on the Museum building's exterior, starting with "You Are America."

The same instinct animates changemakers across the globe and is central to the Foundation's mission to inspire, empower, and connect people to change their world.

"We have always believed in the power of ordinary people to come together to make extraordinary change," said Valerie

Jarrett, Foundation CEO. "The opening of the Obama Presidential Center will be a beacon of hope to the world and a place where we hope guests will be inspired to bring change home to their

communities." The Center will be dedicated on Thursday, June 18, and the campus, including all free areas as well as the Museum, will open to the public on June 19.

ADAPT, from Page 11

way that will make entrepreneurs more resilient to challenges."

"The real takeaway is that you can do something about this," says Carr. "Having the right mindset

matters."

The paper, "A stronger growth mindset of frugality predicts entrepreneurs' responses to setbacks in resourcefulness behavior," is published open access

in the Journal of Business Venturing Insights.

The paper was co-authored by Jeni Burnette, a professor of psychology at NC State; Tim Michaelis, an assistant professor of psychology at NC State;

Joseph Billingsley, an assistant professor of psychology at Marshall University; and David Scheaf, the Robert M. and Louise Rogers Chair of Entrepreneurship at Baylor University.

FILM, from Page 9

does this affect me today?" It's an area that deserved more time, not less. Also, the comments her adult children make about how they took a back seat to their mother's crusade provide a balance to the effusive look at Elliott's accomplishments. Pride, anger, dereliction and hope are duly noted. While feelings of inspiration are likely what viewers will embody.

Educators should know the merits of Elliott's teachings. That's the gift documentarian Judd Ehrlich gives. The life lessons Jane Elliott champions are being passed on to the next generation. "Jane Elliott Against the World." No. "Jane El-

liott Saves the World." Yes!

For more information about the Sundance Film Festival go to: <https://festival.sundance.org>

Visit Film Critic Dwight Brown at DwightBrownInk.com.

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Just Honing My Old Goat Skills

Dr. James L Snyder

I'm rather new to this getting-old stage of life. Up to now, all my life has been young and innocent. Unfortunately, those days have passed.

It's hard to get adjusted to old age because I've never experienced it before. I remember when I was young, all of the fun that I had. But now, I'm at a new stage of life, and I don't know exactly what I should be doing.

Somebody should write a book sometime titled, "How To Get Old in 10 Easy Steps." I'll buy that book in a second.

I've been trying to find the good part of getting old, and I am still looking.

The other day The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage said to me, "You are starting to act like some old goat."

When she said that, something clicked upstairs. I don't want to act like some old goat; I want to be one. It got me thinking, as I've never thought before. How can I use this "old goat stage?" The more I get to know it, the more I'll be able to use it for my benefit. Why not use what you have at hand for your own good?

I'm not sure what an old goat is, but I'm going to work on it and make sure I am the best version of an old goat I can be.

Every time The Gracious



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Mistress of the Parsonage said that I was acting like an old goat, I stopped and thought about what she was talking about. How can I improve that in my life?

I asked her why she thought I was acting like an old goat. She said, "Well, for one you're always remembering things according to what you want to remember. You gotta remember the truth."

As I understand it, as an old goat, I have "selective memory." I never thought of that before. How can I use "selective memory" to make me a better old goat?

I've been working on this for a while, and every time I tell a story from the past, I make sure I am selecting that memory the way I want. Some story in my past, nobody knows all of the details. So, as a professional old goat, I can choose which memories I want to share with people. How do they know if it's right or wrong?

This has made my sto-

rytelling much more enjoyable. I sure have been having fun with all of these "selective memory" moments. One good thing is that I don't have to remember these to tell the same story over and over again as a professional old goat. I can make up things selectively as I go along. Oh, how I love being an old goat.

As we were coming home from a meeting with some of our friends The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage looked at me and said, "That story you told about when you were in high school was that the same story you told three weeks ago?"

Oh boy. I didn't even remember the story I told three weeks ago, so I just said to her, "No, that was a different story."

She just looked at me with one of her smiles, and I realized she did not believe me then.

Now, the next step in honing my old goat skills is remembering the stories that I

tell. The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage cannot forget anything, and she always brings to my attention some of the mistakes that I have made in my stories. I didn't know she listened so attentively to my stories.

So, along with my "selective memory" skill, I need to develop the next stage: "Once told never repeat." I don't know how I'm going to really work on this, but that's the next skill to de-

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The Power of Women's Words



Sister Tarpley
NDG
Religion
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As an author, poet, actress, and champion of civil rights, Angelou (1928–2014) was one of the most dynamic voices in 20th-century American literature. The book, “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings,” an autobiographical account of her childhood, gained wide acclaim for its vivid depiction of Black life in the South.

Born Marguerite Annie Johnson on April 4, 1928, in St. Louis, Missouri, Angelou had a difficult childhood. Writer and civil rights activist Maya Ange-

lou is known for her 1969 memoir, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*.

In 1971, Angelou published the Pulitzer Prize-nominated poetry collection *Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water 'Fore I Die*. She later wrote the poem “On the Pulse of Morning”—one of her most famous works—which she recited at President Bill Clinton’s inauguration in 1993.

Angelou received several honors throughout her career, including two NAACP Image Awards in the outstanding literary work (nonfiction) category, in 2005 and 2009. She died on May 28, 2014.

Multi-talented barely seems to cover the depth and breadth of Angelou’s accomplishments. She was



an author, actress, screenwriter, dancer and poet.

Her parents split up when she was very young, and she and her older brother, Bailey, were sent to live with their father’s mother, Anne Henderson, in Stamps, Arkansas.

As a Black woman, Angelou experienced firsthand racial prejudices and discrimination in Arkansas. She also suffered at the

hands of a family associate around the age of 7:

During a visit with her mother, Angelou was raped by her mother’s boyfriend. Then, as vengeance for the sexual assault, Angelou’s uncles killed the boyfriend. So traumatized by the ex-

perience, Angelou stopped talking. She returned to Arkansas and spent years as a virtual mute.

During World War II, Angelou moved to San Francisco, California, where she won a scholarship to study dance and acting at the California Labor School. Also during this time, Angelou became the first Black female cable car conductor—a job she held only briefly, in San Francisco.

In 1944, a 16-year-old Angelou gave birth to a son, thereafter working a number of jobs to support herself and her child.

In 1952, the future literary icon wed Anastasios

Angelopoulos, a Greek sailor from whom she took her professional name—a blend of her childhood nickname, “Maya,” and a shortened version of his surname.

In the mid-1950s, Angelou’s career as a performer began to take off. She landed a role in a touring production of *Porgy and Bess*, later appearing in the off-Broadway production *Calypso Heat Wave* (1957) and releasing her first album, *Miss Calypso* (1957).

A member of the Harlem Writers Guild and a civil rights activist, Angelou

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NDG Book Review: 'Shut Up and Read' is Some Pretty Good Advice

By Terri Schlichenmeyer



Shhhhhhhh. It's an old wives' tale that that's what librarians always say. Shhhhhhhh, hush yourself, be silent, don't be so loud, no talking. Shhhhh, quiet is what makes a library appealing for many folks. As in the new book, "Shut Up and Read" by Jeannine A. Cook, though, the bookstore is where you can really make some noise.

She had no plans to live in Philadelphia.

But that's where Jeannine Cook landed after she graduated high school – in Philly, in college, living in a "shell" of a house with

occasional rats and junkies. She stayed, though, fell in love with the city of Brotherly Love, and made plans in the form of college essays. She wanted to do something good for her community, to teach youth,

and put books in the hands of the people who needed to read.

As it's been throughout her life, Cook was supported in this plan by "Aunties" and sister-friends, and by "angels" who often appeared. She also appealed to her muse, Harriett Tubman, whose name graces Cook's first physical bookstore.

But Harriett's didn't happen easily.

Cook understood that she needed to own the building that housed her bookstore, and the owner finally decided to sell it to her. The closing took more time than expected; she was in Paris when

purchase day came unexpectedly, so she had to fly back home quickly to get it done. There were problems with construction workers, problems with stock and events and building additional bookstores in New Jersey and in Paris. Problems with safety, in the aftermath of George Floyd's murder, and Breonna Taylor's murder, and the riots that followed.

There were times, she says, when she felt like she was drowning. Her mother had gone back to the Caribbean, her father was dying (again), but Cook stayed the course.

She knew that books were the answer. That's the

mantra she said every day when she got out of bed: books would always be humanity's salvation.

Go ahead, admit it: you need more books. And while you're at it, you need this one.

"Shut Up and Read" is a sweet story with grit, determination, and magic. Anyone who's ever looked for room on their calendar and found none will identify with it. Anyone who's ever dreamed larger than large will find parallel in author Jeannine A. Cook's words. If you've had a hero or two in mind when you launch a difficult endeavor, this is your book. Struggled with your health and

that of an aggravating but much-loved family member, yep. Ever wondered how you're going to get things done, uh-huh. It's all shared, novel-like, held together by coincidence and magic and heartbreak, surprises, customer-service smiles, an "overground underground railroad," literature, and an artificial leg named Lester.

Yeah, it's everything you're thinking, and there's room for it on your shelf.

Hush little reader, here is your book. "Shut Up and Read" is so worth a look. And if opening a bookstore was ever a lure, this is a book that you'll love for shhhhhhh-ure.

TARPLEY, from Page 15

organized and starred in the musical revue In 1961, Angelou appeared in an off-Broadway production of Jean Genet's The Blacks with James Earl Jones, Lou Gossett Jr. and Cicely Tyson.

While the play earned strong reviews, Angelou moved on to other pursuits, spending much of the 1960s abroad; she first lived in Egypt and then in Ghana,

working as an editor and a freelance writer. Angelou also held a position at the University of Ghana for a time.

After returning to the United States, Angelou was urged by friend and fellow writer James Baldwin to write about her life experiences. Her efforts resulted in the enormously successful 1969 memoir about her childhood and young adult

years, I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, which made literary history as the first nonfiction best-seller by a Black woman. The poignant work also made Angelou an international star.

One of Angelou's most famous works is the poem "On the Pulse of Morning," which she wrote especially for and recited at President Bill Clinton's inaugural ceremony in January 1993. Angelou went on to win a Grammy Award (best spo-

ken word album) for the audio version of the poem.

In 1995, Angelou was lauded for remaining on The New York Times' paperback nonfiction best-seller list for two years—the longest-running record in the chart's history.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., a close friend of Angelou's, was assassinated on her birthday (April 4) in 1968. Angelou stopped celebrating her birthday for years afterward, and sent

flowers to King's widow, Coretta Scott King, for more than 30 years, until Coretta's death in 2006.

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

SNYDER, from Page 14

velop as an old goat.

This will be the hardest skill for me to hone, but it's one I'll have to develop.

The next time I tell a story with our friends around, I'm going to keep my eye on The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. If I see a certain expression on her face, I'm going to take the story in an altogether different direction.

This is the third skill

I need to hone as an old goat. That is, "Watch The Gracious Mistress Of The Parsonage Face." After 54 years of marriage, I should be able to read that face, and yet I find it rather difficult. But, being the professional old goat that I am, I'm going to work on it until I have it mastered.

Now that I have come to the stage of being an old goat, I'm beginning to like

getting old. As a young person, I could never get away with acting like an old goat. But now that I have the years behind me, I can act like a professional old goat. Believe me, it has its rewards.

I have a long way to go in developing my old goat skills. I'm going to work at it until I get it as perfect as I can.

I was reminded of David's prayer in Psalm 71:18. "Now also when I am old

and greyheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come." Looking at my life, I must say that this has become my prayer every day.

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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