

Steppin' out

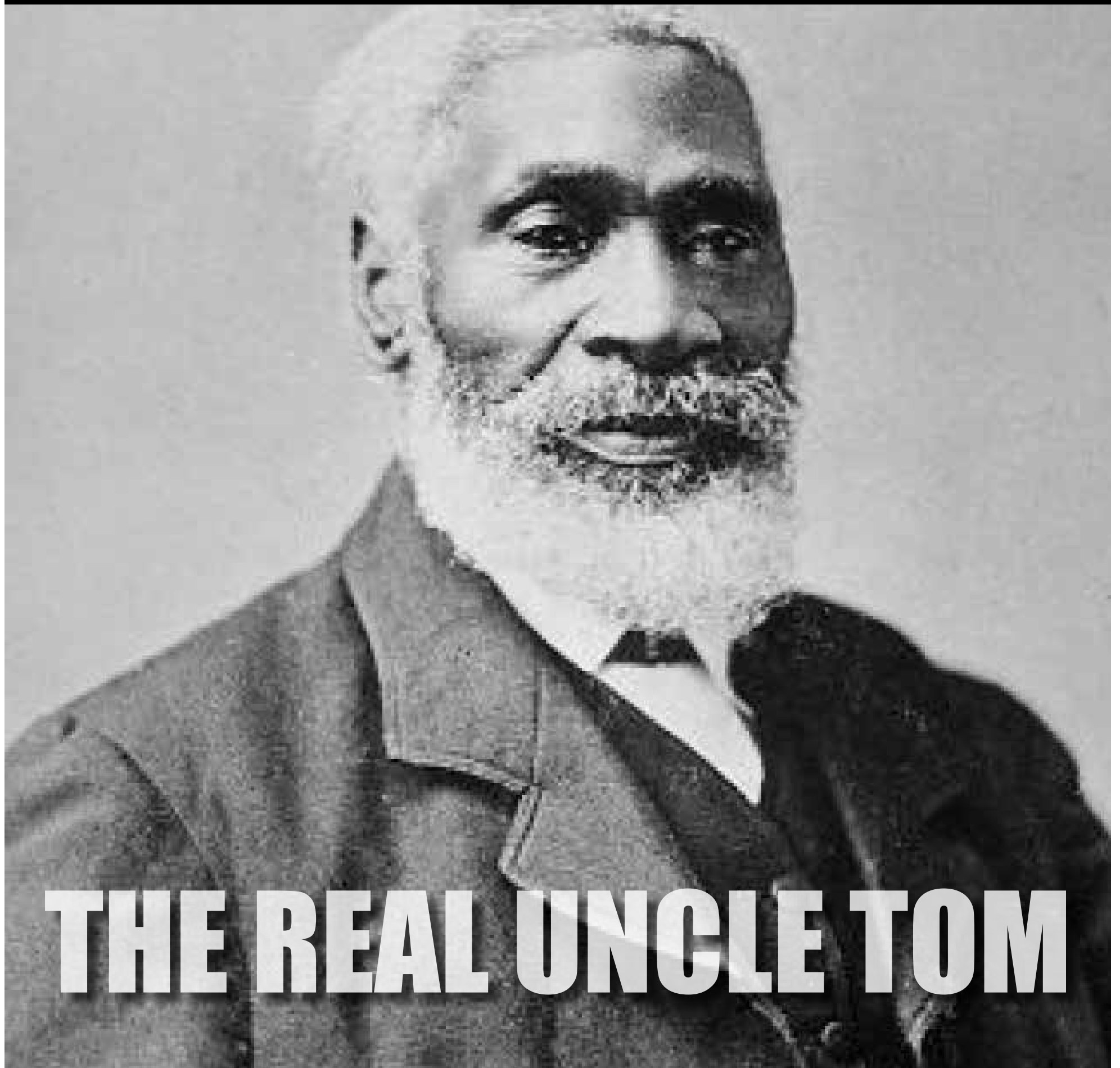
News!

"Reconnecting the Best of the African American Diaspora of Mobile: PAST • PRESENT • FUTURE"

VOLUME 23
ISSUE 07

ARTS • CULTURE • EDUCATION • COMMUNITY

FEBRUARY
2024



THE REAL UNCLE TOM

ABOUT STEPPIN' OUT

STEPPIN' OUT is a subsidiary of LEGACY 166 Inc., a non-profit organization with a Mission to provide Educational, Career, and Economic opportunities for Youth and the Underserved of Diverse Cultures; make available Cultural Activities for community participation; and deliver Quality of Life Skills Training through the Arts and Community Collaborations.

STEPPIN' OUT provides quality of life information to the community in each issue at no cost to the reader. Even though STEPPIN' OUT is not a "hard news" publication, the columns submitted by our contributors touch on subjects that address a wide range of community and cultural issues. Regular features include articles on health, history, entertainment, and finance. Articles on fashion, literature, and technology are some of the subjects that are occasionally featured.

STEPPIN' OUT and LEGACY 166 Inc. will continue to expand their roles in the community by offering internships and career training, and youth development and work opportunities. Volunteers are always needed with this mission.

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TAKING MOBILE TO THE NEXT LEVEL

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Flowers On The Water

by Mike Foster



Previously published by
Wanda's Poetry Garden Facebook Group

At the site of the sunken Clotilda
Delisha Marshall, a descendant of Peter "Gumpa" Lee,
sees the ship "...as a physical anchor of the story."

The stories of the ancestors are true!

She places flowers on the water,
"...in honor of the people who made it over,
for the ancestors."

It's time for the Meaher family to come forward And say,

"We are here. How can we Help?
Perhaps handshakes and hugs
would be a great start.

NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR:

8-1/2 months after I wrote this poem,
Helen and Meg Meaher issued a written apology,
which was broadcast on NBC's Sunday Today Show.

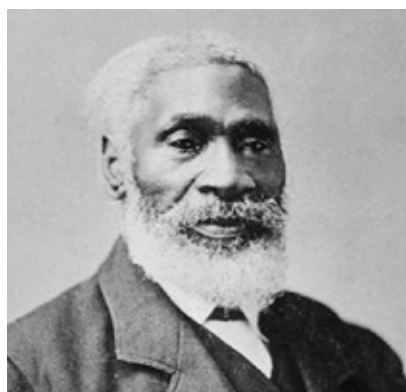
On Sunday, November 19, 2023,
on the last 60 Minutes segment,
Helen and Meg publicly apologized
in front of Descendants, the Nation, and the World.
Reconciliation and respect have begun...
healing can take place.

We have to wait awhile
for them to show us what that will look like.

A new future is forming for all.
The time is right.
The Meaher's and the Descendants
are boldly going where they have never gone before.



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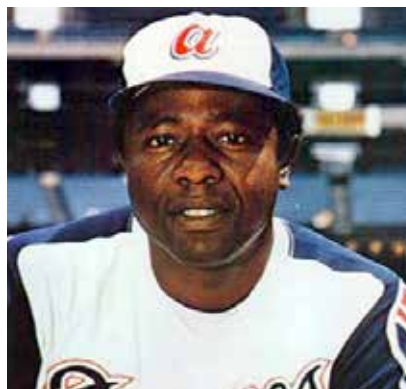
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MARCH 2024



TAKING MOBILE TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Memphis Vaughan Jr.

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THE BLACK COMMUNITY

I've been pondering a lot of things lately about the black community and where we are headed in the future. There are so many ideas, opinions, thoughts, misconceptions, and conspiracies about what encompasses the black community and the challenges we face. I hear constantly about the "crabs in the barrel" but on the other hand, I see us working together through our churches, social groups, community groups and Greek organizations to make a difference.

When we speak of the black community, there are those out-side of this community that say we aren't doing anything to help it and in almost the same breath, they criticize us when we specifically focus on our black organizations and institutions. They constantly question the need for having "separate" organizations, events and initiatives to foster black achievement. Despite the historical reasons for having our own organizations, some feel that by having them we are perpetuating racism. I want to stop right here and state that racism wasn't created by black people. So, if racism is going to end, white people will need to undo this terrible thing they created.

I am proud of the organizations and institutions that have been started and maintained by black people. Most of them still exist today because of the efforts of black people. They are still around because of need, tradition, safety, and cultural reasons that are rooted in the same things that make the Irish, Italians, Greeks, and other ethnic groups cherish and maintain their organizations, institutions, and traditions.

We often hold ourselves to tougher standards about how we don't stick together and support each other in the black community. Yet, when you look at other groups, they face some of the same issues that we do – perhaps at different levels of intensity.

Among white Americans, they have economic, geographical, class, and social divisions that keep them at odds with each

other despite the perception that they all stick together. If you don't believe me, ask a white southerner about a Yankee and see what they have to say. As my late pastor used to say, some southerners are still fighting the Civil War.

In times of real crises, black people have come together to fight against the common enemy. Today, things are more nuanced, we have more opportunities, yet we have more enemies. We must fight battles on the political, economic, corporate, and social levels against those trying to turn back the hands of time.

Then we have the internal battles that still challenge us in the black community. We seem to be fighting a losing battle of educating our young people, teaching them respect for each other, teaching them about their history, ridding our communities of violence, and dealing with the many other negative things that seem to keep us less than united. Given these ongoing battles, I'm not surprised why many turn to drugs, violence, suicide, and other negative things in order to cope. But, those things are not the answer and only serve to exacerbate the problems we face.

I tend to feel helpless and ineffective when I think about the state of the black community and my own personal efforts to make a change. I realize that one person can only do so much. However, I am hopeful because there are those that are working to make a difference in the black community and the community as a whole. It would be fine if we didn't have to identify community by race but until the day comes when race is not an issue, then I am an advocate for the black community. That doesn't mean I don't care about everyone else because I do. I will rely on my faith, my family, my strong circle of friends to help me forge ahead and do what I can to make a difference. I will continue to use this newspaper as a platform to encourage and advocate for things I feel will benefit the community. ♣



Greg Cyprian
PUBLISHER/EDITOR
Steppin' Out News

THE *Real* UNCLE TOM

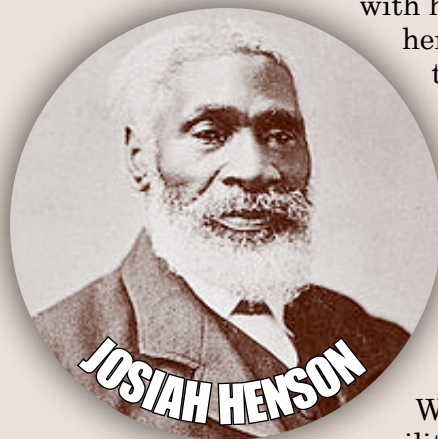
According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary, an Uncle Tom is a Black Person eager to win the approval of white people and willing to cooperate with them to do so (the term for Black Women was/is Aunt Sally). Although back in the day, the equivalent to Uncle Tom was Aunt Jemima.

Many Blacks labeled other Blacks with these titles during and after Slavery. Indeed, most recently, Senator Tim Scott of South Carolina has been given this name by Blacks all over the country, and I've heard the term used for some folk in Mobile. But where did this term come from.

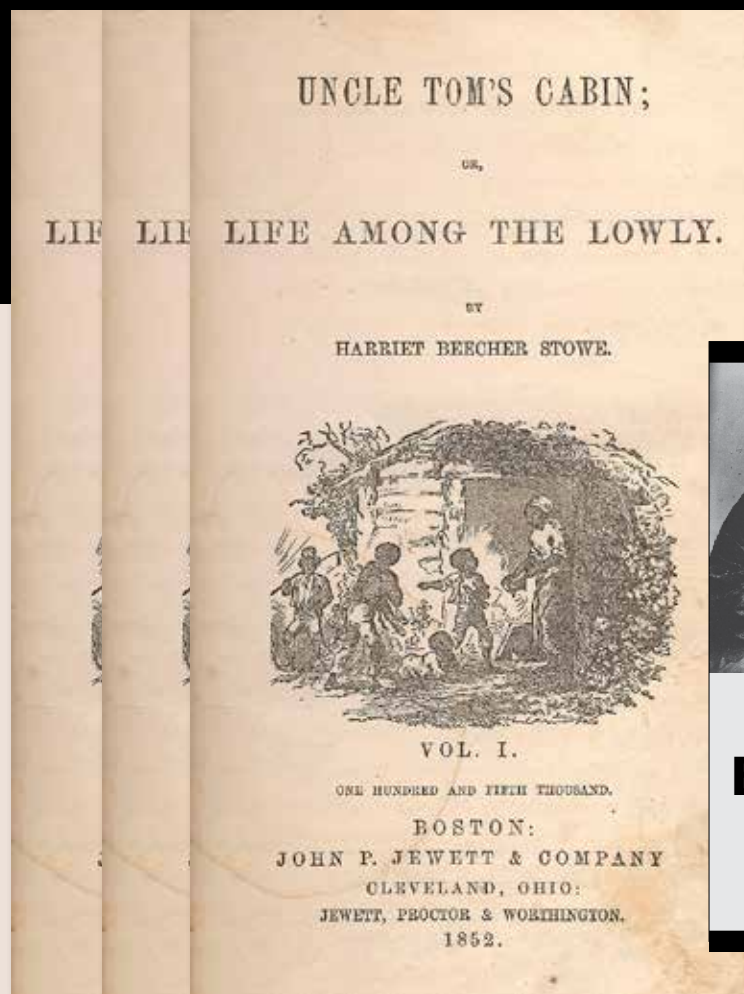
The term Uncle Tom came from Harriet Beecher Stowe's bestselling novel, Uncle Tom's Cabin, published in 1852. Stowe was an author and abolitionist who came from a very religious family in Connecticut. The book depicts the harsh conditions suffered by Blacks in America. The book was highly successful and was made into a play. The book and play affected millions in the United States and Great Britain. In the states, the book's publishing made the northern part of the country's anti-slavery movement grow while in the south, widespread anger ensued.

The book was based off the real life story of Josiah Henson (1789-1882). Henson was born a slave in Port Tobacco, Charles County, Maryland. He escaped in 1830 to present day Ontario, Canada, and founded a settlement and school for the fugitive slaves at Dawn, in Kent County of Ontario. He narrated his autobiography in 1849 entitled *The Life of Josiah Henson, Formerly a Slave, Now an Inhabitant of Canada*. He toured speaking about his book when Stowe reached out to him when they both were in Boston, and their talks about his life as a slave inspired her to write *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. That character was based on his life.

Although he was raised by his mother, as a young boy, Henson watched his father take 100 lashes and have his right ear nailed to a whipping post and cut off for standing up to a overseer.



JOSIAH HENSON



Harriet Beecher Stowe

His father was then sold to a slave owner in Alabama while the rest of his family stayed in Maryland. After his master's death, Josiah was separated from his mother when at a slave auction his siblings were sold, and then his mother to a different owner. When she pleaded to her new master to allow her young son Josiah to come with her, she was rewarded with a punch and a kick. Another man bought Josiah and struck a deal with his mother's new master to keep the youngster with her because he was a sickly child. The man agreed on the condition that the young boy would still have to work in the fields. Henson grew into a man and attempted to buy his freedom several times, but each time after the agreed upon payment was given, his master would raise the price. When he found out that his master planned to sell him again, he escaped to Canada with his wife and children with the help of white families along the way, Native Indians, and a friendly ship captain. He arrived in Canada on October 28, 1830. While in Canada, he became a minister and a military officer. His settlement had over 500 escaped slaves. He personally freed over 118 enslaved Blacks and his settlement was known as the final stop for the Underground Railroad.

So how did Uncle Tom become a negative term when this man was a Hero? It is believed that whites referred to Black Men by this term because of the character in the book. In addition, Black Men were also referred to as Zambo which was a term used by the Spanish which meant a person of African or Native American Ancestry. Unfortunately, during Jim Crow, the term was used in a negative context and an S replaced the Z. Now, both terms are used as offensive labels by Blacks about Blacks who show a propensity to "Sell Out" their own racial heritage. And for Blacks, using these names for those that reflect those characteristics will never allow these names to go away. ❖



Truth , Facts & Justice

Sabrina Mass

RETIRED NURSE • CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST
COMMUNITY ORGANIZER • PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER



Structural Inequalities

“New American Order” forecasts that we all should turn a blind eye to any idea suggesting the United States to be a facilitator of prejudice and unjust acts. I mean are we not the nation to advance from the most extreme version of human-trafficking and free-labor (slavery) to where we are now? Have we not progressed from a nation dependent on outside trade to the leading example of innovation and distribution? Do we not attest to rights of equal protection and freedom, through the privilege of American Citizenship? Or have we as a people become blind to new versions of the same old tricks? In the past, law enforcement was designed to re-enslave people of color. There seems to be little difference, today. Look at the number of people incarcerated in this country. Do the math. In the past, politics was designed for an upper-class designation of individuals alone. Your family had to come from money or you paved a path through invention, business, or battle that led you to money. Today has seen the reincarnation of this same principle... only adding those people of color willing to “sell out” their own direct loved ones for an indirect claim to fame and increased pockets (kickbacks). America has always attempted to justify it acts, by means of the courting system. Segregation was legal... separating everything because of inferiority (labeled by skin tone). Could you imagine, because of your skin, having to take a mental fitness exam in order to vote? Many people don’t know that Jim Crow was a Black character in the White man’s entertainment circle. This is what familiarized the intent of preserving the elitist construct of this country beyond the southern states alone. In 1876, when Reconstruction ended, southern states made everything separate and almost completely reduced the legal rights for people of color. Signs and laws, posted almost everywhere, were now reflecting where Blacks (particularly) could and couldn’t go. Today we tell people that you shouldn’t complain about the happenings of your community if you don’t vote. Can you imagine leaders creating their own terms of disenfranchisement to actively prevent you from having oversight to the area you pay taxes for? The “Southern Black Codes” are arguably far worse than Jim Crow laws. Fast forward to today, while it’s written that we all are equal, people of color often get in positions of power and join the “White Supremacist Establishment” to further rob those in the most vulnerable places, whether geographically or financially. So is it safe to say that Jim Crow laws never really left America, they just took on a different shape? I believe that would be a very fair argument. Why? Because just as in times past, the “powers that be” have found a way to circumvent the worth of people while claiming to be abiding by law... such a level of exhaustion leads to accepting such foolishness as custom, generation after generation. Let’s wake up to reality, and hold leadership accountable, please!♣



Creole History Highlights

Tracy Neely

PRESIDENT: MOBILE CREOLE CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY



Estelle arrived in this world when Alabama was not yet a state, but still part of the Mississippi Territory. There was a section of Mobile called Spanish Town, later referred to as Spanish Alley. People had homes on what is now Bienville Square. And Spain still had a firm grip on Pensacola. According to an 1815 map, the western limits of the city ended at Saint Joachim Street. She was the younger of two children born to Joseph Zenon Michel and Catherine St. John. Joseph died in 1826, when Estelle was just 8 years old. When her mother remarried in 1831, after 5 years of widowhood, Estelle adopted the surname of her stepfather, Jean Baptiste Trenier. As a child, Estelle must have attended school of some kind. On documents her signature is clean, clear, and confident.

In the 20 years she was married to Lucien LaLande, between 1839 and 1859, they had eleven children. Meaning Estelle was pregnant for most of their marriage. She never went for more than a year without being pregnant until after Lucien died about 1859. Her three minor children, Catherine, Sidney, and Victorine, for whom she petitioned for guardianship, were her only children to survive to adulthood. Meaning she was left mourning the lives of eight of her children.

Her resolve must have been unwavering. She continued to raise her surviving children alone, residing on Bayou Street between Augusta and Savannah, while working as a fruit seller. Maintaining a liquor license as well, for her business at the corner of St. Louis and Dearborn Streets, one wonders what her establishment was really like. She never remarried.

In 1867, she sued the Spring Hill Railroad Company for her right to sit inside the car. It was company policy that only whites were allowed to sit in the rail car. The Colored population was permitted to only ride on the exterior of the car and were charged half price. The case came before Judge Loomis. He sided with Spring Hill Railroad Company, saying they had the right to make their own policy regarding segregating passengers. It made the newspapers as far away as South Carolina. There was no boycott of the rail cars as we would see in Montgomery with the buses in 1955. But clearly, she was a woman who used the resources available to her.

No doubt the women in her life modeled this strength for her. Her grandmother, Constance Hugon, spent her entire life as a single mother cultivating and reinforcing the security of her children through acquiring an assortment of properties. She owned property along Dauphin, Conception, and Joachim. Constance was also a fruiterer, on the corner of Dauphin and Conception, in a building known as the Alabama Exchange. The Noble South restaurant operates there now on the corner across from Bienville Square.

Estelle lived until at least 1900, when we see her in the census at the age of eighty-eight with her son, Sidney, and her grandchildren, by her daughter, Catherine Joseph, residing at 261 Wilkinson Street, a number that is long gone on Mobile maps. It is likely she died in the home of her son, Sidney. She is last mentioned in the 1901 city directory. But when she died and where she is buried is uncertain. It is possible that she left Mobile when so many other families of Color began migrating away from Mobile. But more research needs to be done.

If you are a descendant of Estelle LaLande and would like to share additional documentation with us, or if you just want to discuss her story further, please contact us at mobilealabamacreoles@gmail.com ♣



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The Shadow of 'White Privilege' Remains Large

Clotilda descendants being used struck a nerve...

When I was about five years old, my daddy and I were walking past the since long-gone Greyhound Bus Station on Craft Highway in Prichard. There was a sign on the two water fountains out front that read: White, Colored.

I asked daddy what it meant, and all he said was that "It'll be better ... one day."

As I got older and lived through the Civil Rights movement, the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy, his brother Bobby and Martin Luther King Jr., the meaning behind Walter Patter-son's words became clearer with each hate-filled incident I saw unfold in this country.

I'd now come to realize there was a deep divide between Blacks and whites in America, and that so many white folks could care less that the Civil Rights Act passed in 1964 outlawed discrimina-tion based on race, color, religion, sex and national origin.

And by the time I found out later in life that I was the great-great grandson of Clotilda slave ship survivor Pollee Allen, I was a 40-year-old man who was very much aware of the racism that engulfs this country and was part of the very foundation America was built on.

In his profound book, *Being Human, The Holy Spirit and the Rhetoric of Race*, Rev. Dr. Luke Powery, Dean of Duke University Chapel and Professor of Homiletics, affirms Black bodies have been generally viewed historically as not beautiful, but as problematic.

Powery's thesis speaks to my experience as a descendant of the 110 African women, men, and children kidnapped from Benin, Africa and forced into illegal slavery here in Mobile County in the summer of 1860.

My great-great granddaddy Pollee and the other captives were treated inhumanely because their skin was Black. Their mere presence meant that he and his Benin sisters and brothers had no human rights at all.

They became enslaved men, women, and children whom histo-rians say, "built Alabama's grandiose antebellum mansions and government buildings, cleared the fields, and toiled to produce the wealth of the early state's business and political leaders."

Pollee's body could be sold to work, wasn't considered beautiful and was chattel with no soul. During the days of slavery, Black people and the words nobility, honesty and integrity were rarely written ... if written at all ...in the same sentence to attempt to define a Black person's humanity.

Last month, I was front and center to something that happened in Mobile where White Privilege once again raised its ugly head

and made me realize this country may never truly achieve harmony between the races. What happened isn't nearly as important as the reality that it was disrespectful to the legacy of the founders of Africatown, the community where survivors of Clotilda settled and culturally meshed with other Black people, who were also enslaved in Mobile before the Civil War.

It reminded me how important it is to tell the truth and be honest about the history of the Transatlantic Slave Trade in the 21st century.

I immediately addressed the issue with those white people involved and got an apology for the actions of a few, but ... yeah, I'm still angry.

And you're right that I'm talking about racism. Racism, genocide of Indigenous people and the exploitation of Black bodies is the original sin our country. The same Black bodies of men, women and children who built the South and the United States.

Another example of that "privilege" happened in Georgia just a few days ago when a federal jury in Atlanta ordered ex-New York Mayor (turned serious 2020 election denier sycophant) Rudy Guliani to pay two Black Georgia election workers \$148 million for wrongly accusing them of committing fraud in the 2020 election.

That jury of Guliani's peers ruled he had no proof that Ruby Freeman and her daughter Wandrea Moss committed any crime, but he still vowed that he had proof on the way out of the federal court-house in Atlanta.

Many whites in this country don't care what they say about Black people and care even less about things important to Blacks ... like truth and honesty.

Furthermore, they could give two cents about historic sites where atrocities against Black people occurred years ago ... places like that big oak tree in cities all over the South where there was a carnival-like atmosphere complete with drinks, popcorn and chil-dren in attendance when we were hung, burned alive on makeshift rotisserie grills or dragged by horses to our deaths.

But what's even uglier is when white men today still focus on making a dollar ... yet again ... on the true history about Black people's lives in slavery and the sweat, pain, and horror they endured.

A line I've used many times before, and is now on display inside Heritage House Museum in Africatown says: Never let the world forget!

My daddy said it'd be better one day, but I'm just not so sure anymore.

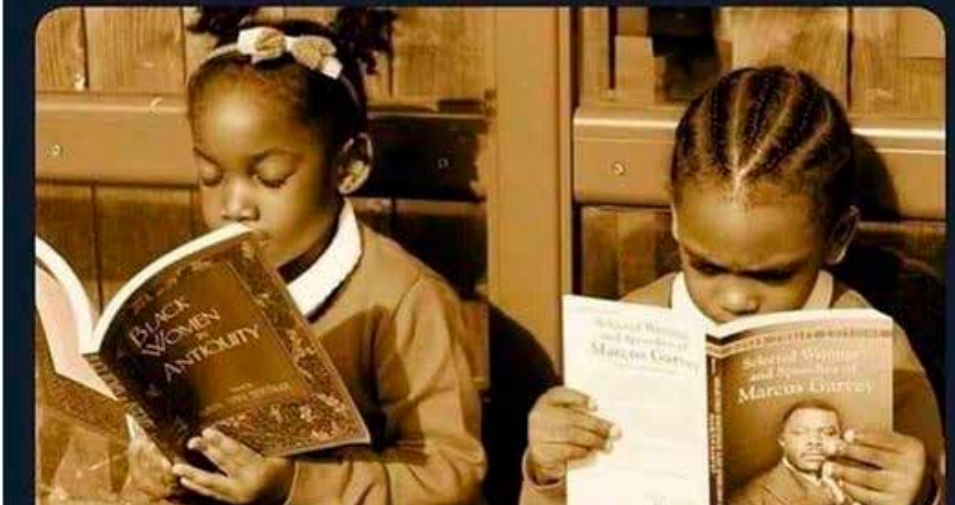
As a descendant of the Clotilda, I also believe in the African proverb, "Until the lion tells the story, the hunter will always be hero."♣

If the child on the left was old enough to pick cotton and the child on the right was old enough to attend Klan rallies, then today's children are old enough to learn about both of these and how they've led us to where we are today!



Instead of buying your children all the things you never had, you should teach them all the things you were never taught. Material wears out but Knowledge stays.

@theblaquelioness



DID YOU KNOW...

- Computer scientist and engineer **MARK DEAN** is a **Co-Inventor of IBM's Original Personal Computer** and the **PC Color Monitor**, changing the face of technology. He also co-created the technology that enables printers, keyboards, disk drives, and monitors to be plugged directly into computers.
- **DANIEL HALE WILLIAMS** – performed **The First Successful Heart Surgery** in 1893
- **DR. PATRICIA BATH** – in 1986 invented the **LASERPHACO...** a new **Device for Laser Cataract Surgery**





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In the Spring of 2023 the City of Mobile announced a new discount airline Avelo with flying from Mobile International Airport (Brookley) to Orlando, FL. I was surprised that the marketing campaign waited so close to the April maiden flight. Leisure travel is normally booked far in advance.

Yet what got my attention was another 'Butt Kissing.' Avelo had a scheduled flight with reserved seats for the Airport Authority to dispense as they pleased. The rationale, as normal, is to reward people who worked on successful campaigns, to ensure local influencers and politicians get their selection and a few of 'friends of friends.'

Now mind you, I have sat on over thirty boards and worked as a corporate executive. I understand the perks. But to me it would have been nice for the Airport Authority to reserve some seats for the citizens of Mobile. They could have given, let's say, two passes per city councilperson to dispense in their districts, reached out to some non-profits or schools. Anything but what they did.

I do not know if you notice, so many of the City of Mobile perks go through and to the same people. To be honest with you, it is not for the hard work that they do or because they are underpaid (compared to the average household in Mobile). It is all because of an out of hand sentiment – kissing up to influencers and affluent families.

It has permeated through society. We use to reward excellence. Now it is more about ensuring that the affluent and influential are happy. I often think that the Bible 'requires' that we look out for the least, the underserve. But society today wants to be close to the money and power and treat the least as though they are invisible.

The Airport Authority has done a nice job in the transition of a West Mobile site that was long ago outdated and place wrong strategically. I am really asking you and anyone who is in power, to consider the citizens of Mobile when giving out perks. Let not the least be invisible. Remember servitude should be the mission, not 'kissing more butt'!

As always LET'S BE GREATER!♣

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The Narrative

Kimberly Williams Pettway



We are NOT Broken – WE ARE SURVIVORS!

Society would have us to believe that we are a broken people. This belief undergirds much of the narrative that has been created for and about us fueling white supremacy. Unfortunately, it has been so engrained in the culture of our country that those within and outside of our communities buy into this nonsense. Broken we are not, wounded perhaps but still very much Surviving. We can no longer allow this world to make us feel inadequate and/or innately flawed. WE ARE NOT! The super imposed labels placed on us are not the sum of who we are. We must reclaim our narrative which begins with our healing. What we have failed to realize is we carry generational trauma. We bare the weight of incomprehensible mistreatment, exploitation, subjugation, and miseducation of our forefathers and we have had no collective healing. Dr. Joy DeGruy, a sistah who holds a MS in Clinical Psychology and PhD is Social Work Research, describes the generational adaptive responses to this repeated trauma as Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome (P.T.S.S.).

According to Dr. DeGruy P.T.S.S. refers to the development of adaptive survival behaviors by African-Americans in response to both multigenerational trauma w/ continued oppression, and the absence of opportunity to heal or access the benefits available to society. I believe this can also be a perceived absence. As a result, we may exhibit maladaptive patterns of behavior such as vacant esteem (insufficient development of primary esteem), propensity for anger and violence, and internalized racism (consequence of a racist socialization). In her book titled Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome, she explains these concepts in detail. She also describes these behaviors using two mothers and their sons as an example. A white mother is able to accept compliments about her son as he relishes in his accomplishments thus supporting a positive sense of self. However, the black mother minimizes compliments to her son, often in a belittling manner though she is actually proud of him. She explains that the black mother's behavior mimick's the behavior of a black mother during slavery, as she would minimize her son's strengths to prevent him from being sold. These behaviors, while survival techniques during slavery, work against us now as the mother nor her son likely understand its previous purpose resulting in the son internalizing his mother's "putdowns". The mother is unaware of why she responds in this manner or the consequence to her son. The son further develops unhealthy behaviors that work against his success in a society that has already marginalized him. While we all have a personal responsibility to be our best selves, many within our community don't know what that looks like due to untreated generational trauma that often results in us working against ourselves.

I explain all of that to illustrate that we are not inherently broken or inferior. Those behaviors and norms within our community that work against us are the result of decades of trauma imposed upon our communities by the very same supremacist system that enslaved our ancestors. It must be dismantled and our narrative must be reclaimed. Our children need to know these truths so they no longer perpetuate the stereotypes imposed upon them. They ARE NOT BROKEN, they represent the legacy of an incredibly broken system and the survival of our ancestors. Let us do our due diligence to ensure we all know that there is nothing nor will there ever be anything innately wrong within us. We must pick up the torch to light our paths as we seek to understand our trauma, heal and walk in the strength of the giants before us. It takes personal accountability and a true knowledge of the past. Reclaiming the narrative.♣



Arthur L. Mack
 FREELANCE WRITER
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Heroes Plaza Groundbreaking Held

A new look will soon grace Water Street as ground was broken for Heroes Plaza, featuring statues of sports hall of famers from Mobile including Hank Aaron and Satchel Paige.

Aaron and Paige will be memorialized with nine-foot-tall statues in front of the Mobile Convention Center along with fellow Baseball Hall of Fame members Billy Williams, Ozzie Smith and Willie McCovey, and Pro Football Hall of Famer Robert Brazile. The statues, made by Michigan-based sculptor Brett Grill, will be installed in Heroes Plaza once it opens. Construction on the project will take approximately one year.

The \$10 million project will be funded through the city's downtown tax increment financing and includes several enhancements to the area between the convention center and Cooper Riverside Park, including a new intersection, a roundabout and a revised drop-off area for vehicles. A seventh pedestal, without a statue, will be constructed to allow people to have their picture taken among the statues.

"This is about honoring our hall of famers, the Cooperstown Baseball Hall of Famers and the National Football League Hall of Famers from the city of Mobile," Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson said during groundbreaking ceremonies held in November. "It's been said that per capita, Mobile has more baseball hall of famers than any city in the nation and I also heard that in the NFL, Mobile may have more players than any other city."

"But this is about us being able to recognize those who have brought recognition to our city. This idea started with (former New York Mets star) Cleon Jones. It was in concert with the Mobile Sports Hall of Fame honoring the hall of famers in a project in the RSA Tower. That started the conversation. We wanted to put it in a place that was highly visible for visitors and it would be a magnet for visitors with the big bronze statues."

"They came to me and said, 'We need to honor you and not only you but the five other hall of famers in baseball,'" said Brazile, whose parents were present at the ceremony. "I'm just glad that my parents, who are both 91 years old, are here to see it."

Jones said the groundbreaking was a dream come true. He said it started as a dream and a simple idea.

-continued in next column... see **HEROES**

HEROES continued...

"When I started this dream, I was all alone," he said. "Now, I've got the City of Mobile that has followed into it. We've been fortunate that we've had a great amount of athletes come through this area."

Jones said he remembered a reporter asking him how Mobile produced so many great ball players.

"Hank Aaron used to say, 'It's in the water,'" Jones said. "Maybe it's true and maybe it's not, but we've been fortunate to have a great number of athletes come through this area."

Stimpson said the addition of Heroes Plaza will be another big thing to see when people visit Mobile.

"When I think of tourist dollars, (former mayor) Mike Dow comes to mind because he recognized what tourism means to any community," he said. "It's huge, because people typically don't come to see one thing; it has to be multiple things that people want to see."

"We have museums that people can see; we have Top Golf, which is one of the newest attractions. Heroes Plaza will be just another jewel in our crown for people to see in Mobile" ❀

Living In Bliss

Debra Braggs

VETERAN FASHION COLUMNIST
AND LIFESTYLE REPORTER



Stress Is Killing Us!

“These are the times that try men’s souls.”

Those famous words may have been penned way back in 1776, but never have they been more apropos today.

I don’t have to run down the list of recent horrific events that have plagued our country, our state and even our small slice of sunshine here on the Gulf Coast. From the lingering trauma of a pandemic to constant gun violence in our streets -- how can our souls not be weary?

The American Psychological Association (APA) released a survey titled “Stress in America 2023” and the findings are bleak. To sum up the data, the APA says Americans are a society experiencing collective trauma and the majority of us are doing nothing about it. When it comes to stress management, three out of five of us are struggling to cope and are bearing the burden alone.

Imagine this: You and four friends create a small circle of five; three of you are probably struggling emotionally and will not admit it because they don’t want to burden others. They feel embarrassed about it or just think “that’s life and I will get over it.”

The APA says stress puts the body on high alert and ongoing stress causes inflammation, breaks down the immune system, causes digestive issues, heart disease, weight gain and stroke. If we continue in this manner, we will lose more family members and friends to diseases like high blood pressure, cancer and even suicide. This is not acceptable. And it’s preventable.

Learning to deal with temporary stressors is a must. This is why I stress the importance of being intentional about your ‘joy.’ Again, being joyful takes work. And I’m not talking about temporary joys that come with special events or gifts. True bliss is found within. It’s the type of joy gets you through trauma or just a very tough day. This type of joy requires a mental shift – a determination to be happy and content no matter the circumstances.

Psychologist say we can train our minds to react differently to stress. However, this must become a daily practice. We have to convince ourselves that our health and families are worth it. Practicing tiny acts (i.e. “bliss breaks” and self-care moments) can trigger new habits and new responses to stressors.

Here are some great tips to get you started on your de-stressing journey:

MAKE STICKY NOTES WITH POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS.

In the morning, place one on your mirror that says: Good morning gorgeous (or handsome)! You’re going to have an amazing day! Place sticky notes in your workspaces that read:

- Challenges are opportunities
- I am stronger than my fear
- I will protect my boundaries
- I will put my energy into things that matter to me
- I deserve to be happy today

SECONDLY, TAKE THOSE BLISS-BREAKS!

You deserve 15 minutes of your day. Whether it’s a walk to “just breathe” or a long hot bath to re-boot, having a time and space to clear your mind is detrimental to good health.

-continued in next column... see **STRESS**

FRIDAY, MARCH 1, 2024, 7:00 P.M.
MOBILE CIVIC CENTER THEATRE, MOBILE, ALABAMA

SOULS TIME

MOBILE CIVIC CENTER

ticketmaster
VERIFIED TICKETS

The Civic Center Box Office or Ticketmaster.com

A MATTHEWS EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANT PRODUCTION
A PLAY WRITTEN BY JAPONICA BROWN COMPOSED BY YVONNE MATTHEWS
MADE POSSIBLE BY MOBILE COUNTY COMMISSION, COMMISSIONER MERCERIA LUDGOOD

STRESS continued...

LASTLY, TALK TO PEOPLE.

Three in five people in the APA survey said they had no one to share their everyday cares with. Being overwhelmed is NOT normal. Bearing the weight of world alone is NOT normal. It can actually be deadly.

If you have no one to talk to, seek online forums, support groups, therapists, clubs and visit religious organizations. The APA suggests these hotlines:

- **CRISIS TEXT LINE:** Text HOME to 741741
- **National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline:** 988
- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration National Helpline:** (800) 662-4357
- **Veterans Crisis Line:** 988 • PRESS 1 • Text 838255

Until Next Month, Keep Chasing Your BLISS!☘

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – JANUARY 29, 2024

Mobilian to Ring Closing Bell at New York Stock Exchange



In what can only be described as an historic event, Mobilian and Philips Healthcare Technical Support Specialist **Charles Johnson** will join company CEO Roy Jakobs Thursday to ring the closing bell at the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE).

The honor of ringing either the opening or closing bells regularly go to designated individuals from companies listed on the NYSE, but the privilege has also over time been afforded high-profile people like notable athletes, entertainers, educators, celebrated first responders and U.S. Presidents.

Johnson will join other African American members of his Philips team, selected by Jakobs from around the country, as special guests to mark the February 1st beginning of Black History Month.

Born to Mobile Mardi Gras costume designer extraordinaire Maggie Outsey and husband Thomas Johnson, the younger Johnson has turned his knack for computing into a career in healthcare laboratory science that has led to jobs with Franklin Primary Healthcare Center, USA Medical Center, and now Philips.

“I’ll carry the work of the descendants of Clotilda survivors, Africatown, The Avenue Cultural Heritage District, and that of the entire Mobile community with me to New York.” “This is truly special. It’ll be an honor to stand with my colleagues for the opening of Black History Month, said Johnson, a graduate of Murphy High School and Auburn University.

A leader in America’s healthcare industry, Philips (trading as Koninlijke, PHG on the exchange), focuses on better healthcare for more people worldwide, but especially those living in under-served communities.

On February 12, 1970, **Joseph L. Searles III**, the first Black Floor Broker in NYSE history, was the first African American to ring the bell in the Exchange’s 178-year history.



He was a partner in the firm of Neuberger, Loeb and Company and had also briefly played professional football with the New York Giants.

Johnson said when he stands Thursday where Searles and other notable Black Americans have stood “It will be something I’ll remember for the rest of my life. What a wonderful journey this has been.”

The closing bell ceremony is at 3 p.m. (CST) and will be televised on CNBC.

Big Zion AME Zion Church Represents at a Production of GEE'S BEND



Get your tickets!
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Mardi Gras Discount

WHERE: Fine Arts Theatre at MGCCC*
WHEN: Saturday, February 3rd at 3pm & 7pm

*Gulfport Community College, Dissonance County Campus, 2226 Switzer Road, Gulfport, MS 39507



Connect to Success!

Nathaniel Patterson

Named to LinkedIn LeadersHum: "Top 200 Biggest Voices in Leadership to Watch For" in 2022 & 2023, Coach, Columnist, Facilitator, Public Speaker and Trainer
CONNECT on LinkedIn -or- (727) 485.3980



Mobile Area Black Chamber of Commerce Making an Impact

The Mobile Area Black Chamber of Commerce (MABCC), started their fifth year, with their monthly meeting on January 24, 2024 at SpringHill College Byrne Hall.

Nationwide there is a need for organizations to advocate and empower Black Entrepreneurs. Two organizations that provide collaborative resources to local Black Chambers. The U.S. Black Chamber Network represents approximately 326,000 businesses nationwide, with over 145 chambers in 42 states. While the National Black Chamber of Commerce reaches over 200,000 Black-owned and online businesses.

U.S. Census data documents that 3.12 million Black businesses generate \$206 billion in revenue and has approximately 3.56 million jobs. The numbers document an average of 11.4 employees per business.

The Mobile Area Black Chamber of Commerce in the summer of 2023, launched a Minority Build a Business Accelerator Cohort, to assist minority businesses in enhancing business acumen, cultivate professional networks and growing their businesses.

At the January monthly luncheon meeting the MABCC discussed the launch of their second Minority Cohort. Board Member and Vice-Chair Ronald McCants recognized current membership and board members. MABCC Chairwoman Michele Wilson commented on current affairs and a call for membership. Board Member Ms. Lynn Campbell introduced the lunch meeting keynote speaker, Dr. Valerie James of Visionspot Enterprises, who reviewed her company services and solutions with a presentation titled, Creating a Healthy Organization.

In addition, to the above Walter Calhoun of Visit Mobile was honored as Member of the Month and Tyloria Crenshaw, SpringHill College was recognized as a Board Member. New Members, Rachel Robbins and Andea Wise. If you have not attended any Chamber meetings you will find that the networking before and after the meetings are truly a value point.

Contact the Mobile Black Area Chamber of Commerce for next meeting date, membership and other information on the next Minority Cohort and Black History Luncheon on February 29, 2024.

Website: mabcc.org or 251.239.9997.

As Always LET'S BE GREATER! ❖

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UNITY EVENT

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LIVE MUSIC

TABLING & FELLOWSHIP

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2024 Platform announcements by elected Democratic officials

The purpose of this free public event is for Democratic elected officials and partner organizations to come together and share their platform and policy priorities with the community prior for the 2024 Alabama Legislative Session which begins February 06, 2024. There will be live music, information tables for constituents, and an opportunity for fellowship with Democrats and elected officials from across the state.

Alabama House Democratic Caucus Chair
Barbara Drummond states...

“

This will be a fantastic event as we share our legislative agenda, which is a bold and inclusive vision for progress for all of us. A unifying vision, focusing on 'Your Freedom and Your Future.'

”



Arthur L. Mack
 FREELANCE WRITER
steppinoutnews@aol.com



MLK MEMORIAL BREAKFAST

THREADGILL: "Urgency Is With Our Youth!"



Mobile County Public School System Superintendent Chresal Threadgill was the keynote speaker at the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. 34th Annual Memorial Breakfast; The event was held at the Calirojae, located on Dauphin Island Parkway.

The theme of this year's breakfast, sponsored by the Port City Chapter of Blacks in Government (BIG), was 'Living the Dream: It Starts with Me.'

"How many of you have prayed for our youth?" Threadgill asked an almost sold-out crowd. "How many of you mentored youth in your community? How many times have you volunteered at a school? It is time for us to train for posterity to help our youth as a collective people."

Threadgill said he was grateful he had the opportunity to talk to the crowd about Dr. King's work and how the community could benefit from it. He offered a quick story about an experience he had.

"About 10 years ago I was invited to speak on a panel," he said. "It was a panel of African-Americans who were successful in their careers. The panel was held to discuss our struggle, our journey dealing with people who were judging us because of the color of our skin. The purpose was also to shed a light on Dr. King and the non-violent movement and how that made an impact on our career decisions, and our successes and accomplishments.

"Before the panel started, we were all trying to know the panelists. They were very impressive individuals. The guy to the right of me, he and I struck up a conversation. The first thing he told me was that he was forced to come to this event by one of his relatives; he didn't want to be there. He proceeded to tell me about his career, about how money he made, and the people he knew.

"I just listened, and then he proceeded to tell me, 'I don't know why I'm here, because I worked very hard for those accomplishments,' and (added) Dr. King and the civil rights movement had nothing to do with his accomplishments; his resume spoke for itself. Now, I'm from Toulminville, and I got hot all over. There are two reasons if you're from Toulminville to get hot all over; somebody's gonna get a whipping or you're gonna fight."

Threadgill said he wasn't the gentleman who sat to the right of him at that panel, and knew the reason why he was in a position to bring the message to the audience.

"I understand how I got here," he said to applause. "I understand what it took to get here; I understand about the sacrifices of others who risked their lives to get me here. I stand here to tell you that I do have a good resume, but if it hadn't been for some of the people who helped me, as well as Dr. King and the civil rights movement, no one would've ever read my resume."

Threadgill went on to quote parts of Dr. King's I Have a Dream speech: "Now is the time to make real promises of democracy. Now it's time to rise from the dark and desolate path of segregation to the sunny path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksand of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.

"We move closer to making Dr. King's dream a reality, but I have two questions for you: One of those questions is a rhetorical question...what is our dream now? Dr. King wrote

continued on Opposite Page...



Port City Chapter of Blacks in Government (BIG)

that dream more than 60 years ago, and nowhere in that speech he asked for material things for himself. It was a hope for the people.

“What is our dream now as a collective people? Just like that young man who sat to the right of me, he had dreams, but he had dreams for himself. As we’ve gotten successful, we’ve gotten complacent; we’ve only dreamed for ourselves.”

Threadgill’s next question was this: “What is our urgency now? I’m sure you can think of many things that are urgent in your life right now...family, jobs, paying bills, but what is our urgency now? In our community and in our collective group, as a drum major for education, I feel a lot of urgency is our youth. Homicides are the leading cause of death of black youth ages 10 through 24.”

Threadgill said on the average, 110 youth in Alabama die by guns each year.

“We need to plan to turn around our youth, especially our young black boys,” he said. “I’m going to address the elephant in the room; some of our youth have no respect for other’s lives.

Some of our youth have no respect for authority or adults, and quite frankly they have no respect for themselves.

“The time is now for us to stand and turn this vicious cycle around. Our youth need us; this is our urgency. Even though we have moved closer to Dr. King’s dream, it took more than Dr. King back then to make a difference, and it’s going to take more than one person today to make a difference. It’s going to take all of us, the people. It’s going to take all of us to understand that the urgency is our youth, and it’s up to us to believe and deliver to make that dream a reality.

Threadgill concluded his speech with a challenge. “Number one, remember how you got here, and never take for granted your resume because someone risked their lives for you to have that resume,” he said. “Also, remember to dream.

It’s okay to dream for self, but also let’s start dreaming as a collective unit, because we have to dream in order to make that dream a reality.

“Finally, we must know our urgency, and our urgency is our youth. We must always keep Psalms 127:3 in mind: Children are a gift from God; they are our reward. So let’s join together and train them as they are our future.”

“We hope that individuals were motivated by what Mr. Threadgill had to say in terms of the dreams of all our young people, which is to try and turn them around,” said Port City BIG President Dr. Reginald Crenshaw. “We are very glad and appreciate everybody coming out and supporting us,”

Crenshaw said the turnout was the largest in the history of the event, and said working on the problem of violence was a community effort.

“This was the largest crowd (we’ve had),” he said. “The importance is to what we take what he has told us in terms of trying to save our young people. We know we have crime in every area; gun crime is one of our major problems. We’ve just got to work on that as a community and a group of people.”

Threadgill told Steppin’ Out News it was important the community as a whole take Dr. King’s message of non-violence and use it as a means of eliminating youth violence, especially in African-American neighborhoods.

“I grew up in the community with underprivileged children, and it’s just a shame to see the violence that has taken place,” he said. “We need to be more concerned about our black youth, and this was a great platform to spread that message with Dr. King and non-violence. Education is the key. It’s not going to take just one person; it’s going to take all of us, the whole village, the whole community, to turn this whole situation around.” ❀



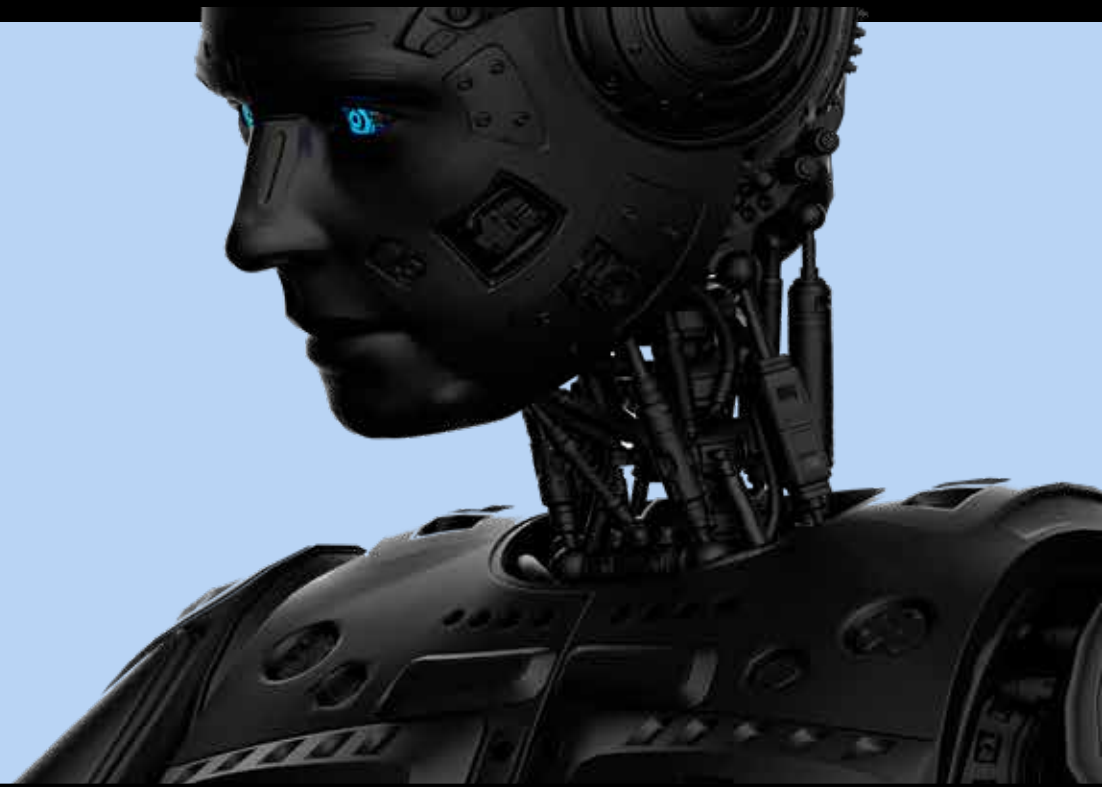
THINKING OUTSIDE OF THE BOX

Arthur L. Mack

FREELANCE WRITER

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It's NOT What it Seems!



For the last several months, I've been hearing about this thing called artificial intelligence (AI). Think about it...Artificial Intelligence...something that appears to be the real thing, but it's just a cleverly created substitute for the original.

I first heard about artificial intelligence during last year's Writers Guild of America Strike. When the strike jumped off, one of the WGA's concerns was the use of artificial intelligence. The WGA wanted artificial intelligence, such as ChatGPT to be used for research and facilitate script ideas and not to be used to replace them.

I thought to myself, Damn, if the Writers Guild of America was striking partly because of that, what about those of us who aren't even remotely connected to Hollywood? Then, it hit me...while there were those who thought AI could be a good thing, the potential was there for it to be used for sinister motives.

Let's talk about politics. If there was a tightly contested race, whether local, state, or national, some slick politician could use AI against his or her opponent and change the outcome of an election. Think of Roger Stone and some of his cronies using dirty tricks to smear an opponent by making it seem he or she said something that in reality, was not actually said at all.

But friends, AI is so sophisticated that a normally intelligent person would be fooled by it; that is, unless there was someone in your corner who can spot such tactics in a hurry. Like AI's more sinister cousin deep fakes, there's the potential for some very tragic consequences.

Imagine this scenario: Someone who is true to the people's cause is running for public office. A very savvy person who can manipulate AI could easily create a scene where our hero or heroine is doing something illegal, causing his supporters to turn against him or her. By the time the truth was discovered, it was too late, and the person's life was ruined.

Just think, my friends. How many good men and women's lives could be potentially ruined because someone used AI to destroy them? The answer is many.

Let's not even think about dating. If you thought catfishing and using social media to fool someone who was looking for love was bad, how bad do you think it would be if someone used artificial intelligence? Someone could use AI to portray his or herself as this handsome dude or fine sister and some lovesick individual could fall into a very deep trap.


Or even worse, what if someone was jealous of someone because they have a great relationship with someone of the opposite sex? That individual could easily do an AI creation of that individual and create a scene where he or she is with someone else, causing friction with that person's partner and causing a break-up... or worse. Lo and behold, Mr. or Ms. Jealous has a clear path to getting the partner.

I can hear it now...Man, she wasn't good for you, or Girl, I knew that man wasn't right. How's that for being low-down?

The potential to ruin someone's life because of AI is there — in fact, I'm working on a book where the main character has to deal with his reputation being left in tatters because someone who didn't like him went through great lengths to use AI and deep fakes to destroy him. I'm not going to give the plot away — you'll find out soon enough when it's published and you buy a copy.

But I digress.

All I can say is this: Artificial Intelligence may have its good points, but it could potentially lead to widespread abuse if one's not careful. We would all be served by heeding the old Marvin Gaye-Tammi Terrell song: Ain't nothin' like the real thing, baby.♣



The first step in liquidating a people, is to erase its memory. Destroy its books, its culture, its history. Then have somebody write new books, manufacture a new culture, invent a new history. Before long the nation will begin to forget what it is and what it was. The world around it will forget even faster.

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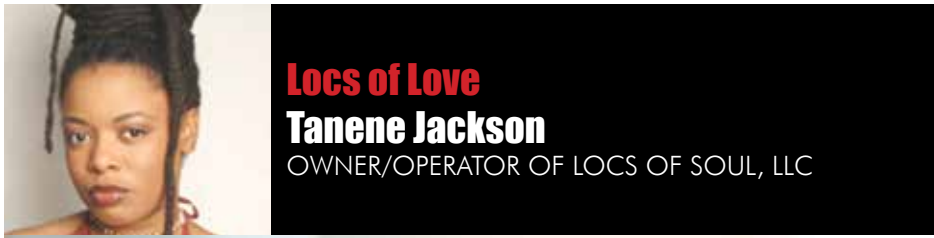


**Until the Lion
Tells the Story,
the Hunter Will
Always be the Hero!**
-African Proverb-

It is Our Duty to Share the Stories of Our Ancestors!



"Reconnecting the Best of the African American Diaspora of Mobile: PAST • PRESENT • FUTURE"



REDUCING STRESS

One thing in life that is constant and consistent is change. Although, it is inevitable and natural. Some people look at change as stress... a disruption. Adjusting to a change can become a positive, allowing for clarity, reflection, growth, and stability. Look at it like spring cleaning. "Out with the old... In with the new!"

Sometimes change allows relaxation for mental health breaks. A vacation if you will from whatever is causing dis-ease. Not allowing change to take place creates an environment of problems the body harnesses and manifests emotionally as well as physically. When we find ourselves sick, tired, exhausted, moody, experiencing weight gain, hair loss/thinning, experiencing outbreaks and inflammation, etc., the root cause may be stress related. Unfortunately, there are individuals whose norm is to function from stress. But are they really functioning?

Cortisol is a steroid hormone produced by the adrenal glands that is released into the bloodstream when the body is stressed. Having too much or too little cortisol can create health problems. That is why being balanced is important to your overall health. Here are a few ideas to bring stress levels down, and improving cortisol:

- Deep breathing exercises,
- Exercise
- Having fun, laughter
- Therapy for mental health
- Dietary changes
- Meditation
- Prioritizing responsibilities
- Connecting with nature.

These "stress-less" experiences can be done alone or with others. Enjoy. Be the change you want to see.

Like it or not.... change IS inevitable.♣



HAPPY NEW YEAR! As 2024 begin, while you are making your Resolutions to become a better person by getting physically fit, emotionally fit, spiritually fit, finding a new career, etc.; let us add financial fitness to this list. There are some simple things we all can incorporate into our financial life to prepare for the future.

Get Started:

Create a budget and stick to it!

Pay more than minimum or pay off those loans, bills, holiday shopping credit cards.

Stop impulse shopping!

If you buy lunch every day, try bringing lunch from home at least a few days a week.

Make it a practice to think before you spend (do I really need to make this purchase?)

Once you get these few simple habits put into place you will be ready for phase two...

Savings

Let us talk about SAVING! Having an ample savings account or a rainy-day fund is important. Below are some remarkably simple ways to get on track without it been a burden. Many say I do not have the extra money to save; however, we all can save a little.

Many banks and credit unions can help you begin this task by using their save n up plan.

This works without much effort on our part. Every time you make a purchase the financial institution will round up your purchase to the next dollar amount and put that amount in an interest-bearing saving account for you. Some institutions will match your savings up to a certain amount. Example (purchase \$25.73 will be rounded up to \$26). The extra .27 cents will automatically be put into savings. This looks small but will grow over time and you will not miss it.

Put all your spare change at the end of the day/week/month in a jar and watch it grow over time.

For the month of February, begin putting \$1 in an envelope and add to it each day.

\$1/day x 29 = \$29.00

Create your own method that will work for you!

Whatever you decide, make it simple and begin early.♣



Greg Cyprian
PUBLISHER/EDITOR
Steppin' Out News

Who Are You VOTING for in March?

There's a crowd running for the newly formed Congressional District 2 Race. Both the Democrats and Republicans have a host of candidates to choose from. The Democratic field hosts 11 candidates to choose from; the Republican field host 7 candidates. The initial vote will take place on March 06, 2024. If no candidate receives over 50% in the primary, a runoff election will occur on April 16, 2024. The General Election will be held November 05, 2024. So, Who You Got?

DEMOCRATS

- James Averhart
- Napoleon Bracy, Jr.
- Merika Coleman
- Anthony Daniels
- Shomari Figuers
- Juandalynn Givan
- Jeremy Gray
- Phyllis Harvey-Hall
- Willie Lenard
- Vital Patel
- Larry Darnell Simpson

REPUBLICAN

- Greg Albritton
- Dick Brewbaker
- Caroline Dobson
- Karla Dupriest
- Hampton Harris
- Stacey Shepperson
- Belinda Thomas

Over the next few months, Steppin' Out will comment and report on what we see and hear about these candidates. The paper will remain neutral and report honestly on these candidates for this very important seat. The Republicans now dominate as Alabama Representatives with a 6 to 1 advantage. Obviously as we get closer to November, there will be more information to pass on as one party wants to dominate with a all Republican front, and the Democrats trying to add a seat in this mostly Black district.

Our only recommendation is for you to make sure you get registered to vote. And when you vote, think about all you see from any candidate. What have you seen them do in your community and across the state? Do they stand up and fight on those issues that affect you or do you only see them for photo opportunities? Remember, this is not a popularity contest. You may like them but if you haven't seen them outside of election time, why would you elect them. Attend meetings, ask the hard questions, and tell them what you're looking for. If they are or have been in office, check their voting records. How did they vote? There are other more local elections coming up soon. What have those candidates stood up for? Have they been strong in the things you believe in or have they folded like a lawn chair because they haven't the Will to fight for you?

And, if you don't get out there to make your voice heard and demand better representation, please keep quiet and don't complain. Not voting means that you have not earned that right. ♣



Mobile selects Dr. Charlotte Pence as City's First Poet Laureate

Through a partnership with the Mobile Arts Council and Alabama State Council on the Arts, the City of Mobile has named writer and educator Dr. Charlotte Pence as its first poet laureate.

A published author and accomplished poet, Pence has been a professor in the English Department at the University of South Alabama since 2017. Her poetry has been published in the "Harvard Review," "Sewanee Review," "Poetry" magazine and other journals. Her books of poetry include "Code" and "Many Small Fires." You can find more of her work at www.charlottepence.com.

Currently, Pence serves as the Director of the Stokes Center for Creative Writing, which enhances USA's offerings in creative writing by sponsoring readings, lectures, forums, community projects, and other free public events. The Stokes Center also issues awards in poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction to USA students.

In her honorary position with the City of Mobile, Pence will continue a similar mission to encourage young Mobilians to explore poetry and find their own unique voices. Over the next two years, she'll be leading educational workshops for local youth, participating in public events and writing original works of poetry about our historic community and its people.

"I am honored to be selected as Mobile's inaugural poet laureate," Pence said. "My hope is to uplift as many voices as possible from this vibrant, multi-faceted community. I want to showcase the diversity of poetic voices that already exists here and encourage more people into poetry."

"There is great power in the written word, and there are so many stories worth telling in the City of Mobile," Mayor Stimpson said. "We are thrilled to have someone as talented and passionate as Dr. Pence representing our community. I also want to thank the Alabama State Council on the Arts and the Mobile Arts Council for their partnership and leadership on this initiative."

Thanks to funding from the Alabama State Council on the Arts, Pence will receive an honorarium stipend of \$5,000 over her term as poet laureate. The City of Mobile will also publish poems by Pence in a book that will be made available at future community events.

#

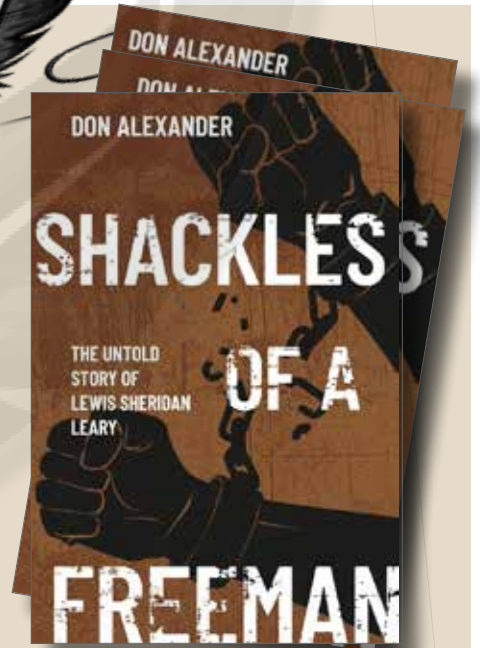
Literary Corner...



Don Alexander

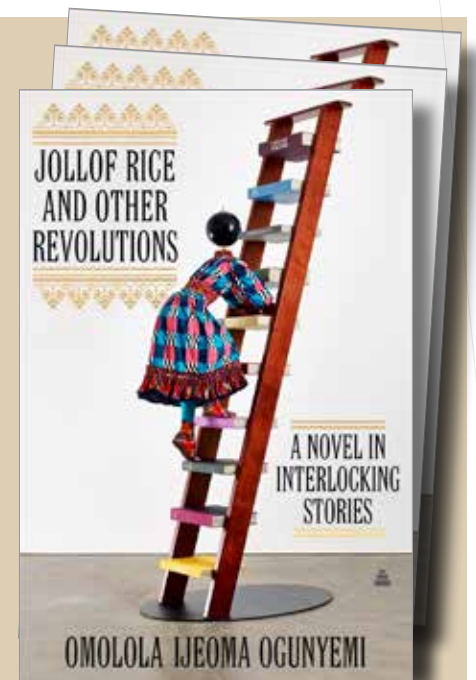
This book is Historical Fiction about Lewis Leary who was born a freeman in 1835 in North Carolina. He was a key figure in the famous Harper's Ferry Raid before the Civil War. This novel brings light to the sacrifices and bravery of those who fought against slavery in the 1850's.

Don Alexander is the son of a 30 year US Army Veteran and a grandson of WW2 and Vietnam War Heroes. He is an accomplished writer in Los Angeles, CA. He spent his childhood on military installations around the world which brings a diverse global perspective to his writings. He studied communications with a focus on Public Relations and a minor in Sociology at Edinburgh University in Pennsylvania. He moved to LA to pursue his dream of screenwriting. ♣



Omolola Ijeoma Ogunyemi

A book exploring Nigeria's past, present and future through the eyes of a trio of fearless globe-trotting women, this collection of stories represents poignant and intimate narratives that relate to Africa with Jollof Rice being a staple dish in African Culture. The Author was born and raised in Ibaden, Nigeria. She is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania with bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees in Computer Science. This is her first book which has been selected as a New York Times Editor's Choice. ♣

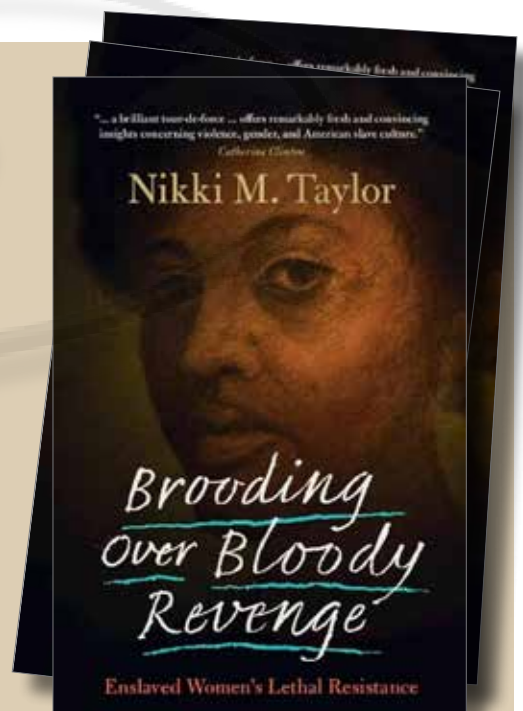


Dr. Nikki M. Taylor

Taylor is a professor of History at Howard University who specializes in Urban, African American Women and Intellectual History. She earned her B.A. at the University of Pennsylvania and her Masters at Duke. She is the author of four books on 19th century African American History.

This book delves into stories taken from legal context that spans across centuries of stories about enslaved Black Women who used lethal force as the ultimate form of resistance. This book strongly challenges assumptions that enslaved women only participated in covert, non-violent resistance when in fact they constantly seized justice for themselves and organized through revolt.

These stories show how the acts of lethal force were premeditated and how these women planned on how and when their enslavers would die, what weapons and accomplices were necessary, and how to evade capture in the aftermath. This book provides a window into the lives and philosophies of enslaved women who had their own ideas about justice and how to achieve it. ♣





Black American Education

JOSEPH MITCHELL PHD

Citizen Musician & Politician



Moments In Time

Paulette Horton



Let's start something! When was the last time you wrote a letter to anyone? Have you ever written a letter BY HAND? We're not referring to a card or a note, but a full letter. Disregarding the mechanical mail, bills and assorted junk that you get delivered to you by the US Postal Service, what mail do you get that is hand-written to you - not to "occupant"?

This writer would like to challenge you to pick up a pen and several sheets of paper and then to write a letter, not to just anyone. The challenge is that you write a letter to your child or to a child with whom you have daily contact! Not only will you write this letter, you will also address an envelope to the child and then MAIL IT to that child. Because you have daily contact with that child, you can ask the child about having received that envelope and letter. If you're the one who checks the mail daily, then when the envelope comes then call it to the child's attention and have the child open the envelope in your presence. Then, have the child read aloud the information on the envelope and then read aloud the letter.

Thousands of children and young adults have NEVER received an envelope addressed to them, nor have they received a personal letter. Furthermore most have never written a letter of any type. Your letter will contain questions however to which the child will respond IN WRITING in a letter of their own BACK TO YOU. Formulate your own real questions: "Where do you sit in class?" "Explain what happens when you get into class." If the child is too young for these type questions then cut a cartoon puzzle from a magazine, insert it in your letter to them and have them complete the puzzle when their "letter" arrives. The child will then mail it back to you.

Using your envelope as an example, and if age-appropriate, have the child address an envelope. Regardless of age, explain to the child how to neatly and correctly address the envelope to you. Explain the importance of the purpose and location of the return address and the postal stamp.

This challenge to you is intended to serve several purposes. Obviously it will give a child a new communications experience, as archaic as that experience may be in light of modern technology. Beyond the receiving and sending of actual postal mail, you will have the occasion to see the child read and write. You may already have certainty

continued in next Column...

Dr. James P. DIXON

One of the earliest physicians I can remember was Dr. Dixon. A graduate of Talladega College and Meharry Medical School, he was born July 15, 1913 in Mobile, Alabama.

Dr. Dixon was the cardiologist for St. Martin De Porres Hospital in Mobile for 19 years. He was active in the community as he was chairman of the board of directors of former Gulf Federal Savings and Loan association, a member of the Board of Pensions and Security and the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce.

As a community leader, Dixon was active in the Boy Scouts of America, for which he received the Silver Beaver Award.

Dr. Dixon died January 25, 1980. He is buried in Oaklawn Cemetery.



continued...

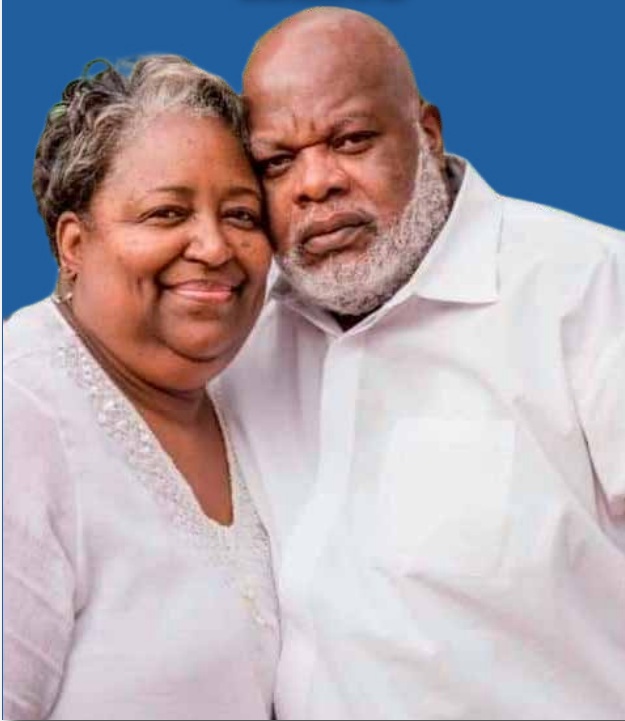
about the child's capacities in these regards but this will be first-hand and unfiltered through a school or teacher. Imagine: You can get spelling words and sample tests from a teacher and mail them to the child AND have the child know that you know!

The last thing here is to help the child to write a personal letter to their favorite teacher. Let's do all letters in cursive, if age appropriate. Help the child in organizing what they want to write; in getting the correct address; and in choosing the correct title (Mr., Mrs., Ms., etc.) and salutation. Children seldom get personal letters from anyone. Teachers seldom get personal letters from students. Imagine the surprise!! One-upsmanship [DEFINITION: One-upmanship – The art or practice of outdoing or keeping one jump ahead of a friend or competitor.] School and academic performance is competition throughout.

We don't know about the reader but when the mail comes to our house and we read the return address as "IRS," our ears perk up! We're paying attention. Hence the challenge. Let's have the child pay attention at school and at home. We can do this! "This address is not only where I live, it is also where I get my mail."♣

Hats Off

HAPPY 50TH WEDDING Anniversary!
James & Gladys Kepney
WHITE

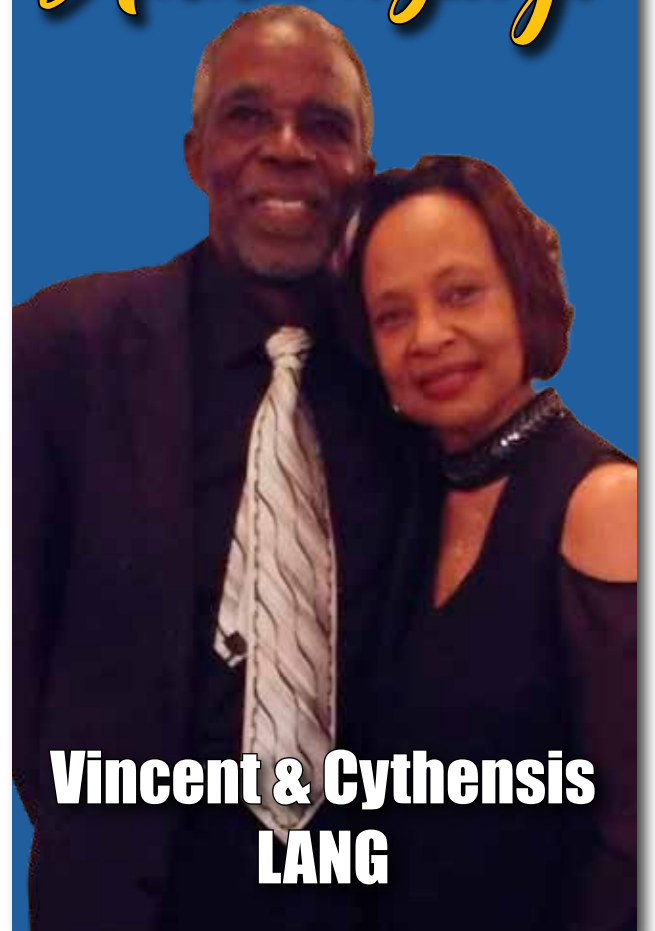


Congratulations!



Shamonee Baker
Named **ANCHOR**
NEWS 5 THIS MORNING
WKRG TV

HAPPY 47TH WEDDING Anniversary!



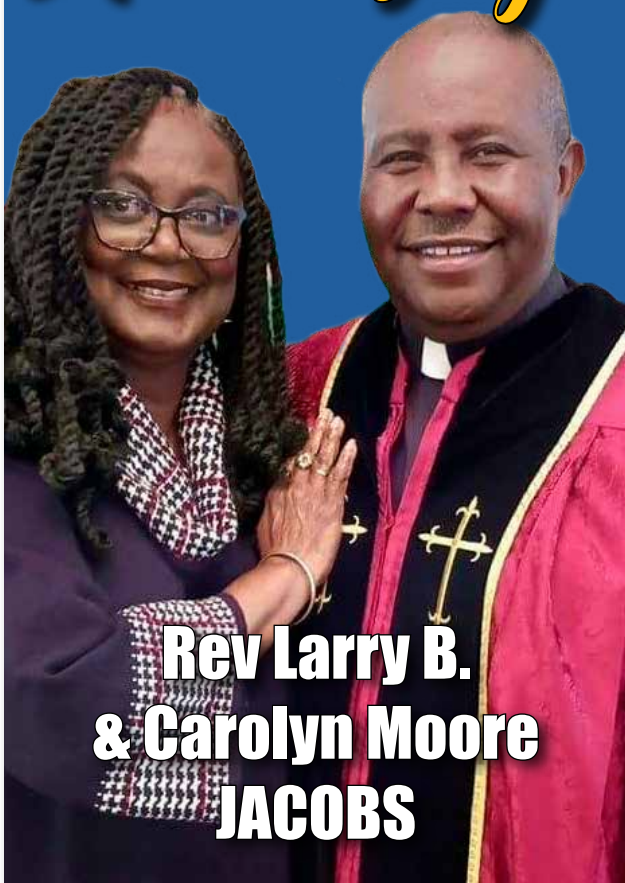
Vincent & Cythensis
LANG

Congratulations!



Nettie Curtis
Named **CRYSTAL DOVE**
Zeta Phi Beta Sorority
Nu Zeta Zeta Chapter
(62 Years of Membership)

HAPPY 37TH WEDDING Anniversary!



Rev Larry B.
& Carolyn Moore
JACOBS

Congratulations!



Rosalind Mitchell
Wallace

Named
2023 CHRIST THE KING
MEDAL RECIPIENT
St. Joseph Catholic
Church Maysville

Hats Off

HAPPY 19TH WEDDING Anniversary!
Timothy & Glenda Marks
WITHERSPOON



Congratulations!
Dr. Alicia Fonette
Named the new
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
New home for
National Council for
BLACK STUDIES
NATIONAL OFFICE

Congratulations!



Fire Chief
Johnny Morris, Jr.
Mobile Fire & Rescue
Officially Sworn into Office

Congratulations!

Ja-Den Carson Brooks



TEEN VOLUNTEER
OF THE YEAR
Blount High
School Junior

HAPPY 19TH WEDDING Anniversary!
Rod & Trithenia
FERRELL



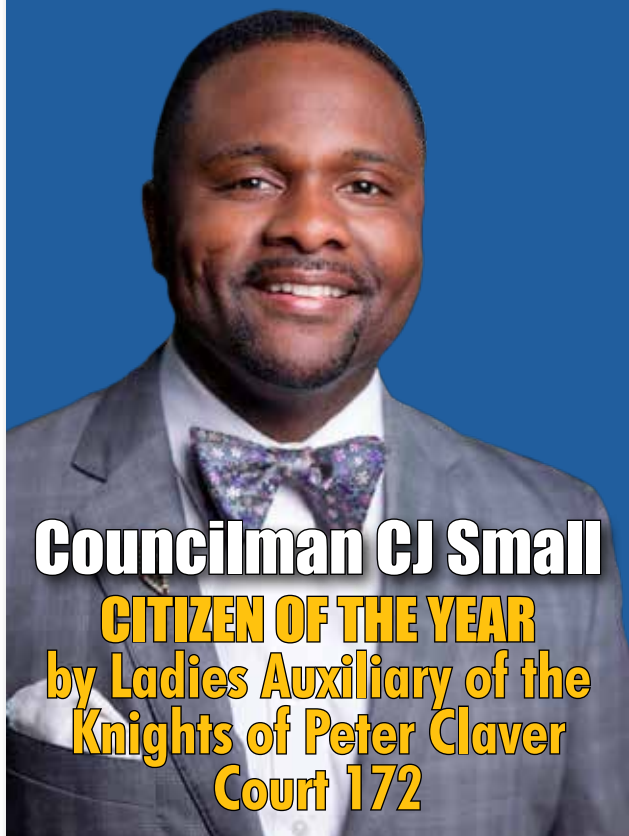
Congratulations!



Mareena Robinson
Snowden
1ST BLACK WOMEN
with a
Nuclear Engineering PhD
from MIT

Hats Off

Congratulations!



Councilman CJ Small
CITIZEN OF THE YEAR
by Ladies Auxiliary of the
Knights of Peter Claver
Court 172

Kudos!



Mikayla Davis
STUDENT COUNCIL
MEDIA OFFICER
Council Traditional School

Congratulations!

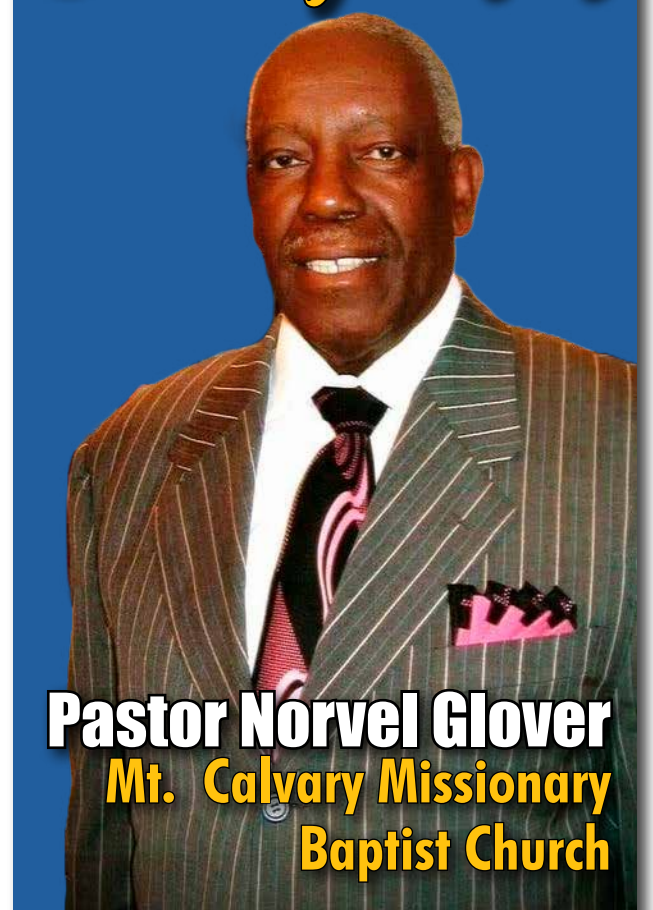


Crystal Nettles
GRADUATE w/Honors
Indiana University
Nursing School



Congratulations!
Phillip Armstrong
Awarded
SENIOR COMPANION
OF THE YEAR

Birthday Wishes



Pastor Norvel Glover
Mt. Calvary Missionary
Baptist Church

Hats Off

Congratulations!



Lola Marie Lewis

**MAGNA CUM LAUDE
GRADUATE**

**BS IN BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE
University of AL Birmingham**

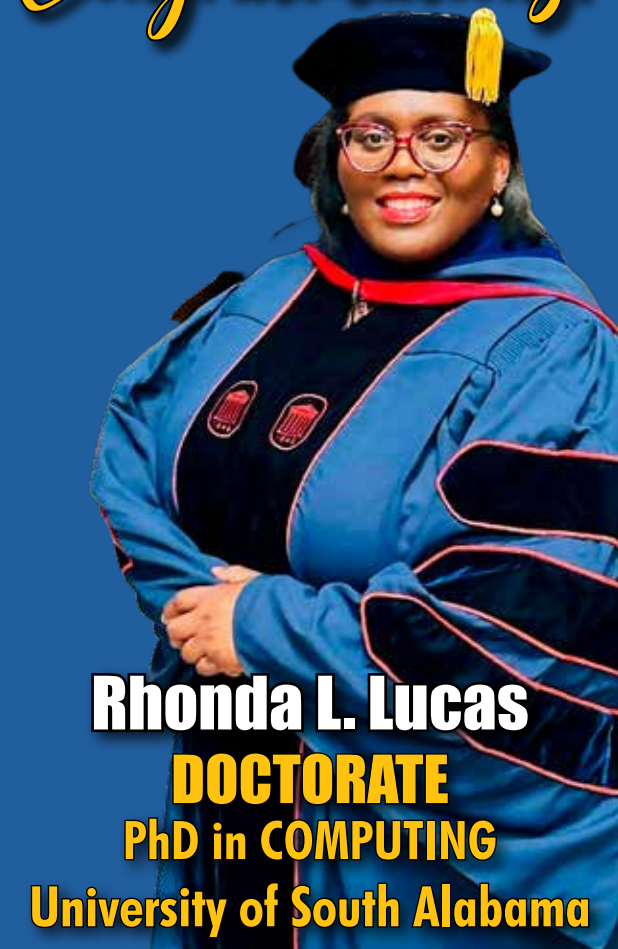
Birthday Wishes



Eloise Braggs

**Celebrated
84 YEARS of Blessings**

Congratulations!



Rhonda L. Lucas

DOCTORATE

**PhD in COMPUTING
University of South Alabama**

Congratulations!



Anthony McGill

**MUSICAL AMERICA'S
2024 INSTRUMENTALIST
OF THE YEAR**

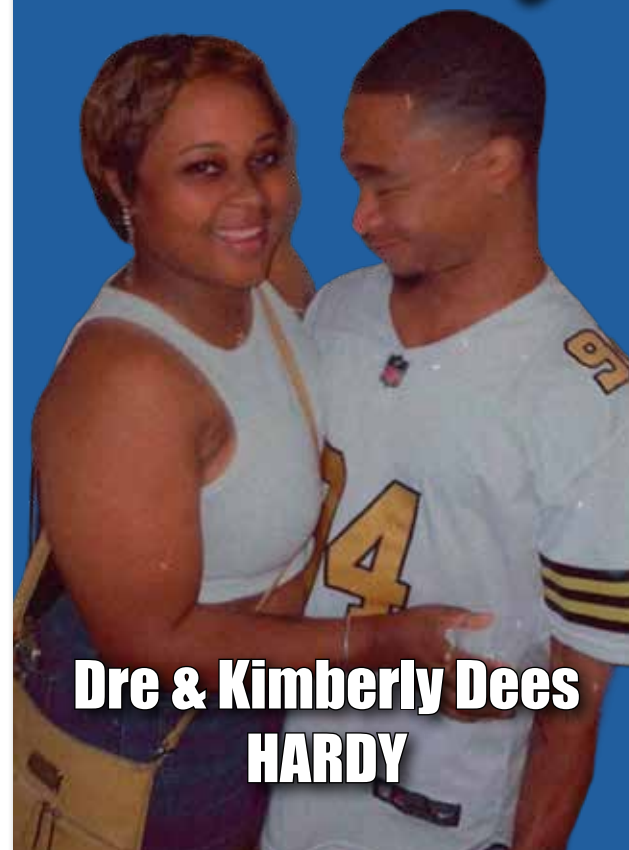
Congratulations!



Kim Richardson

**FIRST BLACK
CERTIFIED YOGA THERAPIST
in Alabama**

**HAPPY 14TH WEDDING
Anniversary!**



**Dre & Kimberly Dees
HARDY**

40 UNDER 40

CONGRATULATIONS!

Local **BLACK LEADERS** selected by Mobile Bay Monthly Magazine

2024 CLASS OF 40 UNDER 40

To see the full list of 40 Honorees... mobilebaymag.com



Kyle Burney-Lamar

ACADEMIC SUPERVISOR
K-12 Mathematics
Mobile County Public School Systems

Sharrell Edmond, M.Ed

Mobile County Public School Systems
Blount High School
COMMUNITY OUTREACH CHAIR/DIRECTOR
Joe Jefferson Playhouse



Alicia D. Evans, M.D.

OWNER/CEO, ARDOR SCRUBS
Family Medicine Physicians
Franklin Primary Health Care

Ashley Williams Hogue, M.D.

TRAUMA, ACUTE CARE & BURN SURGEON
Center for Healthy Communities Director
USA Health and USA Center for
Healthy Communities



Angelica Howard, M.A.

AUTHOR/EDUCATOR
St. Paul's Episcopal School

Sheamon McCants

REGIONAL BRANCH ADMINISTRATOR
Navigator Credit Union



Dr. Brandon Spradley

DEAN SCHOOL OF SPORTS BUSINESS
The United States Sports Academy

Maxine Walters, ESQ.

ATTORNEY
Dearman Law Firm



Black Lives Matter

Tommy Green

FACEBOOK BLOGGER
FORMER EDITOR FOR MOBILE BEACON



Black People's Problem is NOT KNOWING HISTORY

Sisters and brothers, if we knew how our ancestors suffered, we would be further ahead in gaining freedom, Justice, and equality, because we would know that the past explains the present and provides a positive road map into the future. We wouldn't be depressed as soon as we go through a trying moment because we know our history.

We made more progress in the 1960s than any other time since we arrived on these shores. Why isn't the 1960s celebrated in the Black community? After being shown and told that we don't have any history worth studying, we have exhibited that mindset. We will not be able to discard the negative perception of ourselves until we study our ancestors' history, then we will see the value of studying African history. When I was the editor of the Mobile, I was amazed at the number of young African Americans who didn't have an idea of the accomplishments of the Mobile Beacon. It is because Black people haven't been taught to value their accomplishments.

Cleretta Blackmon, deceased CEO/Editor, Mobile Beacon was funeralized on Tuesday, February 8, 2022. She was the daughter of the late Frank P. and Lencie M. Thomas. Frank accompanied Authurine Lucy, to the university's first student of color, onto the campus of the then all-white school. Crusaders that he and his wife were, they led the publication of The Alabama Citizen in Tuscaloosa and the Selma to cover stories in Alabama's Black Belt, and soon after started The Mobile Weekly Review in Mobile, Alabama on June 1, 1943, which would later become The Mobile Beacon and combine with the Alabama Citizen from north Alabama to become the state's longest published family-owned African American Newspaper.

How could a people who knew their past history allow a jewel in the community to be closed?

During the Black revolution, we were proud of ourselves, including color of skin, hair, and eyes, and this was threatening to white racists because they have become comfortable with Black people being submissive to their desires. As we become proud of who we were, the white community will feel threatened because we have been submissive to the whim of white people.

In the earlier 1970s, I was in the U.S. Navy, stationed in San Diego, CA, and I had a disagreement with a Black neighbor who felt that Black people didn't need to study Black history because they were integrated into America, so we are (be) Americans now. I was a firm believer that Black people were making a decision that would cause irreparable harm to the Black community. How do the oppressed ethnic groups maintain and gain additional freedom when their children's values are the same as the oppressor's children. Black youth are suffering today because they don't know who they are.

If you are aware of your ancestors' history, you will be able to discern what is happening in 2023. Our ancestors were tied together for approximately four to six weeks in the bottom of ships. The terrible conditions for those captive aboard slave vessels on the infamous Middle Passage across the Atlantic meant dysentery, fever, small-pox

BLACK PEOPLE continued in Next Column

Mobile Area Black Chamber
of Commerce

**BLACK
HISTORY
Luncheon**

Thursday, February 29, 2024
Renaissance Mobile Riverview Plaza Hotel
11am CDT
64 S. Water Street
Mobile, Al. 36602
Visit WWW.MABCC.ORG

BLACK PEOPLE... continued

and eye diseases, were common, compounded by over-crowding Black People's Problem is not Knowing History-21 and poor ventilation below deck. It seems to me that white people hated us from the beginning of their encounter with us.

Black pastors and Christians, Jesus was on the throne while our ancestors were in slavery/segregation for approximately 350 years. The freedom that we have today didn't come from praying alone. We marched, boycotted, filed court cases, and reduced resources that white racists were receiving.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Goggle Vortex Pact org. This voter initiative was established by Dr. Chris Jones who ran for governor of Arkansas in the last election. He was on Laurie Daniel Favours show on Sirius XM Radio. Dr. Jones talked about a riot in Elaine, AR that Black people will not talk about. I am from Marion, AR, and I had never heard about this travesty. I wrote a four-part series on "Black women and men raped" during slavery, and I received only one acknowledgement. I am going to keep posting those articles because we need to know, so we can grow. "BLACK LIVES MATTER!" ❀



Arthur L. Mack
 FREELANCE WRITER
steppinoutnews@aol.com



PEACE FORUM AT MOBILE GOVERNMENT PLAZA

Dozens of people attended a Peace Forum held at Mobile Government Plaza on Jan. 13 to highlight organizations working to prevent violent crime and make people aware of programs designed to do just that.

Some, however, were skeptical because the Forum was not held in a traditional format. Instead of citizens being given the opportunity to address members of the panel, they were encouraged to write down suggestions. Sabrina Mass, a Steppin' Out columnist who attended the forum, expected even more.

"I came to the forum to listen to the panelists and see what they had to say and understand their points of view," she said. "I definitely thought this forum was going to be more for the public and public participation. I'm definitely concerned that the people (in the audience) didn't get to engage with our questions and get some answers back.

"We also have to go out into the communities. Everybody who wants to see a change, we have to go where the problem is because we have to go to these communities that are impacted by gun violence. You may have a fear of going into those neighborhoods where there is violence, but at what point are we going to put that fear aside?"

Organizations such as the Mobile Police Department, AltaPointe Health, the Mobile County Public School System, USA Health, and several other groups gave presentations about the programs available to the public. Members of the audience were also encouraged to write down solutions which would be used to create solutions for problems facing the community.

Mobile City Councilman Cory Penn, who suggested having the forum after being concerned about the outbreak of crime in the city of Mobile, called on faith, community, and government leaders to come together and address violence in the community.

"It was a great turnout," he said. "People were interested and engaged in making a plan and moving forward in our city. A lot of information was given out and it talked about how different organizations were working together already, but also how to create a synergy and how we can do it better and leverage our resources.

"That's the ultimate plan and how we can engage that, so that's vital. If we can do those things, we can create success." "As Dr. King saw 60 years ago, we must develop a mindset of working together to create this environment of peace that begins with the environment of love," said Rev. Marvin Lue, the pastor of Stewart Memorial CME Church. "I think that's still applicable today."

Joshua Jones, the city's Youth Violence Coordinator, said, "I think the main thing is going back to the three points we always discussed, and that's ensuring they (youth) are ready and prepared for life; that they have all the tools go out and be successful, positive, contributing members of society; and as well if they're connected with caring individuals.

"Lastly, we want to ensure they're connected and engaged with these incredible messages in the community so that when it comes to coming up with creative and productive solutions in addressing youth violence. "It's not just us throwing out ideas; it's us sitting and collaborating with the population that's most affected by this issue and guide us to coming up with solutions to problems they have."

During the 90-minute presentation, representatives from organizations ranging from mental health to victims' services to housing talked about the various programs designed to help Mobile be a safer and better place.

One such program, Bridging the Gap, operated by MPD Cmdr. Curtis Graves, is designed to improve relationships between law enforcement and youth. The focus is on students in the ninth grade, since statistics show that is the grade level where there are the highest numbers of suspensions and arrests from grades K-12.

"That's a pivotal point between middle school and high school," he said. "We wanted to foster relationships with these students to help them stay in school by actually talking to law enforcement and being familiar with law enforcement in their area where the schools are."

The other program, the SCORE program, helps address reducing the footprint of high crime activity. It is an 18-24-month program.

continued on Page 29... see **PEACE**



Just let it go. How many times have you heard someone tell you that? The reason for letting things go is for your benefit. It doesn't excuse what someone has done to you, but it frees you from living a life full of stress. Please don't imagine that by your staying mad, you will somehow affect the other person. You are doing more harm to your body. Your blood pressure starts to rise, your head hurts, you're frowning all the time, and your attitude changes towards the people who are there for you. So, who really is feeling the effects behind you staying mad? Just let it go!

What good does it do to avoid a person or situation? I have known people to move to another city and state just to keep from running into a person that has hurt them. The irony of this is that they'll leave, but still allow that person to run rent free through their mind. So, what's the point of even leaving? The things that we fear happening never happens the way we imagine it anyway. I've heard people say, that the best way to deal with a situation is to confront it head on. This is not to say to start a confrontation, but the point is to allow yourself to rely on God to help you with the situation. God can move your enemy. He can place him underneath your footstool, and he can even allow you to find favor in the eyes of your enemy, leaving them wondering what's really going on. What's really going on is prayer. Have you heard of PUSH? It means: Pray Until Something Happens. How can you ever build endurance or faith if you don't stay the course and allow God to train you? Don't let people control your mood. Don't let your emotions hi-jack your thinking because it will take you to a place that you don't want to go. Control your emotions and don't let your emotions control you. ❀

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) has scheduled a Public Hearing and Availability Session


Modification of a Synthetic Minor Operating Permit for Hosea O. Weaver & Sons, Inc.

When: Monday, February 5, 2024
Availability Session at 5:00 p.m.
Public Hearing at 6:30 p.m.

Where: Robert Hope Community Center Gymnasium
850 Edwards Street
Mobile, AL 36610

Copies of the public hearing notice and proposed permit are available electronically at <http://adem.alabama.gov/newsEvents/pubHearings.cnt>

A recording of the public hearing will be available to view on ADEM's YouTube Channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDwu2w3FpGgT4ZOjhk6Z0w>



PEACE... continued from Page 28

"We started identifying low-level drug offenders and non-violent offenders," Graves said. "We allowed them to participate in the program and utilized the 18-24-month barrier to ensure all the barriers that are in their life to keep them from being productive are overcome." However, Lorenzo Green, who also attended the forum, said more is needed to help children who are affected by crime.

"It was a lot of information put out, but a lot of that information was a little mixed information," he said. "When we look into the community, we see what a lot of the children are needing and what's not in the community. This forum can be the start of something great, but when police officers or law enforcement are involved in a rehabilitation program, a lot of children don't want to go in that direction. They say, 'I don't feel safe because my buddies think I might be working with them.'"

Green said the emphasis should be more on self-reliance.

"Going forward, we need to stop depending on other people to finance our programs for our own children," he said. "We need to get more involved, and once we come together as a people, we got to leave titles at home. We have to find ways to psychoanalyze and determine what is best for our children."

Meanwhile, Penn said information taken from cards that were turned in will be used to help come up with solutions.

"We're going to hopefully put into a power point so we can see what everybody's talking about," he said. "Then, we'll host our next meeting, share that information and start creating a plan." ❀

CLASSIFIEDS

PUBLIC NOTICE

Commonwealth National Bank, who's headquarter is located at 2214 St. Stephens Rd, Mobile, AL, 36617, has filed an application with the Controller of the Currency on May 31, 2023, as specified in 12 CFR 5 for permission to relocate our branch office at 2681 Springhill Ave, Mobile, AL, 36607. All accounts serviced at this location will be available at the 2214 St. Stephens Rd, Mobile, AL 36617 branch and our new location at 3959 Government Blvd, Mobile, AL 36693. Any person wishing to comment on this application may file comments in writing with the Director for District Licensing 500 North Akard Street, Suite 1600 Dallas, TX 75201 or by email at Licensing@occ.treas.gov, within 30 days of the date of this publication.

EMPLOYMENT

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REQUIREMENTS

Valid Driver's License, Transportation
Some Construction Experience, Ability to Work Some Weekend Days

PAY SCALE

\$12-15 per hour depending on skill set. Will be able to work up.

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Email: crconstruction.mobile@gmail.com

Phone: 251-751-6545



ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

The RSA Tower, 201 Monroe Street, P.O. Box 303017, Montgomery, AL 36130-3017
(334) 206-5300 • FAX (334) 206-5520 Web Site: alabamapublichealth.gov

NEWS RELEASE

Free radon test kits offered for Alabama households

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Nick Swindall, (334) 290-6248

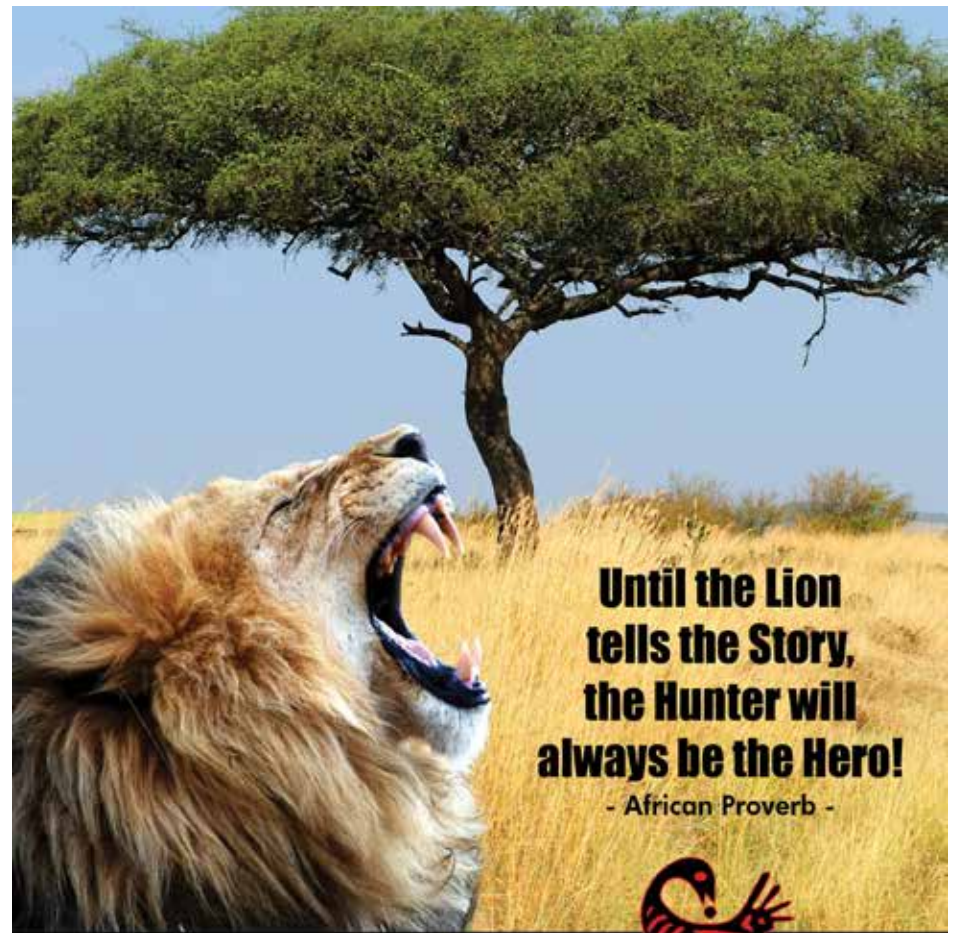
Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. To increase public awareness of radon and promote testing and mitigation, the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) is offering one free radon test kit per Alabama household as part of an initiative to reduce dangerous radon exposure.

Radon is a radioactive gas that cannot be seen or smelled. It is produced when uranium breaks down in soil and water. Radon is harmlessly dispersed in outdoor air, but it can increase the risk of lung cancer when it is trapped in buildings. Anyone can get lung cancer from breathing in high levels of radon over time. Symptoms of dangerous radon exposure include persistent coughing, shortness of breath, and chest pain.

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1 in 15 homes has a radon problem. In Alabama, 15 counties have been identified as having the highest potential for elevated radon levels: Calhoun, Clay, Cleburne, Colbert, Coosa, Franklin, Jackson, Jefferson, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Limestone, Madison, Morgan, Shelby and Talladega.

The only way to tell if a home has a radon problem is to check with a radon testing kit. Alabama households can order one free radon test kit online via ADPH. Recipients are only responsible for paying a return shipping fee.

For more information about the ADPH and radon testing, contact Nick Swindall at John.Swindall@adph.state.al.us and visit the radon web page at www.alabamapublichealth.gov/radon.



**Until the Lion
tells the Story,
the Hunter will
always be the Hero!**

- African Proverb -



**It is Our Duty
to Share the Stories
About Our Ancestors!**



**The Branch Located at 2861 Springhill Avenue
HAS PERMANENTLY CLOSED**




**We Have Moved WEST to Serve You Better!
Visit Our New Branch Location
3959 GOVERNMENT BLVD**
Intersection of Government Blvd and Azalea Road
Mobile Alabama 36693

When God gives you
a new beginning,
it starts with an ending.



Be thankful for closed doors.
They often guide us
to the right one.



Steppin' Out  *News!*

"Reconnecting the Best of the African American Diaspora of Mobile: PAST • PRESENT • FUTURE"

**DON'T MISS OUT!
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in the
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Info@SteppinOutMobile.com





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Unwritten:

Archaeology and Oral History of Jim Crow Mobile



NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE
HUMANITIES

Free Admission

**On Exhibit Now
Until April 2024**

Meet the Lewis, Owens, and Griffin families from Africatown, Down the Bay, and Davis Avenue in Mobile, Alabama.

In the mid-20th century, development transformed their neighborhoods, erasing homes, schools, and shops from the landscape. Though their houses are no longer standing, we can learn their stories through **Archaeology & Oral History.**

USA Archaeology Museum

6050 USA South Drive (251) 460-6106

southalabama.edu/org/archaeology/museum

