

# TEXAS INFORMER



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P.O. Box 332  
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*Bringing you positive news about local people since 1995!*

## William Skinner of Alto Weeping Mary Celebrates 99 years

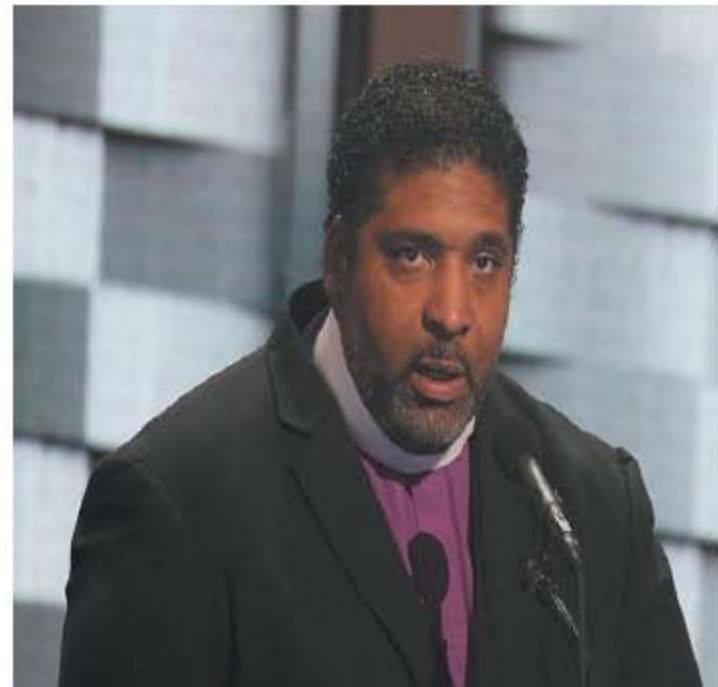


William Barber's Prophetic Voice Demands Voting Rights and Justice for All

See page 3



Russell Simmons speaks at a convention of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives in Washington, D.C. See page 11



William Barber's Prophetic Voice Demands Voting Rights and Justice for All See page 11



## Prayer Vigil Held in Rusk

In light of the recent attack and killings of Dallas law enforcement officers and innocent black men around the country, Cherokee County law enforcement, city officials and law enforcement and citizens came together for a community-wide prayer vigil to pray for the community.

The event took place Thursday, July 27th on the south Court House lawn. The event was initiated by the Rusk Chamber of Commerce in partnership with the City. Tara Hood was MC. Those who spoke or lead the group in prayer were Mayor Angela Raiborn, Sheriff James Cambell, Bro. John Robinhawk and City Councilman Walter Session along with Bro. Jason Hoffman of The Tree of Promise.

## Voter Registration Day Set

Rusk, TX.- Voter registration has been set for August 12, 2016 in Rusk, Texas. According to Emerson Griffin, he and community volunteers, will be available from 11:00AM through 3:00pm at the Texas Informer Newspaper conference room located at 941 Loop 343 Rusk. A tent will be setup outside with voter registration cards available. Contact Emerson Griffin for additional information.

## Jacksonville Urban Ministers Alliance Sets Panel Discussion

Jacksonville, TX. - A panel discussion on race relations in America and the process of reconciliation has been set for Saturday August 27, 2016 from 9:00am until 1:00pm at the Norman Activity Center. This is an opportunity for all residents of Cherokee County to come and participate in the discussion of race relations in America. For additional information please contact Rev. Al Gibson at (903) 721-7597.



**EDITORIAL**

**Black Newspapers Matter**



Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. (NNPA President and CEO)

a new generation of freedom-fighting journalists, publishers and African American owners of newspapers and media companies. There is a huge, qualitative difference between media that is Black-owned and non-Black-owned media that is targeted to Black consumers. Numerous national studies have documented that Black-owned newspapers remain the "trusted and respected" source of news, empowering success stories, and cultural aspirations for more than 45 million Black Americans. The inaugural Discover the Unexpected (DTU) NNPA Journalism Fellowship Program this summer at the Howard University School of Communications supported by Chevrolet has done remarkably well in identifying and encouraging the next generation of gifted, talented and committed young journalism scholars. The National Newspaper Publishers Association is pleased with the positive and transformative results of the DTU fellowships.

In 2017, we will celebrate 190th anniversary of the Black Press in America. Since the first publication of Freedom's Journal on March 16, 1827 in New York City, Black-owned newspapers have led the way when it comes to raising a voice of consciousness for Black America. Today, in 2016, Black-owned newspapers still matter. Black Lives Matter. Black Votes Matter. Black Press Matters. In order to overcome racial inequality and injustice, we have to emphasize the importance of nurturing and mentoring the rise

The NNPA fellows scored front-page news features in NNPA member newspapers across the nation. In addition to attending both the Republican National Convention in Cleveland, Ohio and the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia, Pa., the NNPA fellows completed assignments that covered a wide range of subjects from Muhammad Ali's legacy and Black arts and culture to contemporary Black family life, the 2016 Olympics in Rio, mass incarceration, new data on police and prosecutorial misconduct and abuse, and the struggle to preserve Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). This summer, Brandi Montgomery and Brelaun Douglas worked at the "Atlanta Voice," Briahna Brown and Mckenzie Marshall at the "Chicago Defender," Victoria Jones and Rushawn Walters at "The Washington Informer," and Tatyana Hopkins and Sidnee King worked at the Michigan Chronicle. Black-owned newspapers are businesses and employers that continue to serve the economic development interests of Black communities. As the economy in

Continue page 5

**Open Letter to the Hancock Family**

Dear Hancock Family,  
I pray this email finds you well. Those who attended the 2016 Chicago family reunion are already aware that the SF Bay Area family was chosen to host the 2018 Hancock Family Reunion! The reunion is scheduled for the third weekend in July, as it has been in the past, which will be July 13th to July 16th, 2018. A family Facebook page is in progress, and we are working on the details in terms of location, costs, events and timelines. We want to ensure that we are obtaining as much input as possible, so we will be forwarding a survey in the coming weeks as we begin preliminary planning for this wonderful event. Additionally, we would like to request that each family enlist a point person from their family to assist in getting the word out (locally), address any questions, and communicate suggestions to the host family. Once the email/contact list is confirmed I will send a follow up email regarding this request. I would be remiss if not to say thank you to both the Kansas City and Chicago committees for their outstanding job in planning and hosting the last 3 reunions! We could not be more honored and excited to host the next Hancock reunion, and can only hope to do as great a job, as you all have to make these events the success they have been for our exceptional family.

Love and miss you all,  
Your hosts - The Thomas Family (Rhonda, Marquis, and Cynthia; descendants of Ora Hancock)



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**Mt. Olive Baptist Church**  
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Announces  
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Sunday August 15th 3:00PM with  
Rev. Jimmy Foreman Speaker  
and nightly August 15, 16 and 17th  
7:00PM with Rev. K. B. Clater  
Speaker

**Letters to the Editor Policy**  
We welcome your letters to the editor. Please send to P. O. Box 332, Rusk, Texas or [informernews08@aol.com](mailto:informernews08@aol.com). Letters must include name of the sender.



# William Skinner Celebrates 99 years surrounded by family and friends

Visiting Weeping Mary is always like visiting with family. The 151 year old community, located west of Alto, Texas off highway twenty-one is populated by families, the Moore's, Thackers, Greens, Parkers, Skinners and others whose family roots have helped to populate and keep Alto strong. The family atmosphere is created by those who are always willing to greet those who live outside the community, share community history, and more than likely food at whatever event is going on.

William Skinner, a high spirited fellow of 99 years celebrated his birthday at home, where he lives, surrounded by family. He sat grinning and joking with those who came to visit. His daughter Vertie Martin, who lives next door, placed a huge box containing a birthday cake on his lap and stated the viena sausage cans on the cake were part of the decorations because he loves vienna sausage. "He began stocking his freezers with meat in January of this year," said Rosie Skinner, in preparation for the barbeque today. He wants to make sure there is enough of everything for everybody. Every year he gets excited thinking about his birthday and everybody getting together."

The young men were barbequing and the women were coming and going with delicious covered dishes of salads, vegetables and desserts. People arrived from Dallas, Houston and surrounding communities. Mr. Skinner was born July 27, 1927 in the Weeping Mary Community. His Mom was Ellie Skinner and his dad Floyd Skinner, Sr.. After his mom passed away His Dad remarried and eventually became the father of twenty-one children.

William attended Weeping Mary School and church. When he was a young adult, families did basically what they do now, worked and went to church. He farmed, picked and chopped cotton. 1941 was the year he got married. He farmed at home and for other people raising animals and crops. That year he had worked and saved money. He gave half of it to his Daddy and buried the rest. He said people didn't bank back then but kept their money safe by placing it in a tin can, digging a hole in the ground and burying it. William has the personality and the happy spirit of a much younger person and on this day family and friends enjoyed him as much as he enjoyed them.



Mitilda, Caitlyn, Mrytle, Jakelle and Ellie and Mr. Skinner front and center.



Odean Easily, William Skinner and Pamela.



## WHAT'S COOK'N



## Breakfast Casserole

### Ingredients:

Nonstick cooking spray  
 1 pound ground maple pork sausage  
 6 slices soft hearty white bread  
 One 8-ounce package shredded triple Cheddar cheese  
 8 large eggs  
 2 cups whole milk  
 1 teaspoon dry mustard  
 1/4 teaspoon salt  
 1/2 teaspoon seasoned pepper

### Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Spray a 13- by 9-inch baking dish with nonstick cooking spray.

In a large skillet, cook the sausage over medium heat, stirring frequently, until browned and crumbly, about 10 minutes; drain well on paper towels.

Cut and discard the crusts from the bread. Cut the slices in half, and arrange in a single layer in the prepared baking dish, cutting pieces to fit as necessary to cover the bottom of the dish. Sprinkle with the sausage and cheese.

In a large bowl, whisk together the eggs, milk, mustard, seasoned salt and pepper; carefully pour the mixture over the cheese.

Bake casserole until set and golden, about 40 minutes. Let stand for 10 minutes before serving.

## CHRISTIANITY



## Are You A Virtuous Woman?

Proverbs 31:10-31 King James Version (KJV)

- 10 Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.
- 11 The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.
- 12 She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.
- 13 She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.
- 14 She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar.
- 15 She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.
- 16 She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.
- 17 She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms.
- 18 She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night distaff.
- 19 She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the candle.

- 20 She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.
- 21 She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet.
- 22 She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple.
- 23 Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.
- 24 She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.
- 25 Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.
- 26 She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.
- 27 She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.
- 28 Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.
- 29 Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.
- 30 Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.
- 31 Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.

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# Court relaxes Texas voter ID law for election

AUSTIN — Voters will have more options when presenting personal identification at the polls for the Nov. 8 general election, Texas Secretary of State Carlos Cascos announced last week.

Pursuant to an Aug. 10 federal court order, Cascos said if a voter is not able to obtain a form of approved photo ID, the voter may vote by: (1) signing a declaration at the polls explaining why the voter is unable to obtain a form of approved photo ID; and (2) providing one of various forms of supporting documentation. Supporting documentation can be an original, certified birth certificate, a valid voter registration certificate or one of the following:

- Current utility bill;

- Bank statement;
- Government check;
- Paycheck; or
- Other government document that shows the name and address of the voter.

The forms of approved photo ID are:

- Texas driver license issued by the Texas Department of Public Safety;
- Texas Election Identification Certificate issued by DPS
- Texas personal identification card issued by DPS;
- Texas license to carry a handgun issued by DPS;
- U.S. military identification card containing the person's photograph;
- U.S. citizenship certificate containing the person's photograph; or
- U.S. passport.

The court-ordered change to voting requirements came after the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit in July ruled Texas' stringent "voter ID" law put an unconstitutional burden on minority voters. The Fifth Circuit instructed U.S. District Judge Nelva Gonzales Ramos of Corpus Christi to approve less-restrictive requirements, which she did. Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton agreed to the changes in requirements for the November election, but said he plans to file an appeal.

Voters with questions about how to cast a ballot may call 1-800-252-VOTE.

## Convicted Felons Can Register and Vote

United States Citizens age 18 and older who have committed a felony and been proven guilty may qualify to vote..

Requirements are:

- (1) Completion of probation requirements
- (2) Completion of Parole requirements
- (3) Must have registered to vote 30 days prior to election

Questions

Voters with questions about how to register or cast a ballot may call 1-800-252-VOTE.

# Texas Death is linked to Zika



An infant who died in Harris County recently had microcephaly linked to the Zika virus, the Texas Department of State Health Services announced in August. During her pregnancy, the agency said, the mother was in Latin America, where she was infected. The baby acquired the infection in the womb and test results confirmed the baby's condition and link to Zika.

The Department of State Health Services has been emphasizing precautions, specifically for travelers and pregnant women, through an ongoing public education campaign and via [www.TexasZika.org](http://www.TexasZika.org).

### Black Newspapers Matter from page 2

the United States continues to rebound from economic stagnation and recession under the leadership of the first African American President, it should also be a national priority to ensure the advancement of the economic well-being of

Black families, businesses, and communities.

In the face of historic, political opposition led by the Republican-controlled Congress, President Barack H. Obama, has achieved leadership success in restoring and revitalizing the U.S. economy. In particular, the automotive industry has set new records this year in automobile sales. Thus, we note, with appreciation, those companies in the automotive sector that have been supportive of the NNPA during these difficult and challenging times. General Motors brands continue advertise with the NNPA and as a consequence contributes to the sustainability of the Black Press in America. In particular, .

See Black Newspapers Matter page 7



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# Mt. Pleasant Harrison celebrates 2nd year

## Rev. Lionel Whitaker speaker for Mount Pleasant Church fall revival



Rev. Lionel Whitaker, Pastor of Simpson Chapel Baptist Church, will be the speaker for the Mount Pleasant C. M. E. Church Fall Revival. The Revival will be held on Sunday evening September 25, 2016 at 3:00p.m..

The church is located at 138 Reeder Street. The Pastor is Geraldine Harrison. The public is invited to attend.

Rusk - Left to right- Donnie Mansel, Geraldine Harrison, Jimmy Foreman, Walter Session and H. R. Waggoner. A second anniversary celebration was held in July for Geraldine Harrison, Pastor of Mt. Pleasant CME Church. Stewards pictured above made presentations to Rev. Harrison and Rev. Jimmy Foreman who was speaker for the service. The Christian Methodist Episcopal church pastor was assigned to the church by the CME Conference through the Bishop and North Tyler District Elder. Rev. Harrison has been reassigned and will return to Mt. Pleasant for another year.

### A Prayer

Dear Lord, thank you for making a home within me so I may rest secure in you. Because You are my dwelling place, I am never alone.

In Jesus' name, Amen



Mt. Pleasant Church youth were ready to shed their top covers down to swim suits and hit the lazy river, water slides and wave pool at the Villages indoor Water Park, Flint Texas on July 26th. They, along with eight adult chaperones were treated to a full day of relaxing fun. They were treated to breakfast, lunch and dinner on this special day. Not pictured is Tre' McGown, Destyne and Eddie Harris.

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# Lorenzo and Florence Franklin Celebrate 51 year Anniversary



In 1965 Florence and Lorenzo decided to get married. On September 1, 1965 her father, Sam Richardson drove the two of them to Rusk to the home of Rev. Will Johnson, where they were married.

Today the Franklins live in Jacksonville. They are the parents of two daughters. Florene is the neice of the late Geneva Henderson of the Rusk Elm Grove community.

Black Newspapers Matter  
from page 5

Chevrolet has been outstanding in its support of Discover the Unexpected scholarships as part of the current NNPA fellows program. Chevrolet also increased its advertising with many NNPA newspapers this year. It is our hope that this successful pilot program will be continued and even expanded in the upcoming academic year.

Long live Black-owned newspapers and the struggle for freedom, justice and equality. Yes, Black-owned newspapers surely do matter.

Learn more about the Discover the Unexpected (DTU) program at <http://www.nnpa.org/dtu/> and use the hashtag #DiscoverTheUnexpected on Twitter. Follow us on Twitter @BlackPressUSA and @NNPA\_BlackPress and like our Facebook page at NNPA Black Press.

## 2016 Stewart/Kellum Family Reunion held in Rusk



Rusk, TX. -The Elmer and Augusta Kellum Stewart family reunion was held in Rusk, Texas on Saturday, July 9, 2016 at the Rusk Civic Center.

The group enjoyed a catered meal, bingo, dominoes, gospel singing, basketball, dancing and a pool party which began at 5:00pm.

The late Elmer and Augusta Stewart were parents of Annie Faye, Trudy, Linda, Atheria, Eddie Lee, Larry Elmer, Royal and Emerson. Elmer Stewart of Rusk was the MC. Detailed family history was shared and the oldest members of the family were recognized. Margie, the only surviving sister of Augusta was present.



## Obituaries

### Glenda Kay Whitaker

#### Davis

Services were held July 23, 2016 at 11:00AM at Bowens Temple Church, Jacksonville, Texas with Pastors Don E. Jackson and Claudell Anderson officiants.

She was born August 1, 1946 to parents Woodrow Wilson Whitaker and Archie Mae Anderson. She grew up in Jacksonville, Texas and attended Fred Douglass High School.

She accepted Christ at an early age and joined Calvary Baptist Church where she remained a member until death.

Glenda was employed with Astro Air for 30 years until her health failed. She also worked as a custodian 10 years for JISD.

She met and married James Davis who preceded her in death. No children were born to this union.

She loved having family gatherings, listening to gospel songs, working puzzle books, and playing games on her tablet.

Glenda ended her earthly stay and was called home to be with the Lord on Sunday July 17, 2016. She was preceded in death by her husband, parents and two brothers.

She leaves to cherish her memories a son Wennie (her dog), four sisters: Betty Jean Smith, Grand Prairie, Tx., Mattie Jean Johnson, Mary Alice Whitaker, both of Jacksonville, and Cerester Ann Johnson Tyler, TX., three brothers: James Ray Whitaker of Jacksonville, James L. Whitaker of Tyler, and Willie Whitaker Athens, TX.; a special niece, Niecy

Canady who was her caregiver for many years, a host of other relatives and her pastor Archie Tinsley whom she loved dearly. The service was under the directions of Community Funeral Home of Jacksonville, Tx.

### Demetric Lyons, Sr.

Services for Demetric Lyons, Sr. were held Saturday July 16, 2016 at Sweet Union Baptist Church with Rev. Derry Hinton officiating. He was called into eternal rest on July 9, 2016. He was born to parents Jeanette and the late James Earl. Demetric attended Jacksonville High School, southwest Baptist University and proudly served our country in the U S Army. He was preceded in death by his dad, James Earl, brother Kendrick L. Clark, and grandmother Mattie Clyde Thomas Lyons.

His survivors include his mother Jeanette Earl and father Ricky Clark of Palestine, three children Dylan Helm, Cayden Lyons and Demetric Lyons, Jr.; granddaughter Lilly Helm and two sisters Ashunti (Victor) High, Jamila Lyons, brother Christopher Earl and Ryan L. Clark; his girlfriend Kristyn Elmer and the mother of his children Natalee Helm, a host of neices and nephews, aunts, cousins, friends and loved ones. The service was under the directions of Mercy/McGowan Funeral Home of Jacksonville.

### Theodore R. Miles

Mr. Theodore R. (Big Boy) Miles was born in the Larissa/Jacksonville/Bullard Texas area. He grew up and attended church and school in the area. He remained a faithful member of the Larissa CME Church until his health failed. This beautiful life came to an end on Sunday, July 10, 2016 in Cherokee County.

He served in the US Army from 1942 to 1946. While serving he achieved honors.

He worked for many years at Andrews Lumber Company until he retired and became a farmer.

His first wife Ida Mae Adams and a daughter Quetta preceded him in death. In 1965 he met and married Lillie Pearl Williams. To this union two daughters were born, Eula and Laura Miles. His daughter, Eula also preceded him in death in 2010.

Theodore raised a grandson, KreShard Harris as his own. He loved to spend time with him.

Siblings who preceded him in death were brothers R. C., Jack, Barnett, Edgar, and sister Laura Rattler.

He leaves to cherish his memory his wife of 50 years, Lillie P. Miles

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Continue Obituaries from page 8

Mr. Miles

a daughter Laura Miles, syblings William (Irene , Sue) Alice Blanton (Hubert), and Lorene Brooks; grandchildren Tandy (Edron), KreShard; Great Grandchildren Cordaryn (Bubba) A 'Kira and Cam'ron. Special friends Delandra

and Vic Swindell and earthly angels. "The Street Heat" of Jacksonville, Texas and a host of neices, nephews, cousins and friends. Pastor Kerwin King and Rev. Merlene Williams officiated.

Services were under the directions of Community Funeral Home.

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# Citizens 1st Bank

Margarett Perkins, Laura Perkins, James I. Perkins and Dr. L. Michael Metke President of Tyler Junior College enter into agreement making possible the Rusk TJC Citizens Promise. The James I Perkins Family Foundation and Tyler Junior College established this scholarship program for Rusk High School graduates. The top fifty-percent/qualifying students will have \$8000. scholarships to TJC which began with the class of 2014.



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# EXCEL BEYOND JAIL: A PATH TOWARDS PROGRESS, A PLAN TOWARDS PROMISE

FORT WORTH, TEXAS – On August 2, 2016, the Tarrant County Commissioner’s Court was given a clear update by Dr. Meghan Hollis with Tarleton State University regarding the final report for the landmark six months Tarrant County Jail Use Study.

This report was the catalyst of Commissioner Roy C. Brooks, County Criminal Justice Coordinator Les Smith and the Tarrant County Criminal Justice Steering Committee.

“We have a lot of work to do,” says, Tarrant County Commissioner Roy C. Brooks once the presentation was completed. County Judge B. Glen Whitley and other Commissioners acknowledged the importance of the study and agreed that the hard work of the Tarrant County Criminal Justice Steering Committee was progressing in the right directions. “Keep Working,” agreed the entire Tarrant County Commissioner’s Court.

“Poor Lives Matter. This is a groundbreaking research report on the conditions of the Tarrant County Jail,” says Reverend Kyeve Tatum, a leader with the civil rights group and member of both the County’s Criminal Justice Steering Committee and Truancy Reform Steering Committee.

“The report reads clearly that African-Americans make up the smallest population in Tarrant County, however blacks make up the largest percentage of people that can not afford to pay bail. This has created an alarming case of the criminalization of poverty because they are doing additional time simply because they can not afford to bailout of jail,” says Reverend Tatum.

The public can review the entire Study online and watch the August 2nd Commissioner’s County meeting and hear Dr. Hollis’ presentation. “This is a watershed moment in Tarrant County and I’m honored to serve with an incredible



The 2016 Tarrant County Jail Use Study Reveals African-American and other poor citizens make up the largest number people that are unable to of concerned people. This work is truly something special.

Judge Whitley, Commissioner Brooks, the Commissioner’s Court, Les Smith, Dr. Hollis and the entire Steering Committee worked together. The Tarrant County Jail Use Study was conducted and presented by:

Dr. Meghan Hollis  
 Assistant Professor and Director of Institute for Predictive and Analytic Policing Science  
 Email: [hollis@tarleton.edu](mailto:hollis@tarleton.edu)  
 Office: 330C Ft. Worth  
 Phone: 817-484-4394  
 Link: <http://www.tarleton.edu/criminology/>

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1593	Diamond Dollars Overall Odds are 1 in 2.52	\$50	8/12/16	2/8/17
1727	Hit \$200,000 Overall Odds are 1 in 3.80	\$10	8/13/16	2/9/17
1677	Find the 9's Overall Odds are 1 in 4.42	\$2	8/22/16	2/18/17
1702	Funky 9's Overall Odds are 1 in 3.80	\$5	9/28/16	3/27/17
1630	Super Weekly Grand Overall Odds are 1 in 3.97	\$10	9/28/16	3/27/17

For detailed odds and game information, visit [tollfree.org](http://tollfree.org) or call 1-800-375-6886. Must be 18 or older to purchase a ticket. The Texas Lottery supports Texas education and welfare. © 2016 Texas Lottery Commission. All rights reserved.

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# Simmons, Rush Card Fund Program to Keep the Peace between Police and the Black Community

By Stacy M. Brown (NNPA News Wire Contributing Writer)

"I have a healthy fear [of being pulled over]," said Simmons who was a keynote speaker at a convention of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE) in the nation's capital on Tuesday, July 19. The other day I was pulled over in the Hamptons and I was scared. I was really scared," he said.

"There was a rabbi behind me and [the officer] told the rabbi, 'You go ahead and keep it moving.' I told the rabbi to stay right here. I didn't think they were going to abuse me, but I was scared."

Simmons remarks came after recent tragic events involving police officers and young Black men in Baton Rouge, La., Falcon Heights, Minn., and Dallas, Texas.

At the NOBLE conference, Simmons and RushCard announced the expansion of their partnership and support of The Peace Keepers, a nonprofit whose goal is to maintain peace in communities where gun violence is high and whose mission is to bridge the growing wedge between law enforcement and the African-American community. The Peace Keepers are also partnering with NOBLE in an effort to strengthen relationships between the Black community and law enforcement. Simmons spoke of building stronger relationships between communities and the police, restoring community faith

and trust in law enforcement. He also discussed ways to reduce community deaths at the hands of law enforcement as well as methods to help eliminate violence towards police officers.

"My heart is broken for the families of Alton Sterling, Philando Castile and the law enforcement officers in Dallas who senselessly lost their lives," Simmons said.

"While I am saddened and outraged, I realize that throwing my hands up in frustration won't accomplish anything," he said. Simmons continued: "RushCard is prepared to help finance The Peace Keepers and the valuable work [The Peace Keepers founder] Captain Dennis Muhammad is doing in communities throughout the country. I also look forward to partnering with NOBLE to bring law enforcement to the table to build bridges that will ultimately save lives."

Muhammad, who also attended the NOBLE conference, said men in particular and the community in general must take responsibility to help make their neighborhood a decent and safe place to live. That also means working in partnership with law enforcement, he said. Muhammad said that we no longer view the police as friends and helpers,

# William Barber's Prophetic Voice Demands Voting Rights and Justice for All

By Stacy M. Brown (NNPA News Wire Contributor)

The headlines blared almost non-stop. "Rev. William Barber Rattles the Windows, Shakes the DNC Walls," NBC News said. "The Rev. William Barber dropped the mic," the Washington Post marveled. And, "Americans who'd never heard of Rev. William Barber II won't be able to forget him after last night," said Ari Berman of the political website "The Nation." Even celebrities were awed. "I'm an atheist and I'd go to Rev. William Barber's church in a second," King of Queens actor Patton Oswalt said. "Just to get levitated by his voice." Barber hasn't always held the national spotlight, but he's never sought it out either. As the President of the North Carolina State Conference of the NAACP, Barber has worked in the trenches to deliver strong messages that oppose hate, violence and oppression.

"We have always insisted that some issues are not left versus right, but right versus wrong. Racism is not a liberal or conservative issue," Barber said. "Subverting democracy is not partisan. It is immoral. It's just plain wrong."

According to Barber, North Carolina's voter suppression law that passed in the wake of the infamous 2013 Supreme Court Shelby County

v. Holder decision, was a major culprit in subverting democracy in poor and Black communities.

Earlier this summer, the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in favor of Barber and the NAACP, the League of Women Voters and other groups that had filed suit on the day the Governor Pat McCrory signed the law.

The decision exposed the racist intent of the extremist element of our government in North Carolina," Barber said. "Just think of what that meant. It would have an effect on all the southern states and it would tip the scales in the election."

Based on the ruling, North Carolina voters will not have to show a voter ID in the state in November or in any future election, Barber said. "North Carolinians will enjoy the full scope of early voting opportunities previously available, and will not be denied needed safeguards to protect the ability to exercise the right to vote including the option of same day registration," he said. Barber continued: "We know that this decision is a step closer to a freer, fairer electoral system in our state and in the nation. It is our duty to continue this fight until barriers based on race are swept away as ancient history."



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