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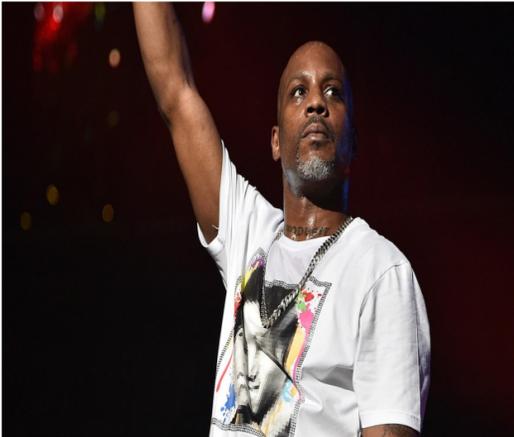
MICHIGAN BULLETIN

Celebrating 25 Years

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R.I.P. EARL "DMX" SIMMONS 1970-2021

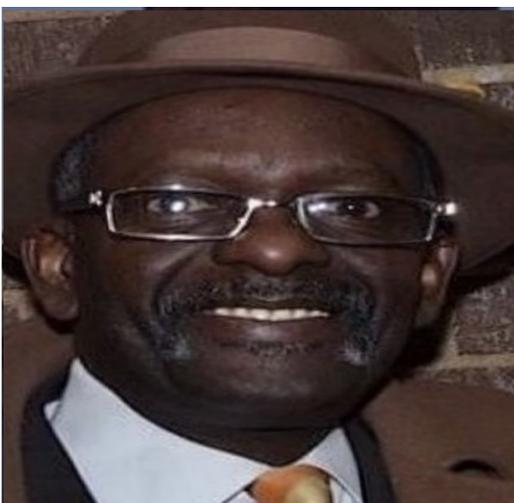


MINORITY HEALTH SPECIAL EDITION



Low vaccination rates in minority communities stem from barriers to access, misinformation, and safety concerns

R.I.P. THEO HARVEY 1950-2021



Overcoming COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy in Minority Communities

Minority communities are among the hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States but have lower rates of vaccination than other groups. As of March 2021, the majority of patients who have received at least 1 dose of a COVID-19 vaccine are White (67%); only 9% are Hispanic, 7% are Black, 5% are Asian, 2% are American Indian or Alaska Native, and <1% are Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.

In a recent webinar hosted by *The American Journal of Nursing*, nursing experts examined the causes of and strategies to overcome vaccine hesitancy in Black, Hispanic, Orthodox Jewish, and other underserved patient populations.

Vaccine hesitancy often stems from misinformation about vaccine efficacy and safety, lack of trust in the government and pharmaceutical companies, fear of deportation among undocumented immigrants, as well as inaccessible vaccination sites in underserved communities. Some patients wonder if COVID-19 death rates have been inflated for political purposes, if the disease is really that bad, and whether the benefits of the vaccine outweigh the risks of serious adverse effects.

Kristen Choi, PhD, MS, RN, emphasized the importance of giving the public clear and accurate information and trusting that they can handle, in some cases, complicated information. When administering the COVID-vaccine, clinicians should ask patients about their concerns and take the time to explain how and why the vaccines work, anticipated side effects, and what is happening in the body when side effects occur, she said.

Patients may need to be reassured that none of the COVID-19 vaccines currently in use contain a live virus and cannot cause COVID-19, said Dr Choi, who is an assistant professor of nursing and public health at the University of California, Los Angeles. Also, some patients believe a common conspiracy theory that the mRNA vaccines (Pfizer and Moderna) will alter their DNA, which is not the case.

Facts to counter concerns on vaccine safety were presented by Janell Routh, MD, MHS, of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and are linked [here](#).

Racism and the COVID-19 Pandemic

In Black communities and other communities of color "we are dealing simultaneously with a pandemic of racism in this country that is rooted in antiblackness and this country's refusal to reconcile its very racist past," said Sheldon D. Fields, PhD, RN, CRNP, FNP-BC, AACRN, FAANP, FNAP, FAAN, associate dean for equity and inclusion and research professor at The Pennsylvania State University College of Nursing.

"The unrest that we all witnessed last summer sparked by the death of George Floyd that led to the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement to the witnessing of the insurrection on January 6, 2021, of our nation's capital by a white supremacist mob, all feeds into the narrative that tells Black people that their lives matter less," said Dr Fields, who is also the first vice president of the National Black Nurses Association (NBNA). "So the question then becomes, why should I trust the government?"

In response, the more than 100 chapters of the NBNA "have been meeting with people where they are," including in rural areas, to offer a trusted voice and to educate patients on facts related to the vaccines, Dr. Fields said.

Dr Fields is not surprised that vaccine rates are low in the Black community. Using New York City as an example, Dr Fields explained that mass vaccination sites were placed in the suburbs of the city that are not easily accessible to minority populations. The movement to increase vaccine supply at pharmacy retail chains also is not effective to reach minorities as pharmacies are more often located in white neighborhoods, he said.

"The issue of pharmacy deserts in a lot of brown and Black communities is very real," Dr Fields said. Even a pharmacy that is 5 miles away may not be accessible to someone without transportation. Also, the race/ethnicity of vaccination teams often does not mirror the population in minority communities, which can be a barrier to vaccine uptake.

"We've got to take this to the people," Dr Fields said. He also stressed the importance of leveraging kinship networks in the Black community. "So if not for yourself, then [get the vaccine] for others around you." And if patients absolutely won't get a vaccine, then he uses messaging about respecting the community with masks, hand washing, and social distancing.

He suggested setting up vaccination sites at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, predominantly Black churches, and other places of faith with open parking lots (for social distancing) and other trusted entities such as federally qualified health centers, which are often located in Black and other underserved communities. To overcome transportation-related barriers, use mobile vans and offer home visits, he suggested.

Vaccine Hesitancy Among Hispanic Patients and Undocumented Immigrants

In the Hispanic community, limited English speaking skills and poor health literacy are substantial barriers to vaccination, said Gina Miranda-Diaz, DNP, MS/MPH, APHN-BC, H-O, Certified Contact Tracer, Fellow New York Academy of Medicine (FNYAM), policy and legislation chair of the National Association of Hispanic Nurses-New Jersey Chapter. Additionally, undocumented immigrants have concerns about having their information gathered into a system where they might be sought out or deported.

Nurses can help address vaccine hesitancy among minority patients by listening to patients' concerns and pointing them to credible sources of information rather than listening to word of mouth or inaccurate sources (Table), said Dr Miranda-Diaz, who also is a New Jersey state-licensed health officer, licensed home health aide instructor, and president/CEO of Hudson Consultants LLC. Many patients do not understand that the vaccine is free, Dr Miranda-Diaz said. While there may be administration costs involved in vaccine administration, patients who cannot afford these fees should be directed to facilities or clinics — such as federally qualified health centers — offering no-cost vaccines, she noted.

Also, President Biden "has said that he would not allow federal agents to be anywhere near the vaccinating centers," Dr Miranda-Diaz noted. "People who want to get vaccinated do not have to reveal their immigration status and we have to go where they are."

Dr Miranda-Diaz agreed with Dr Fields about the need to rethink the strategy of increasing vaccine supply at chain pharmacies to reach underserved communities. "Let nurses or practitioners who can get a mobile unit get out there put these vaccines in arms," she said.

"Poverty, your inability to speak English, your immigration status should not be a cause of death," she said.

Fighting the Infodemic on Social Media

Misinformation on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook continues to be a pronounced barrier to COVID-19 vaccination uptake. Nurses, who are often seen as trusted sources of information, can play a key role in arming the public with evidence-based facts and helping patients overcome vaccine hesitancy, the presenters said.

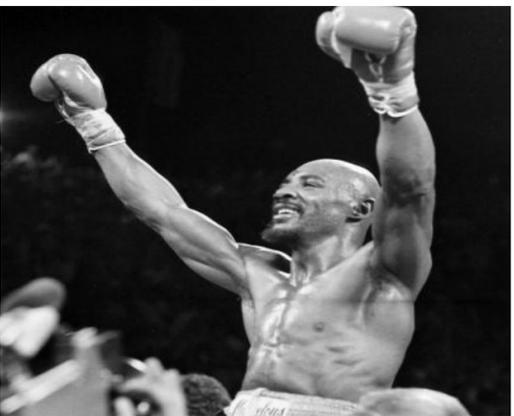
"Allowing lie after lie without breaking in and saying, 'Hold off, this is false. And here's a good resource you can read,' is especially important for the lurkers who may be reading along, but have not been yet given a rebuttal," Dr. Marcus said. She suggests offering scientific information in a respectful response to help battle misinformation online.

However, Dr Marcus also knows when to cut her losses. "It is so important to keep that respect and step back when you feel you can no longer engage in good faith and be useful to the conversation," she said. Article Courtesy of Kristen Volpe of the Clinical Advisor

R.I.P. IVAN CILVILS 1949-2021



R.I.P. MARVIN HAGLER 1954-2021



R.I.P. DESHAYLA HARRIS 1992 -2021



HHS OFFICE OF MINORITY HEALTH



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Minority Health

News, Views & Commentary

\$4 million investment in Clean Slate Pilot program launched to assist returning citizens with setting aside a conviction



Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity awards funds to Michigan Works! Agencies to support local expungement efforts

LANSING, Mich. – Over the coming months, returning citizens can get help with expunging eligible convictions from their criminal record to aid them in their pursuit of full-time, self-sufficient employment thanks to a \$4M investment in the Clean Slate Pilot program from the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO).

"My goal since day one of taking office has been to build fundamental reforms to make our communities safer and improve the people's outcomes going through our criminal justice system. The bipartisan Clean Slate legislation fundamentally changed Michigan's criminal history expungement laws, for the better," said Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist II. "The Clean Slate Pilot program offers a stop-gap for expungement services until automatic expungements go into effect. We're excited to get to work. Soon Michiganders will be able to feel the real changes that will come about from this program." Setting aside a conviction, sometimes called expungement of criminal records, will remove a specific conviction from a public criminal record. If returning citizens get an order setting aside their conviction, they can legally state on any job or school application that they have never been convicted of or arrested for that crime. They will also be able to state that they have not been convicted of that crime on applications for public benefits, housing or employment.

"Before this legislation and this pilot program, there were many barriers in place for returning citizens," Susan Corbin, LEO Director said. "These barriers to seeking criminal record expungement include a lack of information, time constraints, cost of retaining a private attorney and fear of the criminal justice system. With the Clean Slate Pilot program, Michigan Works! Agencies will help these citizens overcome many of these barriers and guide them on a path to success."

The Clean Slate Pilot Program funding will be awarded to all 16 Michigan Works! Agencies (MWAs) throughout the state with each of the agencies providing localized efforts.

"Before this legislation, just under 7% of eligible individuals pursued an expungement," said Shamar Herron, Executive Director, Michigan Works! Southeast. "We know how important equitable access to expungements are for job seekers. According to a [University of Michigan Study](#), after having a rec-

ord expunged, job seekers obtained employment at an increase of 11% and their income rose by 25% in two years. Michigan Works! Agencies and the Clean Slate Pilot program will help job seekers overcome many barriers and guide them on a path to success, while providing support to area businesses by increasing the number of available workers, adding to the talent pool."

Some of the components of the current expungement law include:

- A person who is convicted of one or more criminal offenses may file an application with the convicting court for the entry of an order setting aside one or more convictions as follows:
 - A person convicted of one or more criminal offenses, but not more than a total of three felony offenses, in Michigan, may apply to have their convictions from the State set aside.
 - Up to three felonies can be expunged.
 - If there are multiple convictions for the same offense (with a max sentence of 10 years) only one can be expunged.
 - Unlimited misdemeanors may be expunged.
 - Only two convictions for assaultive crimes may be expunged (this is true for misdemeanors and felonies).
 - "One Bad Night" counts multiple convictions that occurred as part of the same transaction within 24 hours as one conviction.
 - Convictions NOT eligible for this are:
 - Assaultive crimes.
 - Crimes involving the use or possession of a dangerous weapon.
 - Crime with a maximum penalty for 10 or more years' imprisonment.
 - An applicant may not have more than a total of two convictions for an assaultive crime set aside under the Act during his or her lifetime.
- An applicant may not have more than one felony conviction for the same offense set aside if the offense is punishable by more than 10 years' imprisonment.
- All MWAs will have localized Clean Slate Pilot Program processes in place. For more information, visit [MichiganWorks.org](#) or call 800-285-9675.



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Authentic BROTHERS

© Dee Freeman

May I borrow your ear?
Let's re-write, re-tell, re-articulate the facts of Authentic and Divine Black brothers, right here!

Let's peer into the real deal!
The so called "powers" have always written Their version of history, yes, his-story. Voila! His lies, deceptions, distorted facts... His consensus of contorted tales of glory.

Their false scripts have spiraled into A reality forced onto an entire population. Then, our contributions are manipulated to appear meager, Swept under the rug or ignored by this nation. The struggle for EQUALITY demands one rip or tear away These dominating mindsets from our consciousness today!
My Nubian brother, I love you! You are my unheralded hero... YOU are awesome, worthy of this praise...like no other
Your ardent wish has been to be born men... Not as an image of servility, as in the mind of multiple others.

Brothers, we know from infancy, you've been hated, Pushed down, beaten, castrated and killed... Because of your innate manliness, charm, Brut strength and unwavering will... You are the envy of and threat to the Powers that be!
They discredit you in order to feel superior. But I know... I feel... I hear... I see Those dominators, who would see you, brother Divine... Bowed, fiddling, grinning, shuffling, or even silent When accused ... of eye contact or stepping out of line; They wait to overthrow you from your rightful place... They try to stifle and abuse our entire race.

Now, You newly genetically coded Black man... Bred from a powerful life force and an uncommon stock... Do not shake or quiver, bend, or bow, beg or butt kiss... Divine Brother...I can see...you ROCK!
YOU step up to defend what's yours, with one wish!...

To gain prominence, respect, in your place in society And will no longer allow "the man" to cheat you... Understandably, your cup runneth over with bitterness... Even rage for a system set out to degrade, mistreat or beat you... Seemingly for deranged pleasure, to just delete you.

My Authentic Brother, though your country and birthplace Drain you of respect, honor, or decent treatment, You...my hero...Still head up this race. Asserting power through sheer grit and grace... Your heart is swollen from loving your people... Your hands are ready to tackle reality. You survive because of enormous tenacity... Yes, with a no fear mindset, time is ripe to work the plan!
Your Sistahs honor your manhood and walk beside you, our He-man!
Offering a strong shoulder, a thunderous voice, And a helping hand to aid success in your mission to Resurrect Black folk throughout this nation of choice.

Your Destiny is stepping from the Wimpy roles of the oppressor. Your pains and ills of years of past savagery demand you step Into your Divine power...The power of only a Black man... Unequaled in love and respect for his own fellow-man.

My newly reborn Brother...you control your spirit. Out of this nation's darkness, you are a great beacon of light... Your power, your life energy, your future, are brilliant, as you Seek liberation, salvation, and preservation. You, embody the DNA of excellence... 'Seeds of greatness', The genetic coding of Royalty...of Kings and Gods... The supreme, preeminent regeneration! Behold, Brother, Your AUTHENTICITY is showing!!! You EXCELL!! Above and beyond!! Authentic Brother, I can see...You WEAR it WELL!





Pastor/Chaplain Pamelajune (Pj) Anderson, DMin.
Lt. Commander (RET) US Navy Chaplain Corps
Certified Peer Support Specialist



BE STILL AND YOUR SOUL WILL SPEAK

"Even their chief, Michael, when disputing with the devil over Moses' body, did not offer his own taunting judgment against him. Michael, "May the Lord's rebuke fall on you." Jude 1:9



"Dear God, Thank You for protecting me from the militia. I attended a training for a concealed weapons license on Sunday. During that time, I heard the instructor criticize the police, calling the people "the people down the road [i.e., the legislatures] stupid, and accusing the president of trying to take away our guns. At this point, I raised my hand to challenge him on what President Biden said about expanding the time for background checks when purchasing weapons. The instructor proclaimed and expounded

on the First Amendment – freedom of speech – and the Second Amendment – right to bear arms." None of this training alarmed my soul than when he announced, "you are the militia. You must protect yourself because you cannot depend on the police to protect you." After I asked him, "are you anti-government?" he calmed down and continued to curse throughout the presentation as if I struck a nerve. During the break, I asked him why the only Black face on the PowerPoint was portrayed as a thief breaking into a white home?"

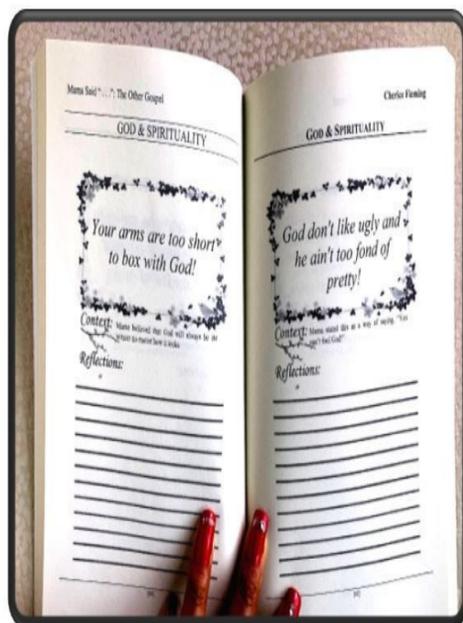
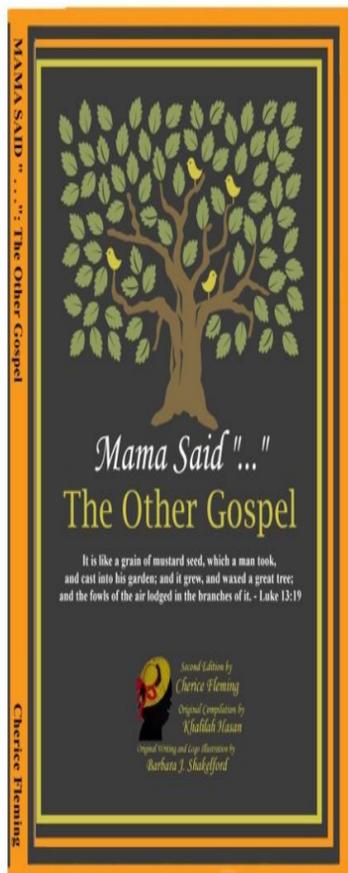
The one time I left my recorder at home.

I felt the presence of Michael, the warrior Archangel, and Satan, the Angel of Light, wrestling for my soul. Have you ever felt the hairs rise on the back of your neck to give you a warning? I suggest, if you have, you experienced the presence of an angel protecting your soul. The soul is the spiritual, immaterial, everlasting, and everlasting part of a human being that is never born and never dies.

You may want to feed your soul with positivity so that you will immediately KNOW the difference between propaganda and the Promises of God. I sharpen my radar through prayers to my feet, meditation, reading the Word with a critical eye, and studying nature.

Please visit and subscribe to our YouTube channel at <https://tinyurl.com/drpjandersonYT> and experience our dialogue: WHAT IS THE SOUL? Part II.

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Announcements

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Birthdays in April 2021

- Mrs. Joy Geraldine Brown, (deceased March 15, 2020): we celebrated her 94th year from birth on April 1st, remembering joyous times spent with husband, Mr. Robert (Bob) Brown, Jr., (deceased October 7, 2019), 56 Yrs. married, sharing Their Love to enrich others: Living, doing Good, enjoying Jazz; outstanding character... Heroes to many, especially Me!!!
- Mr. Corey Williford celebrates his birthday on April 1st.
- Mr. Joshua Ide celebrated his 21st birthday on April 1st, with family and friends. "You will always be my "Joshua Bear" 1-4-3!" Love, Mom!
- Ms. Rosetta Adams celebrated her 40th birthday on April 1st, with family and friends.
- Mr. Eric Jones celebrated his "Happy 34th birthday" on April 1st, from your Sweetheart, Emerlisa.
- Mr. Robert Dyer celebrated 43rd birthday on April 2nd, with his wife, Dawn, their son, and friends.
- Ms. Shannon Miller celebrated her birthday on April 3rd.
- Mr. Robert A. McConnell celebrated his birthday, with wife, on April 3rd.
- Ms. Stacy Lynch celebrated her birthday on April 3rd.
- Ms. Tara May celebrates her birthday on April 3rd.
- Mrs. Dorothy Maxwell celebrated her birthday on April 4th, with loving husband, Bob.
- Mr. Henry A. Moore celebrates his birthday on April 4th.
- Ms. Diane Hicks celebrates her birthday on April 4th.
- Ms. Maria M. Rouse-Brewer celebrated her birthday on April 5th.
- Mr. Alan Canady celebrates his birthday on April 5th, with his loving family. Ms. Doretha Akins celebrated her birthday on April 6th.
- Ms. Stephanie T. Mondy enjoyed her birthday on April 6th.
- Ms. Nona Brown celebrates her birthday on April 6th.
- Ms. Addie Morrow joyously celebrated her birthday on April 8th.
- Ms. Lois McNeeley celebrates her birthday April 9th.
- Ms. Latoya Clark celebrated her birthday on April 9th.
- Mr. Everett Mitchell celebrated his birthday on April 9th.
- Ms. Yolanda Campbell celebrated her 52nd birthday on April 9th, with friends.
- Mr. Sam Mallot celebrated his birthday on April 10th with family and friends.
- Mr. Kevin E. Eaton celebrates his birthday on April 10th.
- Ms. Sharon Civils celebrates her birthday on April 11th, with family and friends. She said, "I'm glad to see another year on earth; I'm truly blessed!
- Mrs. Jo Ann Mondy celebrates her birthday on April 11th.
- Mr. Dustin Phifer celebrates his birthday on April 11th.
- Mr. Kapuki Outlaw celebrates his birthday on April 11th.
- Ms. Kristi Correa celebrated her 34th birthday on April 12th.
- Ms. Karen Allen gratefully celebrated her 63rd birthday on April 12th.
- Ms. Betty Wheeler celebrated her 57th birthday on April 12th.
- "Happy Birthday Ms. Capital City!"
- Ms. Andrea Fundunburks celebrates her birthday on April 13th. "Yeah, I'm 24
- Ms. Arabella Pitts celebrates her 14th birthday on April 13th, with her Mom, Ms. Jesse Pitts and Dad, Mr. Travis Hough, who say, "Mommy and Daddy love you!
- Mr. Quick Calhoun celebrates his 36th birthday on April 13th. He says, "Westside certified!"
- Mr. Jonas Clark celebrates his birthday on April 13th.
- Ms. Myrtle L. Hendricks celebrates her birthday on April 14th.
- Mr. Duane Michael (Poppie) Brown, Sr. celebrates his birthday on April 15th with family and friends, enjoying life: Great Guy!
- Ms. Kristina Eveleth celebrates her birthday on April 15th, with friends.
- Ms. Branda Hawley will celebrate her 43rd birthday on April 16th, with friends.
- Mr. Michael Phifer celebrates his birthday on April 16th with family and friends.
- Mr. Jeffery Couthen celebrates his birthday on April 16th.
- Ms. Dayna M. Smith celebrates her birthday on April 16th.
- Ms. Fonda Brewer celebrates her birthday with friends and family on April 17th.
- Ms. Mary L, King celebrates her birthday on April 17th.
- Ms. Shanequa Dennie celebrates her birthday on April 17th, spending time with family and friends.
- Ms. Shamira Johnston celebrates her 19th birthday on April 18th. She is Grandma's "Honey Bunny!"
- Mr. Damion Jordan celebrates his 44th birthday on April 19th.
- Mr. Larry King III celebrates his birthday on April 19th, with his Mom, Dad and baby sister.
- Ms. Gemma Carnegie celebrates her 72nd birthday on April 20th with her students.
- Ms. Indiya Jones celebrates her birthday on April 20th.
- Mr. Tyrone Scott Daniels, Jr. celebrates his birthday on April 20th, with his family.
- Ms. Jackie Perkins celebrates her birthday on April 21st, with family and friends.
- Ms. Toni Woods celebrates her birthday on April 21st, with family and friends.
- Mr. Robert A. Maxwell celebrates his birthday on April 21st, with his loving wife, Dorothy.
- Ms. Alexis Ward celebrates her 15th birthday on April 21st with family.
- Ms. Heidi Childress is celebrating her birthday on April 22nd.
- Ms. Tonya Jones' birthday is on April 26th. She celebrates with friends.
- Ms. Cora M. Huguely celebrates her birthday on April 24th with family and friends.
- Ms. Sabrina Jones Lewis celebrates her birthday on April 23rd.
- Ms. Michelle Williams celebrates her 44th birthday on April 23rd.
- Mr. Hunter Talon celebrates his 13th birthday with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Tom and Jessica Stowell: Grandmother Barb Marciniak loves you!
- Ms. Khadijan Daniels celebrates her 33rd birthday on April 24th.
- Mr. Frankie Lara celebrates his 15th birthday on April 24th. Grandmother Betty Wheeler, says, "I Love you, Baby!"
- Ms. Angelica Saucedo celebrates her 35th birthday on April 25th.
- Dr. Eugene L. Cain celebrates his birthday on April 25th, with his loving wife, Maxine and Family.
- Ms. Claudia N. Williams celebrates her birthday on April 26th.
- Ms. Adrianna Foster celebrates her birthday on April 26th.
- Mr. Jesse Rouse Jr. celebrates his birthday on April 29th.
- Mr. Andre L. Anthony celebrates his birthday on April 29th.
- Ms. Vicky Taylor celebrates her birthday on April 30th.
- Ms. Lydia St.Cyr celebrates her 28th birthday. "Hello Lydia! I hope you enjoy your birthday. I Love You!" Mom.
- Ms. Kimberly Cooper celebrates her birthday with her family.

*Anniversaries

- Mr. Cullen Dubose Sr. and Mrs. Helena J. Dubose celebrate their anniversary on March 31st.
- Mr. and Mrs. Luther Wm. and Amy Brown Jr. celebrated their 17th wedding anniversary on April 3rd, with their children Jordan Luther, Taylor Ashley Denise, Idyana Francis Taylor and Isabella Megan Marie Brown, enjoying Florida. True Love!!!
- Mr. Brewster and Mrs. Linnea's 27th wedding anniversary is April 17th.
- Mr. Earnest and Mrs. Janice Cabule celebrate their 43rd anniversary on April 28th.
- Ms. Kimberly Hetchler, Sergeant first class, celebrated her 36th anniversary in the Michigan National Guard. She works as the State Security Clearance Manager for the state of Michigan.

*Announcements

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Elder statesmen: Lee Elder has his day in the sun at the Masters



Lee Elder Picture courtesy of USA Today

AUGUSTA, Ga. – The ovation began as Lee Elder approached the first tee at Augusta National Golf Club in a golf cart and reached a crescendo as he stood with the help of a cane and waved his right hand. “Today Lee Elder will inspire us and make history once more,” Augusta National chairman Fred Ridley said of Elder becoming just the 10th honorary starter in Masters history. “Lee, you have the honors.” Elder, 86, who uses oxygen to assist his breathing, had a full set of golf clubs at his disposal and used a driver for balance, but he was unfit to hit a shot. When he took a seat to another round of applause, he said, “That feels good.” “I was so afraid that was going to happen,” his wife, Sharon said. “He just didn’t feel well at all this morning.” None of that mattered. This moment – long overdue – belonged to Elder, a trailblazer in every sense of the word, and he soaked it all in. “I think it was one of the most emotional experiences that I have ever witnessed or been involved in,” Elder said. “It is certainly something that I will cherish for the rest of my life because I have loved coming to Augusta National.” Special day. In 1975 Lee Elder broke the color barrier at The Masters, this morning he joins as an honorary starter. As Lee says, you gotta “stay the course” and we all gotta stay the course to continue what Lee started with expanding access to the sport. Congrats to this legend. pic.twitter.com/TqNDiB6DEH — Stephen Curry (@StephenCurry30) April 8, 2021

They all came to see Elder in his mint-green shirt on the first tee at Augusta National Golf Club one more time. Masters champions Phil Mickelson, Bubba Watson, Charles Coody and Nick Faldo and fellow contestants Corey Connors and Cameron Champ, one of the few minorities on the PGA Tour and lone Black representative in the 88-man field were among those on hand. “It’s been a very long time since I’ve come to this,” Faldo said of the honorary starter ceremony. “But I didn’t want to miss this one.” Neither did Melvin, a worker at the Augusta National clubhouse with his uniform and nameplate intact, as did NFL Hall of Famer Lynn Swann and his fellow Augusta National member Condoleezza Rice, both looking resplendent in their green jackets. Rice, for one, begged out of a potential conflict to be there. “I texted that I’d like to be on the tee,” Rice said. Gary Player and Jack Nicklaus were there, too, in their traditional roles as First Tee Starters, but they were overshadowed by Elder, who learned to play the game crosshanded as a caddie in rural Dallas. Ted Rhodes, another black pioneer who served as a mentor, changed him to a traditional grip and he’d go on to dominate the United Golf Association, the tour for Blacks in the era of the PGA’s Caucasian-only rule, before earning his PGA Tour card in 1967, winning four times and qualifying for the 1979 U.S. Ryder Cup team. “I wanted it so badly,” Elder once told *Golfweek*. “When I first qualified for the Tour, in 1967, I said I wanted to get that one thing that had not been accomplished out of the way. The Masters was the one tournament that hadn’t been integrated.”

Two years before Elder qualified, a group of politicians urged Augusta National to invite Elder, but their request was rebuffed. “We are a little surprised as well as being flattered that 18 Congressmen should be able to take time out to help us operate a golf tournament,” Augusta National co-founder Clifford Roberts wrote. “...We feel certain someone has misinformed the distinguished lawmakers, because there is not and never has been player discrimination, subtle or otherwise.” Elder earned his way to the Masters holing an 18-foot birdie putt on the fourth playoff to beat Peter Oosterhuis in the 1974 Monsanto Open at Pensacola Country Club in Florida, at the same course where a few years earlier he had been refused entrance into the clubhouse and changed his shoes in the parking lot. To understand the world at the time it is important to remember that Elder was whisked away to the clubhouse, and for good reason. “I didn’t know why until we got in the car and they said they had received calls that if I won, they were going to kill me,” Elder said. “We got so many calls like that.” During the week of the 1975 Masters, he bounced between two rental houses just to be safe and stayed up late with friends playing cards and trying to wrap his head around what it meant to break the color barrier at the Masters. “My friend said to me, ‘Do you really know how much you’ve done?’ I said, ‘I feel like I do. I feel like I contributed to society.’ They said, ‘No, my man, you’re breaking the barrier that had been in existence for a long time,’” Elder recalled. On a misty morning, 46 years ago Elder wore green pants, a green shirt, and a green sweater. He was asked if he’d like a rainsuit. “And mess up this pretty green?” Elder said. What he remembered most from that fateful day when he shot 74 during his Masters debut wasn’t all that different from the response, he experienced one more time today. “Every tee and every green that I walked on, I got tremendous ovations,” he said. “I think when you receive something like that, it helps to settle down, because I’ll tell you, I was so nervous as we began play that it took me a few holes to kind of calm down.” All these years later, Nicklaus remembers being “astonished” that a Black player hadn’t played in the Masters yet, given the talent of the likes of Rhodes, Pete Brown and Charlie Sifford, and that Elder would be the first. “I thought it was long overdue when he finally got invited,” Nicklaus. So was this celebration of Elder. Article by Adam Schupak of USA Today.

THE REALS OF JUSTICE

FEDERAL MANDATORY MINIMUMS UNDER 18 U.S.C. SECTION 924

By: Ayanna D. Neal



Ayanna Neal

The 18 U.S.C. Section 924 (c) require one of several mandatory minimum penalties depending on the circumstances of the offense. Offenses under this section involve the use or carrying of a firearm during and involving a crime of violence or drug trafficking crime, or in the furtherance of those crimes. The charge under this section must run consecutive to other sentences imposed for other related offenses. The statute provides (18 U.S.C. § 924(c)(1)): • (A) Except to the extent that a greater minimum sentence is otherwise provided by this subsection or by any other provision of law, any person who, during and in relation to any crime of violence or drug trafficking crime (including a crime of violence or drug trafficking crime that provides for an enhanced punishment if committed by the use of a deadly or dangerous weapon or device) for which the person may be prosecuted in a court of the United States, uses or carries a firearm, or who, in furtherance of any such crime, possesses a firearm, shall, in addition to the punishment provided for such crime of violence or drug trafficking crime— (i) be sentenced to a term of imprisonment of not less than 5 years; (ii) if the firearm is brandished, be sentenced to a term of imprisonment of not less than 7 years; and (iii) if the firearm is discharged, be sentenced to a term of imprisonment of not less than 10 years. Brandishing a firearm means to show it to another person and discharging a firearm means to fire or shoot the firearm. Crimes of violence typically charged in federal indictments include homicide, robbery, and assaults. According to the United States Sentencing Commission, in fiscal year 2019 76,538 cases were reported to the U.S. Sentencing Commission. Of those cases, 3,142 cases were convictions under 18 U.S.C. Section 924 (c). 96.5% of the 924 (c) offenders were men. 52.6% were Black, 23.7% were Hispanic, 21.1% were White, and 2.6% were other races. Their average age was 33. All but one 924 (c) offender was sentenced to prison. The average sentence was 138 months. 87.6% of 924 (c) offenders were convicted of another offense: 53.8% for drug trafficking, 27.1% for robbery, and 8.7% for another firearm offense. The average guideline minimum decreased from 203 months to 185 months from fiscal year 2015 to fiscal year 2019. The number in which firearm offenders who have been convicted of an offense that carries a mandatory minimum, has remained stable. The number of offenders who have been convicted of such offenses that carry mandatory minimums has decreased significantly since 2010. The mandatory minimums, however, continue to affect Black offenders more than any other race. Section 924(c) has survived several constitutional challenges. The mandatory minimums were added to Section 924 (c) as a floor amendment to the Gun Control Act of 1968. Public concern over violence related to drug trafficking led Congress to expand Section 924 (c) to try to reduce drug trafficking crimes. But as more offenders received life sentences many courts began to doubt the fairness of sentencing offenders to life sentences for multiple uses of a firearm during a single crime. Section 924 (c) is sometimes applied to nonviolent firearm owners. Firearms should not be in the hands of violent offenders but consecutive or “stacking” of sentences can create very lengthy or life offenses for firearm offenses that involve both nonviolent firearm owners and violent offenders. If you or a loved one has been indicted for federal firearm offenses under Section 924 (c) seek counsel of a criminal defense attorney who has experience in handling federal criminal cases.

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