

ACHIEVE! School Choice Guide 2024

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NOVEMBER 6-12, 2024

A Three-Peat for Westinghouse

A true dynasty after winning City League title game, 40-12

by Rob Taylor Jr.
Courier Staff Writer

The Chicago Bulls did it. The Los Angeles Lakers did it.

And now the Westinghouse Bulldogs have done it.

Three championships in a row, a "three-peat" is what they're saying—or something to that effect—in Homewood as their Westinghouse Bulldogs football team pulled away from the Allderdice Dragons, 40-12, to win their third City League championship in a row. The title game was played at Cupples Stadium, Oct. 26, where more than 70

percent of the fans who attended were Bulldogs fans.

At this point, you could call this era of Westinghouse football a dynasty. They've won 5 of the last 6 City League championships, have made it to back-to-back state title games, and play a tough brand of football that's efficient in all three phases—offense, defense and special teams.

Add "battle-tested" to Westinghouse's resume, too. The team opened the 2024 football season with a loss to Beaver Area, 28-26, on Aug. 24 at the Wol-

SEE WESTINGHOUSE A9



WESTINGHOUSE CELEBRATES THEIR 2024 CITY LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP, OCT. 26, AT CUPPLES STADIUM. (PHOTO BY JOEY BOVA)

'The Piano Lesson' hits theaters Friday, Nov. 8

Play originally part of August Wilson's 'Pittsburgh Cycle'

by Mercedes J. Williams

NNPA Newswire Senior National Correspondent

Some say you shouldn't mix business with pleasure or work with family, but it seems to be working for Denzel Washington's family. Later this month, Washington will release the highly antic-

ipated film, "Gladiator"; his wife, Pauletta, plays an opinionated mother on Hulu's breakout sitcom, "Reasonable Doubt"; and their two sons, Malcolm and John David, dominate both sides of the camera in Netflix's "The Piano Lesson."

Malcolm Washington directs the revival of "The Piano Lesson," part

Commentary

of August Wilson's celebrated Pittsburgh Cycle (also known as American Century Cycle), while his older brother stars as Boy Willie.

Set in 1936, the movie follows the Charles family struggling over the fate of an heirloom piano

intricately carved with their ancestors' faces. This isn't just a living room ornament; it's a musical staple of pain, resilience and memory—a generational story of Black lives shaped by history and personal loss.

"The piano represents

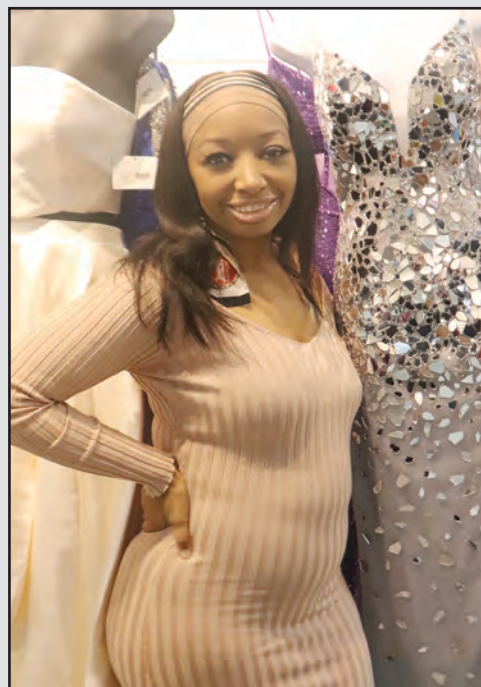
a lot—it's an altar for all the ancestors that came before and made sacrifices and fought for the lives of their descendants," said Malcolm Washington, 33. "It also, in so many ways, represents the future. What are you going to do with this legacy?"

I sat down with the brothers in August Wilson's childhood home in

the Hill District on October 28. Hours before they were set to host their own special screening of "The Piano Lesson," we discussed a lot—the complexity of the film, what it's like working with family, the great people of the Historic Hill District, and

SEE PIANO LESSON A3

Black-owned businesses in Robinson showing their strength



NEW Pittsburgh Courier

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The holiday season is upon us, and the next time you travel to The Mall at Robinson, take note of the four Black-owned businesses there that are making their mark, aiming high on the success meter each day in front of a diverse group of shoppers. Learn more about each Black-owned business on Pages A11-12.

Legendary producer Quincy Jones dies at 91, leaving a monumental legacy in music and culture

by Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior
National Correspondent

Quincy Jones, the record producer, arranger, and cultural trailblazer whose influence spanned more than seven decades, has died at 91. His publicist, Arnold Robinson, confirmed his death in a statement, noting that Jones died peacefully at his home in Bel Air. The statement did not specify the cause.

Known for producing Michael Jackson's landmark albums, "Thriller" and "Bad," Jones's career far exceeded even those iconic works.

Jones transformed genres, introduced new styles, and championed Black artistry in a largely segregated industry. The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, which inducted him in 2013, called him a "Jack of All Trades" but noted that Jones "excelled at every role he took on." His contributions as a record producer, arranger, composer, and performer reflect a boundless curiosity that kept him at the cutting edge of music across generations. His presence shaped countless albums, film scores, and even social movements, making him a bridge between jazz, R&B, pop, and hip-hop and between Black and White audiences.

Jones began as a jazz trumpeter, arranging for bands like Count Basie's and becoming a respected composer in his own right. His compositions for films, including *The Pawnbroker* and *The Color Purple*, displayed his extraordinary range, mixing classical, jazz, funk, and Afro-Cuban influences. His television scores, such as those for *Sanford and Son* and *Ironsides*, brought Black music to mainstream audiences, shaping a generation's auditory landscape.

The three Jackson albums Jones produced—*Off the Wall*, *Thriller*, and *Bad*—stand among his most famous works. The albums broke sales records and redefined the global pop music industry, bridging racial divides and setting new standards for production. But Jones's career had already reached milestones before those records. He had become the first Black vice president at Mercury Records in 1964 and had garnered critical acclaim for his arrangement of Count Basie's "I Can't Stop Loving You." Over time, he received 28 Grammy Awards from 80 nominations, a record surpassed only by a few.

Born in Chicago on



QUINCY JONES

March 14, 1933, Quincy Delight Jones Jr. faced a childhood filled with challenges and resilience. According to his official biography, Jones was primarily raised by his father, a carpenter, after his mother was diagnosed with schizophrenic disorder. Moving to Seattle in his early teens, he honed his craft in a music scene as diverse as his musical inclinations. By 15, Jones had already earned a spot in Lionel Hampton's band, launching a career that would take him across the globe and into the company of jazz greats like Dizzy Gillespie and Ray Charles, who would become a lifelong friend and collaborator.

Jones's time as a jazz bandleader and arranger in the 1950s established his name in elite music circles, but his ambitions led him into film and television scoring, where he created iconic soundtracks. Throughout the 1960s and 70s, Jones's music could be heard in theaters and living rooms, with scores for films like *In Cold Blood* and *The Deadly Affair* and contributions to Alex Haley's *Roots*, the celebrated mini-series. His soundtrack for *The Color Purple* in 1985, adapted from Alice Walker's novel, remains a cultural milestone.

In 1985, Jones united more than 40 of the world's biggest music stars for the

charity single "We Are the World," raising awareness and funds for famine relief in Africa. The project's success further cemented his reputation as a visionary capable of bridging divides for a greater cause. His label, Qwest, produced a roster as diverse as his interests, featuring artists from George Benson to the experimental jazz saxophonist Sonny Simmons.

Through the 1990s and 2000s, Jones expanded his reach beyond music, producing television hits like *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* and the magazine *Vibe*. In his later years, he remained active, working on projects that celebrated his love for jazz and hip-hop alike. In 2022, he collaborated with *The Weeknd* on *Dawn FM*, delivering a spoken monologue reflecting his decades of life and artistry. His work became a rich tapestry, woven with threads from every major genre and cultural moment in modern American history.

"He always is soaring ahead and doesn't like to look backwards," Oprah Winfrey said of him during his *Rock and Roll Hall of Fame* induction.

Jones leaves behind seven children: Jolie, Kidada, Kenya, Martina, Rachel, Rashida, and Quincy III in addition to his brother Richard, sisters Margie Jay and Theresa Frank.

This Week In Black History — A Courier Staple —

• NOVEMBER 6

1858—Samuel E. Cornish dies. Along with John Russwurm, he established the first Black-owned and operated newspaper in America—"Freedom's Journal." The newspaper's famous motto was "We wish to plead our cause."

1860—Abraham Lincoln is elected the 16th president of the United States. His opposition to the expansion of slavery prompted slave-owning states to succeed from the union which brought about the Civil War. Lincoln's opposition to slavery was more pragmatic than moral signified by his famous phrase—"A nation cannot exist half-slave and half-free."

1900—James Weldon Johnson composes "Lift Ev'ry Voice And Sing." The song becomes the "Black National Anthem." In 1920, Johnson becomes the first Black head of the NAACP.

• NOVEMBER 7

1837—Elijah P. Lovejoy, one of the White heroes of Black history, is killed by a pro-slavery mob while defending his anti-slavery newspaper in Alton, Ohio.

1841—The "Slave Revolt On The Creole" occurred when 125 Black slaves overpowered the crew of the slave ship *Creole* and sailed it to the Bahamas where they were granted freedom and political asylum.

1876—The disputed presidential election that changed the course of Black history occurs. The dispute led to the Hayes-Tilden Compromise. In order to be declared president, Republican Rutherford B. Hayes reached an agreement with southern Democrats, which had the effect of ending much of Reconstruction and the protection of Black rights. The Jim Crow era began with "Black codes" and other measures, which severely limited Black rights. Many of these rights were not restored until the 1960s.

1934—The first Black Democrat is elected to the United States Congress. His name was **Arthur L. Mitchell**. Up until this point in history, most Blacks were Republicans because of the roles of Abraham Lincoln and a group known as the "Radical Republicans" in ending slavery. Mitchell defeated Oscar DePriest for the congressional seat from Chicago.

1967—Riots spread throughout the nation. A Senate committee issues a report revealing that there were 75 major Black riots in cities across the nation. This compared with just 21 the previous year.

1989—L. Douglas Wilder is elected the first Black governor of Virginia since Reconstruction. Virginia was actually governed by a Black man for a brief period during Reconstruction.

• NOVEMBER 8

1898—The Wilmington Massacre occurs. A mob of Whites launched a terror campaign against Blacks in Wilmington, N.C. They destroyed a Black newspaper plant, seized control of city government and officially left nine to 11 Blacks dead. However, the unofficial death toll was said to be closer to 100.

1932—Franklin Delano Roosevelt is elected president. During his 16 years in office Roosevelt instituted a series of New Deal programs designed to pull the nation out of the Great Depression. It was during his years in office that Blacks overwhelmingly switched from the Republican Party to the Democratic Party even though Roosevelt adopted some policies that angered Blacks.

1933—Actress Esther Rolle is born in Pompano Beach, Fla. She is best remembered for her role in the 1970s television series "Good Times."

1966—Edward W. Brooke is elected the first Black U.S. senator since Reconstruction. He was a Republican from Massachusetts.

• NOVEMBER 9

1731—Multi-talented scientist and inventor Benjamin Banneker is born in Ellicott Mills, Md. He is generally considered America's first Black scientist. Banneker constructed the first clock made in America; completed the design and layout of Washington, D.C., after Pierre L'Enfant returned to France; published a farmer's almanac for 10

years, while also studying astronomy; and predicted solar eclipses.

1868—The governor of Arkansas, Powell Clayton, calls out the state militia and declares martial law in 10 counties in a bid to put down a Ku Klux Klan-led insurrection.

1868—The Howard University Medical School—the first designed to train Black medical personnel—opens in Washington, D.C. There were eight students in the first class.

1901—Fiery pioneer Black journalist William Monroe Trotter starts the *Guardian* newspaper in Boston, Mass. Trotter made headlines throughout the nation when in November 1914, he confronted President Woodrow Wilson in the White House for failing to do more to stop the lynching of Blacks. For daring to argue with the president, the *New York Times* denounced Trotter saying he had "superabundant tactful belligerence." But W.E.B. DuBois called him "fearless."

1922—Actress Dorothy Dandridge is born in Cleveland, Ohio. She is generally considered one of Hollywood's first Black female sex symbols. She appeared opposite Harry Belafonte in "Carmen Jones" and was the first Black woman nominated for an Oscar. Dandridge died in 1965 at age 43.

• NOVEMBER 10

1898—George H. White introduces the first anti-lynching legislation in the U.S. Congress. The North Carolinian was one of the last Blacks in Congress before Jim Crow laws and attitudes drove most Blacks from high elected offices. After leaving Congress, he founded a Black bank and established an all Black community called Whiteville near present day Trenton, N.J.

1891—Granville T. Woods patents an improvement to the electric railway. Woods was one of the most prolific Black engineers and inventors in U.S. history. His motto could have been "I didn't invent the product, but I invented something that made it better." Born in Columbus, Ohio, he invented and patented improvements to the electric railway, air brakes, telegraphs, telephones and numerous other products.

1957—Charlie Sifford wins the Long Beach Open, becoming the first Black person to win a major professional golf tournament.

1994—Famed jazz singer Carmen McRae dies in Beverly Hills, Calif. She was born in New York City on April 8, 1920.

• NOVEMBER 11

1831—Anti-slavery rebel Nat Turner is hanged roughly two months after his capture for leading the bloodiest slave revolt in U.S. history. The minister and mystic told reporters God had called on him to lead the revolt, which left 55 Whites dead.

• NOVEMBER 12

1775—General George Washington, first president and "father of the country" issues an order barring free Blacks from serving in the army as the U.S. struggled for independence from England. Washington was also a slave owner. The slave owning aristocracy felt if free Blacks fought for America's liberation they would demand freedom for their enslaved brothers and sisters. Despite Washington's order, hundreds of Blacks did fight in the Revolutionary War.

1900—Henry Ossawa Tanner becomes an internationally acclaimed artist as he takes a silver medal for his art displayed at the Paris Exposition. Nearly 7,000 artists had entered their works. The Pittsburgh-born Tanner had numerous major works including his painting called "The Banjo Lesson."

1922—Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. is founded by seven Black women in Indianapolis, Ind. The sorority grows to become one of the largest in the nation.

1977—Ernest "Dutch" Morial is elected the first Black mayor of New Orleans, La.

1994—Track and field great and Olympics star Wilma Rudolph dies in Nashville, Tenn., at the age of 54.



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'The Piano Lesson' hits theaters Friday, Nov. 8

PIANO LESSON FROM A1

the significance of August Wilson's literary work.

The siblings both agree that the Pittsburgh playwright is the foundation of their careers and brought them together for this film.

"He is responsible for my Broadway debut. August Wilson is responsible for his cinematic debut. And these are moments in our lives that we will never forget," said John David Washington, 40.

This adaptation breathes contemporary life into Wilson's 1987 narrative and has a little bit of everything. The film reminds you of the gritty flashbacks of "Fried Green Tomatoes" (1991), the family woes of "Soul Food" (1997), and the supernatural activity of "The Deliverance" (2024).

This movie is a strong start for Malcolm Washington's cinematic career. A sweet bonus is that "The Piano Lesson" was truly a family affair. Father Denzel Washington produced the film, mother Paulette Washington plays Mama Ola, sister Olivia Washington plays Young Mama Ola, and brother John David stars in the film.

Although not a part of

the family, Danielle Deadwyler deserves her flowers, too. Her outstanding performances capture the subtle heartbreak, conviction and burden of being the only woman in the family. Just like the piano, she inherited her matriarch position, balancing the weight of history with moments of humor and warmth that feel authentic.

"The Piano Lesson" invites audiences to sit with the characters' dilemmas and natural family dysfunction.

"I hope that when they engage with it, they see themselves in it. I hope they see the community they come from, the community they are connected to—the lineage, and find power, peace and protection in it," said Malcolm Washington.

His brother added, "I hope people achieve a great sense of identity, to be proud of where you come from."

John David Washington is also excited to bring audiences from so many different parts of the world to the Hill District.

"The Piano Lesson" will have a brief stint in select theaters November 8, 2024 before streaming on Netflix on November 22.



"THE PIANO LESSON" HITS SELECT THEATERS ON NOV. 8, AND ON NETFLIX, NOV. 22.



MERCEDES J. WILLIAMS INTERVIEWS MALCOLM WASHINGTON AND JOHN DAVID WASHINGTON IN PITTSBURGH, OCT. 28. (PHOTO BY JAY WHITE DIGITAL MEDIA)

Is marriage the ultimate wealth cheat code?



Damon Carr tells the story on Page B1.

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CHAMPIONS FOREVER... LEGENDS ACHIEVE GREATNESS!

Trust me when I tell you that never has a lead title ever been more on point. But I don't have to tell you, if you were among the 300-plus in attendance, you already know.

For those of you who somehow managed to miss the event of the year, please allow me to get you caught up.

To do that we have to start at the beginning, that hot summer day in June 1974 when Connie Hawkins, Kenny Durrett and Will Graham walked out of the newly reconstructed Homewood YMCA where I was the recently hired program director, by way of Penn Hills and Slippery Rock Uni. Now it's important to remember I was a football/track man...while I loved the game of basketball, the only thing I knew at the time was that Connie, Ali and Jim Brown were the sports jocks who covered my college dorm walls...and here I now stand with the legend of legends.

There's a ton more that goes with this, but you'll have to get it when my book is published (for the last time people, I don't know when...just stay tuned).

Anyway, that's when it all started. I asked "The Hawk" if I could name the league after him, and he agreed as long as I promised not to tarnish his name. (There's a big smile that goes with that, just read the autobiography on "The Hawk" to get caught up.) From that moment on, Connie's



IT SIMPLY DOESN'T GET ANY BETTER THAN THIS AND I TRULY MEAN THAT! (Left to right) Kirk Bruce, Pitt University star, ABA Utah Stars draft selection, Pittsburgh City League and Connie Hawkins League Hall of Fame; Bobby Byrd, Pittsburgh City League Basketball Legend and Connie Hawkins League Hall of Fame; Ricky "Black Magic" Coleman, Schenley H.S. Legend, Pittsburgh City League Hall of Fame, Connie Hawkins League Hall of Fame, and Boston Celtics draft selection; and Baron "BB" Flenory, Valley H.S./New Kensington Basketball phenom, Duquesne University superstar, draft selection by the Boston Celtics, European Pro League Champion, voted top 100 in PA Basketball History.

Football Camp, The Kenny Durrett High School All-Star Basketball Classic (the longest-running high school all-star game in Western Pennsylvania history, second only to the Dapper Dan Roundball Classic), Toys for Champions, Thanksgiving for Vets, and the now historic Pittsburgh City League High School All Sports Hall of Fame Inductions (just to name a few of the more than 50 programs that were created!).

As you well know, they didn't come to see me... although don't get it twisted, I could play...no, they came for three reasons. #1. The Ball. #2. The Fun—and man, it was fun (never called the police in 20 years). #3. The Ladies. That's right! On average at the Y...East Hills and at Pennly Park, aka Champions Park, 1,000 people a night, three games a night, five nights a week, and the legend began to build with the likes of Connie, KD, Kirk Bruce, John Marshall, Bobby Byrd, Jeff "Junkhead" Burton, Hosea Champine, Jeep Kelly, Ricky Coleman, Sam Clancy, Clyde Vaughan, "Magic Mike," "Houndini," "Giss," "Rock-



PITTSBURGH CITY COUNCILMAN KHARI MOSLEY served as Co-Chairman and Host for the Anniversary Celebration is joined by Shawn Hawkins, the grandson of the legendary Connie "The Hawk" Hawkins. Shawn is a Pittsburgh City League and Connie Hawkins League Hall of Famer and enjoyed a great career in the European Professional Basketball League.

in Ron," "Lace," "Duck," "Coop," "Scooch," "E," "Breeze," "Moon," "Byrd," "Bum," "Chaz," "Wilson to Wilson," "Mac," "Lenny," "Chicken," "Dr. K," "Stu," "Dr. Hook," and an endless list of some of the world's greatest all-time players.

And let's not forget the importance of the legendary Jennifer Bruce lending her name to the first all-women's league that included great players such as Karen Hall, Margie Hinton, Mary Myers, Carlita Jones, and count-

less other pre-WNBA players who helped make the league even more special.

I realize that if you weren't there, some of you are asking, OK, what's the big deal? Of course there was the legendary Oza-

nam League and The Due Brown League, and the Centre Ave "Y" League, and the great Kinard Summer League, and they were all Kings of the Hill

SEE LEGENDS A6



right hand man, Sterling Smith, taught me how to wheel and deal. KD and Graham told me how to set it up...the legendary Mr. Carl Kohlman told me how to manage it, and the great "Due Brown" told me how to run it. And Cle Edwards taught me the game...it was basketball 101, on-the-job-training and in five years we were rated top ten in the nation and the rest, as they say, is history.

The nationally and internationally recognized Connie Hawkins Pro/Am/NCAA Summer Basketball League was born! And from it came The Willie Stargell Pittsburgh MVP Awards Banquet, The Franco Harris All-Pro



FORMER PITTSBURGH CITY COUNCILWOMAN, longtime civic and community leader, and current representative for State Senator Jay Costa, Tawanda Carlisle presents the proclamation from the state senator to Honored Guest Bill Neal for 50 years of dedicated community service.



FORMER PITTSBURGH STEELER SUPER BOWL CHAMPION and current Allegheny County Judge Dwayne Woodruff, seated with his lovely wife, Joy, receives the Achieving Greatness Inc. Sponsorship Award along with 19 other sponsors.

NEW Pittsburgh Courier

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CHAMPIONS FOREVER...LEGENDS ACHIEVE GREATNESS! (continued)

LEGENDS FROM A4

long before the emergence of the Connie Hawkins League...but there was something special going on here, and that something special was the GREAT, GREAT, GREAT CONNIE HAWKINS! Trust me when I tell you. When the Rankin Gangsters played the Cosmic Echoes, there was no one left at home. Everybody was at the Hawkins League!

I am privileged, proud and blessed that some of Pittsburgh's finest thought me worthy of being recognized and honored for my fifty years of dedicated service.

The effort was spearheaded by Councilman Khari Mosley, Dr. Charlene Coleman, Sharon McIntosh, and the Executive Staff of Achieving Greatness Inc. including Jim Frazier, Warren Wilson, Ivy Tucker, Mike Booker, Daina Hunter, Jeannie Harris, Marlene Scott, Jamie Locicero, Ken and Judy Ogilvie, Bill Boyce, and Debbie Coleman.

Fortunately, the thank yous don't stop there. Please allow me to continue that effort while I am in that direction. After all, I'm "70" and I don't pivot as quick as I used to.

A tremendous thanks goes out to BB Flenory, Vince Lackner, Chanel Smith, Dennis Briggs, Mayor Pauline Calabrese, Brother Melvin El, Ms. Tawanda Carlisle, Jerry Chiappinelli, and Major Mark Whited, without whom this celebration would not have been possible.

Secondly, nothing, and I mean nothing, happens without sponsorship and this spectacular night is no exception. Our very special thanks goes out to Frank Fuhrer III, Senator Jay Costa, Mayor Ed Gainey, UPMC, Councilman Khari Mosley, Ozanam Basketball, Elite Corvettes of Pittsburgh, The Highland Park Tennis Club, Charles Allie,



THE LEGENDS SHOWED UP AND SHOWED OUT. (left) former Duquesne Uni star and NBA L.A. Laker two-time World Champion Norm Nixon; (center) Chuck Cooper, Pittsburgh City League Hall of Famer and son of Mr. Chuck Cooper, the first African American to play in the NBA; (right) Bobby Franklin, Point Park University Hall of Fame and all-time leading scorer, and Connie Hawkins League Hall of Fame.

Briggs Transportation Co., Maser Art Galleries, Goodrich & Geist, Goodrich & Associates, Diversified Municipal Services, Judge Jack McVay, and, of course, to all of our contributors and supporters for giving, caring, sharing, and coming to the event!!!

That being said, "The Night Of The Champions" was underway, and oh what a night it was. It all occurred on Saturday, Oct. 5, at the Marriott, Downtown. The room was "lit" right out the gate with honored and special guest Norm Nixon. The two-time L.A. Laker World Champion brought his "on court cool" and swag to the party and did not disappoint. The professionalism, the photos, the mix and mingle, and most importantly remembering everyone



ATTORNEY VINCE LACKNER, President of the Lackner Group, former Harvard University and European Pro League player is credited with being one of the original architects of the famed Connie Hawkins Summer Basketball League in its initial beginnings!



THIS IS WHY THEY CALL HIM "SMOKING JIM" FRAZIER, Senior V.P. with Achieving Greatness Inc., former Gateway H.S. and California University football great with host models, Savionne Chambers and Sindal Taylor.

who wanted to be remembered. Thank you my brother!

Norm flying in from L.A. could have been the icing on the cake. But we were also blessed with Jeff Baldwin and wife from Texas, Billy Varner flying in from Spain, Ron Brown and his crew driving up from Virginia, Larry Baxter from Jacksonville, Jerome Flint from Ohio, by way of the legendary Farrell, Pa., basketball program, and of course "Bishop" from Cleveland.

Now don't get me wrong, logging in those miles matters and it gets them a discount on the next 50-year celebration. But I am not about to forget my shout out to the heart of Pittsburgh and Western Pa. After all, I've got to live here.

A thousand thank yous to all of you who helped make me...me! Eddie Jefferies, Coach Matt Furjanic, DJ Shock, Brother Carmack, Bruce Atkins, Chris "Nightmare" Stallworth, Craig Prosser, John Bazari and the crew, Jennifer Bruce, Darrell Porter, Clarence Hopson,

Dr. Karen Hall, Kirk Bruce, Bobby Clanagan, Dwight Law and my Donora family, Rodney and Joyce Merritt.

I want to beg your indulgence for one more moment as I extend this very, very special thank you to Steeler Super Bowl Champions Randy Grossman and wife, Judge Dwayne Woodruff and wife, Judge Kim Clark and husband, Olympic Champion Kevin "Freight Train" Parker and wife, and Allegheny County Chief Executive Sara Innarato.

I said it before and it bears repeating. I owe my professional career to Connie Hawkins and I'm proud to say I flew with "The Hawk." And certainly last, but not least, for all of our fallen heroes and legends... Connie Hawkins, Willie Stargell, Franco Harris, Kenny Durrett, Coach Bill Shay, Coach Cle Edwards, and the countless others who gave of themselves to help build and establish our legacy...WE THANK YOU, WE LOVE YOU, WE MISS YOU. CHAMPIONS FOREVER!

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“Can we afford to give-up the same?”

Submitted by
Ken Owens-El aka Ismail El Amin


(Excerpt taken from ‘Black’s Law Dictionary’, 11th Edition,
by Bryan A. Garner, Editor in Chief)



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The Courier is THE VOICE of Black Pittsburgh.

Rev. A. Marie Walker's Weekly Inspiration



"For as the HEAVEN is HIGH ABOVE the EARTH, so GREAT is HIS MERCY toward them that FEAR HIM. AS FAR as the EAST IS from the WEST, so far hath HE REMOVED our TRANSGRESSIONS from US."

-Psalm 103:11-12

REV. WALKER SAYS: This FEAR is reverence for OUR GOD, so GREAT is HIS MERCY to FORGIVE US. Lamentations 3:22 It is the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassion fail not. Let's say THANK YOU JESUS!!!

Dr. Lola M. Thorpe honored by City of Pittsburgh as she enters retirement

A retirement event themed, "In The Fullness of Time," was held, Oct. 26, for Dr. Lola M. Thorpe in the banquet room of the Institutional Church Of God In Christ on the North Side. An entourage of religious and community leaders from Pittsburgh and beyond shared their love and appreciation for Pastor Thorpe's many contributions to their ministries.

Dr. Thorpe, who previously served and supported the Institutional Church as Co-Pastor alongside her husband, Bishop Eugene Thorpe, pursued her Doctorate of Divinity from the North Carolina College of Theology and expanded the church outreach ministry upon her husband's transitioning in 2006.

In addition to full-time pastoring, Dr. Thorpe has hosted numerous Interdenominational Women's Seminars, a Women in Ministry series on PCTV-21 as well as her own radio show entitled, "Moments Of Inspiration." She has authored two books, "When God Gave My Daughter Back," and "When The Worst Came First."

Dr. Thorpe, known as

the courageous female Evangelist forerunner in church leadership and ministry in a male-dominated religious community, has become a measurable icon across the U.S. Her innovative and visionary ministry tenacity has never been deterred or limited by the cultural church norms and has blessed thousands. Her newest passion is awarding "The Lola M. Thorpe Scholarship" to members of the next generation to help further the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Bishop Matthew Lamont Brown of Marietta, Georgia, served as Master of Ceremony.

A few days prior to Dr. Thorpe's retirement event, the City of Pittsburgh and Pittsburgh City Council honored Dr. Thorpe for her numerous accomplishments and dedication to the community. The city declared Oct. 26 as "Dr. Lola Thorpe Day" in the City of Pittsburgh.

— Jacquelyn McDonald



DR. LOLA M. THORPE



FAMILY MEMBERS OF DR. LOLA M. THORPE. (PHOTOS BY JACQUELYN MCDONALD)

Westinghouse wins third City League title in a row



WESTINGHOUSE HAS NOW WON FIVE OF THE LAST SIX CITY LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIPS. THEY DEFEATED ALLDERDICE, 40-12, ON OCT. 26, 2024. (PHOTOS BY JOEY BOVA)

WESTINGHOUSE FROM A1

varena (Woodland Hills High School). Then the mighty Bulldogs watched Allderdice in the City League title game come back to tie the tilt at 12 at halftime.

“That was probably the worst half of football we played all year,” Westinghouse head coach Donta Green said after the championship win. He said he reminded his team at the half to play

their brand of football in the second half, which he called “fast, physical, family football.”

Westinghouse outscored Allderdice 28-0 in the second half, forced ‘Dice into just 39 yards in the half and two interceptions. Meanwhile, Westinghouse quarterback Khalil Green connected with teammate Lloyd Penn for two more touchdowns, for four total on the afternoon. Westinghouse’s Khalil



WESTINGHOUSE CELEBRATES!



ABOVE AND BELOW: ALLDERDICE PLAYERS PLAYED THEIR HEARTS OUT, BUT CAME UP SHORT IN THE END.

Mitchell and Dameon Hill ran for touchdowns in the half, too. Any thoughts of upset on the minds of Allderdice were wiped away by the fourth quarter.

The loss to start the season “humbled us,” Donta Green said post-game. “We had some kids where the only loss they had was the state championship game two years in a row. It was a

great opportunity for us to learn from it, prepare better, which we have since then, and it’s put us on the right track.”

The Bulldogs love winning City League titles; 2024’s version was their 40th such championship. But it’s been 35 years since a City League football team won a state championship. The Perry Commodores won it all in 1989 (20-8 over Berwick

Area) and went to the state title game in 1997, but fell short that year, 17-14, to Berwick Area.

Westinghouse made it known that this year, the title belongs to them. Westinghouse will play in PIAA Class 1A for these playoffs after playing in Class 2A the past two years, falling in the title game each time to Southern Columbia, a powerhouse team locat-

ed between State College and Philadelphia.

“We comin’,” Donta Green said.

“A win, no more runner up trophies,” voiced Penn.

“We’re gonna win it this year,” Khalil Green said. “We lost the last two years, but this year we’re winning it all.”



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THE MALL AT ROBINSON—BLACK-OWNED BUSINESSES MAKING THEIR MARK

Nabakindo Skincare—from a family remedy to the family business

by Maia Williams
For New Pittsburgh Courier

The Mall at Robinson is home to Nabakindo Skincare, one of only four Black-owned businesses in the mall. Founded by Philip and Vania Gbee, Nabakindo Skincare officially launched in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, but its roots trace back to a personal beginning.

The idea for the business was sparked years before, when the couple sought a solution for their oldest daughter, Amirah, who has eczema.

After trying out many commercial brands without progress, Philip Gbee looked to his cultural roots as a Liberian native.

"I said, 'you know what? Let me try shea butter just by itself in its raw essence' and that was so helpful," Philip Gbee told the New Pittsburgh Courier. He said the results were evident. Amirah's skin cleared up and the couple discovered a need for cleaner and more sustainable skincare products in the United States.

The couple's journey into retail began at various local pop-up markets, where they found their products selling out. The success sparked their ambition to scale the business, leading them to Pittsburgh. "We weren't going to do a store. A store was not in our plans. We were simply going to do a kiosk," Philip Gbee said.

After a kiosk space during the holiday season fell through, the couple quickly received an offer for a small storefront at The Mall at Robinson in 2023. They opened their store to the public on Nov. 15, 2023. The Greater Pittsburgh Airport Chamber of Commerce hosted the ribbon-cutting ceremony for Nabakindo on April 17, 2024. Nabakindo Skincare is currently open Monday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Sunday from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. The store is located on the mall's first floor.

Philip Gbee spends his days at Nabakindo Skin-

care balancing a range of tasks like attending to customers, packaging products, staying organized, and joining meetings. "When customers come in, we have a big thing — if you're going to introduce yourself, smile, speak to them, have a conversation, understand their needs," said Philip Gbee. The couple believes their commitment to customer service and word-of-mouth referrals are key to their growth. They are also constantly looking for ways to advance their brand.

"I met Philip and Vania at the Holiday Black Market in 2021. From our first interaction, they listened to my skincare concerns and provided personalized suggestions based on my needs," said Jenna Tracy, a Nabakindo customer. "I immediately fell in love with the four-piece facial care routine including the Alpha Hydroxy Facial Cleanser, Complexion Clarifying Toner, Sunrise Cream and Sunset Cream. Their products are all natural with minimal ingredients you can pronounce."

Nabakindo stands out not only for its chemical-free, preservative-free products, but also as a family-run business. "I don't think there's anywhere else where you have two beautiful little kids, you know, coming up to you and speaking," he said.

Those two little kids are the aforementioned Amirah, and Arabella. Philip and Vania Gbee also have a son, Philip Jr.

Philip Gbee has found that over this past summer, the store's top seller for men was Bakindo Head-to-Toe, while Victoria Falls is gaining popularity among women.

Nabakindo Skincare also engages with the local community through donations, gift boxes and fundraisers. "We're here for the long haul and we are trying to grow within the community, not just take from it," Philip Gbee said.

As Nabakindo Skincare scales, Philip Gbee hopes to participate in sponsorship opportunities. A challenge he experiences as a Black



PHILIP AND VANIA GBEE, OWNERS OF NABAKINDO SKINCARE, AT THE MALL AT ROBINSON. (PHOTOS BY ROB TAYLOR JR.)

entrepreneur is finding authentic ways to get more exposure. He hopes to diversify Nabakindo's customer base. "We're building a community, a strong group of individuals that are a variety of different races and backgrounds — Black, White, Asian, etc., — that come in here," he said.

Philip Gbee's advice to aspiring Black entrepreneurs is to know their "why" and understand their value. He also emphasizes the importance of perseverance through challenges. "Oftentimes, you may see individuals that think everything is just an overnight sensation," he told the Courier. "Sometimes you have to play the long game and can find a lot more satisfaction at times in a long game because you build the different calluses needed in business, so that when you get these more firm opportunities down the line, you're fully prepared for it."



PHILIP AND VANIA GBEE, OWNERS OF NABAKINDO SKINCARE, AT THE MALL AT ROBINSON, WITH THEIR THREE CHILDREN—PHILIP GBEE JR., ARABELLA GBEE AND AMIRAH GBEE. (PHOTOS BY ROB TAYLOR JR.)

Wanna stand out? Get to Fire Sneakers & More

by Rob Taylor Jr.
Courier Staff Writer

Mom knows best.

Loretta Clark had this feeling, this intuition about her son, Mark Sheffield, early on. Maybe even before Sheffield himself knew. She said her son always wanted to have his own, not settling for working for someone else.

"I always thought he was going to be an entrepreneur, because of the way he carried himself growing up," Clark told the New Pittsburgh Courier.

It never really dawned upon Sheffield, the whole "entrepreneurial" thing, as he traversed the walls of Wilkinsburg High School, graduating in 2013. But when he would travel to New York City with his children, he was instantly drawn to the fashions there that you couldn't find in Pittsburgh.

"I got inspired from out there," Sheffield said. "I wanted to bring it to this city...I know we're pretty late on stuff so I'm here to help out."

Sheffield, who loves the Yeezy shoe brand, talked it over with his mother and on April 8, 2023, "Fire Sneakers & More" was born, on the second floor of The Mall at Robinson. A walk inside, and you'll find the high-end streetwear from brands like BAPE, Supreme, Hellstar, Essentials, Denim Tears, and more. Shoes, clothes, accessories, it's there. Young Thug's Spider (pronounced spider) brand, it's there, too.

Sheffield said the first year was a good year for business, but the second year has seen some challenges. He said business is starting to pick back up, and with the holiday season about to be in full swing, Sheffield is hoping

to reap the rewards.

"I'm really proud of him," Clark said of her son. She also said her friends are happy for Sheffield, too.

Sheffield told the Courier he's in the process of making his inventory available through a website, but he gets plenty of interaction on his Instagram page.

"It feels good," Sheffield said about being a business owner, and one of a few Black-owned businesses in The Mall at Robinson. "Don't get me wrong, it's not easy. When it's slow, you gotta manage your money, you don't want to overdo it. Whenever it gets slow, I want to be able to work through it and not get hit hard."

Sheffield, a father of three, said no matter what, he's not giving up. He said he has that "tunnel vision" in order to "stay focused."



LORETTA CLARK AND MARK SHEFFIELD. SHEFFIELD OWNS FIRE SNEAKERS & MORE IN THE MALL AT ROBINSON. (PHOTO BY ROB TAYLOR JR.)

THE MALL AT ROBINSON—BLACK-OWNED BUSINESSES MAKING THEIR MARK

Lundon Boutique relocates, while honoring a legacy of love

by Maia Williams
For New Pittsburgh Courier

In September 2023, Lundon Dunbar reopened Lundon Boutique, her women's clothing store, at The Mall at Robinson.

The reopening marked a new start after relocating from Ross Park Mall following the tragic loss of her fiancé, Derwin Miligan, in a car accident in 2022. The couple was together for 13 years and Dunbar continues to honor his legacy through her

dedicated work at the boutique.

"I just felt like I shouldn't give up. He wouldn't have wanted me to," Dunbar told the New Pittsburgh Courier. "I know he believed in me and he supported any idea that I had."

Dunbar's entrepreneurial spirit was influenced by her father, who owned a convenience store when she was a child. Dunbar's journey as a business owner began in 2011 when she started hosting

jewelry parties. As it grew, she expanded to offer a variety of accessories and later, clothing. "I used to meet up with people who wanted the items right away, and it became overwhelming, so I realized I needed a store," she said.

Lundon Boutique offers a variety of women's apparel from shoes, handbags and accessories. The store, located on the mall's first floor, is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Sundays from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Adapting to the mall's schedule has been an adjustment for Dunbar, who said the foot traffic is a significant advantage. "You have to be here. You have to be on time, and you have to close on time," she said. "I think the pluses of being in the mall is that you get way more foot traffic."

Dunbar values her customers and takes pride in helping them feel beautiful. "I listen to them and what they're looking for. I'm open to their suggestions," she said. "I love making people feel beautiful. Some customers come in on their birthday with no idea what they want to wear." She added that it brings her joy using her eye for style to help them choose the perfect outfit.

A common challenge Dunbar has faced as a small business owner is how some people who know her tend to ask her to discount her store items, but then fully sup-



LUNDON DUNBAR IS THE OWNER OF LUNDON BOUTIQUE. (PHOTOS BY ROB TAYLOR JR.)

port other small business owners they don't even know personally.

"They don't realize how much time and effort we put into it," Dunbar told the Courier.

Despite the challenges, Dunbar encourages aspiring Black entrepreneurs to trust their vision. "You just have to have faith, believe in yourself and your vision, and work hard every day." She emphasized the importance of staying open-minded and accom-

modating to customers. "You'll meet people from all different walks of life and you have to incorporate that into your business because that's who you need to grow your business."

Step into Lundon Boutique, and you'll see that dresses are a customer favorite. They're always being purchased for events and special occasions like birthdays and weddings. Dunbar adjusts her inventory based on peak

seasons such as homecoming and prom. She also engages with the community through pop-up shops and hopes to expand the business to where she can hire a full staff.

"I would just really love to be able to build the store up to where I wouldn't have to work here anymore," Dunbar said. "I could just provide jobs for the community."



LUNDON DUNBAR STANDS NEXT TO SOME OF HER MOST POPULAR DRESSES IN HER STORE.

Kolor-N-Kiln—home of art and culture

by Maia Williams
For New Pittsburgh Courier

Alyson Blackburn and her mother, Jeanine Blackburn, own and operate Kolor-N-Kiln, a Black-owned family-run pottery studio at The Mall at Robinson, located on the first floor. The pottery studio offers an environment where visitors can relax, connect and tap into their creativity by making ceramic paintings, glassware, wood cutouts and more.

The mother-daughter duo started the business in 2012, inspired by a shared hobby. Alyson Blackburn, reflecting on her childhood, recalls her mother taking her to spaces on the outskirts of Pittsburgh where she could explore her creativity. "When I was a child, I was interested in doing pottery," she told the New Pittsburgh Courier in an exclusive interview. "My mom was into finding these random places like an

hour or two outside of the city. We'd take a day trip to like Sharon, Pa., and some other random places. So as a kid, I just always had some type of connection with pottery."

Running the studio involves a wide range of daily tasks, from booking parties and attending to walk-in customers to handling administrative duties and engaging with the audience. "Typically, we're answering phones or just taking care of the back end of things. Every day, I'm processing pottery," said Alyson Blackburn. "Something is always being worked on or created, or some type of brainstorming is always happening."

Kolor-N-Kiln is open Monday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Sundays from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Alyson Blackburn, a graduate of Norfolk State University with a bachelor's degree in music education, draws on her musical background

when hosting pottery sessions at Kolor-N-Kiln. "I think it's like a show every day, so when the gate goes up, it's kind of like the curtain going up," she explained.

Alyson Blackburn adjusts her energy, tone and approach based on her audience, whether she's working with children or adults. "I literally have to have, like, a different voice for different things."

Kolor-N-Kiln is the only pottery studio in The Mall at Robinson. Alyson Blackburn says being Black-owned and family-operated is what sets them apart from competitors. "We can take parts of our culture, parts of who we are and infuse that into something."

For example, Alyson Blackburn says she crafts handmade Kwanzaa Kinas during the holiday season because the celebration is important to her. "I know what that feels like to be able to be seen and



ALYSON BLACKBURN OWNS KOLOR-N-KILN POTTERY STUDIO WITH HER MOTHER, JEANINE BLACKBURN. (PHOTO BY ROB TAYLOR JR.)

so I try to infuse that for people who look like me, but then also for other people as well."

The Blackburns have faced challenges as Black entrepreneurs, including instances where some White customers questioned their ownership of the studio and times when they were overlooked in their previous location in Kennedy Township. "I used to be more reactionary to things," Alyson Blackburn admitted. "But over the years, especially since moving to the mall, we've encountered more open-minded people."

She says The Mall at Robinson has exposed them to a more diverse customer base and it is rewarding when people are excited to see her in leadership. "I am a young, Black, plus-size woman with locks," she said. Alyson Blackburn finds it especially fulfilling when people are surprised to learn that

she co-owns and operates Kolor-N-Kiln. "They seem surprised—pleasantly surprised, sometimes—and that's always rewarding."

Returning customer Randis Doster has had positive experiences at the studio. "I went to an event that was a collaboration between Iota Phi Theta fraternity and Sigma Gamma Rho sorority," Doster said. She shared that she has visited Kolor-N-Kiln about five times. "I have several pieces from there, including a painting, wine glasses, and a cute little piggy bank. I love that I can support a Black-owned business and relax and be creative."

Kolor-N-Kiln also partners with local schools to expose children to art. "It is rewarding to see kids get involved with art," Alyson Blackburn said. The studio participates in philanthropy as well. "I love when charities are able to work

with us on different things. We've helped out with charity fundraisers, whether it's facilitating it in our space or donating."

Alyson Blackburn encourages aspiring Black entrepreneurs to persevere through fear and focus on their goals. "Whatever it is that you want to do, that you think you can provide, go for it. Also, do your homework," she said. "If you know that you want to open a particular business, make sure you know the ins and outs of it and give yourself grace." She emphasizes that starting a business is a learning experience at every stage, no matter how advanced you are.

Looking to the future, Alyson Blackburn hopes to expand Kolor-N-Kiln with additional locations.



THE OWNERS OF KOLOR-N-KILN POTTERY STUDIO—JEANINE AND ALYSON BLACKBURN. (PHOTO BY ROB TAYLOR JR.)



Ta-Nehisi Coates' poor American parallels

J. Pharoah Doss
Page B4

Emergency Funds 101: Here's how to build one

by JPMorgan Chase

Life is full of uncertainties, and unexpected financial challenges can arise anytime. Whether it's a medical emergency, car repair, sudden job loss, or an unexpected home repair, having a financial safety net can provide peace of mind and security. This safety net is known as an emergency fund. In this article, we will define what an emergency fund is, discuss tactics for building one, estimate how long it takes to establish, and highlight how it can offer safety and security in times of need.

What is an Emergency Fund?

An emergency fund is a dedicated savings account for unforeseen expenses and emergencies. It provides a financial cushion to cover unexpected costs without resorting to credit cards or loans or depleting long-term savings accounts such as retirement funds. The primary purpose of an emergency fund is to provide financial stability during times of crisis, ensuring that you can maintain your basic needs and lifestyle without plunging into debt.

Safety and Security in Times of Need

An emergency fund offers invaluable safety and security when facing unexpected financial challenges. Some of the benefits include:

- **Preventing Debt.** With an adequate emergency fund, you won't have to rely on credit cards or loans to cover unforeseen expenses. This can help you avoid accumulating high-interest debt that can be difficult to

Building an emergency fund is a wise and responsible decision for protecting and achieving your financial goals.

repay.

- **Reduces Stress.** Knowing that you have a financial cushion in place provides peace of mind. It allows you to face emergencies with confidence, reducing stress and anxiety.

- **Protects Financial Goals.** An emergency fund protects your long-term financial goals by ensuring you won't have to dip into investments or savings reserved for other purposes, such as buying a home.

- **Promotes Financial Independence.** Relying on your savings rather than external sources of funds fosters financial independence and self-reliance.

How Long Does It Take to Build an Emergency Fund?

The time it takes to build an emergency fund depends on your income, expenses, and savings rate. If you can save a significant portion of your monthly income, you can build your fund relatively quickly. For example, if your goal is to save \$10,800 (equivalent to three months of living expenses for the average person in the United States) and you can save \$900 per month, it would take you one year to reach your goal.

However, it may take longer for those with tighter budgets or more expenses. The key is consistency. As long as you progress toward your goal, you build financial security.

Tactics for Building an Emergency Fund

Building an emergency fund requires a strategic approach and disciplined saving habits. Here are some tactics to help you get started.

Set a Clear Goal

Determine how much money you want to have in your emergency fund. Financial experts often recommend saving at least three to six months of living expenses. However, your circumstances may warrant a larger or smaller fund. Remember that it is better to have a small emergency fund over none at all.

Create a Budget

SEE EMERGENCY FUNDS B2



Financial literacy for teens: How to mold savvy spenders

(Sponsored by JPMorganChase)—Financial literacy is more important than ever. Because everything is digital, it's easier to ignore the realities of your financial situation and avoid learning about financial best practices. Help your teen start off on the right foot with some basic education about personal finances.

Bank Accounts

A bank account is the first step to financial independence. Whether at your local branch, online, or in a high-yield savings-only setting, helping teens set up their own accounts will provide the chance to learn.

Savings vs. Checking

Adults take it for granted, but teens may not know the difference between checking and savings accounts. It's important they understand the withdrawal limits on savings accounts and any minimum balance requirements. It's a good idea for teens to have both a checking and a savings account to get in the habit of planning their expenses separately from their savings.

Options for Teens

Most banks and credit unions offer account options for teens. Choosing the right bank and account type should be a collaborative process. Ask these questions:

- What kind of money access does the teen need?
- Can they be trusted with a typical bank card, or do they need a monitored approach first?
- Is a local institution ok, or do they need better national options?
- Where can we find the fewest fees?

ing points by offering bad deals to unsuspecting borrowers. Teens will quickly learn that the game is rigged in favor of the lender, and they should avoid falling into that trap as real-world borrowers.

Investments

While a savings account is good for money you'll

The benefits of a Roth IRA for teens are numerous, but the biggest plus is that most teens can invest that money tax-free. Small contributions now will mean significant gains over the next 40 years.

College and Education Accounts

Saving for education expenses can be an intelligent move for teens if they plan to get higher education. A 529 plan allows you to save money in an investment portfolio and then withdraw it for qualified expenses. Most states have a 529 plan, so shop around to find the best options. If they choose the one for their state, they'll likely get a tax credit for any contributions.

Budgeting

The single most important part of financial literacy for teens is budgeting. Understanding how to handle your money, plan for future goals, and make smart decisions is the best way to be financially independent and secure. Help teens understand the importance of budgeting with this interactive game that shows how quickly you can go through your money. For an in-depth budgeting game that helps teens see the bigger picture for each small decision, this game and lesson plan is outstanding.

SEE LITERACY B2

Help your teen start off on the right foot with some basic education about personal finances.

- Do they need a physical location, or is online only sufficient?
- **Credit and Debt** Understanding credit and debt is crucial for teens. Help teens establish a good credit score early by adding them with limited privileges on an adult's account. Having a card they can use will make it easier to avoid the credit card companies and their predatory interest rates that will descend on your teen the day they turn 18.

On the flip side, help them understand how debt can quickly snowball and leave them in trouble. This game lets teens play as loan sharks, earn-

want to use in the near term, investments are the better option for long-term savings. Teens can have fun learning about the stock market, but investing in an index fund is the smartest choice. These funds have lower fees and produce reliable returns over the long run. Help teens understand the power of compound interest and investments with this interactive game.

Retirement Savings

Anyone who earns money is eligible for retirement savings. Teens should invest some of their earnings in a Roth IRA (either directly or by getting a guardian to make the contributions).

Is marriage the ultimate wealth cheat code?

Marriage has often been touted as a potential "wealth cheat code," a way for two average income earners to become a financial powerhouse when they combine forces. For instance, consider a couple where one partner makes \$63,000 and the other earns \$54,000. Individually, they are average earners, but together, their combined income reaches \$117,000, transforming them into a six-figure household. But is marriage truly a financial advantage? When I shared this idea on social media, the post sparked a heated debate, highlighting just how divisive this topic can be.

The comments from my social media post revealed a range of perspectives. Some people expressed deep skepticism about marriage being a wealth cheat code. One person wrote, "That's exactly what the government and businesses are banking on. It's a cheat code for everyone but the guy when, in 10 years, she files for divorce and takes half + alimony + child support." Another added, "A cheat code after the one-sided divorce." The fear of divorce and the potential financial consequences is very real, especially when marriages end with one partner facing a heavy financial burden.

Others questioned the practicality of two incomes making a difference. One user commented, "Today that's still broke. Most bills increase, so it's not as good as it sounds." With rising living costs, especially for things like housing and childcare, even a six-figure income

might not stretch as far as it used to. This sentiment underscores the need for smart financial planning even when incomes are combined.

The conversation also touched on the complexities of shared finances. One person observed, "Not when one chooses not to help... his money is their money, but her money is her money." Another user offered a practical tip: "Never combine your income. Three bank accounts: yours, hers, and a joint bank account." These comments highlight the challenges of managing money together, especially when one partner may feel the financial responsibilities aren't shared equally.

Another set of insightful comments brought up the importance of values and effort in a marriage. One reader wrote, "Usually bitter folks that fail to keep God first, fail to communicate and be transparent, fail to rebuke any advances re: infidelity. Also usually the same ones who play victim after the relationship ends JMO tho." Another added, "They need to read, then reread, then go back and reread your last statement... 'CHOOSE THE RIGHT PARTNER.' That's on ALL fronts, not just financially.

If you choose a morally corrupt partner, expect morally corrupt behavior. If you select a broke and uncompromising partner, expect that same behavior." Lastly, a commenter emphasized the importance of commitment: "If people put the effort into KEEPING a marriage, this scenario wouldn't be an issue."

This debate is particularly relevant in the Black community, where at least 60 percent of Black households are led by single women, many of whom struggle financially. This statistic emphasizes the economic impact of not having a second income or partner to share financial responsibilities.

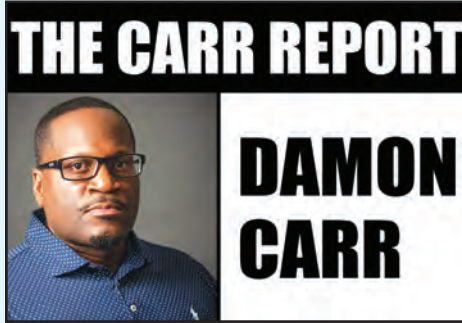
Marriage, when approached strategically and with the right partner, has the potential to change this dynamic and offer a pathway to greater financial security.

To harness the financial advantages of marriage, it's essential to be equally yoked financially. This means sharing values, goals, and financial priorities. According to the National Center for Family & Marriage Research, the current divorce rate in the U.S. is 39 percent, and money issues remain a leading cause of marital strife. Is it irreconcilable differences causing turmoil in the

relationship, or inability to reconcile the budget? Financial disagreements often stem from clashing values or spending habits, highlighting the importance of financial alignment.

Here are some steps couples can take to become equally yoked and make marriage the financial asset it promises to be:

- **Now We Are ONE:** The Census Bureau, The IRS and The Bible considers you to be one economic unit. Marriage means you are on the same team. Use pronouns like "we," "ours," and "us." One spouse's struggle is the other spouse's struggle, and one partner's gain is a shared victory. Embrace the mindset that your financial fates are tied together.
- **Avoid Financial Infidelity:** Be financially transparent. No secret accounts, hidden purchases, or undisclosed debts. Agree on major spending decisions, like anything over \$500, to maintain trust and accountability.
- **Be a Life Mate, Not a Roommate:** Marriage isn't just about sharing space; it's about sharing responsibilities. Both partners should be engaged in household and financial duties. Even if you divide tasks, each spouse should know the overall financial picture.
- **Love Is Taxing:** Sacrifice is often necessary. The tax you pay for love is



SEE DAMON CARR B2

Is climbing the corporate ladder worth the hustle?

by Laura Onyeneho
Houston Defender

The once-coveted corporate ladder climb is losing appeal for a growing segment of the workforce, particularly millennials and younger generations. For decades, the formula for success was clear: put in long hours, demonstrate unwavering loyalty, and patiently wait for your turn at the top.

Today, however, the equation is being rewritten. Workers prioritize work-life balance, individual fulfillment, and a sense of purpose in their careers, often at the expense of the traditional corporate trajectory.

The COVID-19 pandemic undoubtedly catalyzed this shift. Confronted with a global health crisis, many workers were forced to re-evaluate their priorities. Suddenly, the relentless pursuit of promotions and corner-office titles seemed less important than personal well-being and a healthy separation between work and personal life.

A 2021 survey by Paychex Inc. found that 62 percent of global employees now expect their employers to prioritize their well-being. This sentiment is reflected in social media trends like “quiet quitting,” where employ-



A 2021 CENTER FOR TALENT INNOVATION report found that 65 percent of Black professionals believe Black employees must work harder to advance.

ees focus on completing assigned tasks without exceeding expectations, and “quiet ambition,” where individuals prioritize personal goals alongside work.

Broken Trust and Lack of Diversity

Millennials entering the workforce today inherit a corporate landscape where trust in the traditional system is eroding. They witness examples of dedicated employees passed over for promotions and a lack of diversity within leadership positions. A 2022 report by McKinsey & Company revealed that while Black professionals make up 12 percent of the workforce, they only hold 3.2 percent of executive positions. This lack of representation breeds frustration and a sense of limited opportunity.

Jasmine Smith, a pseudonym chosen by a source who wished to remain anonymous, provided insights into the situation. The 30-year-old Black millennial professional describes her disillusionment with the corporate world.

“After working years in human resources, I realized I was constantly overlooked for promotions despite con-

sistently exceeding expectations. Those in leadership all look the same—White women in their 50s—and there were very few people of color in leadership positions. I felt invisible,” she said.

Smith plans to leave the corporate world to launch her own business.

“Things aren’t set in stone yet, but once I do, I’ll have the flexibility to set my hours, work with clients who value my skills, and build a business that reflects my values,” she said.

Smith’s story is not unique. Many Black professionals cite a lack of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) initiatives as a major reason for leaving corporate jobs. A 2021 Center for Talent Innovation report found that 65 percent of Black professionals believe Black employees must work harder to advance.

Nekpen Osuan Wilson, a certified career coach

in Houston, said that a lot of Black people in the workforce don’t feel valued by corporate America, so they feel better off on their own.

There is an allure in pursuing entrepreneurship, which offered her greater control and flexibility once she left corporate America as a management consultant for a Big Four firm. Now, she helps her clients navigate shifts in their careers.

“I tell my clients to start with the end goal in mind because everyone wants different things, whether it be more income, benefits, or better work boundaries,” Wilson said. “Then, there is also the wellness piece. Many clients are burnt out and tired of the grind and competitiveness. Both have challenges, whether you move up the corporate ladder or start a business. You have to choose which ‘hard’ is best for you.”

The rise of the gig econ-

omy and technological advancements further empower individuals to pursue career paths outside traditional corporate structures. Platforms like Uber and Upwork provide more flexible work arrangements, while online tools and resources make it easier than ever to launch a business. This shift allows individuals to integrate work seamlessly into their lives and become the “CEO” of their careers.

While the corporate ladder may not disappear entirely, its dominance is dwindling. Companies must adapt to this changing landscape to attract and retain top talent. Offering competitive work-life balance programs, addressing diversity concerns through concrete action, and creating a more inclusive work environment is crucial.



NEKPEN OSUAN WILSON, a Houston-area certified career coach. Credit: Nekpen Osuan Wilson

Financial literacy for teens

LITERACY FROM B1

• Track Your Income and Spending

Most teens aren’t entirely responsible for their needs yet. This is the perfect time to practice budgeting when the stakes are lower. Have them track income and spending for two months using

this worksheet. They can also use this app to track spending in real-time. Knowing your starting point is essential for budgeting wisely.

• Make a Plan

After they’ve tracked their money, it’s time to make a plan. Their basic budgeting sheet can help them fill in goals and

amounts for categories they anticipate in the future. This app can help them visualize savings goals. Getting in the habit of planning for upcoming needs will help teens successfully navigate their more complicated lives once they leave home.

Financial success as a young adult is main-

ly about knowledge and planning. By giving teens a chance to practice these skills before they’re financially independent, you’re helping give them an enormous advantage as young adults.



Emergency Funds 101: Here’s how to build one

EMERGENCY FUNDS FROM B1

Track your spending to understand your fixed monthly expenses, such as rent, and discretionary costs, such as eating out or shopping. Identify areas where you can cut back or allocate more funds toward savings. Create a budget that prioritizes saving for emergencies.

Automate Savings

Set up automatic transfers from your checking account to a separate savings account designated for emergencies. Treating this savings account as a non-negotiable monthly expense will help you consistently save over time. Define what constitutes an emergency and only withdraw from this account in those situations.

Start Small

Don’t be discouraged if you can’t save much initially. Even small contributions add up over time. The key is to get into the habit of saving regularly.

Use Windfalls Wisely

Whenever you receive unexpected windfalls, such as tax refunds, work bonuses, or gifts, consider allocating some of this money to your emergency fund rather than splurging

on discretionary spending. This strategy can boost your savings quickly and help you reach your goal faster.

Cut Unnecessary Expenses

Periodically review your expenses and look for ways to reduce discretionary spending. This can free up additional funds for your emergency fund. This short-term sacrifice isn’t easy, but it is worth it for the long-term security.

Increase Income

Explore opportunities to increase your income through part-time work, freelance gigs, or side hustles. Can you hold a yard sale or sell unused items online? The extra income can accelerate your emergency fund growth.

Building an emergency fund is a wise and responsible decision for protecting and achieving your financial goals. By committing to building your emergency fund, you can establish a financial safety net that provides peace of mind and security. Remember that financial stability is a journey. Even small steps can make a significant difference when you face unexpected challenges.

(Sponsored by JPMorgan)

Is marriage the ultimate wealth cheat code?

DAMON CARR FROM B1

compromising or delaying some of your personal goals for the greater good of the family. Both partners must be willing to support each other’s financial dreams.

• **A House Divided Cannot Stand:** Have regular discussions about your financial goals, concerns and plans. Make sure both partners have a voice and a vote. Create a roadmap that addresses both of your needs and sets a clear path for achieving them.

In conclusion, while marriage has the potential to be a wealth cheat code, it requires careful planning, open communication, and a shared commitment to financial stability. If couples are willing to adopt these steps and work together as a team, marriage can indeed transform their financial future. The key is to choose the right partner, communicate openly, and remain committed to



your shared goals. With the right foundation, marriage can be more than just a romantic union—it

can be a powerful financial partnership.

(Damon Carr, Money Coach can be reached @ 412-216-1013

or visit his website @ www.damonmoneycoach.com)

Guest Editorial

Inequality is far too pervasive for Black politicians to yield to corruption

As Black children leave the safety of their home and community, either to pursue higher education in colleges and universities, or in pursuit of their dreams, parents routinely advise, "You must be better—10 times better—than the others."

In other words, to make it in America, where the institution of slavery, racial inequality and the restriction of civil and political rights are embedded into the fabric of society, they must stand head and shoulders above the competition, particularly White Americans.

Such advice should not be misconstrued as racist but rather as realistic. And with no segment of society garnering greater scrutiny than the political arena, it's hard to fathom why Black men—stalwarts in their communities—were caught by federal prosecutors with their hands, allegedly, in "the cookie jar."

In August, Washington D.C. residents witnessed the arrest of Ward 8 Councilmember Trayon White (D), charged with bribery after allegedly agreeing to accept \$156,000 in exchange for using his position to persuade local employees to extend several lucrative contracts.

Then, in September, New York City Mayor Eric Adams was charged with five separate criminal counts, including: conspiracy to commit wire fraud, bribery and receiving campaign contributions by foreign nationals.

Innocence or guilt notwithstanding, what's disturbing about both cases is how these pillars of their communities allowed themselves to become sullied by various forms of graft that have destroyed the careers of so many politicians—Black and White—before them.

Only through activism, persistence and great sacrifice have Black Americans overcome slavery, Black Codes and Jim Crow to finally secure political power. From Hiram Rhodes Revels in 1870 becoming the first Black elected to the Mississippi state Senate, to Barack Obama taking over the White House as America's first Black president in 2008, to Justice Ketanji Brown-Jackson's confirmation to the Supreme Court in 2022, African Americans have ascended to some of the highest positions in the nation.

There are scores of bad examples that Black politicians can follow. But if we continue to knock down centuries-old walls of injustice, level the playing field and make this a better world for all, those who seek political careers would do well to follow in the "right footsteps."

Leaders such as Shirley Chisholm, Andrew Young, Carol Mosely Braun, John Conyers Jr., Colin Powell and John Lewis set an example. No, they were not perfect. But they strove for excellence . . . and accepted nothing less. That's what we need today—no more, no less.

(Reprinted from the Washington Informer)

The Real Victory!

(TriceEdneyWire.com)—My article won't tell you today how political races across the country will turn out on November 5th because I am required to turn it in the Friday before the big day. As I write, we are still waiting for the victory, but I will tell you how it should come out at the top of the ticket.

There can be no doubt that Vice-President Kamala Harris should be President of the United States as you read this later or as you hear who the winner is on November 5, 2024! The real victory should go to the best candidate!

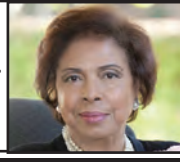
Whatever you learn once the election is over, I am going to tell you who and why Kamala should win the race for President because she was the only person who should even have been a candidate in the race!

I don't know about others, but every single person of color, every woman, every person of goodwill, every working person, every person with good sense (without regard to Party), every person who supports our democracy, every person who cares what their children's future will look like, every person who knows there was no comparison between the two candidates, every honest person, every non-racist person, every non-sexist person, every person who has knowledge of the race knows Kamala Harris should be called Madam President when it's over.

Kamala ran a flawless race. She

Dr. E. Faye Williams, Esq.

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offered a program to heal many of our problems in the coming days. She promised to already have her "To Do List" when she walks into the Oval Office of the White House. Her opponent had already told us he would have his "Hit List" of those he considered his enemies.

One would think that those who couldn't see and support the far superior candidate had on blinders, and because of their own inability to discern the candidate best prepared, best educated, best experienced, and greatest concerned about the people than about herself, should be President of the United States today.

No matter how this race turns out, every little girl can grow up knowing she has a shot at becoming President because the leading women who dared to run for President, Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, former First Lady and former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, and Vice-President Kamala Harris, made us proud.

Donald Trump has been going after things over his head all of his life by lying, cheating and bullying

people far smarter than he would ever be. Whatever the results are the day after election day, we will be convinced that we've seen a woman coming out of the race showing the world who deserved to win, who worked hardest and I pray it's obvious that Kamala Harris is the victor, while her opponent is still vowing that he wants to say and do whatever he wants to say and do about women whether we like it or not! We can't say he didn't tell us that women should be punished for having control of our bodies and our lives! He wants to be our protector now as we look back at the vulgar things he has said and been convicted of doing to so many women!

For those who didn't see and support the genius of Kamala Harris, I wonder if Trump even knows he was never fit to lead this nation. It was never more obvious who the superior candidate was for President. There were voters who didn't have the courage to support the very best candidate for the country they claim to love! I wonder if Trump was even capable of knowing some people voted for him only because they were intimidated by him while being embarrassed by his behavior. I wonder if he even knows he in no way came close to being the superior candidate in the race. That was always Kamala Harris.

(Dr. E. Faye Williams is President of The Dick Gregory Society.)

Three areas where Biden must now act to cement his legacy on the environment

(TriceEdneyWire.com)—Now in its final months, the Biden-Harris administration has a chance to cement its powerful legacy on the environment. Congress returns for its so-called lame duck session on November 12. The administration should pull out all the stops to work with Congress and use the powers of the presidency to get some more big things done.

First, the administration must continue its historic work to address the climate crisis and further push the United States economy away from the burning of fossil fuels. The Inflation Reduction Act, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and the other major policy initiatives championed by this administration are some of the most effective tools we have ever had to combat climate change, create good American jobs, and ensure the US leads in the next economy. The investments in clean energy and manufacturing must continue. But while that happens, we also need to stop bad policies that threaten reckless fossil fuel expansion — the opposite of the direction in which we need to move.

There are two critical actions the federal government can take right now to combat fossil fuel-driven climate change. One is stopping the buildout of massive liquified natural gas (LNG) export terminals like the proposed CP2 facility in Louisiana. Approving more fracked gas infrastructure only will serve to lock us into a fossil fuel future neither country or the world can afford. Increasing fracked gas extraction and processing for export is a bad choice all around. We do not need to be burning more fossil fuels for energy. Virtually every step of the cycle from extraction to export is fraught with risks to public health. From the fracking and the pipelines used to transport the gas to the liquefaction process and the harm to ecosystems from the new terminals and tanker traffic, it

Ben Jealous

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all creates dangerous pollution. And it is a raw deal for American consumers as well. According to an analysis by Public Citizen, domestic consumers could face \$14.3 billion in higher annual energy costs due to LNG exports. The Biden administration should reject LNG expansion and stop the CP2 project.

The other lame duck session action the administration should take against fossil fuel expansion is working to defeat the bad permitting bill by Senators Joe Manchin (I-WV) and John Barrasso (R-WY). Energy Permitting Reform Act of 2024 would gut bedrock environmental laws, endanger public health, open up federal lands and waters to further oil and gas leasing, and fast-track the review of proposed LNG export projects. It would be another big step in the wrong direction.

The second area in which the Biden-Harris administration needs to continue its historic leadership is in the protection of public lands. The administration's America the Beautiful initiative aims to protect and preserve at least 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030. President Biden can go out with a bang by using the Antiquities Act to create several more national monuments. This administration's record in this area is stellar. The administration protected over 12.5 million acres of public lands just in 2023 alone. Now President Biden has a chance to create national monument at Sattitla highlands in Northern California. The monument would protect over 206,000 acres of land that hosts unique ecosystems and has deep cultural

importance to Indigenous tribes in the area. He should also create the Chuckwalla National Monument, which would protect roughly 660,000 acres of the California Desert south of Joshua Tree National Park. And, at long last, the president should designate the site of Black Wall Street in Tulsa, Oklahoma a national monument to recognize the Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921, one of our country's most horrific and largest incidents of racial violence.

The other action the administration should take to protect lands is to finalize protections, under the US Forest Service, for America's remaining mature and old growth forests. Mature trees are especially effective at removing carbon from the air and are one of Earth's most important natural defenses against the climate crisis.

Lastly, the Biden-Harris administration should work with Congress to expand access to the outdoors for all Americans. That means doing what it takes to pass the EXPLORE Act and sign it into law. The bipartisan bill is a wide ranging package of policies including the Outdoors for All Act and expansion of the Every Kid Outdoors program to make national parks and public lands accessible to more of America's youth. The EXPLORE Act would help close the nature equity gap and help kids, families, veterans, and millions of others enjoy the gifts of nature.

This president deserves our gratitude for how he has prioritized the climate, fighting pollution, and land conservation. President Biden now has a little under three months to keep doing big things. We should push both his administration and Congress to keep doing big things. These times call for bold action. And the planet, places, and people we love deserve nothing less.

(Ben Jealous is the Executive Director of the Sierra Club and a Professor of Practice at the University of Pennsylvania.)

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Corruption vs. human decency

(TriceEdneyWire.com)—Most things in politics are intentional, rarely occurring arbitrarily. What may appear to be a coincidence sometimes is not a coincidence. Political activities can be like a chess match with moves against your opponent and counter moves. Politics is strategic. It involves action plans designed to achieve the overall goal of winning elections and maintaining power. American politics involves individuals willing to share political power and economic empowerment versus those who prefer to keep it exclusively within select groups. The activities associated with running political campaigns and governance are sometimes abused with greed, deception, and dishonesty.

In 2002, Kwame Kilpatrick became the 72nd mayor of Detroit, Michigan. At 32, he was the youngest person ever elected to lead the Motor City. Known as America's "first hip-hop mayor," his election represented a fresh beginning for many residents as he promised to revitalize the majority-Black city. The hope and excitement surrounding the new mayor would eventually lead to public corruption, marking Kilpatrick's time in office as one of the most difficult periods in Detroit's political history. "Criminal activity was a way of life for him, and he constantly used the power of his office to look for new opportunities to make money illegally," said FBI Special Agent Robert Beekman. Kilpatrick was sentenced to a 28-year prison term for his role in a wide-ranging racketeering conspiracy that included extortion, bribery, and fraud. Thirty-two others were also convicted of crimes in connection with the case, including Kilpatrick's contractor friend, Bobby Ferguson, who received a 21-year jail term.

Kilpatrick and Ferguson established a "pay to play" system in which Kilpatrick extorted city vendors, rigged bids, and took bribes. He used funds from nonprofit civic organizations to line his pockets and those of his family. "His crimes were not the result of a momentary lapse in judgment," said a document prepared for the court

David W. Marshall



Commentary

by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Michigan. "He systematically exploited his office to enrich himself, his friends and his family." Kilpatrick and Ferguson obtained more than \$500,000 from the state of Michigan and private donors for nonprofit organizations they controlled. The organizations were supposed to help the community. Instead, the "hip-hop mayor" spent large sums on luxury vacations, spa treatments, and golf clubs. The U.S. Attorney covering Detroit at the time, Barbara McQuade, said at a news conference following the conviction that Kilpatrick ran the city of Detroit like a criminal enterprise. "One juror said she is a Detroit resident and voted for Kwame Kilpatrick for mayor twice herself, but the evidence that she saw in this case made her stomach turn," McQuade shared.

This has a different feeling when public corruption is at the hands of a Black mayor while those who suffered the most were Black residents. We know corruption has no color. It's carried out by those who are White, Black, or brown. It has no party affiliation. It can come from those who are Democrat or Republican. But should Black mayors, councilpersons, and school board members be held to a higher standard since they serve Black communities?

My answer is yes. A local government intimately touches the lives of individuals and communities more than higher levels of government. The purpose of obtaining racial diversity in local governments is to have a government that proportionally reflects the racial makeup of the overall community. Racial diversity in seats of power allows marginalized and disenfranchised citizens to have a voice at the table of power. As a result, we expect a deeper level of sensitivity and understanding of the plight many economically oppressed residents face. While honoring their oath of office, we expect trusted servants of the people to have a more intimate understanding of the root causes and complexities challenging Black residents living in blighted and impoverished communities.

The expectation is for them to respond appropriately. In the case of former Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick, we saw how corruption and selectively holding back economic empowerment were not motivated by greed and racism but rather by greed and classism. Fair competition was taken away from Black businesses who played by the rules. Needed resources and help were taken away from communities when nonprofit funding was used for personal use. It shows a lack of human decency mixed with racial betrayal by someone once viewed as a rising star in Democratic politics. Few things in politics happen arbitrarily. When any candidate running for office has dark motives behind their words and actions, it creates a feeling of distrust when the hidden motives are publically revealed after they assume office. The distrust can turn citizens who are already doubtful and on the fence away from civic engagement and voting.

While President Joe Biden won the state of Michigan by 154,000 votes in 2020, future presidential elections in the battleground state are likely to be close as well. Therefore, in the chess match of presidential politics, it would not be surprising that Donald Trump planned his moves years ahead when he commuted Kilpatrick's sentence as one of his final acts as president. In June this year, Kilpatrick returned the favor and endorsed Trump in the 2024 presidential race. The Michigan Republican Party recently ran radio ads in Detroit using former Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick. The question remains: how many Black voters with loyalty to the charismatic Kilpatrick will choose a corrupt convicted felon to be the next president of our nation?

(David W. Marshall is the founder of the faith-based organization TRB: The Reconciled Body and author of the book God Bless Our Divided America)

Ta-Nehisi Coates' poor American parallels

The Message, a new book by award-winning author Ta-Nehisi Coates, includes a contentious essay about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Coates concluded that the dispute isn't complicated. It's a simple matter of right and wrong—and Israel is wrong.

Coates never mentioned in his book that Israel is surrounded by nations seeking to eradicate it and is constantly coping with terror attacks, thereby perplexing a CBS interviewer. The interviewer sought to know whether Coates omitted these facts since he thought Israel had no right to exist.

Coates replied, "No country in this world establishes its ability to exist through rights. Countries establish their ability to exist through force, as America did." Clearly, Coates suggests that the extermination of the Native population and the seizure of their land led to the creation of America, and that Jews followed suit in Palestine to establish the state of Israel.

Spanish, French, and British colonies were responsible for the conquest of land and the annihilation of native populations throughout North and South America, but the United States of America established itself through rights.

The United States declared independence from England. The King of England believed the 13 colonies had no right to autonomy. Europe's governing principle at the time was the divine right of kings, whereas the king was God's representative and ruled on God's behalf.

The Declaration of Independence challenged the King's "divine right" to rule. In order to reduce the King of England from God's representative to a common man whose title had no divinity, the document declared that men were equal.

The Declaration replaced the divine right of kings with the concept that all human beings had natural rights bestowed on them at birth by their Creator. Legislation could never revoke these rights, nor could a civil authority grant them. The purpose of government was to protect these God-given rights, and the founding fathers sought to form such a government.

The Revolutionary War altered the

J. Pharoah Doss

Check It Out



course of history, not by separating the United States from England but by challenging the divine right of kings.

One should be aware that Coates is an atheist.

In 2017, Daniel Steinmetz-Jenkins published a piece in The Guardian that questioned whether atheism was the reason for Coates' pessimism. He wrote, "Coates' entire worldview rests on a theology of global chaos. [His book] We Were Eight Years in Power describes this theory of chaos as Black atheism. Remarkably little attention has been given to the pivotal role this idea plays in his work."

Since chaos reigns supreme for Coates, he rejects the premise that the divide-right of kings or God-given natural rights factored into the establishment of any nation. Therefore, the United States forced itself into existence for its own gain without any guiding first principle, while Israel forced itself into existence after the Holocaust to create a safe haven for the Jewish people, despite having no right to do so in a region already populated by Arabs.

Coates can reject God-given rights, but he can't ignore the right to self-determination.

1948 was the year the British mandate in Palestine expired. The previous year, the newly established United Nations planned to create one state for the Jews called Israel and another for the Arabs called Palestine, once the British withdrew from the region.

The United Nations aimed to promote self-determination among subjected people by establishing nation states. The UN Charter defined self-determination as the right of a people to constitute itself in a state while having the right to freely choose its political, economic, social, and cultural systems.

The Arabs rejected the UN's plan because they didn't want to share the

region with Israel. The Israelis, on the other hand, declared their independence and seized the portions of land designated to them by the UN. The neighboring Arab countries attacked Israel in an effort to eliminate the Jewish state, but the Israelis fought for their right to self-determination, won the war, and established the state of Israel.

Coates' premise that America and Israel established themselves through brute force without natural rights or self-determination being fundamental factors in their independence is shortsighted.

Coates also asserted that the Palestinian territories are no different than the Jim Crow South.

When Coates was on The Gray Area podcast, the host told him, "When you compare Palestine to the Jim Crow South, my reaction is that these are both moral obscenities, but they are different. And I do think it's complicated."

"Tell me why you think it's complicated." Coates inquired.

The host replied, "I think it matters that Black people in the Jim Crow South wanted to be treated as equal citizens in a fully democratic America. I don't think it's generally true that Palestinians want equal rights in a fully democratic Israel. And if they had that, they might vote to end its existence as a Jewish state ... And I also think it matters that Jews are indigenous to that land and have nowhere else to go. I just think that complicates the picture."

Coates' American parallel fails because the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is unprecedented. There aren't historical comparisons. Coates made the Jim Crow comparison because it was the easiest way to condemn Israel.

Unfortunately, Coates refused to acknowledge the inadequacy of his Jim Crow comparison and the complexity of the Israel/Palestinian conflict.

He simply made another comparison. He told the podcast host, "There is nothing in this world that will make separate and unequal okay, and there's nothing—and I'll use this word—that makes apartheid okay."

I guess Coates ran out of American parallels.

No Diddy: The intersection of Black misogyny in Hip-Hop, the hood, and movement spaces

The recent arrest of Sean "Diddy" Combs brings up issues of misogyny and violence toward Black women. This issue extends beyond Hip-Hop, spreading into Black liberation spaces and our communities. In Hip-Hop, it manifests in various ways, such as the portrayal of Black women in the music as well as the over-sexualization and policing of our bodies.

Some suggest this began in the 1980s with gangster rap, but as someone born in 1980, I remember witnessing the effects of misogyny and exploitation much earlier. For example, the UTFO song "Roxanne, Roxanne," where the group describes catcalling, reminds me of my experiences of being catcalled at the age of ten. I have always been thick, and this began when I was in middle school. At times, this made it hard to walk home from school, with older men, young men, and even older women pointing out my hips and thighs—something that still happens today. Let me add that as a thick Black girl, we don't need reminders that we are thick. The song made me uncomfortable and helped to normalize misogyny. When Roxanne Shante responded, it was my first memory of Black feminism. It may sound surprising, but for a Black woman to speak truth to power at that time was incredibly powerful.

This trend of misogyny and Black

Fawn Walker Montgomery



Commentary

women in Hip-Hop fighting back continued. Despite Black women like Salt-N-Pepa and Lil' Kim reclaiming their power through their music, misogyny has worsened, with lyrics that demean Black women and perpetuate sexual violence. Examples include older artists being in relationships with younger Black girls, songs that depict gender violence, as well as the silence surrounding the women who did speak out against some of our "faves." The acceptance and normalization of this are connected to how it manifests in our communities and Black liberation spaces.

Specifically, in the hood with older men parking across the street after school and making comments to young Black girls. This includes whistling, courting (buying gifts/giving them money), and openly discussing waiting until the girls turn 18. It's important to acknowledge that this behavior also affects young Black boys, with older Black women

often putting them in similar situations, etc.

This toxicity also appears in the movement for Black liberation, where Black women are sometimes separated from the cause due to misogyny. I, too, have experienced being overlooked, ignored, or erased because I am deemed too strong, or not submissive enough. This was discussed by the Combahee River Collective. A Black feminist lesbian organization released a statement calling this behavior out in 1977. To this day it remains a crucial text in Black feminism. The authors boldly called out this behavior, stating, "We struggle together with Black men against racism, while we also struggle with Black men about sexism."

To address this issue, we must be willing to engage in courageous conversations about Black misogyny and how it manifests. Additionally, create safe spaces where Black women can speak up and be believed. And yes, this means going beyond podcasts! Don't get me wrong, I enjoy a good podcast. However, the overwhelming amount of advice directed at Black women and the policing of our experiences is not helpful. The silence has gone on for far too long, which is why there are so many Cassies in our communities. We must support and protect Black women in REAL LIFE!

The Congressional Black Caucus and what Black folks must do

(TriceEdneyWire.com)—One of the most valuable contributions of the 2024 Annual Legislative Conference hosted by the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (CBCF) is providing an opportunity for several thousand Black folks from the United States of North America, South America, Africa, Europe and Asia, to meet, talk, listen and sometimes debate about issues that affect our lives.

A subject that was frequently talked about was the 2024 U.S. Presidential Election in which a woman of African descent was believed by many to possibly be this country's first woman president. When my basic position was asked about that subject, I stated that I will be voting against Donald Trump. It's important to remember that he is not new on the American political scene. White males like Donald Trump, who is supported by overt and covert White supremacists and colored people of African descent, have been running this country since it was

A. Peter Bailey



Reality Check

officially launched in 1776.

One of the most well attended forums was one of which a Black historian delivered a serious speech about the real history of this country, a history that is not taught in most American junior high schools, high schools, colleges and universities. For example, one of the most important facts of American history was the heroic role that Black soldiers played in the winning of the Civil War. Yet, this story is rarely told.

It is extremely important that we know this history because our opponents seemingly believe that they can mess with us and not worry about a serious response. That's

why it is so important for CBCF and other Black organizations that they host conferences that include forums on culture, education, economics, politics, technology, psychology, communications and Pan Africanism. On the last day of the conference each attendee should be given a listing of concrete suggestions on what we must do as a people to promote and protect our interests.

To more effectively promote and protect our interests in the above listed arenas, the attendees should also be encouraged to read, study and act on guidance from master teachers such as Brothers and Sisters Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr., Lerone Bennett Jr., Marcus Garvey, Mary McCloud Bethune, Fannie Lou Hamer, C. Delores Tucker and others who have left us with vital information about what we must do if we are going to provide better lives for our children, grandchildren and future generations.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Help Wanted

BRENTWOOD BOROUGH, PA
Main Street Manager/Community and Economic Development Director Position
 Location: Brentwood Borough, PA
Salary Range: \$60,000 - \$85,000 per year, plus fantastic benefits
Employment Type: Full-Time, Exempt Salaried Position
 Ready to blaze a trail and make history? Brentwood Borough is on the lookout for its first-ever **Main Street Manager/Community and Economic Development Director** – a brand-new role that will be pivotal in transforming our community. This is an exciting opportunity to be a groundbreaker, shaping the future of Brentwood's business districts and creating vibrant, thriving spaces for residents and visitors alike. This isn't just another job – it's a chance to transform Brentwood's future. From shaping our participation in the **Pennsylvania Main Street Program** to executing the Borough's newly adopted **Implementable Comprehensive Plan**, we're looking for someone who can bring fresh ideas and the drive to make them happen.

Key Responsibilities:

- Manage the implementation of the Pennsylvania Main Street program.
- Collaborate with business owners, property managers, and community members to foster a vibrant and thriving downtown area.
- Identify and pursue grant opportunities to support community and economic development initiatives.
- Develop and implement marketing strategies and sponsorship opportunities to promote community events and local businesses.
- Work closely with, provide support and participate on the Brentwood 4th of July Parade Committee.
- Oversee the implementation of the Borough's **Implementable Comprehensive Plan**, ensuring alignment with long-term development goals.

Qualifications:

- A bachelor's degree in business/public administration, Community Development, Marketing, or a related field.
- 3-5 years of experience in economic or community development.
- Strong project management and organizational skills.
- Experience with grant writing, fundraising, and management is highly desirable.

Preferred qualifications include a master's degree in a relevant field and a Certified Main Street Manager (CMSM) designation, or a willingness to obtain certification.

Application Process: Interested candidates are encouraged to apply by **December 31, 2024** by submitting a cover letter, resume, and **COMPLETED** Borough Employment Application to **Susan Toth, Finance/HR Director** at **stoth@brentwoodpa.gov**. For more information and to download an employment application, please visit our website at **www.brentwoodpa.gov**.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Help Wanted

BOROUGH OF BELLEVUE
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
 The Borough of Bellevue will be appointing an **Assistant Director of Administrative Services**. For more information go to the personnel code at **bellevuepa.org**.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Public Notice

OTHER PROPERTY EXCHANGE – NON-REAL ESTATE ASSETS CITATION FOR FREEDOM FROM PARENTAL CUSTODY AND CONTROL
SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
 325 SOUTH MELROSE DRIVE, VISTA, CA 92081
 JUDGE KELLY MOK, DEPT. N-24
 CASE NUMBER 24AD000587N

IN THE MATTER OF Bailey Alexis Plivelic
DATE OF BIRTH 10/1/2016 A MINOR
RESPONDENT(S) Blair Anthony Plivelic

To Blair Anthony Plivelic

You are ordered to appear in the Superior Court of the State of California, County of San Diego, in Department N-24 at the court location indicated above on December 05, 2024, at 8:30 AM, to show cause, why (names) Bailey Alexis Plivelic should not be declared free from parental custody and control for the purpose of placement for adoption as requested in the petition. This hearing will be conducted by video or telephone through the NORTH COUNTY DIVISION 325 S. Melrose Drive VISTA, CA 92081. **IMPORTANT: BLAIR ANTHONY PLIVELIC**, please call the court promptly for instructions on how to attend this hearing. **(760) 201-8720 Monday – Friday 8:30am-11:30 PST**. At the hearing, the judge will read the petition and, if requested, will explain the effect of the granting of the petition, any term or allegation contained therein and the nature of the proceeding, its procedures and possible consequences, and may continue the matter for not more than 30 days for the appointment of counsel or to give counsel time to prepare. The court may appoint counsel to represent the minor whether or not the minor is able to afford counsel. If any parent appears and is unable to afford counsel, the court shall appoint counsel to represent each parent who appears unless such representation is knowingly and intelligently waived. Someone over the age of 18 – not the petitioner – must serve the other party with all the forms and complete a proof of service form, such as Proof of Service of Citation (Adoptions) (SDSC Form #JUV-300), telling when and how the other party was served and file that with the court. If you wish to seek the advice of an attorney in this matter, you should do so promptly so that your pleading, if any, may be filed on time. Date: 10/2/2024. Kelly C. Mok, Judge of the Superior Court. FILED Clerk of the Superior Court OCT 02, 2024, By: TR, Deputy.

LEGAL ADVERTISING

Legal Notices

Estate Notices

Letters have been granted on the estate of each of the following decedents to the personal representative named who request all persons having claims against the estate of the decedent to make known the same in writing to him or his attorney, and all persons indebted to decedent to make payment to him without delay:

Estate of **JANET W. ONDOS**, Deceased of Pittsburgh, Allegheny, Pennsylvania, No. **02-24-01121**, Eric J. Ondos, Administrator, 141 Buckthorn Drive, Baden, PA 15005 or to **ROBIN L. RARIE, Atty; BRENLOVE & FULLER, LLC**. 401 Washington Avenue, Bridgeville, PA 15017

Petition to Determine Title to 3912 Kleber St, Pittsburgh, PA 15212, formerly owned by **WILLIAM D. KUSHIK**, deceased, filed October 1, 2024 by William C. Kushik, No. **6241 of 2024**. **Peter B. Lewis, Neighborhood Legal Services**, 928 Penn Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15222, Counsel.

Estate of **KRAMER, RAYMOND**, deceased, of Pittsburgh, PA. No. **01651 of 2024**. Lisa Kramer, Co-Extr. and Pamela Kramer, Co-Extr., 1020 Jancey Street Pittsburgh, PA 15206, Raymond E. Kramer, Jr., Co-Extr., 100 Kennedy Drive, Apt. 308 Sayreville, NJ 08872 and Linda A. McCullough, Co-Extr., 6606 Premo Street Pittsburgh, PA 15206 or to **James B. Campese, Esq.**, 200 Capital Drive, Aliquippa, PA 15001.

Estate of **JOEARAL F. KENNEDY**, (deceased) of Pittsburgh, PA. No. **06350 of 2024**, Ferdinand Cooper, 7309 Mariners Landing Drive, Fayetteville, NC 28305, Administrator or to **Sheila M. Ford, Esq., Attys**, 6419 Stanton Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15206

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CLASSIFIEDS GET RESULTS!**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Meetings

PUBLIC NOTICE ALLEGHENY COUNTY SANITARY AUTHORITY
The Green Committee of the Allegheny County Sanitary Authority will hold a special meeting for general purposes on **Wednesday, November 20, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. prevailing time** in the Trefz Board Room at its offices located at 3300 Preble Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15233. Official action on the Committee's recommendations will take place at a regular meeting of the Board of Directors at a later date. The public may view the meeting via livestream by visiting **www.alcosan.org**.

PUBLIC NOTICE ALLEGHENY COUNTY SANITARY AUTHORITY
The Professional Services Committee of the Allegheny County Sanitary Authority will hold a special meeting for general purposes on **Thursday, November 14, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. prevailing time**, in the Trefz Board Room at its offices located at 3300 Preble Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15233. Official action on the Committee's recommendations will take place at a regular meeting of the Board of Directors at a later date. The public may view the meeting via livestream by visiting **www.alcosan.org**.

The Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh will be holding a meeting of the Board of Commissioners on Thursday, November 21, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. EST. via Zoom Webinar.

HACP conducts business in accordance with all federal, state, and local civil rights laws, including but not limited to Title VII, the Fair Housing Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, The PA Human Relations Act, etc. and does not discriminate against any individuals protected by these statutes.



PUBLIC NOTICE ALLEGHENY COUNTY SANITARY AUTHORITY
The Finance Committee of the Allegheny County Sanitary Authority will hold a special meeting for general purposes on **Tuesday, November 12, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. prevailing time**, in the Trefz Board Room at its offices located at 3300 Preble Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15233. Official action on the Committee's recommendations will take place at a regular meeting of the Board of Directors at a later date. The public may view the meeting via livestream by visiting **www.alcosan.org**.

PUBLIC NOTICE PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING CABLE FRANCHISE RENEWAL FOR THE BOROUGH OF BEN AVON
 Notice is hereby given that the **Borough of Ben Avon** will hold a **public hearing** regarding cable franchise renewal. The public hearing will take place on **November 19, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.** at the Borough Building located at 7101 Church Avenue, Ben Avon, PA 15202. Citizens are invited to testify. The purpose of the public hearing is to review the past performance of the cable operator, Comcast, and to identify the future cable-related community needs of the Borough. Questions may be directed to **Rick Wagner - Borough Council President** - at (412) 766-7704.

PUBLIC NOTICE PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING CABLE FRANCHISE RENEWAL FOR THE BOROUGH OF EMSWORTH
 NOTICE IS HEREBY given that the Borough of Emsworth will hold a Public Hearing regarding cable franchise renewal. The Public Hearing will take place on **Wednesday, November 13, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.** at the Borough Building located at 171 Center Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15202. Citizens are invited to testify. The purpose of the Public Hearing is to review the past performance of the cable operator, Comcast, and to identify the future cable-related community needs of the Borough. Questions may be directed to **Cathy Jones, Borough Secretary**, 412.761.1161.

CATHY JONES
 Borough Secretary

To place a display ad in the **New Pittsburgh Courier** call **412-481-8302** ext. 128

SONNY BOY

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**LEGAL ADVERTISING**

Bids / Proposals

LEGAL ADVERTISING

Bids / Proposals

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF PITTSBURGH INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFBs) FOR BEDFORD DWELLINGS ENVISION CENTER- NEW DEDICATED HEATING PLANT AMP-02 IFB #600-21-24 REBID

THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF PITTSBURGH ("HACP") will receive sealed bids for the **Direct Opportunities Center (DOC) Rehabilitation AMP-39**. Bid Documents will be available on or about **Monday, November 4, 2024, and may be obtained HACP's webpage, www.hacp.org**. Bidders may register on the website and download the bid documents free of charge.

A Pre-Bid Conference and Site Visit will be held in-person on **Thursday, November 21, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.**:
 2305 Bedford Ave
 Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Bidders shall come prepared to review all aspects of the construction site necessary to prepare a bid.

Bids will be received at:
HACP Procurement Department
 412 Boulevard of the Allies, 6th Floor
 Pittsburgh, PA 15219
Attn: Brandon Havranek, Associate Director of Procurement until 9:00 a.m. December 5, 2024.

HACP will also accept online submissions for this Invitation for Bid in addition to accepting submissions at our 412 Boulevard of the Allies office. For respondents wishing to submit online, please access the instructions provided in the project manual or on HACP's website to submit the bid digitally. In addition to the electronic submittal above, HACP will only be accepting physical bids dropped off in person from **8:00 a.m. until the closing time of 12:00 am on December 5, 2024**, in the lobby of 412 Boulevard of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA 15219. Sealed bids may still be mailed via USPS at which time they will be Time and Date Stamped at 412 Boulevard of the Allies, 6th Floor, Pittsburgh, PA 15219. **All bids must be received at the above address no later than December 5, 2024, at 9:00 a.m., regardless of the selected delivery mechanism.** HACP reserves the right to waive any informality in or reject any and all bids. No bid shall be withdrawn for a period of sixty (60) days subsequent to the opening of bids without the consent of HACP.

The Contractor will be required to comply with all applicable Equal Employment Opportunity requirements for Federally Assisted Construction Contracts. The Contractor must ensure that employees and applicants for employment are not discriminated against because of race, color, religion, sexual preference, handicap or national origin. HACP has revised its website. As part of those revisions, vendors must now register and log-in, in order to view and download IFB/RFP documentation.

THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF PITTSBURGH STRONGLY ENCOURAGES CERTIFIED MINORITY-OWNED BUSINESS ENTERPRISES AND WOMAN-OWNED BUSINESS ENTERPRISES TO RESPOND TO THE SOLICITATION.

Additional information may be obtained by contacting **Brandon Havranek, Associate Director of Procurement** at (412) 456-5890.

Caster D. Binion, Executive Director
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF PITTSBURGH

HACP conducts business in accordance with all federal, state, and local civil rights laws, including but not limited to Title VII, the Fair Housing Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, The PA Human Relations Act, etc. and does not discriminate against any individuals protected by these statutes.



PORT AUTHORITY OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY D.B.A. PRT
Electronic Proposals will be received online at **PRT's Ebusiness website (http://ebusiness.portauthority.org)**. Proposals/bid submittals will be due **11:00 AM on December 2, 2024, and will be read at 11:15 AM**, the same day, through your web browser via Microsoft Teams video conferencing, for the following:

Electronic Proposal - Ebusiness website (http://ebusiness.portauthority.org)

	Bid Number	Bid Name
1	B24-10-97	Bus Batteries (AGM)
2	B24-10-98	Diesel Engine Oil

To join the bid opening through Microsoft Teams meeting on your computer, mobile app or room device
Meeting ID: 258 266 182 363
Passcode: PyPAkD
Or call in (audio only) 412-927-0245
Phone Conference ID: 615 424 160#

No bidder may withdraw a submitted Proposal for a period of 75 days after the scheduled time for opening of the sealed bids.
 A Pre-Bid Conference will be held on each of the above items at **10:00 AM on November 19, 2024**, through your web browser via Microsoft Teams video conferencing.

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device
Meeting ID: 288 376 767 457
Passcode: gZqHMM

Or call in (audio only)
412-927-0245
Phone Conference ID: 389 834 424#

Attendance at this meeting is not mandatory but is strongly encouraged. **Questions regarding any of the above bids will not be entertained by the PRT within five (5) business days of the scheduled bid opening.** These contracts may be subject to a financial assistance contract between Port Authority of Allegheny County d.b.a. PRT and the United States Department of Transportation. The Contractor will be required to comply with all applicable Equal Employment Opportunity laws and regulations. **Contractor is responsible for expenses related to acquiring a performance bond and insurance where applicable. All items are to be FOB delivered unless otherwise specified. Costs for delivery, bond, and insurance shall be included in bidder's proposal pricing.** Port Authority of Allegheny County d.b.a. PRT hereby notifies all bidders that it will affirmatively insure that in regard to any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, disadvantaged business enterprise will be afforded full opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in consideration for an award.

The Board of PRT reserves the right to reject any or all bids.

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Bids/Proposals

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**HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF PITTSBURGH
INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFBs) FOR
DIRECT OPPORTUNITIES CENTER (DOC) REHABILITATION AMP-39
IFB #600-34-24**

THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF PITTSBURGH ("HACP") will receive sealed bids for the Direct Opportunities Center (DOC) Rehabilitation AMP-39 Bid Documents will be available on or about **Monday, November 4, 2024**, and may be obtained HACP's webpage, www.hacp.org. Bidders may register on the website and download the bid documents free of charge.

A Pre-Bid Conference and Site Visit will be held in-person on **Tuesday, November 19, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.:**
1205 Liverpool Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15233

Bidders shall come prepared to review all aspects of the construction site necessary to prepare a bid.

Bids will be received at:
HACP Procurement Department
412 Boulevard of the Allies, 6th Floor
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
Attn: Brandon Havranek, Associate Director of Procurement
until 10:00 a.m. December 5, 2024.

HACP will also accept online submissions for this Invitation for Bid in addition to accepting submissions at our 412 Boulevard of the Allies office. For respondents wishing to submit online, please access the instructions provided in the project manual or on HACP's website to submit the bid digitally. In addition to the electronic submittal above, HACP will only be accepting **physical bids dropped off in person from 8:00 a.m. until the closing time of 10:00 am on December 5, 2024**, in the lobby of 412 Boulevard of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA 15219. Sealed bids may still be mailed via USPS at which time they will be Time and Date Stamped at 412 Boulevard of the Allies, 6th Floor, Pittsburgh, PA 15219. **All bids must be received at the above address no later than December 5, 2024, at 10:00 a.m., regardless of the selected delivery mechanism.** HACP reserves the right to waive any informality in or reject any and all bids. No bid shall be withdrawn for a period of sixty (60) days subsequent to the opening of bids without the consent of HACP.

The Contractor will be required to comply with all applicable Equal Employment Opportunity requirements for Federally Assisted Construction Contracts. The Contractor must ensure that employees and applicants for employment are not discriminated against because of race, color, religion, sexual preference, handicap or national origin. HACP has revised its website. As part of those revisions, vendors must now register and log-in, in order to view and download IFB/RFP documentation.

THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF PITTSBURGH STRONGLY ENCOURAGES CERTIFIED MINORITY-OWNED BUSINESS ENTERPRISES AND WOMAN-OWNED BUSINESS ENTERPRISES TO RESPOND TO THE SOLICITATION.

Additional information may be obtained by contacting **Brandon Havranek, Associate Director of Procurement at (412) 456-5890.**

Caster D. Binion, Executive Director
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF PITTSBURGH

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PORT AUTHORITY OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY D.B.A. PRT

Electronic Proposals will be received online at PRT's Ebusiness website (<http://ebusiness.portauthority.org>). Proposals/bid submittals will be due **11:00 AM on November 21, 2024, and will be read at 11:15 AM.**, the same day, through your web browser via Microsoft Teams video conferencing, for the following:

Electronic Proposal - Ebusiness website
(<http://ebusiness.portauthority.org>)

	Bid Number	Bid Name
1	B24-10-92	Gemini Passenger Plastic Seat Inserts

To join the bid opening through Microsoft Teams meeting on your computer, mobile app or room device
Meeting ID: 289 659 876 090
Passcode: dq27Ds

Or call in (audio only)
412-927-0245
Phone Conference ID: 307 533 07#

No bidder may withdraw a submitted Proposal for a period of 75 days after the scheduled time for opening of the sealed bids. A Pre-Bid Conference will be held on each of the above items at **10:00 AM on November 06, 2024**, through your web browser via Microsoft Teams video conferencing.

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device
Meeting ID: 292 503 848 784
Passcode: 9bVaAH

Or call in (audio only)
412-927-0245
Phone Conference ID: 264 589 048#

Attendance at this meeting is not mandatory but is strongly encouraged. **Questions regarding any of the above bids will not be entertained by the PRT within five (5) business days of the scheduled bid opening.** These contracts may be subject to a financial assistance contract between Port Authority of Allegheny County d.b.a. PRT and the United States Department of Transportation. The Contractor will be required to comply with all applicable Equal Employment Opportunity laws and regulations. **Contractor is responsible for expenses related to acquiring a performance bond and insurance where applicable. All items are to be FOB delivered unless otherwise specified. Costs for delivery, bond, and insurance shall be included in bidder's proposal pricing.**

Port Authority of Allegheny County d.b.a. PRT hereby notifies all bidders that it will affirmatively insure that in regard to any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, disadvantaged business enterprise will be afforded full opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in consideration for an award.

The Board of PRT reserves the right to reject any or all bids.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Public Notice

**ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS
BOROUGH OF SWISSVALE
7600 EVANS STREET, SWISSVALE, PA 15218
FOR
NEW SWISSVALE MUNICIPAL BUILDING
AT 7560 ROSLYN STREET, SWISSVALE, PA 15218
PROJECT DESCRIPTION/ NARRATIVE**

Construction of a new municipal building with administrative offices, police department, and large multi-function community room. The project includes site improvements of new utility services, parking lots, plaza area, basketball court, widening curb cuts and repairs to pavement on traffic rights-of-ways.

Bids shall be submitted for the Following Prime Contracts:

- 7900-22-01-GC General Construction
- 7900-22-01-MC Mechanical Construction
- 7900-22-01-EC Electrical Construction
- 7900-22-01-PC Plumbing Construction
- 7900-22-01-FP Fire Protection Construction
- 7900-22-01-TC Technology Construction

The Borough of Swissvale is requesting bids to be made and will award the contract to the lowest responsible bidder(s) all as more thoroughly described in the Contract Documents.

Bids will be received at the Borough of Swissvale Administrative Offices located at 7600 Evans Street, Swissvale, PA 15218, until **2:00 p.m. prevailing time, on DECEMBER 3, 2024**; at which time all Bid submissions will be publicly opened and read aloud.

Plans, Specifications and Bid forms are on file for review and may be secured by prospective bidders from:

Accu-Copy, Inc.:
302 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
Telephone: (724) 935-7055

Bidding Documents may be obtained through prior arrangement with the Printer; and upon payment of the non-refundable cost of reproduction. A separate non-refundable cost will be required for shipping and handling charges if mailing is requested.

A certified check, bid bond or a combination of both totaling an amount equal to ten percent (10%) of the total amount of the Base Bid PLUS any Add Alternates and made payable to the Owner, must accompany each bid.

The Owner reserves the right to reject any or all bids, and/or to waive any informality, infirmity, omission, defect, irregularity and/or disqualifying error in any bid.

The Owner anticipates awarding Contracts within thirty (30) days of the bid opening. No bona fide bids shall be altered or withdrawn for a period of sixty (60) days after the bid opening.

All bids shall be clearly marked with contractor's name and Prime Contract number and name.

Written questions will be accepted by CORE Architects, LLC. via email: cmagee@corepgh.com.

Items which require clarification will be addressed by Addendum prior to the Bid date.

Respectfully,
Greg Bachy, Borough Manager; Borough of Swissvale
(412) 271-7101

**YOU'RE NOT JUST SUBSCRIBING TO A 'NEWSPAPER' ...
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PITTSBURGH'S FIRST BLACK MAYOR**

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**Friday noon preceding
Wednesday publication**

ACHIEVE!

School Choice Guide
New Pittsburgh Courier
November 6-12, 2024





MOVEMENT WAS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF GLORIA MERRIEX'S LESSONS AT DUVAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN GAINESVILLE, FLA.

How educator Gloria Jean Merriex used dance, drills and devotion to turn around a failing elementary school in a year

by Boaz Dvir
Penn State University

When Duval Elementary – a school that served mostly Black and poor students in East Gainesville, Florida – failed the state’s high-stakes standardized test in 2002, district leaders pressured the school’s educators to more closely follow the curriculum.

But Gloria Jean Merriex, who taught third and fourth grade reading and fifth grade math, wasn’t interested. She argued that doing more of the same would yield more of the same results. She rebelled by creating a customized curriculum and going out of sequence, teaching the hardest units first.

Opting for a more kinetic approach to learning, she introduced music and movement. She revamped math and

reading instruction by infusing the lessons with hip-hop, dance and other innovations.

And she got results, leading Duval from an F to an A in 2003 and maintaining that academic excellence until she died of a diabetic stroke in 2008. Her students achieved the greatest gains in math among all of Florida’s fifth graders.

As one who has spent years researching Merriex’s career for “Class of Her Own,” a documentary set for national release on April 16, 2024, I believe the example she set could help students from economically poor families make up the considerable ground they lost during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pandemic cost these students three-fourths of a year in math and more than a third of a year in reading, according to

the Education Recovery Scoreboard, a collaboration between educational researchers at Harvard and Stanford who are examining learning loss and recovery across the country. These students suffered more than twice the pandemic-induced math skills erosion than students from families of great economic means, the scoreboard shows.

Merriex’s students consistently outscored their peers until her death at the age of 58.

Based on what I learned of her approach in the classroom, here are some of the most important takeaways from Merriex’s life and career:

1. Meet your students where they are, from where you are

Merriex breathed new life into this somewhat vague cliché by being uncompromisingly authentic. She wasn’t al-

ways that way. For much of her time at Duval, she followed the cookie-cutter curricula. But when Duval failed the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test, she felt she’d been letting down her students all those years.

Merriex started incorporating community and cultural concepts into her curriculum.

A church choir member, she also began keeping her students on task by snapping her fingers, lighting a fire under them by turning static class exercises into dance routines and engaging them in call-and-response. In one exchange depicted in the documentary, Merriex calls out “one-fourths equal,” “two-fourths equal,” and her class responds in unison “25%,” “50%” and so on until they reach 100%.

In another, after giving an incorrect answer, one

of her fifth graders says: “I made a mistake.” Merriex calls out, “It’s OK. Why?” Her students respond, “Not too many.”

It was out of this authentic stance that Merriex wrote the “Math Rap” and other hip-hop-fueled educational songs. Her teaching style exemplifies research that has found Black students learn best through “culturally relevant curriculum” and by having classroom activities connected to “prior knowledge and ... real life.”

Personally, Merriex preferred other musical genres, but she knew rap would resonate with her students.

2. Make repetition a habit

Merriex turned repetition into an art. She demonstrated that saying it once means simply mentioning it; to teach, you must repeat. And,

through her reverse sequencing of teaching the most challenging concepts at the outset, she gave herself plenty of chances to revisit them throughout the year.

Several domestic and international studies illustrate the benefits of repetition to a variety of students.

3. Get parents involved
Merriex believed parental involvement boosted student success – a notion that is backed up by research.

“If a kid forgot their homework, she’d get on the phone with their mom,” University of Texas at San Antonio assistant dean of research Emily Bonner says in the documentary.

To enable parents to keep up with their children, Merriex offered them evening math and

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Gloria Jean Merriex turned around failing school in a year

ELEMENTARY FROM PAGE 1

reading classes. “And she sometimes used to go by their house, especially kids that are really going through a lot,” parent volunteer Anthony Guice says in the documentary.

Guice continues to share Merriex’s math and reading raps and dance routines with North Florida residents.

4. Show you care

Merriex provided free after-school tutoring and Saturday sleepover test prep at Duval. She sewed school uniforms and graduation gowns. She cooked meals. “She put us before anything, before her own health,” former student Britany Daniels says in the documentary.

A diabetic, Merriex could ill-afford to do that. Research shows overwork can be hazardous to your health, potentially even deadly.

“She only missed three days out of 30 years of school,” her

daughter, Tayana Davis, a certified nurse, says in the documentary. “That’s when she was in the hospital.”

Thus, Merriex has provided us with two lessons, one unintentionally: Care, in a multitude of ways, for your students — and yourself.

5. Embrace standardized testing

Critics have long called standardized testing inequitable and unfair. Their criticism reached a crescendo with passage of President George W. Bush’s 2001 No Child Left Behind Act, which required yearly assessments and carried consequences such as being forced to restructure or or replace staff, including the principal, for schools that didn’t make adequate yearly progress.

In recent years, states have opted for less ominous evaluations through the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Most universities



have scrapped SAT and ACT requirements from their applications.

Yet Merriex, who rejected other educational mandates, welcomed Florida’s standardized test. She viewed it as an equalizing factor. She used the exam to raise expectations and motivate her students. One of

the means to a bigger end, it played a part in her mission to give her students the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in school and beyond.

Recent studies show she had a point. Researchers have found a correlation between how K-12 students do on standardized tests and how they do in college. For this reason, some universities, such as Dartmouth and Yale, have reinstated the SAT and ACT.

Florida’s test certainly leveled the playing field for Merriex’s students. Their success transformed Duval from an underserved school into a well-funded magnet arts academy in 2005.

It was quite telling that after her students took Florida’s state test every spring, Merriex continued drilling its concepts through the end of the year.

The most relevant Merriex lesson, however, has nothing to do with state tests or hip-

hop or chanting. “You’ve got to know who your students are, and you need to teach those students,” Bonner, the research dean from Texas, says in the documentary.

Not every group of students responds to rap or chanting, but children respond to a teacher who knows and cares about them, seeks to genuinely connect with them and unleashes their true self in the classroom to bring out the best in them.

The year after Merriex died, 2009, Duval failed the state test. The school never regained its academic footing and ultimately closed in 2015.

Boaz Dvir, Associate Professor of Journalism, Penn State This article is republished from The Conversation under a Creative Commons license.

Why more families are choosing online learning

by Niyoka McCoy,
Ed.D.

If you catch a glimpse of 4- and 5-year-olds in attendance of a virtual pre-k classroom, you may witness a chorus of enthusiastic voices

singing “The Wheels on the Bus,” with hands energetically following the motions of their teacher. These young learners represent a rapidly growing trend of parents opting out of the traditional classroom setting in favor of online

learning environments, where engaging teachers, family involvement, and interactive resources create a captivating learning experience.

While both online and traditional pre-k programs share similarities—such as state-certified teachers leading classes and opportunities for peer interaction—virtual learning offers unique advantages. Teachers are specially trained for online instruction and excel in “edutainment,” a high-energy, engaging teaching approach that captures the young students’ attention through the screen. Moreover, students benefit from frequent one-to-one instruction, including dedicated sessions focused on key literacy skills such as letter recognition and learning to form specific sounds through mouth movements.

Virtual programs also strike a balance between desk time and hands-on

activities away from the screen. For example, a science lesson involves a project where students and their families build birdhouses to create an ecosystem that protects birds. This activity, used as part of a K12-powered pre-k program often draws in older siblings, and families share that their children love watching the birds visit their creations, making it a true family favorite. We frequently hear that these hands-on activities bring entire families together, transforming learning into a shared experience at home.

During classroom sessions, teachers take frequent brain breaks—a strategy that incorporates interactive tools to help keep 4- and 5-year-olds focused and engaged. Take “Doggyland” for instance—this lively animated series gets kids moving through song and dance, with music that covers various educational

topics like sharing, diversity, letter and number recognition, and self-confidence.

While pre-k is not mandatory in any state, studies show that children who attend a structured learning environment before kindergarten gain a significant academic advantage. Researchers point out that pre-k attendance builds foundational knowledge in subjects such as math and reading, as well as fine motor skills, which enhance long-term academic performance, including higher assessment scores and stronger math abilities, providing benefits that extend into adulthood.

Virtual pre-k programs offer a lifeline to families who want their children to experience the benefits of a structured pre-k program but face barriers to traditional programs. These obstacles can include lengthy waitlists, lottery systems, high tuition and

fees, or long commutes. Moreover, families must navigate challenges like potty training requirements, lack of facilities designed for small children, and crippling separation anxiety that can make the daily drop-off traumatic and upsetting for the child and parent.

No child should miss out on the benefits of pre-k due to lack of access. Virtual pre-k presents a modern solution to families, ensuring equitable access to a high-quality curriculum for all, regardless of location or income. The flexibility and accessibility of virtual pre-k allow all children the opportunity to thrive in a structured learning environment. I expect more families will continue to embrace virtual school options that prioritize their child’s development and growth.

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FIRST GRADERS led the desegregation of New Orleans' public schools in November 1960. Bettmann via Getty



WHITE NEW ORLEANS RESIDENTS protesting school integration in 1960. Bettmann / Contributor via Getty



TESSIE PREVOST WILLIAMS in 2021. **PETER G. FOREST / CONTRIBUTOR VIA GETTY**

New Orleans schools still separate and unequal 70 years after Brown v. Board of Education

by **Connie L. Schaffer, Martha Graham Viator, and Meg White**

University of Nebraska Omaha, Rowan University, Stockton University

Sixty-four years ago this November, public schools in New Orleans began to desegregate. School buildings once designated as “White” opened their doors to Black students. The integration process, which deeply divided the city, was led by four first-grade girls.

Tessie Prevost, Leona Tate and Gail Etienne were the first Black students to attend the McDonogh 19 School. Ruby Bridges was assigned to the previously all-White William Frantz Public School. Newspapers worldwide ran photographs of the girls walking past protesters and entering the schools accompanied by federal marshals.

When Prevost died in July 2024, she was lauded as a Civil Rights hero. Oprah Winfrey paid tribute to her at the Democratic National Convention.

Prevost herself did not realize her role in history until high school, when a teacher assigned the class a project on Brown v. Board of Education, the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that desegregated American schools. As she researched, she discovered her own

name and story. She took this discovery to her parents, and they gave her a box of photographs and letters about her place in history, including a note from Eleanor Roosevelt praising her courage.

To some, Prevost represents the promises of the Civil Rights Movement: integration and equality. As our research on New Orleans Public Schools shows, however, neither of these promises has ever been fully realized.

New Orleans' schools re-segregated in the late 20th century, and the city's predominantly Black schools still lag behind White schools in many ways.

‘All deliberate speed’

In the landmark 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education*, the justices ordered U.S. public schools to desegregate “with all deliberate speed” – language that allowed Southern cities and states to drag their heels.

New Orleans schools did not begin desegregating for six years. Even then, only four first-grade girls out of thousands of Black students were permitted to enroll in White schools.

The New Orleans district would subsequently desegregate one additional grade per year. As a member of that first desegregated class, Prevost was always

in the grade being integrated. As such, all the grades above her remained segregated.

Indeed, McDonogh 19 remained segregated during the first year of integration because all its White students immediately stopped attending. By December 1960, the school's only students were the three Black girls. Two White students briefly enrolled in January, but their family succumbed to the pressure of the boycott and soon withdrew their children.

When Prevost, Etienne and Tate entered second grade, McDonogh 19 still had very low enrollment. In third grade, in 1962, the girls transferred to T.J. Semmes Elementary School, where enrollment of White students was much higher.

Within that White student majority, the girls encountered many cruel classmates. White students, encouraged by some teachers and parents, tormented their Black peers. Prevost recalled this as the worst time in her life.

“The White teachers and students did not want us there,” she said. “Every day there were beatings and cursing. They spat on us and ripped off our clothes.”

After several years, Prevost's parents recognized the impact of this heinous racism on their daughter

and transferred her into a predominantly Black junior high school. Prevost would again be separated from most of her White peers.

Equality in name only

The *Brown* ruling also promised an equal education regardless of race. In practice, that has yet to happen.

Most White teachers in New Orleans opposed desegregation, and the district initially allowed teachers to choose where they would teach. In 1972, however, the district re-assigned many teachers to work in desegregated schools, and many quit in protest. Other White teachers struggled to connect and engage with their Black students, leading to disaffection among Black students. Their academic achievement declined, and dropout rates began to rise.

Simultaneously, White flight was working against integration. Between 1960 and 1980, the White population of New Orleans dropped 20%, resegregating many New Orleans schools. By 2004, 50 years after the *Brown* ruling, McDonogh 19 – which by then had been renamed Louis Armstrong Elementary – was again effectively segregated by race: Nearly 100% of its students were Black.

Across the district, academic performance de-

clined in predominantly Black schools. By the 1990s, student achievement became increasingly measured by standardized tests known to be biased against students of color and poor students. Black students were also more likely to be taught by teachers with fewer years of experience and less education.

By 1998, test scores at Louis Armstrong Elementary had fallen well below national, state and district averages. The school was also in a state of deep disrepair. In the summer of 2005, the city closed the school, and a few months later, Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans.

The abandoned school building sustained heavy wind damage and flooding. Water reached halfway up the walls of the first floor, leaving toxic mud, peeling chalkboards and mold-encrusted furniture.

A legacy

Following Katrina, the State Board of Education stripped New Orleans Public School District of its authority to manage public education.

The state of Louisiana and charter organizations took over city schools, making New Orleans Public Schools the first all-charter school district in the U.S. Despite the change in governance, New Orleans

schools remained segregated by race. Over a decade later, in 2017, roughly 75% of schools had populations of 95% students of color, and test scores showed only incremental improvement.

Prevost, whose married name was Tessie Williams, lived in New Orleans her whole life, working at Louisiana State University for over two decades.

She returned to McDonogh 19 in 2022, when the restored building opened as the Tate, Etienne and Prevost Center. The site, once a symbol of resistance to civil rights, is now a community center and museum committed to advancing the unfulfilled promises of the *Brown* ruling.

As an adult, when Prevost spoke publicly about desegregation, she recalled the difficulty and disappointment she and others faced. But she tended to emphasize her hope for the future.

“The ways that we are different are things that we should celebrate,” she said in a Black History Month interview with Louisiana State University. “There is so much power and freedom when we see differences in a positive light.”

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SARAH ZANGLE PRESENTS A COMMUNITY-DRIVEN PROPOSAL FOR CHANGING THE PPS PORTFOLIO AT AN OCT. 22, 2024 PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE SMITHFIELD UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, DOWNTOWN. (PHOTO BY CAMERON CROSTON/PUBLICSOURCE)

Fewer closings, regional schools and choices featured in parent-crafted alternative to PPS consolidation plan

by Lajja Mistry,
PublicSource

As Pittsburgh Public Schools weighs potential closures and consolidations, some parents have presented their own community-driven proposal in response.

The community proposal, presented October 22 at a press event on Smithfield Street, Downtown, is based on regional schools with an element of choice. With that, it recommends closing 10 schools: Banks-ville K-5, Fulton PreK-5, Grandview K-5, Liberty K-5, Manchester PreK-8, Roosevelt PreK-5, Schiller 6-8, Spring Hill K-5,

West Liberty PreK-5 and Woolslair PreK-5.

Five of these schools — Grandview, Manchester, West Liberty, Fulton and Liberty — would become community hubs. The hubs would serve as teacher training centers and spaces for community partners to host in-school or after-school activities. A new K-5 would be established in the retired Northview Heights building.

Sarah Zangle, a Woolslair parent spearheading the community proposal, started a grassroots movement and gathered input from about 120 parents and community

members to inform the plan. The proposal, which had been in the works for about a month, aims to bring more equity while considering the district's strategic plan.

"We are trying to drive equity so we're trying to bring resources to areas that are historically marginalized or have been left out in previous decisions and also trying to make sure that we don't create school deserts," said Zangle, a registered nurse.

Consultants from Education Resource Strategies [ERS] presented their final recommendations for the district-led Facilities Utilization Plan to the

board last week. ERS proposed 14 school closures, changing grade configurations and phasing out of most magnet programs. As the next step, the PPS board has directed Superintendent Wayne Walters to create a feasibility report in the coming weeks, after which they will finalize a date to vote on the proposal.

ERS spent six months studying the district, gathering input and trying to address community questions. The consultant's initial plan presented in August was met with immediate backlash from parents and community members. The district and

consultants organized multiple regional input sessions to gather community feedback on that plan.

While the proposed changes are not final, some parents feel that the entire process was rushed and did not gather meaningful community input.

Zangle's team of parents gathered community input from local organizations, teachers and students to create the plan. However, she acknowledged the need for more feedback and time required to fully develop it.

"There's definitely a group of people that are historically marginalized,

that are hard to reach," Zangle said. "It's been really hard to really get into that community and get authentic community feedback for many reasons."

Splitting schools regionally

The proposal retains some aspects of the consultants' plan, such as moving to the traditional K-5, 6-8 and 9-12 grade configurations. According to the proposal, the district would be split into regions at different grade levels.

Elementary schools would be split into five



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Fewer closings, regional schools and choices

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regions: east, west, central, north and south. K-8 Schools like Arlington, Mifflin, Greenfield, King, Morrow would be reconfigured into K-5 schools.

Conceptual map of kindergarten to grade 5 school zones contemplated in the Community-Driven Proposal for Changing the PPS Portfolio, which parent advocates introduced at an Oct. 22 press conference, Downtown.

Each elementary school would have a guaranteed base curriculum and retain a specialized focus. Parents could choose to send their kids to a school of their choice within their region.

A two-region model would be implemented for middle schools. Parents living in the north and east regions could choose to send their kids to any school in those regions. South- and west-residing parents could choose to send their kids to any school in those regions. Parents living in the central region could send their kids to any middle school in the city.

Conceptual map of grades 6 to 8 school zones contemplated in the Community-Driven Proposal for Changing the PPS Portfolio.

All high schools would be under one region and parents could choose any high school for their children.

Middle schools would



Ginger Thompkins asks a question following the presentation of a Community-Driven Proposal for Changing the PPS Portfolio at an Oct. 22 press conference at the Smithfield United Church of Christ, Downtown. (Photo by Cameron Croston/PublicSource)

focus on a pathway such as Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics [STEM] and high schools would expand Career and Technical Education [CTE] offerings and increase the availability of Advanced Placement courses.

Minadeo K-5, Allegheny K-5, Colfax K-8 and Miller K-5 would become 6-8 middle schools. South Hills would become a CTE adult learning site. All 6-12 schools — Obama, CAPA, Sci-Tech, Westinghouse and Millions UPrep — would become 9-12 high

schools. A CAPA middle school magnet would be established in the Arsenal Middle School building. A Sci-Tech program would be established at Miller Middle School.

The community proposal did not prioritize finances because reducing expenses wasn't a stated goal of the Facilities Utilization Plan. However, if the board considers moving forward with it, a volunteer team is working to provide an estimate of the plan's expenses, Zangle said.

Magnet programs in elementary schools would

be phased out to bridge the equity gaps created by magnet application processes.

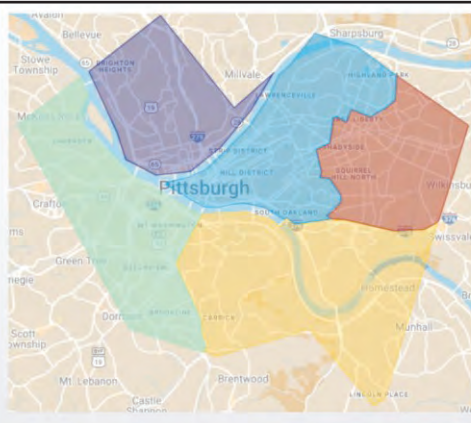
Magnet-like processes

Much like the district's current magnet application process, parents would be required to rank the schools of their choice in their region. Enrollment applications would be weighted on factors such as sibling attendance or school proximity. Families living in historically marginalized areas would be given higher preference.

"By keeping themed schools and schools with an emphasis, but just creating the ranking system and getting rid of the magnet application, you really preserve choice and preserve thematic learning

SEE PPS PAGE 10

Regions for K-5



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Conceptual map of kindergarten to grade 5 school zones contemplated in the Community-Driven Proposal for Changing the PPS Portfolio, which parent advocates introduced at an Oct. 22 press conference, Downtown.

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Fewer closings, regional schools and choices

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and drive equity at the same time,” Zangle said.

Ten English Language Development centers would be established across elementary and middle schools to accommodate the district’s growing English Language Learners population. Those centers would concentrate resources for students with language needs in that region. The proposal also recommends creating a 6-12 Newcomer Academy to provide extended English language services for students with the highest needs. The academy would aim to serve students who speak little to no English and provide intensive language development for students so they could be integrated with general education students.

The plan also recommends strengthening classroom support for students with an Individualized Education Plan [IEP] by creating a fixed paraprofessional-to-student ratio in general education classes. It recommends universal testing for all students to be part of the district’s gifted program.

Could school choice drive



Karen Sloan listens while her daughter, Belle Calton, leans against her, while Sarah Zanger presents a Community-Driven Proposal for Changing the PPS Portfolio at an Oct. 22 press conference. (Photo by Cameron Croston/PublicSource)

gentrification?

Some community members said they worry that this school choice-based model in the community proposal would exacerbate gentrification in certain areas.

“In theory, that’s a great

idea because those communities haven’t had those opportunities but the problem comes when you have people with money able to buy a house in said areas,” said Sam Schaffner, an Uptown resident. “They can live there

and get their child the first or second choice.”

During last Tuesday’s presentation, Zangle acknowledged this limitation saying the proposal’s authors hoped that it would not lead “people to move to an underserved

part of the city just to get school choice. But I guess that is a potential and we do have to look after that.” She added that the community plan is open to any ideas that could prevent gentrification.

“There’s a disconnect be-

tween what they’re seeing as community input, we see as community reaction,” Zangle said. “We’re really hoping that this sparks some really good discussion on the board and the district level and that we can really collaborate and move forward together using some of these innovative ideas.”

Board president: some merit

At an Oct. 15 board meeting at which ERS detailed its revised proposal, board President Gene Walker indicated that the board would review the alternative, but suggested that the work of the Boston-based consultants might have priority.

“We hired a consultant for a reason, and they did their job. For other folks who wanted to do a proposal, there was an RFP process that they could have participated in,” Walker said then.

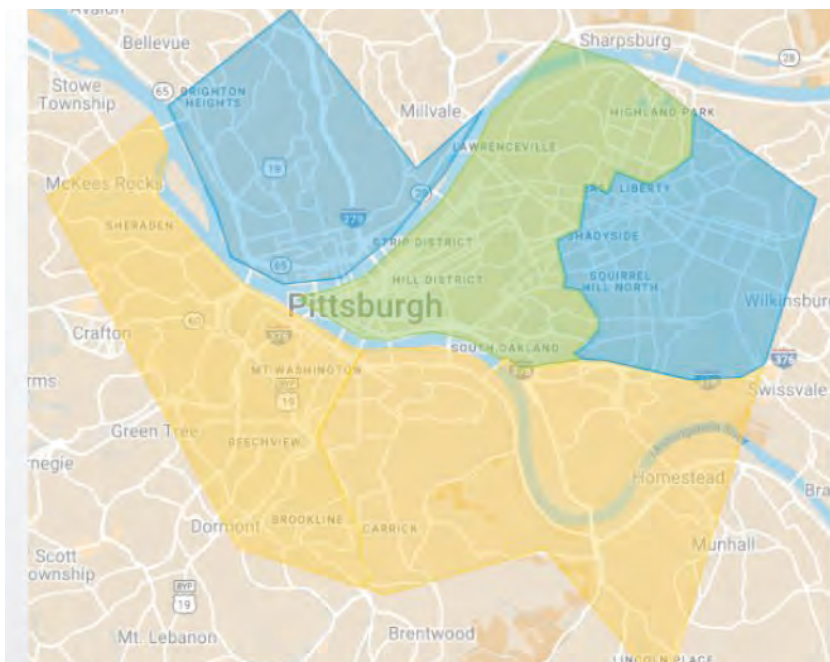
After the presentation, Walker said many of the community proposal’s ideas had merit including the regionally split model but added that it wasn’t a perfect plan. He said Superintendent Walters could consider the plan while creating the feasibility report and decide if there are any aspects of the plan worth incorporating.

“I’m not convinced that we would move fully away from what we’ve worked on for the last six months, but that’s really up to him,” Walker said. “And then we can add our input as a board as it comes up and make decisions based off of those ideas.”

Under the ERS proposal presented to the board, the following schools are listed for proposed closures:

Lajja Mistry is the K-12 education reporter at PublicSource. She can be reached at lajja@publicsource.org.

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Regions for 6-8

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Math teachers view student performance differently based on race and gender

Teachers report thinking that if girls do better in math than boys, it is probably because of their innate ability and effort. But they also report that when boys do well in math, it is more likely due to parental support and society's higher expectations for their success.

That's what we discovered from 400 elementary and middle school math teachers we surveyed across the country for our new study. The purpose of the study was to learn more about how teachers explain students' success and failure in math.

We found that the variation in views among educators is not limited to the gender of students. Teachers also hold contrasting views about math performance when it comes to students' race and ethnicity, our study found.

More specifically, we found that when Black and Hispanic students outperform Asian and White students, teachers are more likely to think it's because of effort and differences in their cognitive abilities. In contrast, when Asian and White students outperform others, teachers attribute it to the support and expectations of others, such as from parents and society as well as cultural dif-

ferences that value math learning.

To reach these conclusions, we conducted an experiment. In the experiment, teachers were first asked to help us by reviewing student responses to items on a math test we were developing. After they rated the student responses, we randomly assigned teachers to conditions telling them that one group – either boys or girls, Black and Hispanic or Asian and White – performed better on this test. Then, we asked the teachers to rate their agreement with a set of potential explanations for the disparity. These potential explanations included statements such as, "Boys often pay more attention and follow directions in class compared with girls."

After teachers had rated their agreement with these explanations, we asked them about their personal beliefs and experiences with gender and racial discrimination in math classrooms. We analyzed how these beliefs related to their explanations of performance differences.

We found that teachers were more likely to attribute the success of girls and Black and Hispanic students to internal

factors, such as ability and effort, whereas they were more likely to attribute boys' and Asian and White students' success to external factors, such as parental involvement and cultural differences.

We also observed that teachers who reported personally experiencing racial discrimination in math classrooms when they were students were more likely to agree that ability was responsible for Black and Hispanic students' higher performance.

Why it matters

How teachers explain student performance can affect their expectations of students. It can also affect how they teach and how they emotionally respond to student needs.

For example, research has shown that when teachers attribute students' failure to a lack of effort, they tend to maintain higher expectations of students and encourage them to expend more effort next time. When they attribute student failure to a lack of ability, however, evidence shows that teachers are more likely to lower their expectations and express more pity. Lowered expectations and feelings of pity can be internalized by students. This can in turn



TEACHERS HOLD DIFFERENT VIEWS ON WHY GIRLS ARE GOOD AT MATH THAN THEY DO FOR BOYS. MASKOT VIA GETTY IMAGES

lead them to assume that they have low ability and expect to fail more often in the future.

Findings from our study show that teachers tend to explain students' failures and successes differently based on which social group performed better than another. Sometimes, these attributions were consistent with stereotypes, such as attributing the higher performance of white and Asian students

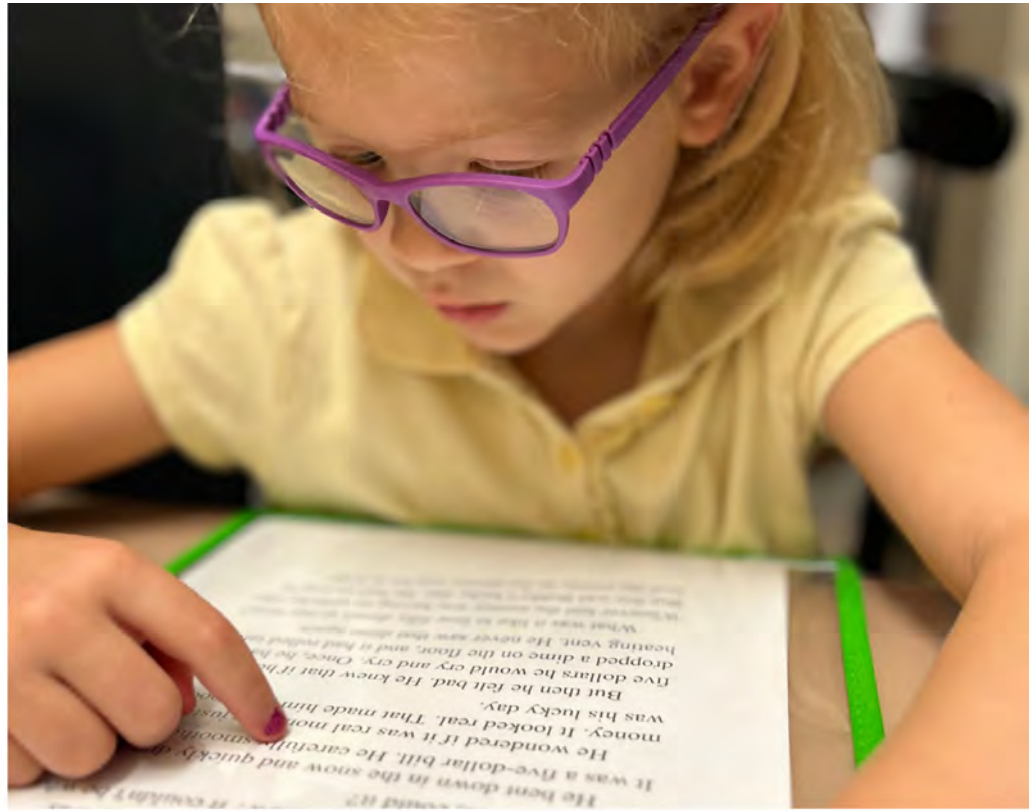
to their parents and culture.

What still isn't known Our research, along with that of others, shows that implicit biases exist in math classrooms. These biases influence how teachers view students' abilities and explain their performance. However, most existing anti-bias training interventions are not very effective.

Researchers need to develop new types of train-

ing to combat these biases in math classrooms, which could help improve teaching and reduce cognitive and emotional burdens that students experience.

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