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THE STAR OF ZION

MAY 2024 | VOL 148 NO. 5 | STAROFZION.ORG | THE OFFICIAL VOICE OF THE A.M.E. ZION CHURCH

ZION




THE A.M.E. ZION CHURCH
The Freedom Church



HAPPY

Mother's Day



The Star of Zion is an award-winning newspaper and journalistic media organization, published by The A.M.E. Zion Church as its official organ since 1876.

Being guided by the core values of truth, faith, and love, the Star seeks to raise the consciousness of readers with news that is current, relevant, and dependable.



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OPINION

Elevating the Vision for Christian Education

Learn more about the mission and work of the Christian Education Department.

By Rev. Patrick Barrett, II

Dr. James Eichelberger, the first General Secretary-Treasurer of the Christian Education Department, held an expansive vision. It was a vision for Christian education to “minister to every need of every pupil and of every group of pupils in each area of human experience” (Eichelberger, 1954). He believed, as we still do today, that Christian education is essential for promoting holistic, Christ-centered community development and spiritual growth. It guides individuals from the youngest to the eldest to discover their spiritual gifts, understand scripture and doctrine, practice spiritual disciplines to nurture Christian identity, pursue academic excellence, and use their gifts and graces for the greater good of the entire society.



For more than 100 years, under the leadership of Dr. Eichelberger, Dr. George Blackwell, Dr. Raymond Hunt, Dr. Kathryn Brown, Dr. Brenda Smith, and now, the Rev. Patrick Barrett, the A.M.E. Zion Church has been blessed to be a committed partner in this transformative and liberating ministry through the work of its Christian education enterprise. Across many of the conferences, districts, and local churches of our Zion, we are blessed to see the work of education going forth with creativity, passion, competence, and persistence. Zion’s Christian education ministry has produced stellar academic institutions, sought-after scholars and teachers, a slate of impactful and transformative leaders in the church and society at large, and a cadre of emerging youth and young adult leaders poised to make their mark to the glory of God.

“The Christian Education Department of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church will become a premier resource for the development of credible, committed Christian disciples with a specific emphasis on discipleship with African-Americans and those throughout the African diaspora.”

The above is the current vision statement of the

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Continued on page 15



Mrs. Debra Chappelle-Polk
Zion Spotlight Editor
ZionSpotlight@StarOfZion.org

ZION CENTENARIAN COTERIE

Zion's Centenarian Coterie Our Newest Club Members Dora Marie Thompson And Cleo Singletary

By Debra Chappelle-Polk, Zion Spotlight Editor

CENTENARIAN [sen te narian] (noun) a person who is 100 years old or older.

COTERIE [code da re] (noun) an intimate and often exclusive group of persons with a unifying common interest or purpose.



Mrs. Dora Marie Thompson Allen was born July 11, 1922, at Mercer Hospital in Trenton, NJ to Thomas and Annie Laura Roberts Thompson. She attended public school in Trenton, NJ. In 1941, Mrs. Allen moved to Eggerts Crossing after marrying her husband, the late Sidney Allen, the son of the late Reverend Phillip J. Allen, the founding Pastor of New Salem Baptist Church in South Trenton. Mrs. Allen has two children: Phillip S. Allen (deceased) and Brenda A. Blakeley.

Mrs. Allen began attending St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church when it was located on North Willow Street, and after her marriage, she attended New Salem Baptist Church with her husband. She returned to St. Paul after 25 years of membership at New Salem. Mrs. Allen served on the Usher Board and Nurses Unit at both churches and in other ministries at each.

Mrs. Allen worked at General Motors for 27 years as an Inspector and eventually retired due to illness. She was a volunteer at The Boys and Girls Club on Pennington Avenue and the location at Centre Street for many years. She also volunteered at Monument School for years and received an award from the school district in 1985 for volunteering 500 hours to assist teachers in the classrooms. She taught children how to bake and how to make a variety of art projects. She also served as a Girl Scout Troop Leader in Lawrence Township, NJ. Mrs. Allen was a member of the Order of the Eastern Star, where she once held the distinguished title of Worthy Matron. In addition, she was a member of Ameta Lexine Charity Organization.

Mrs. Allen loved to organize trips to Atlantic City for the senior citizens and play BINGO and POKENO with friends and family. She taught her grandchildren how to play 21, and they are no strangers to "scratch-offs."

On her birthday, July 11, 2022, she received a Proclamation from the City of Trenton, NJ signed by Mayor Gusciora, who wrote, "I, W. Reed Gusciora, Mayor of the City of Trenton, New Jersey, do hereby take official note of this joyous occasion of Dora Marie Tompson Allen 100th birthday and invite all citizens to join me in wishing her the happiest of birthdays."

Mrs. Cleo Guinyard Singletary was born in St. Matthews, South Carolina, on January 4, 1923, to Walter and Pearl Guinyard. She attended the St. Matthews schools up to tenth grade. She completed her public school education at Dunton High, Orangeburg, SC. She completed her nursing degree at Mercer County Community College and was a licensed Reg-

istered Nurse. She worked in nursing at most of the hospitals in the Trenton area, including Mercer Hospital and Princeton Nursing Home. She also worked as a private duty nurse at Merwick Care and Rehabilitation Center. She later worked as a supervisory nurse in the Forensics Department at the State of New Jersey Psychiatric Hospital, a job she loved. Solving problems is a passion of hers. She retired in 1988.

Cleo (as she likes to be called) became a member of St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church after transferring from Cadwalader United Methodist Church (UMC) in Trenton, NJ, around 2021. She continues to drive herself to church, where she is very supportive of St. Paul ministries. She is a faithful member and regularly attends worship, Sunday School, Bible Study, and class meetings. St. Paul pastors and members love her smile, encouragement, godly wisdom, guidance, and homemade zucchini bread. She was quite active in ministry at Cadwalader UMC as the President of the Communion Stewards for 40 years, Chairperson of Evangelism, Class Leader, and Chaplain of Cadwalader United Methodist Church Nurses Unit. She also served well in the community of Trenton as the Vice President of Nurses of Trenton and Community and Chairperson of Nurture Care.

Because of her outstanding work and commitment to God and community, Cleo received several awards, including the Cadwalader UMC, The Purpose Driven Life Award as a Class Leader, The Children of New Vision Community Center Award, honors from the Collinswood Manor United Methodist Home, Top Ladies of Distinction in Ewing, The Ewing Hollowbrook Center Award, and United Nurses of Trenton and Vicinity. She was also honored for outstanding work to the church and community of the State of New Jersey Psychiatric Hospital.

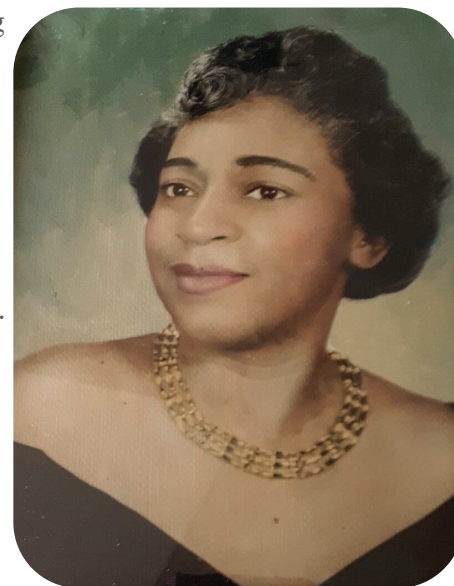
Cleo married the love of her life, the late Nathaneal Singletary, in May of 1940. She has one daughter, Dolores, and is a very proud grandmother.

Cleo's favorite Scripture is John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Her favorite hymns are, This Little Light of Mine and It Is Well With My Soul.

Cleo's motto is "Let the life I live speak for me." And she says, "I put my light on top of a barrel so it can be seen shining for Jesus."

ZION'S CENTENARIAN COTERIE is a new and exciting STAR OF ZION Spotlight feature. Celebrating our centenarians is an idea whose time has come and is long overdue. It has been created because of conversations I've had with other Zionites requesting that the STAR OF ZION acknowledge members of their congregation who are 100-plus years young. Our Super-Seniors are Loyal and Royal. Their devotion to the Zion denomination deserves to be praised, honored, and treasured.

Please submit names, bios, and pictures of our living legends to be included among Zion's Centenarian Coterie to Debra Chappelle-Polk, Zion Spotlight Editor-zionspotlight@starofzion.org



Palmetto Conference CED Sees the Future Now

By Linda Powe Jones

The Palmetto Conference Christian Education Department, led by Conference Director Ms. Ashley Melton, encouraged the members to ‘See the Future Now’ through innovative presentations facilitated by some of Zion’s leading Christian Educators at Jones Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church in Columbia, South Carolina. Preceding the workshop sessions, the spirit of the Lord was ushered in by the Kingdom Praisers of the host Church. Leading the first session for the day, Reverend Lakesha Womack, Church Growth Consultant and Founder of the Womack Consultant Group, did not disappoint with her “Rethinking Church: Understanding Discipleship to Make Disciples. Rev. Womack started her presentation by posing some practical yet thought-provoking questions, such as: Why do people come to church? Why do people join the church? Why do people leave the church? What is the purpose of the church? What is discipleship? After a lively discussion and sharing of ideas, Rev. Womack explored the many ways to use digital media to create disciples: text messaging, website, emails, video conferencing, social media platforms, and telephone conferences.



The next session, which was equally informative as the first, was led by Bro. Darin Kent, Chief Communications Officer and Chief of the Star of Zion. Bro. Kent gave a power-filled presentation on Church Technology and Innovation with a focus on the

intent to be intergenerational. He encouraged the members to embrace the change and expand the use of technology in the church. He acknowledged that it is a role that everyone can play. He stressed the need for members to research and learn more about Artificial Intelli-

gence (AI) because this new phenomenon is here to stay, and we must learn to live with it. He went on to remind the members that AI is the use of computers and algorithms to perform tasks and traditions done by humans, according to Bro. Kent, AI is a powerful tool that helps us get the most out of the church’s digital presence to grow the faith-based community. Churches can use this vital platform to reach lost souls in this digital age.



After a dynamic sharing session between the children of the Conference and the Directors of Children, Mrs. Linda Sartor and Ms. Brunashia Gilree, the workshops morphed into worship. An inspirational moment led by Paisley Melton, Interim VICYC President, masterfully wore dual hats by presiding over the worship service and serving as a photographer for the occasion. Reverend Dr. Jerret Fite served as the speaker for this occasion with a resounding message from Luke 22:31-32. God used Dr. Fite in a mighty way during this glory-filled worship experience. One of the questions that left many attendees to ponder was, “Is your ministry pulpit ministry, or is it Jericho ministry?” Dr. Fite currently serves as Pastor of Steele Hill A.M.E. Zion Church in Lancaster, SC.

The Presiding Elders of the Palmetto Conference, Reverend Dr. Victor C. Wilson-Spartanburg District, and Reverend Dr. Alvin McLamb-Columbia-Camden District, both encouraged the members to take the nuggets and the wealth of information shared during the sessions back to their local churches for intentional sharing. Conference Director of Christian Education, Ms. Ashley Melton, was commended for her visionary and transformative leadership.

Wilmington District Celebrates! Lay Person of the Year 2024

By Laverna Hargrove

On April 14, 2024, the Wilmington District celebrated at St. James A.M.E. Zion Church, Southport, NC, twenty people chosen by the individual churches as their Lay Person of the Year. The district was welcomed to St. James A.M.E. Zion Church, pastored by Rev. Vanness Middleton, by the President of their Lay Council, Edna Bernard. The 2024 theme “Sharing Our Faith” permeated the celebration. The Men’s Choir of Browns Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church, Southport, NC, ignited waves of praise with their harmonious rendition of “I Came to Tell You.”



William Evans
WD Lay Council
President

Raymond Davis
Wilmington District
Lay Person of the
year 2024

Dr. Alexander Jones
Elder of the
Wilmington District

Harold Boone of Mt. Hebron A.M.E. Zion Church, Hallsboro, NC, gave the Meditation to the standing-room-only congregation. He presented scriptural directions of what it means to Share Our Faith, punctuated by living illustrations of how these directions can

be followed. Mr. Boone’s testimony of his transformation and growth as a child of God ignited remembrances of our individual

journeys of transformation. Mr. Boone’s use of humor, seriousness of purpose, and heartfelt praise made this meditation most memorable.

The twenty Lay Persons of the Year are Dennis Bessent, Browns Chapel, Southport, NC; Larry Godwin, Mt. Zion, Lake Waccamaw, NC; Raymond Davis, St. Andrew, Wilmington, NC; Janice Montgomery, Walters Chapel, Bolton, NC; Annie Brown, Evergreen, Delco, NC; Teresa Parker, St. James, Southport, NC; Sharon Ballard, Moores Chapel, Leland, NC; Leandra Carroll, Blackwell Chapel, Leland, NC; Derrell Greene, St. Mark, Whiteville, NC; Sadie Mapson, Johnson Chapel,

Leland, NC; Keith Williams, St. Luke, Wilmington, NC; Lenora Hall, Bowen Chapel, Wilmington, NC; Carolyn Smith, Lees Chapel, Bolton, NC; Delores Josey, Warner Temple, Wilmington, NC; Debra Watson, St. Phillip, Wilmington, NC; Emma Bellamy, Christian Chapel, Winabow, NC; Carolyn Wilson, Summerville, Leland, NC; Stephany George, Price Cathedral, Wilmington, NC; Carolyn James, St. James, Leland, NC; Lula Mae Fulton, St. Paul, Bolton, NC.

The Wilmington District Lay Person of the Year is Raymond Davis of St. Andrew, Wilmington, NC. The recipient of the Wilmington District Lay Person of the Year serves others with heartfelt sincerity, focusing on the elderly who may be facing some form of hardship. Mr. Davis’s generosity knows no bounds, as evidenced by numerous acts of service within the church and the wider community. He leads the Trustee Board with integrity, is a member of the Men’s Choir, and is a Life Member of the WH and OMS, the Lay Council, the Christian Education Department, and the RW Johnson Club. The recipient was instrumental in getting a plague erected in front of the Gregory Congregational Church, commemorating the Wilmington Ten. This plaque stands as a testament to the courage and resilience of those who fought for justice.

One of the unique features of the Wilmington District Lay Person of the Year Celebration is the Keeper of the Flame Award. The 2024 recipient is Mrs. Gerotha S. Spain, Executive Assistant to Presiding Elder Dr. Alexander Jones, and a member of St. Luke, Wilmington, NC. The Keeper of the Flame award is given to a layperson who has consistently, for a long length of time, gone beyond what was asked, and used their time and talents to perfect the requirements of the position or task to which they were called.

For 31 plus years, the recipient of the 2024 Keeper of the Flame Award, Mrs. Gerotha S. Spain, has been the record keeper, finance manager, and correspondence processor to our Presiding Elder, Dr. Alexander Jones. She served as his secretary for 5 of the 31 years while he pastored her home church, St. Luke, Wilmington. She also helps the clergy

of all rank and file to understand the operation of the church, especially in the area of finance. She manages the district's Quarterly Conference Management System. Because of her expertise, she has served on the General Secretary's Connectional Quarterly Conference Management System Committee to help perfect its development and implementation. She currently serves on the same committee in an advisory capacity.

The four centenarians of the Wilmington District were honored with the inclusion of their legacies in the program and by presenting the Wilmington District Youth Choir with uniform T-shirts in their honor. The centenarians are Mrs. Inez Richardson of St. Luke, Wilmington, NC.; Mrs. Posey Johnson of St. Andrew, Wilmington; Mrs. Ruth Harrison of St. James, Leland, NC; and Mrs. Gracie Davis of Price Cathedral, Wilmington.

Inez Sophia Richardson was born to the late Georgia Butler and Thaddeus Richardson on April 24, 1921. She graduated from Williston Industrial High School in 1937, Winston Salem Teachers College in 1941, and earned a Masters Degree from Columbia Teachers College to become a stellar educator serving at the NC Governor's School, Assistant Principal at MCS Noble Junior High School, Wilmington, NC and Principal of Washington Catlett School, WH Blount Elementary School, and Wrightsville Beach Elementary School. She holds membership in many civic organizations, including Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Retired Teachers of the Lower Cape Fear, Elderhaus Board of Directors (Retired), and the League of Women Voters. She has served as the St. Luke Church Historian, President of the Goldenaires, Mortgage Captain, and President and Chorister of the Choral Club. She was an ardent visitor of the sick. Ms. Inez attends Hump Day when she can. She has served 13 pastors of St. Luke.

Mrs. Ruth Lee Hill Harrison was born and bred in the St. James A.M.E. Zion Church, Leland, NC. She is the daughter of Mr. Jimmy and Mrs. Laura Hill. When the first church was built, it was also the site of a school. She attended that school. She served as Church Treasurer, Trustee board member, and President of the Usher Board for many years. She was instrumental in helping to build the present sanctuary, as indicated on the church cornerstone. Her passion has always been the beautification of the church grounds and church building. She served as the volunteer janitor for many years. She attributes her longevity to the Christian principle: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you". She often reminds her church members and family



Ms. Gerotha Spain, center, is honored as the 2024 Keeper Of The Flame for the Wilmington District

that 'you can't enjoy the mountain top unless you have gone through the valley.'

Posey Smith Johnson was born in Gilford County, NC, on February 17, 1924. She graduated from Palmer Institute, Greensboro, NC, and Winston Salem Teachers College, Winston Salem, NC, with a degree in education. She joined St. Andrew A.M.E. Zion Church in 1949 when her husband, the late Rev. Robert W. Johnson, was pastoring there. She has served on every board, auxiliary, and committee in the A.M.E. Zion Church, touching every age and gender division under 28 bishops. Her Zion affiliations include the Women's Home & Overseas Missionary Society, Lay Council, Christian Education, International Ministers' Spouses, Widows and Widowers Fellowship, and Church Women United. She is also an active member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority. She attends church regularly.

Mrs. Gladys Tindle Davis was born on January 8, 1924, in Sumpter, SC. She became a member of Price Cathedral in the 1950s. Mrs. Davis served her community and her church through the ministry of ushering and her talent for preparing delicious food. She served as President of the Usher Board for 45 years. She served at the conference and connectional level as an usher. Mrs. Gracie was a very disciplined usher. Uniforms had to be in order from head to toe, and ushers had to be on time because ushering, she said, is a calling. Her husband, William Davis, had served as president of the usher board before her. They reared all 9 of their children at Price Cathedral. In her sweet, soft voice, she would remind the youth worshippers that 'we are here to learn about the Lord.' Because of her faithfulness to the ministry of Ushering, the Usher Board was renamed the Gracie Davis Adult Usher Board of Price Cathedral under the leadership of Reverend Theodore Hayden in 2000. In 1980, Mrs. Davis recruited Trudy Evans to become an usher. Mrs. Evans now serves as president of the ENCED ushers and the president of the Cape Fear Conference Ushers.

Presiding Elder Dr. Alexander Jones remarked on his appreciation for the work that all of the laity of the Wilmington District is able to accomplish and for their willingness to elect one of their own to honor on the district level. He also noted that the inclusion of the centenarians is a way to thank them and their families publicly for those on whose shoulders we stand and is a source of encouragement for us to do more because we are given more with which to be the hands and feet of God on the earth.

BOOK LAUNCH

"The Power of Intentional Intimacy: 21 Days of Prayer & Fasting will make a Difference" Kindle Edition
by R.J. Chandler Sr. (Author) | Format: Kindle Edition

Fast and Prayer are the keys by which Christians unlock the doors of revelation from God. Fasting helps us get ready for God's arrival, His presence, and manifestation. It puts us in a mindset to clean up what we can in our lives and put forth our best effort in presenting ourselves empty so that God can fill us. This devotional supports spiritual development as one grows closer to God through prayer and fasting. Each day, the believer is encouraged to read scripture, meditate, and pray in the morning before the start of the day.

Price length: 68 pages -- Language: English | Sticky notes: On Kindle Scribble

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DABNEY N. MONTGOMERY REMEMBERED AT 82ND ANNIVERSARY OF FIRST GRADUATING CLASS OF THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN CORP

By Debra Chappelle-Polk
Zion Spotlight Editor

On March 7th & 8th, 2024, the 82nd Anniversary of the first graduating class of the Tuskegee Airmen aviation pilot cadets was commemorated in both houses of the Alabama State Legislature. Amelia A. Montgomery, the widow of Tuskegee Airman Dabney N. Montgomery and lifelong member of Mother A.M.E. Zion Church, shared her thoughts and comments on this history-making event with the Star of Zion.

The theme of the celebration was THE RETURN TO THEIR BEGINNING - TUSKEGEE AIRMEN FAMILY AND FRIENDS (TAFF) RELIVE HISTORY. Mrs. Montgomery, along with “ten sons and daughters and kindred members, sojourned to Tuskegee University and Moton Field in Tuskegee, Alabama for the celebration. Mrs. Montgomery said, “There were 13 aviation cadets in the first class; 8 ‘washed out’ before graduation, leaving 5 to receive their ‘wing’ pins on March 7, 1942.” One of the cadets to graduate was Captain Benjamin Oliver Davis, Jr., who earned the rank of Commanding Officer of the 99th Pursuit Squadron of the 332nd Fighter Group, attached to the 51st Fighter Wing of the Tuskegee Airmen. He was the commander of 16,000 Airmen and women, of which 996 were pilots. He led the fighter pilots through 1500 victorious missions that contributed to ending WWII. On December 9, 1998, Benjamin Oliver Davis, Jr. was promoted to four-star general.

Mrs. Montgomery also provided the event itinerary. On March 6, 2024, Lanell Roberts Brent and Amelia A. Montgomery appeared on WSFA and WAKA, the local TV News stations in Montgomery, AL., to discuss the 82nd anniversary and the donations of the Tuskegee Airmen’s artifacts.

On March 7, 2024, the Alabama State Legislature (The House of Representatives and the Senate), Montgomery, Alabama, invited the descendants and widows of Documented Original Tuskegee Airmen to their Chambers for the reading of a Resolution ‘CELEBRATING TUSKEGEE AIRMEN DAY ON MARCH 7, 2024.’ The seventh WHEREAS course of action states:

WHEREAS, the list of donated artifacts also includes a handwritten autobiography by DOTA Robert Olivia; DOTA Myron Wilson’s Class Book and Pilot’s Log Book; DOTA Wilson Wing’s; DOTA Wilson’s Airman’s Certificate from the United States Department of Commerce; DOTA Wilson’s Airman’s Rating Record; WWII German and American artillery shells from DOTA Dabney Montgomery; a two-foot Bronze Maquette Statue of DOTA Howard Baugh; WWII flight scarf of DOTA Spanky Roberts; and letters written by DOTA Spanky Roberts to his wife and parents while he was stationed at the Tuskegee Army Air Field and in Ramitelli, Italy; It acknowledges donations from four families of their Airmen’s WWII artifacts to be donated to the Tuskegee University Archives Project. The donors are Richard Baugh, son of Tuskegee Airman Howard Baugh; Lanell Roberts Brent, daughter of Tuskegee Airman George Spencer ‘Spanky’ Roberts; Rosanna Wilson Beaumont, daughter of Tuskegee Airman Myron Wilson; and Amelia A. Montgomery, widow of Dabney Montgomery.



The tenth and final WHEREAS course of action states:

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA that we take great pleasure in recognizing March 7,

annually, as Tuskegee Airmen Day in the State of Alabama. We remember the great sacrifices made by the Tuskegee Airmen to secure our lives and our freedoms. By a copy of this resolution, we pay the highest tribute to these American heroes.

At the end of the Senate presentation, Senator Robert Stewart approached the podium to pay ‘tribute’ to Tuskegee Airman Dabney N. Montgomery. Senator Stewart is a native of Selma, AL., and a member of Clinton Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church, the same town and church as Dabney Montgomery.

Mrs. Montgomery (pictured with Sen. Stewart) said she was “surprised and tearful” when both houses of the Alabama State Legislature sang “Happy Birthday” to her at the end of the session. Mrs. Amelia Montgomery was born on the same day – March 7th --as the first graduating class.



Keith Hargrove, PhD, Provost, and Amelia A. Montgomery also participated in a ribbon-cutting ceremony at Tuskegee University, officially opening the Tuskegee University Archives.

On March 8, 2024, The Friends of Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site, Inc., The National Park Service, Tuskegee University, Macon County Commission, and the City of Tuskegee hosted a “Tuskegee Airmen Day: Preserving an Extraordinary and Unparalleled Legacy” breakfast at Moton Field, Tuskegee, AL, the location where the Airmen received their pilot training. This fundraising effort goes toward building ‘A Wall’ memorializing the Tuskegee Airmen.

Mrs. Montgomery said, “Although this was an awesome celebration while standing in the Alabama Statehouse, in Montgomery, Alabama, I reflected on Mr. Montgomery telling me about the day he went to the Dallas County Courthouse, Selma, Alabama, after his discharge from the military in 1945, to register to vote and was denied.”

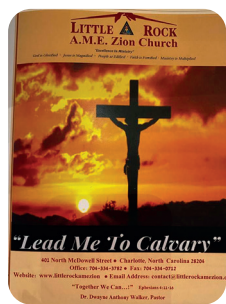
Tuskegee Airman Dabney N. Montgomery was born in Selma, Alabama, on April 18, 1923. He graduated from Livingstone College with a B.A. degree in Religious Education (May 1949) and received an honorary doctorate in Humane Letters from Livingstone College in May 2015. Mr. Montgomery joined Mother A.M.E. Zion Church in 1955. He was affectionately called “Uncle Dab” and was a devoted member of Mother Zion until his passing on September 3, 2016. He was a civil rights activist and served as one of Dr. Martin Luther King’s bodyguards during the Selma to Montgomery March in 1965 for the right to vote. A few days later, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Voters’ Rights Act into legislation.

Mrs. Montgomery said, “Now, 79 years later, Mr. Montgomery and his fellow Airmen and women are revered by the Alabama State Lawmakers - proclaiming March 7, annually, as ‘TUSKEGEE AIRMEN DAY,’ throughout the State of Alabama. Who knew? Better late than never.”

Amelia A. Montgomery is a member of the Claude B. Govan Tri-State Chapter, TAI, Heritage-Kindred Committee, TAI, and Tuskegee Airmen Family and Friends (TAFF).

“Lead Me to Calvary” The Seven Last Words of Christ

By G. Joyner Johnson
Reporter
Antoinette Cody
Photographer



On Good Friday evening March 29, 2024, the Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church and several other congregations, under the leadership of Pastor Dr. Dwayne A. Walker celebrated the Seven Last Words of Jesus Christ. The invitation had been extended to seven pastors/preachers from various churches to each preach a Word.

The Little Rock Music Ministry featuring the Sanctuary Choir provided inspiring music with hymns and songs of the season. After the devotion by Rev. Dr. Sonya Campbell, scripture and Rev.

Belinda Austin, prayer local ministers from Little Rock, Dr. Walker presented the preachers of the evening.

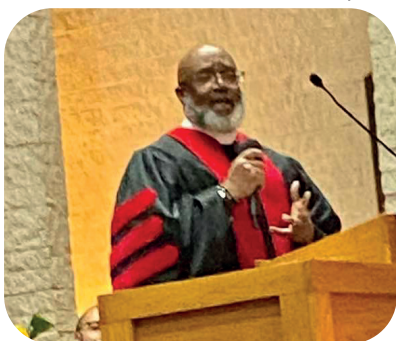
Preaching the First Word “Father, Forgive Them” from Luke 23:24, was Rev. Dr. Reginald Boyd, pastor of the Union Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church in Albemarle, NC. His sermonette was entitled “An Unselfish Plea.” That same prayer could be applicable today in our lives as we all need forgiveness. Jesus paid the price for all sin thereby paying our sin-debt.



The Second Word, “Today, Thou Shalt Be with Me in Paradise.” from Luke 23:43 was preached by Rev. Dr. Tajuan Kyles the pastor of Southern City Tabernacle A.M.E. Zion church in East Spencer, NC. Her sermon title was “He Was the Man in the Middle, But He Was Not the Middle Man.” While Jesus was dying, he was forgiving sins, making living arrangements, and making top level decisions. He was giving a master class on living.

Do not allow your position in life to define who you are.

Rev. Louis Hunter, Pastor of the Caldwell Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church, Mt. Mourne, NC., preached the Third Word, “Woman, Behold Thy Son...” John 19: 26-27. His title “It’s a Family Affair.” Everybody gets involved in the family affair to worship Jesus in spirit and in truth. Mary needed to know that Jesus had to fulfill his father’s assignment first. He had to take care of his family. God sees us in our brokenness and through our struggles but we must remember the promise.



Mark 15:34, “My God, Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me?” was preached by Rev. Brittany White, the pastor of the Center Emmanuel A.M.E. Zion Church, Rock Hill, SC. She chose the title “It Had to Happen.”

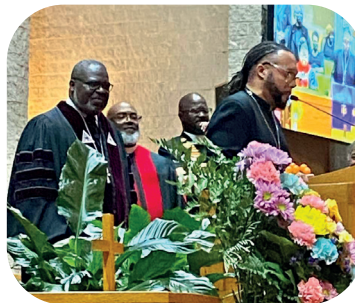


The Fifth Word was preached by Rev. Dr. Reginald D. Broadnax, Editor of the Quarterly Review and pastor of the Mt. Olive A.M.E. Zion Church, Durham, NC preached the Fifth Word from John 19:28, “I Thirst!” He preached about

human thirst, water and hydration. Some of those present at the crucifixion did not believe that Jesus was human, but thirst is a human condition that exists when the body is dehydrated, and He cried out, “I am Thirsty.”



Rev. Dr. Jarret Fite, pastor of the Steele Hill A.M.E. Zion Church, Lancaster, SC. was the preacher of the Sixth Word. From John 19:30 his word was “It Is Finished!” The title of the sermonette was “A Finished Work for an Unfinished Belief.”



The Seventh Word, “Father, Into Thy Hands I Commend My Spirit” from Luke 23:44-46 was preached by Rev. Dr. Quientrell L Burrell, Jr, pastor of the New Hope Baptist in Charlotte, NC. He preached that when Jesus said “It Is Finished”, he did not say it is over. Jesus committed his own spirit into God’s hand but when God returned his spirit to him+, he also gave Jesus all power.

He expressed the sentiments of all in attendance who were uplifted by these dynamic preachers. TO GOD BE THE GLORY! The invitation to Christian Discipleship was extended and the benediction was pronounced.

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Mt. Hope A.M.E. Zion Church And Community Housing Innovations To Construct Affordable Housing For Seniors

By Debra Chappelle-Polk
Zion Spotlight Editor

White Plains, NY - New York State Governor Kathy Hochul announced that construction has begun on a \$40 Million affordable housing development for seniors in White Plains. Mt. Hope Plaza will include 56 affordable apartments, including 20 for those in need of supportive services. The development is the result of a partnership with the Mt. Hope A.M.E Zion Church and Community Housing Innovations to construct affordable housing on an underutilized parcel formerly owned by the church. Dr. Gregory Roberson Smith, Senior Pastor of Mt. Hope A.M.E Zion Church, said, "Our seniors are the crown jewels of the community with the greatest need for affordable adequate living accommodations. Unfortunately, they are also the most forgotten. Our mission is, without question, to minimize and/or eliminate this atrocious situation. The Mt. Hope Plaza design will provide a comfortable living space during their maturing golden years."



There will be 20 units for seniors experiencing homelessness supported by services and operating funding under the Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative administered by the New York State Office of Mental Health. The supportive service provider is Community Housing Innovations.



Mt. Hope Plaza will participate in the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority's New Construction Housing Program and EPA ENERGY STAR Multifamily New Construction v1.1 Certification, as well as Enterprise Green Communities 2015 Criteria. The building is designed to be all-electric and solar-ready.

Residential amenities will include a green roof, a community room, a central laundry room, and free internet for the residents with at least one wired connection in the living room.

Mt. Hope A.M.E. Zion Church is 197 years old and is the oldest African American congregation in Westchester County, New York. It dates back to 1827 when the Quakers of Purchase, New York, liberated the slaves and settled them on the rugged highlands in the Silver Lake section of White Plains, New York. This section was then referred to as "Nigger Hill" because it was the underground slave station and was located north of Horton's Pond.

Dr. Smith, his wife, Dr. Brenda L.G. Smith, former General Secretary of Christian Education, and the entire congregation of Mt Hope are to be commended for bringing much-needed affordable senior housing to the community. For more information and updates, contact and/or visit Mt Hope A.M.E. Zion Church, 65 Lake Street, White Plains, NY 10604; PH: (914) 948-6372; FAX: (914) 948-6131; Email: mthopeamezionchurh@gmail.com.

The groundbreaking took place on Friday, April 12, 2024. Bishop Dennis Vernon Proctor, Presiding Bishop of the New York District Conference, led the delegation for this historic event, along with Hon. Tom Roach, Mayor City of White Plains; Hon. George Latimer, Westchester County Executive; Hon. Andrea Steward-Cousins, Majority Leader of New York State Senate; Hon. Vadat Gashi, Chair Westchester County Board of Legislatures; Hon. Shelly Meyer, New York State Senator. New York State Assemblyman Chris Burdick congratulated Rev. Smith for his leadership in making the development a reality.

The six-story building is being constructed at 65 Lake Street on a parcel adjacent to Mt. Hope A.M.E Zion Church. The development will include a structured parking garage with 72 spaces, of which 47 will be shared with the church. All 56 apartments are for adults aged 62 and older earning at or below 60 percent of the Area Median Income.

North Charlotte District Honors Laity



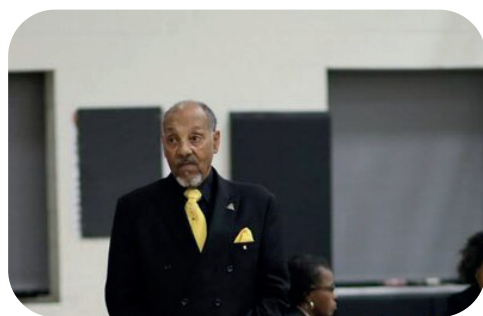
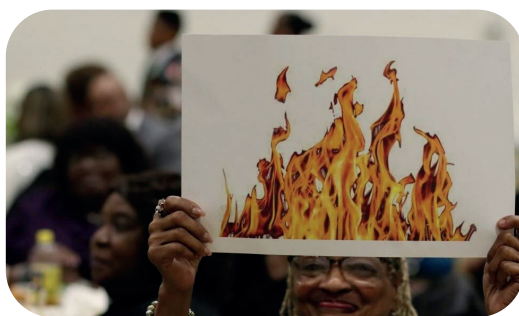
By G. Joyner Johnson

The North Charlotte District held its Annual Fellowship and Recognition Luncheon on Saturday, March 9, 2024, at the Wardell Henderson Center of the Weeping Willow A.M.E. Zion Church in Charlotte, NC. At this event, each church selects a lay person to be recognized for their labors in their respective churches.

Ms. Doris Chisolm read the scripture, and prayer was rendered by Ms. Cindy Saunders. Mrs. Susan House welcomed the attendees. Music was

provided by Ms. Toni Stitt, who sang beautifully. Mrs. Rosalind Agurs was the speaker for the event and expounded on the duties and responsibilities of the laity in the church. Whatever you do for God, do it with fire and enthusiasm. The audience participated in her presentation with signs and lights. Her presentation was exciting and inspiring.

Ms. V. Carolyn Hubbard, President of the North Charlotte District Lay Council, announced the names of the honorees from each of the nineteen district churches. As she read a summary of their accomplishments, Presiding Elder Wardell Henderson presented the certificate of appreciation



to each honoree. Some honorees were surprised to hear their names called. Their faces showed disbelief that their service was even recognized.

Pastors and other clergy were in attendance to show their support of the laity.

Rev. Jarma Chisolm, pastor of the Columbus Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church, received a special award for her support of the Lay Council.

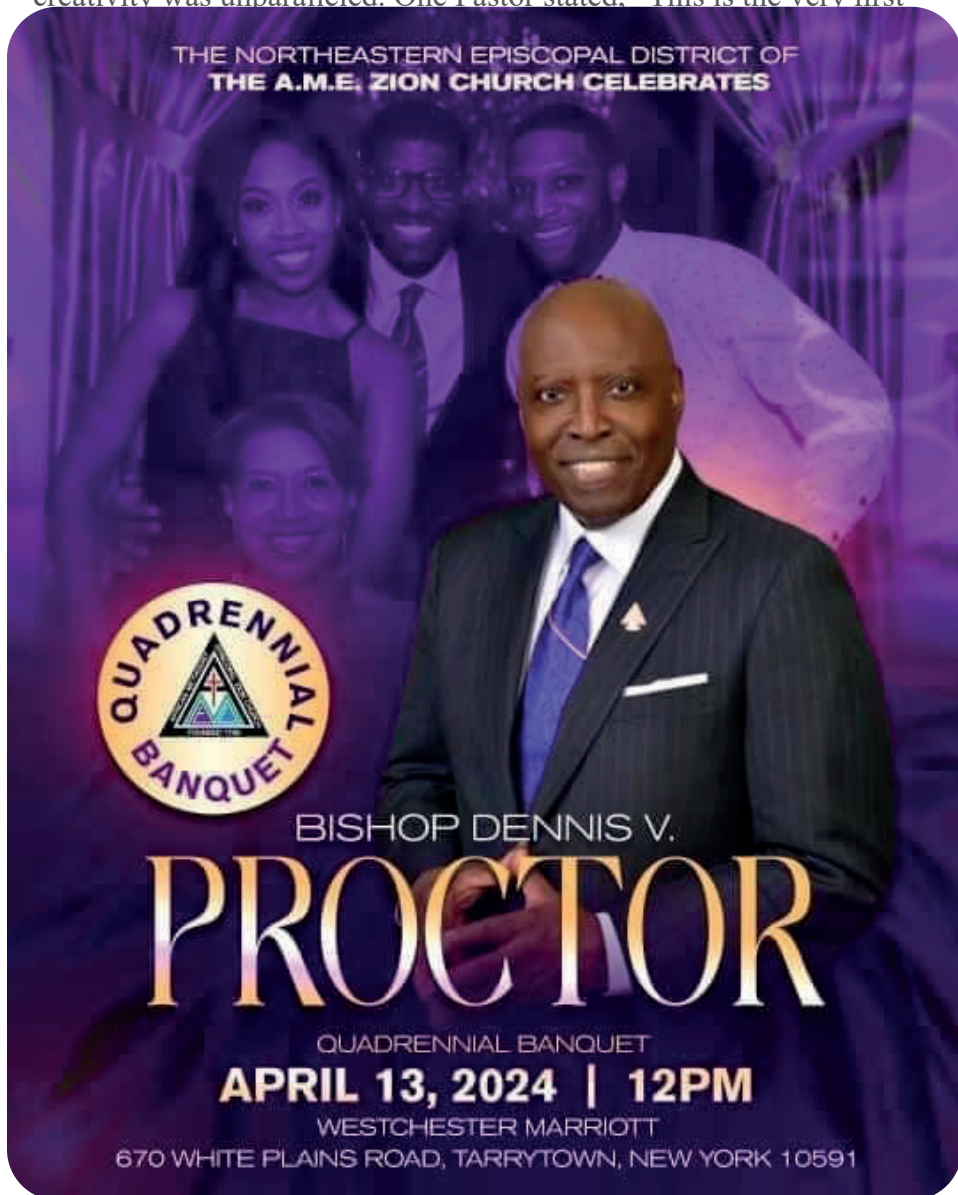
The caterer, Just the 2 of Us Catering, owned by Zionites, provided a delicious meal with excellent service. The luncheon concluded with the Lay Council Closing Prayer.

Celebration and Quadrennial Banquet for Bishop Dennis V. Proctor

By Mrs. Tamika Johnson

The Northeastern Episcopal District of the A.M.E. Zion Church gathered on Saturday, April 13, 2024, at 12:00 P.M. at the Westchester Marriott in Tarrytown, NY, to celebrate our Bishop, The Right Rev. Dr. Dennis V. Proctor. Over 720 members were present for this auspicious occasion. The decorations were elegant and fashioned for a king. Bishop Proctor was in awe as he processed in with our Queenly Missionary Supervisor, Mrs. Deborah Diane Wilson Proctor. This royal Quadrennial Banquet was hosted by The Rev. Dr. Stephen Pogue, Pastor of The Greater Centennial A.M.E. Zion Church, and The Rev. Dr. Laticia Hill Godette, the first woman Presiding Elder of the Camden District. Their creativity was unparalleled. One Pastor stated, "This is the very first

banquet I have attended where I wasn't bored. I was excited during the entire program!"



Dr. Pogue and P.E. Godette included all twelve Presiding Elder Districts and used drama, skits, poetry, dance, and video presentations to illustrate different parts of Bishop Proctor's life. Presiding Derrill Blue presented an emotional video about Bishop Proctor's parents that moved Bishop Proctor to tears. Presiding Elder Alphonso Meadows presented a skit demonstrating how Bishop met his beautiful wife in college. The presentation made Bishop Proctor laugh. Presiding Elder Kevin Coakley had the entire room singing "The Proctor Bunch," while Bishop Proctor smiled when he saw his children representing on the video. Presiding Elder A. Alfred Carson highlighted powerful, prolific moments of Bishop Proctor's preaching ministry. Bishop Proctor is an internationally known preacher who will make you want to preach. Presiding Elder Moses Harvill surprised Bishop Proctor and captured Bishop's former church members, saying how Bishop transformed their lives. Presiding Elder Keith Harris showcased greetings from Dr. Cynthia Hale and other ecumenical leaders.

Our Bishop is well-known at the prestigious Hampton University Ministers' Conference, and a national board member of the N.A.A.C.P. Presiding Elder Jacqueline King created her own rendition of "I Just Wanna Praise You" by Maurette Brown Clark and led the entire room in singing, "Thank you Bishop...for blessing me!" The song electrified the banquet, and we got caught up praising God for our Bishop. Presiding Elder Branch and the drama ministry team from The Greater Cen-

.....
Continued on next page

ennial A.M.E. Zion Church performed a Black Nationalism play about the fight for Civil Rights and educated us on leaders of the movement, including Bishop Proctor. Presiding Elder Odinga Maddox, II presented on Bishop Proctor's college days at Ohio State University.

The presentations concluded with Presiding Elder Laticia Hill Godette and the Camden District Pastors performing a skit to demonstrate how Bishop Proctor went to Livingstone College with a full-ride football scholarship and ended up with a full-ride scholarship as the new Drum Major. P.E. Godette surprised Bishop Proctor by bringing Master Corian Mincey, the current Drum Major at Livingstone College, to close out the celebration with a live performance. Master Corian ended his performance by stepping to Bishop Proctor and placing his mace in Bishop's hand and his busby hat on Bishop's head. In true Drum Major form, Bishop Proctor came alive and started his shimmy as he danced. Presiding Elder Godette led the entire room in a chant, "One band, one sound!" She let Bishop know that he is the drum major of The Northeastern Episcopal District and that we are in his band working together in unity because teamwork makes the dream work.

Pastor Pogue and Presiding Elder were full of surprises for Bishop Proctor. Bishop Proctor thought his children were unable to attend the banquet due to their friend's wedding. Dennis Vernon Proctor, Jr. was the greatest surprise. Dr. Godette told everyone that there are some things that money just can't buy! Dennis, Jr. gave the most touching remarks. He ended by saying, "The highest compliment anyone could ever give me is to tell me I remind them of my Father. I love you, Slim!" Also, The Northeastern Episcopal District stood to give Mrs. Proctor an enthusiastic round of applause for her faithful, loyal, considerate, and loving leadership and service. Mrs. Proctor gave remarks and thanked everyone for showing love to her husband and family. The Northeastern Episcopal District ended the banquet by showering Bishop Proctor with appreciation gifts of love. The North Eastern Episcopal District Choir, led by Sister Nicole Phifer, serenaded Bishop Proctor before he gave his remarks. Bishop Proctor approached the podium to make final remarks and was moved to tears. He was full of love, joy, and thankfulness to receive a celebration of this magnitude. "Let the Elders who serve well be counted worthy of double honor!"

The Northeastern Episcopal District definitely gave Bishop Proctor our best. God blessed us with an exceptional Bishop and Missionary Supervisor. We were happy to return the love. Bishop Proctor capped off the celebratory weekend by worshipping at The Greater Centennial A.M.E. Zion Church in

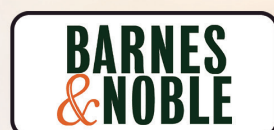
Mt. Vernon, New York. Pastor Stephen Pogue invited Bishop Proctor to preach at the 9:30 A.M. Worship Service.

Bishop Proctor experienced some vertigo symptoms so he gave Presiding Elder Laticia Hill Godette the opportunity to preach in his place. She preached from 2 Kings 20:1-7, "You Shall Recover All!" It was a powerful, soul-stirring message. We thank God that one soul was saved. Pastor Pogue and his congregation showed radical hospitality to Bishop Proctor and all assembled.

Bishop Proctor gave final remarks and the Benediction. He thanked Pastor Pogue for being his first Pastor for 16 years of his episcopacy and for doing an excellent job. Bishop Proctor was extremely pleased with the entire Celebration! Special thank you to Pastor Stephen Pogue, Presiding Elder Laticia Hill Godette, Presiding Elder Daren C. Jaime and Presiding Elder Derrill Blue (Planning Committee); Sister Phyllis Couch (Decorations); Sister Jackie Davis (Commemorative Journal); Bishop Brian R. Thompson, Sr. (Video Greetings); Livingstone College President Anthony Davis (Video Greetings); All Presiding Elders and members of N.E.E.D.; & Sis. Nicole Phifer and the Music Ministry.

The Coppinville Experience

FROM POVERTY TO GOD'S WILL



The Autobiography of Frederick L. Hamilton

Bank of America Executive Maurice L. Coleman to Deliver Keynote Address at Livingstone College's 2024 Commencement Exercises

By Garette Hunter



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Salisbury, NC—Livingstone College is delighted to announce that Maurice L. Coleman, the Tax Credit Syndication and Investment Executive at Bank of America, has been selected to deliver the keynote address at the 2024 Commencement exercises. The ceremony will take place on May 4 at 9:00 a.m. in Varick Auditorium.

Mr. Coleman is a distinguished executive in the banking industry with over two decades of experience in private equity, corporate banking, and real estate. At Bank of America, he leads a national team responsible for the bank's origination of Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LI-HTC) equity through syndication partners to create affordable housing, as well as the delivery of Historic Tax Credits (HTC) to preserve and restore historic properties across the country.

In addition to his professional achievements, Mr. Coleman is known for his commitment to community development and education. He has served as the Chairman of the Board of Directors of three national Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), the co-founder/vice chairman of two charter schools, and actively serves on the Board of Visitors at Columbia College for Columbia University. He is a graduate of Columbia University, where he received both a B.A. in

History and Economics and a MPA from the School of International and Public Affairs with a concentration in Public Finance. He attended the Columbia Business School Management Program and has served as a guest lecturer at the Columbia Business School, teaching finance and social impact investing.

Livingstone College President Dr. Anthony J. Davis will present Mr. Coleman with an honorary doctorate in recognition of his outstanding contributions to banking and society.

"I pretended to be just a basketball player," says Mr. Coleman, who was often self-conscious of his ability to score high on exams as a youth because he was told that sports took precedence over academics. Despite growing up in a lower working-class family with limited income, Coleman had an unobstructed vision for his future, shaped by his parents' emphasis on education, which instilled a strong sense of purpose in him. "I am honored and humbled to have been selected as the keynote speaker for Livingstone College's 2024 Commencement exercises," Mr. Coleman said. "I look forward to sharing my experiences and insights with the graduates and their families and to congratulating them on their achievements."

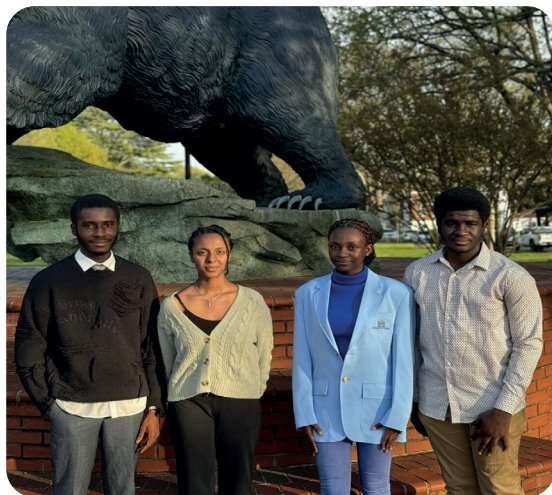
For more information about Livingstone College and its 2024 commencement exercises, please visit www.livingstone.edu.



Livingstone College Hosts 35th Annual NCCIIIE Conference

By Star of Zion News

Livingstone College hosted the 35th Annual North Carolina Consortium of International and Intercultural Education (NCCIIIE) Model United Nations Conference on April 4-6, 2024. Livingstone's 13th president, Dr. Anthony J. Davis, stated, "As an institution that shares NCCIIIE's determination to surmount the obstacles of our contemporary world while upholding our core principles, which have been in place since 1879, we consider it an honor to host this year's event."



The conference welcomed multiple North Carolina HBCUs, including Fayetteville State, Winston Salem-State University, Shaw, and North Carolina A&T State universities, to compete with the theme Ensuring global peace, justice, and security through humanitarian diplomacy and collective action, guided by the unequivocal recognition of our shared humanity, with the ultimate goal of eliminating wars under the auspices of the United Nations Security Council. Mayor Karen Alexander added, "I congratulate the members of the NCCIIIE and your dedication to the mission of hosting conferences, sponsoring study abroad activi-

ties, and offering scholarships and training to students for the purpose of international studies. It is remarkable and admired." The Livingstone College delegation represented Japan, Nigeria, and Ethiopia whereas Secretary General Yaw Owusu-Agyeman and Deputy Secretary General Bright Osei Karikari won top awards.

Other student awards included Morgan River of Fayetteville State representing Ukraine on the First Committee of Peace and Disarmament, Deadria Ricks of Fayetteville State representing Ghana, the Third Committee on Humanitarian Concerns and Human Rights, and Nyshawna Whitehurst of Fayetteville State representing Ukraine on the sixth committee International Law. Yaw Owusu-Agyeman, recipient of the \$6,000 scholarship from DACOR Bacon House Foundation, said, "I am grateful for this opportunity to compete against others, learn and grow with my teammates, and proudly represent nations while honing skills, critical thinking, and writing. This was truly an extraordinary experience." Livingstone's delegation included Ellis Dogbe-Gakpetor, Eye Beyan, Isatu Kruah, Nancy Oppong, Bright Karikari, and Yaw Agyeman, with coaches Laura Johnson and Da'Tarvia Parrish. The NCCIIIE was founded in 1989 by several North Carolina institutions of higher learning and has continued operating under the distinguished leadership of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

In the past thirty-four years, NCCIIIE has sponsored an Ambassador-in-Residence, spearheaded the United States Department of State HBCU briefing, held thirty-four Model United Nations conferences, sponsored study abroad activities, offered scholarships to students, and conducted training of students. For more information, visit <https://ncciiie.wordpress.com>.

Livingstone College Secures Victory in Home Depot Retool Your School Competition

By Rev. Roderick J. Josey



Livingstone College has emerged victorious in the prestigious Home Depot Retool Your School competition, securing the coveted Innovation Lounge Grant. This remarkable achievement is a testament to the innovative spirit and unwavering dedication of the college community toward creating a vibrant and dynamic learning environment.

The Home Depot Retool Your School competition, known for its focus on supporting historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), recognizes institutions that demonstrate creativity and commitment to campus revitalization. Livingstone College's success in securing the Innovation Lounge Grant highlights its proactive approach to enhancing campus facilities and fostering a culture of innovation and excellence.



The newly awarded Innovation Lounge Grant will enable Livingstone College to transform a designated space on campus into a state-of-the-art innovation hub equipped with cutting-edge technology, collaborative workspaces, and creative amenities. This innovative



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lounge will serve as a catalyst for creativity, collaboration, and entrepreneurship, providing students with a dynamic environment to explore new ideas, engage in hands-on learning experiences, and pursue their passions.

The success of Livingstone College in the Home Depot Retool Your School competition is a source of pride and inspiration for

the entire college community. It underscores the college's commitment to innovation, excellence, and student success, as well as its ability to compete on a national stage.

As the Livingstone College community celebrates this well-deserved victory, there is a renewed sense of excitement and anticipation for the opportunities that lie ahead. The Innovation Lounge Grant represents not only a physical space but also a symbol of the college's ongoing dedication to empowering students, fostering creativity, and preparing future leaders.

Congratulations to Livingstone College on this remarkable achievement! Let's go, Blue Bears!

Clinton College Educator Addresses Impact of Post-Realistic Structures on Marginalized Youth in TED Talk

By Rev. Roderick J. Josey



Mr. Aaron Nance, an esteemed Assistant Professor and Division Chair of Education at Clinton College, recently had the honor of delivering a TED Talk on a topic of critical importance: "Post-Realistic Structures Impact on Marginalized Youth." This compelling presentation sheds light on the challenges faced by marginalized youth in navigating post-realistic societal structures and offers insights into fostering resilience and empowerment.

In his TED Talk, Mr. Nance delves into the complexities of post-realistic structures, which often perpetuate systemic inequalities and marginalization, particularly among vulnerable youth populations. Drawing upon his expertise in education and social justice, Mr. Nance explores the ways in which these structures shape the lived experiences of marginalized youth and hinder their access to opportunities and resources.

Through powerful anecdotes, research findings, and thought-provoking analysis, Mr. Nance examines the multifaceted impacts of post-realistic structures on marginalized youth, including limited access to education, employment, healthcare, and social support networks. He highlights the urgent need for systemic change to dismantle these barriers and create more inclusive and equitable environments for all youth.



As an advocate for social justice and educational equity, Mr. Nance offers practical strategies and solutions for addressing the challenges posed by post-realistic structures. From community organizing and advocacy efforts to culturally responsive teaching practices and mentorship programs, Mr. Nance emphasizes the importance of collective action in supporting marginalized youth and fostering positive social change.

Mr. Nance's TED Talk serves as a poignant reminder of the resilience and potential of marginalized youth in the face of systemic adversity. By amplifying their voices and advocating for their rights, Mr. Nance inspires hope and empowerment in communities across the globe.

To watch Mr. Aaron Nance's TED Talk on "Post-Realistic Structures Impact on Marginalized Youth," please visit the following YouTube link: [TED Talk: Post-Realistic Structures Impact on Marginalized Youth]



Elizabeth City District CED celebrates its 2024 Church School Convention!



By Mrs. Lucy Beamon and Mrs. Mary Holley

The Elizabeth City District Christian Education Department celebrated our Church School Convention on March 23, 2024, at Mt. Lebanon A.M.E. Zion Church, where the pastor is Rev. Javan Leach. This year's theme was "FAITH IS LIKE A MUSCLE: IT HAS TO BE EXERCISED DAILY."



The Convention was opened by the District Director of Christian Education, Mrs. Lucy Beamon, with a processional of members from all of our departments: Children, Youth, Young Adults, and Adults. We marched in to the instrumental version of the Rocky movie theme song, "Gonna Fly Now." We wore metal medallions to signify being winners when we trust in God and grow our faith daily.



Our opening worship service included scripture found in Luke 5:17-20 Little Miss Holland Hill of Good Hope A.M.E. Zion Church, followed by a spirit-filled prayer by Mrs. Mary Holley of Whiteville Grove A.M.E. Zion Church. After we opened up in Gospel order, the Children and Youth Departments were led downstairs by their teachers, District Director of Children, Mrs. Sandra Davis, and Mrs. Felicia Brittingham-Hill of Good Hope A.M.E. Zion Church, to learn about exercising their faith through age-appropriate lessons. They had an opportunity to share in the discussion about faith and how to exercise it daily. They made crafts, played icebreaker games, participated in bible searches, and received the "CED Survival Kit." They were also given envelopes containing "Emergency Numbers" about scriptures to reference when they needed to call on Jesus!



While those two departments were downstairs, the Young Adult and Adult Departments had a representative from each church share their Sunday School program with us, which was led by Mrs. Yvonne Walton, local Director of Christian Education at Mt. Lebanon A.M.E. Zion. They described their church's Sunday School service, such as virtual or in-person attendance, time of day, number of teachers/classes, and how many days a month they meet.



Afterward, Rev. Wanda Johnson, District Director of Young Adults, led a lesson discussion about four types of Faith:

- Collective Faith using scripture in Matthew Chapter 18
- Commanding Faith using scripture in Luke Chapter 10
- Questioned Faith using scripture in Luke Chapter 7
- Persistent Faith using scripture in Matthew Chapter 15

After each type of faith was explained, all attendees had an opportunity to share their testimonies and ask questions.

Once the time of sharing was completed, the departments that were downstairs rejoined the adults upstairs and presented information about what they learned.

In honor of our former District Director of Youth Ms. Thelma Jordan, who was also the Penny Brigade President for the W.H.O.M.S., we presented her with a gift basket and certificates from both organizations.

We had a wonderful day enjoying Jesus. After remarks by our Presiding Elder, Rev. Dr. Donald Jones, we recited the Sunday School Benediction, sang the Wesleyan Grace, and went downstairs to the Dining Hall for refreshments prepared by Ms. Alice Stallings and Mrs. Wilma Griffin, both members of Whiteville Grove A.M.E. Zion Church!



Continued from Page 2



Christian Education Department crafted by the late Rev. Dr. Kathryn Brown. Rooted in Ephesians 4:11-14, the department's primary task is to oversee the faith formation, education, and leadership development programming in the denomination and to aid our local churches with resources as noted above.

We accomplish this aim through our 11 connectional departments, auxiliaries, and commissions, in addition to a connectional staff, episcopal directors, and a host of conference, district, and local church directors. These entities include the Church School Literature Department, which produces the quarterly church school lessons and the quarterly Church School Herald Journal; the Varick International Christian Youth Council (VICYC); the Assembly of Christian Educators (ACE); Young Adults in Christian Ministries (YACM); Varick's Children (VC), Zion Women Rock, the SG Spottwood Acolyte Ministry, SAGE (Seniors Advancing God's Excellence), the Commission on Family Life, the Commission on Scholastic Engagement, and the newly formed Commission on Youth Ministry. The Department also participates in the annual Lenten and Advent devotionals in partnership with the Christian Education Departments of the A.M.E. and CME churches and has launched two new VBSA (Vacation Bible School Anytime) programs. The newest



program, "4 Miles Per Hour: Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus", is now live and available for purchase.

In 2023, CED successfully applied for a \$1.25 million grant from the Nurturing Prayer and Worship in Children Initiative funded by the Lilly Endowment, Inc. These funds will undergird the new C.A.R.E. for Children program through the Department. The program will not only provide critical faith formation resources for our children and local children's ministry leaders, it will also enable us to expand our VBSA efforts and to launch home-centered print and digital faith formation materials for families.

CED is also utilizing technology to expand our leadership development work. In September 2023, we launched the "Thrive on Thursdays" teaching series as part of the CED Month programming. This inaugural series provided important insights to build up youth ministry and educational advocacy in our local churches and will return in September 2024. We have also launched the quarterly "Family Meeting" which gathers Christian educators and church leaders virtually to be empowered and equipped with new tools and information for vibrant discipleship ministry. We invite all of Zion to get connected!

The Department serves as an advocate for education through the

schools and colleges division. Did you know that the A.M.E. Zion Church operates several schools and colleges across the globe? Yes! Livingstone College, Clinton College, Hood Theological Seminary, A.M.E. Zion University in Liberia, and Hood-Speaks Theological Seminary in Nigeria are all a product of the educational vision of the A.M.E. Zion Church. The General Secretary sits on the boards of all three of the stateside schools, and the board of schools and colleges receives reports on the status of all our institutions. The A.M.E. Zion church also operates one of the largest school systems in Ghana, West Africa, with nearly 600 elementary and middle schools and five high schools. The General Secretary also partnered with Hood Theological Seminary to launch two exciting new programs in Christian Education: The Certificate in Christian Education and the Masters of Arts in Christian Education.

Additionally, the department grants upwards of \$20,000 annually in scholarships for secondary and post-secondary students through the efforts of VICYC, ACE, YACM, and the Acolyte Ministry. The history of the A.M.E. Zion Church includes an ardent presence at the front lines of the academic advancement of our people. We must continue this legacy!



Of course, the apex of our year is the annual Winter Meeting of the Christian Education Department, where the Department's faith formation, leadership development, and education emphases are on full display. Formerly known as "Truthville" and now "Elevate" the Winter Meeting is our Zion's premier evangelistic and educational experience. We invite all to experience this life-changing time of powerful preaching, transformative teaching, and faith-filled fellowship. Despite the challenges of the global pandemic, our team worked persistently to present the first ever fully cyber Winter Meeting in 2021. Since then, the meeting has bounced back in full force. In December 2023, the Department registered record numbers for Truthville 2023. Nearly 2,500 persons were registered for this truly powerful experience, which concluded with a concert by award-winning gospel artist, Pastor John P. Kee. Plan now to join us for the first Elevate conference in Kansas City, MO, Dec. 27-30, 2024.

The success of this department is largely attributed to our team of staff, departmental directors, episcopal directors, and officers. I owe a debt of gratitude to these men and women who labor with me as leaders in your Christian Education Department. Likewise, I celebrate the community of conference, district, and local church Christian education leaders who give of their time, talent, and treasure to this vital ministry.

As we approach the 52nd session of the General Conference, we give thanks for our board chairs for Home and Church – Bishop Dennis Proctor, Bishop W. Darin Moore, Bishop Nathaniel Jarrett, and Mrs. Ava Swinton – who continue to be a source of wisdom, counsel, and support for this Department. They have governed with distinction for nearly 12 years. Also, special thanks to the Board of Schools and Colleges, Bishop Kenneth Monroe, Bishop Darryl Starnes, Bishop Hilliard Dogbe, and Mrs. Delores Cowherd - for their leadership and commitment to academia.

The global pandemic, coupled with other social and cultural shifts, has left many new questions for which the church now wrestles. Yet even in the face of uncertainty, there remains great opportunity for faith leaders to birth new solutions that are innovative, engaging, and faithful. Christian education is vital to the future of the church, and we invite you to join us in this movement to engage, educate, and elevate credible, committed Christian disciples in the A.M.E. Zion Church. Learn more about your Christian Education Department, its leaders, and resources by visiting the new CED website at cedamezion.com

New 24-25 FAFSA Process: Why Timely Application is Crucial for Students

By Rev. Roderick J. Josey

In the realm of higher education financing, the FAFSA ([Free Application for Federal Student Aid](#)) has long been a beacon for students and parents navigating the turbulent waters of college expenses. However, with the introduction of the new 24-25 FAFSA process, there are crucial changes that every prospective college student and their families need to be aware of.



This revamped process underscores the importance of submitting FAFSA applications as soon as possible. The implications are significant: the earlier you apply, the better your chances of securing a substantial amount of financial aid. This is not merely about meeting deadlines; it's about ensuring that students are provided with the financial resources they need to pursue their academic aspirations.

According to recent studies [1], students who apply for financial aid early tend to receive more generous awards than those who procrastinate. This is primarily because financial aid is often distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. Hence, delaying your application could mean missing out on potential funding opportunities.

Furthermore, prompt submission of the FAFSA facilitates the timely issuance of award letters. These letters detail the types and amounts of aid a student is eligible to receive. Having this information early on

enables families to make well-informed decisions about college affordability and financial planning [2].

However, it's crucial to recognize that the FAFSA is not the sole avenue for funding higher education [3]. While it remains an essential tool, students are encouraged to explore additional sources of financial assistance, such as scholarships. These merit-based or need-based awards can significantly alleviate the financial burden of tuition fees, textbooks, and other educational expenses.

In today's competitive landscape, scholarships are more than just financial support; they represent opportunities for recognition and personal growth. Whether through academic achievements, extracurricular involvement, or unique talents, there are scholarships tailored to diverse backgrounds and interests. Hence, investing time in researching and applying for scholarships can yield substantial returns in terms of college affordability and academic success.

In conclusion, the new 24-25 FAFSA process underscores the importance of early application for financial aid. By submitting the FAFSA promptly, students can increase their chances of securing significant funds and receiving timely award letters. However, it's equally important to explore alternative funding options such as scholarships. Through proactive financial planning, students can unlock the doors to higher education without being burdened by excessive debt.

[1] Source: "The Impact of Early FAFSA Filing on Financial Aid Award Offers." *Journal of Student Financial Aid*, vol. 52, no. 2, 2023, pp. 67-82.

[2] Source: "Understanding College Financial Aid Award Letters." U.S. Department of Education, Student Aid.gov.

[3] Source: "Beyond FAFSA: Exploring Alternative Funding Options for College." *Forbes*, January 15, 2024.

Discrimination in the Classroom: Texas Student Suspended Over Hairstyle

By Rev. Roderick J. Josey



In a troubling incident highlighting ongoing issues of discrimination and bias in schools, a Texas student, Darryl Georg, has been suspended due to his hairstyle. This case sheds light on the pervasive nature of racial stereotyping and the urgent need for greater awareness and sensitivity in educational institutions.

Darryl Georg, a black student attending a school in Texas, became the center of controversy when school administrators cited his hairstyle as a violation of school policy. Although Darryl's hairstyle posed no threat to his safety, well-being, or his peers, he was subjected to disciplinary action solely based on his appearance.

This incident underscores the broader issue of cultural insensitivity and systemic discrimination within educational settings. Hair has long been a point of contention for black individuals, with many facing discrimination and prejudice due to their natural hairstyles, such as afros, braids, and twists. By penalizing students for their hairstyles, schools perpetuate harmful stereotypes and contribute to a hostile environment for students of color.



Moreover, the disproportionate targeting of black students for dress code violations reflects deeper issues of racial bias and inequity within the education system. Studies have shown that black students are more likely to face disciplinary action compared to their white counterparts, often for minor infractions or subjective reasons such as dress code

violations (1).

In response to Darryl's suspension, community members and advocacy groups have voiced their outrage and called for accountability from school administrators. They argue that policies targeting hairstyles associated with specific racial or cultural groups are discriminatory and have no place in modern educational environments.

It is essential for schools to recognize and address their role in perpetuating systemic racism and discrimination. Educators and administrators must undergo training to identify and challenge their own biases, foster inclusive and equitable environments, and ensure that disciplinary policies are applied fairly and without prejudice.

In conclusion, the suspension of Darryl Georg over his hairstyle is not an isolated incident but a symptom of broader issues of racism and discrimination within the education system. It serves as a wake-up call for schools to examine their policies and practices, confront implicit

bias, and work towards creating environments where all students feel valued, respected, and supported.

(1) Source: "Racial Disparities in School-Based Disciplinary Actions: An Investigation of Trends and Predictors in a Large, Multistate Sample." *Educational Researcher*, vol. 49, no. 2, 2020, pp. 103-121.



St. Augustine University Loses Accreditation: Students Displaced, Legal Battle Ensues



Amidst this turmoil, St. Augustine University has taken legal action against the accrediting firm responsible for the accreditation withdrawal. The university asserts that the decision was unjust and based on flawed assessments, leading to irreparable damage to its reputation and the academic pursuits of its students. The lawsuit seeks to restore the university's accreditation and hold the accrediting firm accountable for its actions.

In light of these developments, the St. Augustine community, both past and present, is called upon to rally behind the university and its students during this difficult time. As the institution navigates this crisis, prayers, support, and solidarity are needed to uplift and empower those affected by this unforeseen setback.

As the future of St. Augustine University hangs in the balance, the collective hope remains steadfast in the resilience of its community and the pursuit of justice to restore its esteemed status in the realm of higher education.

By Rev. Roderick J. Josey

In a shocking turn of events, St. Augustine University, a beacon of higher education renowned for its academic excellence, has been stripped of its accreditation. This devastating blow has left students in disarray, with many facing uncertain academic futures and the abrupt displacement from campus life.

Following the accreditation revocation, students were left reeling as they were swiftly removed from campus accommodations, disrupting their studies and uprooting their lives. With little time to process the news, many found themselves scrambling to find alternative housing and academic arrangements.

The university administration, in a bid to salvage the semester amidst the chaos, has announced plans for remote learning to allow students to complete their coursework. However, the transition to online education presents its own set of challenges, further compounding the stress and uncertainty faced by the student body.



The National Council of Churches Announces “NCC Freedom Summer 2024”



Rev. Dr. Allison Lee
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Author: By NCC News

Washington, D.C.—The National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA (NCC) is excited to announce its NCC Freedom Summer campaign, which will launch in Washington, D.C., with a Day of Action on June 19 (Juneteenth), and conclude with a Freedom Summit in Jackson, Miss., on August 17. This announcement comes as NCC commemorates the 60th anniversary of its 1964 Freedom Summer efforts and prepares for the 2024 general election this fall. NCC urges its member denominations, as well as all people of faith and goodwill, to use this summer as a time to educate, engage, and empower voters for social change and transformation and to strengthen our democracy.



NCC’s President and General Secretary, Bishop Vashti McKenzie, emphasized the timeliness and importance of this year’s campaign and the ongoing efforts to mobilize and educate voters in this election year.

“In 1964, NCC, with a deep sense of urgency, immersed itself into the troubled waters of racial injustice in Mississippi to engage in direct action in the struggle of African Americans for racial justice,” she said, “There was a belief

that it was going to be a decisive moment in American history. As it was then, so it is now. We are at a pivotal point in a polarized country. We must retrace our steps to build upon the foundations of justice left by previous generations.”

Three Actions. One Summer.

Educate – NCC Freedom Academy

Freedom Academy is designed as an intensive six-week virtual “Sunday School” to teach the principles of civic engagement, social justice, and the importance of voting rights from a faith-based perspective.

Engage – NCC Freedom Fellows

NCC Freedom Fellows will be appointed to help organize congregations in civic engagement activities such as voter registration, community canvassing, and phone and text banking.

Application Deadline: May 15, 2024

Fellowship: July 8, 2024 – August 17, 2024

Empower – NCC Freedom Ride

NCC Freedom Summer will host a five-city Freedom Ride tour to empower voters and inspire communities through faith, food, and fellowship. The Freedom Ride schedule is as follows:

July 19, 2024 – Jacksonville, Florida

July 26, 2024 – Atlanta, Georgia

August 2, 2024 – Durham, North Carolina

August 9, 2024 – Detroit, Michigan

August 16, 2024 – Jackson, Mississippi

For more information and to find out how to get involved, visit our website, NCC Freedom Summer 2024, or contact freedomsummer@nationalcouncilofchurches.us.

The 2024 NCC Freedom Summer is a faith-based civic engagement campaign to mobilize voters in five priority states (Mississippi, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, and Michigan) through voter registration, voter education, and voter mobilization efforts for the 2024 election.

According to Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton, Chair of NCC’s Governing Board, “The Freedom Summer of 1964 led to the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, making it possible for thousands of disenfranchised to vote. In 2013, the Supreme Court gutted the Voting Rights Act, enabling new restrictions on the constitutional right to vote. The Freedom Summer of 1964 turned deadly. The Freedom Summer of 2024 is still a matter of life and death. We dare not stand idle – too much is at stake.

“We call upon all people of faith, our member communions, and partner organizations to mobilize for this movement. As we follow in the footsteps of Freedom Summer 1964, let us educate, engage, and empower voters around the country to take part in the democratic process this upcoming election season. ‘For freedom Christ has set us free’ (Galatians 5:1 NRSVUE),” said Bishop Eaton.

With the 2024 Freedom Summer campaign, NCC hopes to recapture the energy and spirit of the 1964 project, which sought to integrate Mississippi’s segregated political system using nonviolent methods. Almost 1,500 volunteers, including 254 NCC-sponsored clergy, worked in project offices across Mississippi.

ENTERTAINMENT & THE ARTS

Board of Bishops/ IMLA Pt. 2



Rev. Dierdre R. Parker
Entertainment & The Arts Editor
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By Dierdre R Parker,
Entertainment & the Arts Editor
Photos By Mr. James Feldman

Day two began with a cavalcade of purple as the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church Board of Bishops processed in for the morning service. After the opening hymn and reading of scriptures, The President of the Board of Bishops, Bishop George Crenshaw, delivered a soul-stirring prayer.

The denominational choir then ignited our souls under the leadership of Dr. Lisa Moore. Implementing a Director of Music for the denomination has immediately deepened the worship experience of this gathering. Our ears were blessed with the beautiful harmonic rendition of





All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name; our eyes were blessed with the beautiful expression of worship through dance. The combination of the sights and sounds of this moment was a potent reminder that we are children of the Most High, and our reasonable response to the Presence of the Most High is praise. As Bishop Brian Thompson said, "When you know who you're worshipping, you can bless the Lord on a Hymn, a Negro Spiritual, or an Anthem."

After a beautiful reminder from the denominational choir that God is on Our Side, Bishop Dogbe came forward to "Present somebody who will present somebody who will present the word." In his introduction of our Senior Bishop, Bishop Dogbe recalled that there was a time when he sought advice from Bishop Monroe, but Bishop Monroe did not respond. He let Bishop Monroe know once Bishop Dogbe decided or got his answer. Bishop Monroe replied, "Sometimes, in the midst of silence, you hear the voice of God." The Sermon, which Bishop Frencher rendered. The details of Bishop Frencher's sermon can be found in the previous article or on AMEZTV.



The IMLA reconvened in the afternoon for a Money Matters Workshop by Morgana Jones. Ms. Jones asked some fundamental questions: What is your worldview on money? If you passed away today, what would you leave behind? If you get sick, who will take care of you? If you lose your job, what is your backup plan?

She reminded us that wealth is a mindset before it is an asset. Therefore, it is essential to know your own "money story." Ms. Jones is committed to helping churches find alternative ways to fundraise. There are many options. You can reach out to her directly via LinkedIn. Rev. Dr. Orlando Dowdy was next with Looking Beyond the Pandemic: A Post-Covid Checkup. Dr. Dowdy gave us information on the



state of mental health in our country since Covid 19. Studies show that rates of depression and anxiety have not returned to baseline for many, and suicide has become an option for some. Girls are more negatively affected by the collective trauma of COVID-19 than boys. Since the pandemic, there has also been an increase in PTSD. Dr. Dowdy is a licensed Therapist/Pastoral Counselor who uses a unique combination of spiritual resources and psychological understanding in a nonjudgmental, supportive, nurturing, and safe environment. He reminds us that "whatever consumes your mind controls your life." "If you need help," Dr. Dowdy says, "go get it." It is okay to have Jesus and a therapist.



The IMLA President's Address followed. The theme: Balancing Life: Navigating Life's Demands. Rev. Dr. Anthony Witherspoon stated that Covid brought the organization to its knees. He stated. "If we are serious about the association's future, we must be willing to pass the torch." Nearly 1 million people walk away from the faith each year. It is necessary to foster a ministry that includes young people intentionally.



The final event for the second night was the evening service in which Bishop Dennis V. Proctor preached. The details of that sermon were included in the first night article. I was privileged to have a few moments to interview Bishop Proctor. "What I would like to say about my departure is that we're leaving the church (the Board of Bishops) in good hands. There was a time when you wondered what would happen with us, but the caliber of ministers and lay people and their commitment to Jesus Christ and the institution He left. I'm encouraged. I'm excited. I can go sit down with great confidence that we will continue to be the Freedom Church and the church of Freedom."

And the morning and the evening was the second day.



See Jon Batiste in Concert this Year

By Asia Briana Brown

Jon Batiste is touring across North America this year. Have you seen him perform live? If not, book your concert ticket to his Uneasy tour in a city near you. This past March, Jon delivered an electrifying performance at The Fillmore Charlotte, playing many of my favorite tunes, from “Freedom” to “I Feel Good,” and a few tunes from his latest album, *World Music Radio*. He majestically played nearly every instrument and danced unbridled and freely onstage and among the audience.

I was privileged to meet and witness Jon perform live at The Fillmore Charlotte on March 22, my mom’s third heavenly birthday. When Jon entered the stage, donning a sharp blue suit and guitar in hand, he reminded me of Prince in the stage lighting as he gleefully belted his first selection, “Tell the Truth,” a single from his *We Are* album.

Four hours prior to Jon’s concert opening, I stood in line with other guests who purchased the Worship VIP Meet and Greet Experience. Minutes before meeting Jon, I remembered my mom’s words from 2016 when I was waiting to meet a celebrity couple during their book tour: “Think about what you want to say before you meet them.”

Quite the contrary, I was full of emotion meeting that couple, bursting into tears after saying “Hello.” So, determined to have a more coher-



ent, joyful presentation meeting Jon, I was surprised when he greeted me with a hug after I said, “Hello, Jon.” After gifting him a copy of my poetry book, *Bring Me Back Home*, New Orleans, and expressing our shared New Orleans heritage and how his concert presence was an answered prayer, we both smiled for the photographer.

If you have ever witnessed one of Jon’s performances—either his Grammy performances, one of his love riots with his former band, Stay Human, or on *The Late Show* with Steven Colbert—you know that Jon’s performances are always electric, even when subtle. I shed my first tears at The Fillmore Charlotte when he performed “Butterfly,” one of his hit singles from his *World Music Radio* album, which is a beautiful tribute to his wife, Suleika.

As a fan of Jon Batiste’s music since 2015, I attest that experiencing Jon live is pure joy. He will have you grooving, vibing, reflecting, and celebrating life and the beauty of existing: the essence of staying human. True to this motto, Jon ended his concert in classic New Orleans fashion by second lining through the crowd with his bandmates while playing “I Feel Good” on his melodica, my favorite song of the evening. In his own personal fashion, Jon’s second line through the audience granted personal access to Charlotte concertgoers, including the people in the back.

Beyond being a multi-talented musician and multi-instrumentalist, Jon Batiste is the epitome of love, sharing the Light of the World with all who would listen across his interstellar airwaves.

Beyond being a multi-talented musician and multi-instrumentalist, Jon Batiste is the epitome of love, sharing the Light of the World with all who would listen across his interstellar airwaves.

Shoe Cam At BOB/IMLA

By Dierdre R. Parker
Entertainment & The Arts Editor

You can tell a lot about a person by what they wear on their feet. Shoes protect our feet, cushion our body weight, and allow us to play sports safely. There are all types of shoes: closed-toed shoes, open-toed shoes, sandals, boots, and sneakers, to name a few. And then there are the heels... Perhaps this writer is obsessed with high-heeled shoes because she can’t wear them anymore. Running on concrete when I was in the Army left little to no cartilage in my knees, making wearing heels painful. Enter Shoe Cam. The idea came from the now-defunct *Wendy Williams Show*. Wendy, who suffers from lymphedema, can no longer wear high heels. When a guest came and sat on her couch, she would first have the cameraman put the camera on the guest’s shoes. Once the Shoe Cam became popular, guests would wear their fanciest, highest heels possible.



While the Board of Bishops/IMLA Conference was not a show, all and sundry will show up in their most impressive attire. And while some women wear church hats, Zion women rock shoes. Not just any

shoes. Leather, Suede, or canvas. Sparkly, Studded, or striped, the shoes are always on point. Take Presiding Elder Sharon Browning, for instance. You will likely see her picture if you look up “hostess with the mostest” in the dictionary. She was moving almost at the speed of sound. She was doing everything from answering questions to moving furniture, and she could do that, at least in part, because she had on the most adorable, sparkling slip-on sneakers.

High-heeled shoes can be uncomfortable sometimes, especially if you





have a lot of walking or standing to do and they are pointy in the toes. Please believe that these resourceful Zion women were well prepared. Have you ever looked under a pew during a packed church service? People would probably think you're weird, so don't do that. If you did, you would

see that in those super huge purses, a pair of flats or comfortable shoes is sometimes hidden. Don't get it twisted; comfortable shoes can be pretty, too. I saw a pair of sneakers with a gold buckle that were especially fetching.



It is not about the shoes alone. The shoes are part of a larger aesthetic. It is about the entire look. This includes pantyhose. They merge the concept of the whole outfit. Sequins, textures, and colored patterns adorn the hose as well. The accessories, the outfit, the shoes, and the hair are all part of the statement that a Zion Woman is making. And



trust me, she is making a statement. She is letting the world know that she is committed to the things of God and the church. She is letting the world know that she does things with excellence.



She is adorned with grace and wisdom. She is clothed in strength and dignity. Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised (Ps. 31:30 ESV).



HEALTH & Wellness

Attention: Mental Health and Self-Care are Related!



Mr. Daman De Leon
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By Daman De Leon
Health & Wellness Editor



May is here. That means we are in the heart of the Spring Season. There are several themes which encompass the month of May. Mental Health Awareness Month is one of those themes. As a result of our daily transactions we tend to experience burnout, and that comes from all types of professions effecting people from all walks of life. However Mental Health Awareness Month is a perfect time to focus on our own mental health and wellness.

Self-care is essential for mental health and overall well-being. I am encouraged to see more and more people prioritizing their mental health just as they would their physical health. We have seen professional athletes, actors and actresses, and other high-profile public figures putting their jobs on hold to put their mental health first. This is such a healthy and important step because by raising awareness and acceptance of mental health, we not only empower ourselves but also help remove stigma, enforce the message that it is okay to not be okay, and encourage people to seek help when they need it.

When you take care of your mental health, your physical and emotional

health improves; you become more resilient, and it makes it easier to find ways to manage life stressors in a healthy and positive way. There were several people in the Bible who struggled with their mental health:

- Elijah, who Reached Burn-Out (1 Kings 19)
- Job, who Lost Everything (Job 1-42)
- Jonah, who Wanted His Life to End (Jonah 4)
- King Saul's disturbed behavior, taken as a whole, indicates that he was afflicted by some kind of a mental disorder (1 Samuel 18-24)

Here are just a few suggested strategies that you can use to maintain positive mental health. The key is to try them and see what works for you. Then, put them into practice regularly.

Enjoy the awesomeness of nature: Research indicates that being immersed in nature can help with mild depression and anxiety symptoms. For example, just going for a walk or a hike in a natural setting can help you manage these depression and anxiety symptoms. Consider setting a reminder for yourself to get up and get out! This will help you stick to your plan to get some fresh air and will also help you maintain positive mental health throughout your day.

Connect with family or friends: This is another great way to reduce stress and even improve mental health. We are social beings and thrive on the connection, support, love, and belonging that friends, family, and our communities bring to us. Studies show that people who feel connected to others are less likely to feel anxiety or sadness and often feel increased happiness.

- Practice mindfulness: Mindfulness techniques, such as breathing exercises or guided meditation, can help manage stress and anxiety. Making time for mindful techniques, even just a few minutes at the end, or beginning, of your day can make a big difference.
- Extracurriculars: Join a book club, take a hobby-related class, or enjoy live music with others.
- Spend time with your pets: Owning a pet can help to reduce stress and boost endorphins. Pet owners may socialize and connect with other pet owners or be outside more often – both great ways to improve or maintain positive mental health.

- **Volunteer:** Helping others and participating in community organizations can also be a positive boost. Many community organizations welcome volunteers.
- **Sleep:** Another critical piece to maintaining positive mental health is getting enough sleep. Set your sights on trying to sleep for however long you need to feel rested and recharged during the day.
- **Join a support group:** Reach out and connect with others who can share strategies for getting through challenging times.
- **Eat right:** Food can affect our mood. Cut back on processed and sugary foods.
- **Exercise:** Spend time each day to walk, run, bike, or whatever you can do to move your body.
- **Reduce or eliminate alcohol and other substance use:** Limiting the use of substances will improve your health and mental health.
- **Practice self-gratitude:** Being grateful for yourself, what you have, and the life around you can promote positive thinking.
- **Pray, Pray, Pray!**



Focusing on self-care is important because we play a part in each other's mental wellness. It's up to each of us to be a lifeline, sharing in a commitment to care for ourselves and those around us. However, you cannot be of help to others if you are not taking good care of your own mental health. Think of it like the safety instructions we receive on an airplane. We are told to put on our own oxygen masks first before we can be of help to others. The same philosophy applies to taking care of our own needs, including mental health needs, before being able to be fully present and supportive of others in our lives.

When it comes to mental wellness, small actions can have a big im-

pact. During Mental Health Awareness Month, do something kind for others: hold the door open for someone, give a compliment, or pay someone else's kindness forward. See how these small acts boost your mental health and have the added bonus of likely making a positive impact on others.

More importantly, check in on loved ones and ask them about how they're doing. Talk to your kids about their mental health. We know that 1 in 5 kids are experiencing behavioral health issues, such as anxiety or depression, which was further exacerbated during the pandemic. If you notice that your children are struggling, reach out for help. Getting help during the early stages of mental illness, or at the first signs of mild behavioral health symptoms, can help prevent those symptoms from developing into more serious conditions. In addition, getting help for yourself or your children could help your children develop healthy habits that will benefit them throughout their lives.

Remember, taking care of yourself is not selfish; it is necessary for you to be able to take care of others and lead a fulfilling life. By encouraging others to seek help, helping others access help, or simply by being there for someone when they need us, we instill hope in ourselves and those around us.

So, make self-care a priority this May and beyond. Spread positivity. Be hopeful. Practice patience and kindness, and empathy toward others. It may just make a life-changing difference.

Treatment Resources

FindTreatment.gov

A confidential and anonymous source of information for persons seeking treatment facilities in the United States or U.S. Territories for substance use/addiction and/or mental health problems.

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

24-hour, toll-free, confidential support for people in distress. Prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones. Call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org.

SAMHSA's National Helpline

This Helpline provides 24-hour free and confidential treatment referral and information about mental and/or substance use disorders, prevention, and recovery in English and Spanish.

1-800-662-HELP (4357)

TTY: 1-800-487-4889

Text your zip code to: 435748 (HELP4U)

LIFESTYLE

Spring Fashion Trends 2024



Ms. Angel Eason

By Angel Eason
Lifestyle Editor

Spring is here. I had the opportunity to attend New York Fashion Week virtually, and I am ready to share the latest fashion trends to incorporate into your wardrobe for church, work, and day-to-day family activities. The good thing about the spring 2024 trends is that you may have these items in your closet.



Bye, leggings... Hello Bible Study Trousers!

Wide-leg trousers are in for this spring and this makes me happy. I love leggings but when I put them on, I feel like I am missing something. Trousers come in a variety of colors, sizes, and styles depending on the designer. You can wear them with a blouse, blazer, or graphic tee for everyday styling.

Trousers pictured
(Image by gpointstudio on freepik)



First Sunday's Best

White dress pictured
(Image by halayalex on freepik)

Yes, white dresses are in for spring 2024. Pull out your Sunday's best and dress it down with a nice pair of loafers or sandals. Are you attending brunch or the derby? Add a hat and heels. White goes with everything; feel free to add a pop of color to stand out.

Youth Sunday Denim Skirt

Statement skirts are in for spring and include denim. If you have been around a few years or more in church, you know that on Youth Sunday or at the church cookout, denim skirts are popular. Pull out your Youth Sunday Denim Skirt or pants for your next outing. Denim skirts have no age demographic.

Grandma's Purse

Now if your grandma is like my grandma, she carries a large bag. In this large bag, you might find peppermints, a lap scarf, ink pens, a coin pouch, safety pins, and a notebook. Oversized bags are in. Grab you one.



White dress pictured (Image by halayalex on freepik)



White dress pictured (Image by halayalex on freepik)

The Trench

When you think of spring, I am sure you think of the Trench Coat. If not, where have you been? The Trench Coat is one of my favorite items to wear during spring, and this spring is no different. On the runway, belted, un-belted, cropped, long, and classic.

The beauty of the spring trends is that all these

items can be a part of a capsule wardrobe. A capsule wardrobe includes interchangeable clothing items that can be worn in several ways. You can create numerous outfits out of 7 or fewer items with these items. Stay tuned for why you should have a capsule wardrobe and ditch one-off pieces.

ROAD TO GENERAL CONFERENCE 2024

Reverend Charlrean B. Mapson, D.Min.

Reverend Dr. Charlrean Batten Mapson is the daughter of the late Charlie Batten, Jr. and the late Anna Rean Batten.



She is a native of Atlanta, Georgia, where she attended the Atlanta Public Schools. Her high school matriculation took place at Benjamin E. Mays Academy of Science and Mathematics. Upon high school graduation, she attended Clark Atlanta University (CAU) where she received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Chemistry with

a minor in Engineering. While at CAU, she served as inaugural president of the Atlanta University Center (AUC) chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) and a national officer of NSBE as National Pre-College Initiative Chairperson. In 1991, the AUC chapter of NSBE honored her with the creation of an annual award and scholarship bearing her name, "The Charlrean Batten Leadership Award." Upon completion of her undergraduate studies, she moved to Wilmington in 1991 and began employment with Hoechst Celanese as a Laboratory Supervisor. She was later promoted to Chemical Sales Representative.

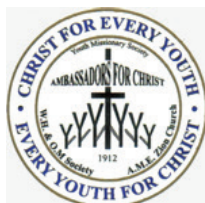


After six years of service at Hoechst Celanese, she entered the real estate business, then later opened her own firm in 2009. In 2003, she was named Realtor of the Year for the Wilmington Regional Association of Realtors, which had approximately 2,000 members at that time. Her service to the real estate community includes Board of Directors member of the Wilmington Regional Association of Realtors, Board of Directors member of the North Carolina Association of Realtors. She is currently an instructor of real estate continuing education courses for the North Carolina Real Estate Commission.



She has been active in the Wilmington community for many years with service in various capacities. In previous years she has served on the Boards of Cape Fear Habitat for Humanity, Friends of New Hanover County Public Library, member of the Wilmington Planning Commission, and the 1898 Racial Reconciliation Committee.

She is the former General Youth Secretary of the Women's Home & Overseas Missionary Society for the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, serving 2003-2011. Implementing the Youth Empowerment Statement, Y-M-S song (to the tune of YMCA), and the Vickie Awards, honoring



students excelling in academics and the arts.

She joined the St. Luke A.M.E. Zion Church under Dr. Dennis V. Proctor, now Presiding Bishop in the A.M.E. Zion Church. And began her pastoral ministry at the Johnson Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church in Leland, North Carolina. During the two and one-half years of service at this charge

twenty-three members were added to the congregation under her leadership. She implemented several youth ministries including a step team (in partnership with the graduate chapters of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.); she implemented youth and children's Bible study and Sunday School classes; and implemented a summer day camp for youth and children.

She served successfully for seven years as pastor of the historic Saint Mark A.M.E. Zion Church in Whiteville, North Carolina.

While serving at the St. Mark Church, she led the church in a \$250K renovation project and had the church entered in the state's historic registry. She initiated monthly community discussions on the topic of racial reconciliation; partnered with the Presbyterian Church to implement the Circles of Hope program for single parents living in poverty; organized and maintained the

Whiteville Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance; and implemented several feeding programs for area families in need, most partnered with another church of the denomination and a local Food Lion store. Additionally, she initiated a support group for parents of children with special needs and participated in the Reimagining Health Collaborative (RHC) held at Duke Divinity School. RHC is a program which seeks to bridge the gap between the church and those suffering with mental health issues.



She served as pastor of the historic St. John A.M.E. Zion Church in Wilson, North Carolina for two years. She implemented and taught Special Needs Sunday School and Vacation Bible School classes. Implemented financial reporting system for the Wilson District, as chair of the Budget and Finance Committee.



She is currently the proud pastor of the Price Cathedral Church in Wilmington, North Carolina. Provides spiritual and administrative leadership to church, including managing daily operations, developing, and administering annual budget, delivering compassionate pastoral care to community and leading

worship services, ordinances, funerals, and weddings. Partners with city officials, non-profit resource organizations, civic groups, other denominations, and members of the public for outreach to community.

In May 2021, she was named by Governor Roy Cooper to serve the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities. In February 2022 (less than a year after the appointment) she was elected chair of the council's Community Living Committee.

In November 2021, she was appointed to the New Hanover County/ City of Wilmington Community Relations Advisory Committee.

In May of 2016, she graduated Magna Cum Laude from Hood Theological Seminary as a Master of Divinity degree



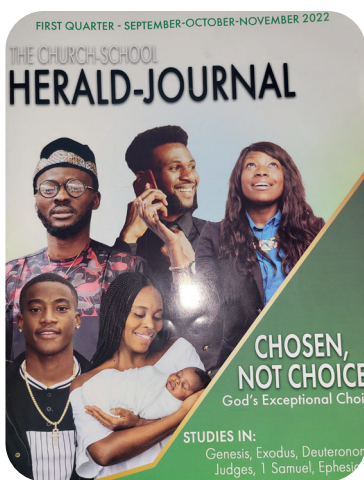
recipient and recipient of the Student Recognition Faculty Award.



In May of 2021, she graduated from Duke Divinity School as a Doctor of Ministry degree recipient. Her doctoral thesis is entitled Inclusion of the Autism Population in Churches, Schools, and Communities. She recently completed season 1 of her first podcast, "Let's Talk Autism with Dr.

C..." | Podcast on Spotify.

A prolific writer, in January 2016, she published, "Christianity, Christian Symbolism and the Ku Klux Klan," in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church Quarterly Review. Furthermore, she has written for the African Methodist Episcopal



Zion Church School Herald and Sunday School literature and the Women's Home & Overseas Missionary Society.

On January 31, 2005, she and Reverend Donald R. Mapson were blessed with

son, Jadon Hassani Mapson who has Autism. So, she is a loud and proud Autism mother and fierce "Autism Mama Bear!"

After twenty plus years in ministry, and standing on Exodus 34:10, Dr. Mapson prayerfully offers herself for the office of Bishop.

She has a PLAN for Zion. She is promoting:

- Personal Care and Mental Health for Ministers. It is important for ministers to care for themselves if they are to effectively serve their parishioners.
- Leadership in a post-pandemic era. It is important to embrace the strategies learned during the quarantine-driven pandemic; utilizing those strategies and enhancing ways to creatively meld the new normal with the old ways of worship, outreach, and other ministry-related activities.

- Autism Awareness, Acceptance, and Inclusion. Everyone deserves an opportunity to participate in worship and other church activities. The church should be a place of acceptance, rather than rejection. Dr. Mapson has creative strategies to assist pastors and congregations in the inclusion of all special needs individuals. As a member of the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities, Dr. Mapson has effectively succeeded in convincing the council to fund (up to \$120,000) an effort to educate law enforcement personnel in handling special needs individuals.
- Nurturing Ecumenical Relationships. She has been active in various activities with other denominations. Most recently she was the newly elected President of the Board of Directors for UNC – Wilmington's Wingspan ILM. Wingspan ILM is a new joint campus ministry on the campus of UNCW consistent of the A.M.E. Zion Church, Lutheran Church, Presbyterian Church, and United Methodist Church. The goal is to provide a space for students who are matriculating at UNCW to remain grounded in their Christian principles.

To connect with Dr. Mapson:

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YouTube Channel – Charlean Eats Clean

Watch God Work!

Then the Lord said: "I am making a covenant with you. Before all your people I will do wonders never before done in any nation in all the world. The people you live among will see how awesome is the work that I, the Lord, will do for you.

Exodus 34:10 (NIV)

PLAN.
MAPSON2024
"She has a PLAN for Zion"

- ▶ **PROMOTING**
PERSONAL CARE AND MENTAL HEALTH FOR PASTORS
- ▶ **LEADERSHIP**
LEADERSHIP IN THE NEW ERA OF WORSHIP
- ▶ **AUTISM**
AUTISM AWARENESS AND INCLUSION
- ▶ **NURTURING**
NURTURING ECUMENICAL RELATIONSHIPS

Strengthening • Equipping • Evangelizing



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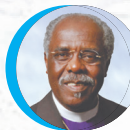
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Working Moms: Championing our Families and our Economy



Dr. Dana Stilley
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By Dana G. Stilley
Financial Freedom Editor

Each May, the world pauses to celebrate our mothers, motherhood, and maternal bonds. First celebrated in the early 1900s, Mother's Day was designed to honor and acknowledge the many sacrifices that mothers made for their children and families. Like many other holidays, the growth of business and industry in this country has led to increased commercialization of Mother's Day. As early as mid-April, media begins to flood our pathways with opportunities and ideas for the 'perfect' gift for mom. Firmly believing that mothers should be celebrated every day - I am guilty of flocking to the store to purchase flowers, cards, chocolate, and jewelry in preparation for Mother's Day. In fact, estimates indicate that over \$35 billion was spent on Mother's Day purchases in 2023 despite fears of a looming recession at that time.

Spending \$35 billion was far more than I had imagined would be spent on Mother's Day, and that led me to reflect on some of the facts I learned during Women's History Month last March. I was specifically astonished to discover that women could not borrow money - apply for a credit card or get a mortgage on their own - until 1974!



This compelled me to think about how working "moms" and mom figures (women) impact the US economy and successfully reach financial freedom.

Here are a few facts. Almost 47% of the US workforce are women. Without these women, the US economy would be approximately 25% smaller than it is. Most households are dual-income earners, and most mothers are the primary wage earners or co-breadwinners in their households. Also, the wage gap in the US persists, and women who work full-time are paid 84% of what men earn. The gap is wider for women of color. Last, caregiving responsibilities severely impact women's employment due to insufficient paid leave and related protections.

The continued presence and growth of women in the workforce are beneficial to the US economy and to the well-being of women and their children. As moms and mother figures continue to strive to gain financial freedom, we can support them by addressing the inequities in wages, increasing access to affordable caregiving support, and acknowledging their contributions and value to our economy.

Forbes: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/allisonrobinson/2023/11/30/the-economic-impact-of-moms-in-the-workforce-is-the-next-research-frontier/?sh=5f5875546cd2>

CAP20: <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/fact-sheet-the-state-of-women-in-the-labor-market-in-2023/>

SPORTS

Beyond the Bracket: The HBCU All-Star Game Lights Up Final Four Weekend



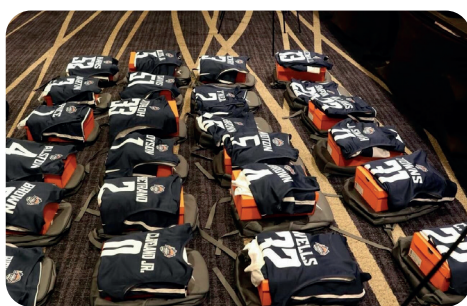
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By Alexis D. Hutchinson
Sports Editor

"The Road Ends Here" is often the slogan of the NCAA Men's Final Four, but for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), it rings true at the HBCU All-Star Game. An event that shines a spotlight on the incredible talent within Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Spearheaded by Travis Williams, the game aims to elevate the visibility of HBCU athletes and provide a platform for them to showcase their skills.

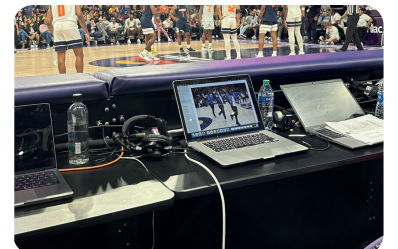
The third-annual HBCU All-Star Game, held on April 7th in Phoenix, Arizona, was a testament to the growing momentum of this movement. With a sold-out crowd of over 7,000 in attendance at the Global Credit Union Arena, the atmosphere was electric as HBCU alumni, fraternity and sorority members, and HBCU fans gathered to witness the best players from the SWAC, MEAC, CIAA, and SIAC conferences compete.

Williams, the visionary behind the All-Star Game, understands the significance of mentorship and education for Black college student-athletes. Drawing from his own coaching experiences at institutions like Tennessee State and Fort Valley State, he recognized the need to provide HBCU players with opportunities to showcase their talents on a national stage.



The event itself was truly remarkable. A special message from NBA superstar Kevin Durant set the tone for an unforgettable afternoon of basketball. Broadcasted live on CBS Sports, the game featured two teams, Team Ben Wallace and Team Rick Mahorn, competing for glory.

However, the HBCU All-Star Game was more than just basketball; it was a celebration of culture, community, and excellence. Fans started off the morning at a Fan Fest on the campus of Grand Canyon University in their quad, including vendors and college showcases added to the festive atmosphere, while halftime performances by the Morehouse Cheerleading Squad and the Clark Atlanta University Mighty Marching Panthers showcased the rich traditions of HBCU spirit.



For the players, the game was an opportunity to shine on a national stage and take the next step in their basketball careers. With custom-made suits from Reveal Suits, commemorative rings from Jostens, and official gear from Nike, they were treated to a first-class experience befitting their talent and dedication. Players were also given the chance to watch the Men's NCAA Final Four games at State Farm Arena from a suite, enjoying the two semifinal games - NC State vs. Purdue and



Alabama vs. UCONN.

Beyond the court, the HBCU All-Star Game was a celebration of service and community engagement. From homeless outreach initiatives to educational school fairs, the event underscored the importance of giving back and making a positive impact in the communities we serve.

As the final buzzer sounded and Team Ben Wallace emerged victorious, it was clear that the HBCU All-Star Game had transcended the realm of sports to become a cultural phenomenon. With founder Travis Williams leading the charge, this annual gathering of HBCU talent during the Men's NCAA Final Four weekend is poised to continue breaking barriers and inspiring the next generation of Black college athletes.

As someone who had the privilege of attending the event, I can attest to the unparalleled energy and enthusiasm that permeated every moment. From courtside interactions with players to the camaraderie shared among fans, the HBCU All-Star Game was a testament to the power of unity and excellence. It felt just like a HBCU homecoming football game, complete with tailgating and passionate fans. This gathering on the West Coast, where HBCUs are rare, provided an opportunity for communities to witness the strong bonds and fellowship shared among HBCU alumni.

In the words of Dhashon Dyson, the game's MVP, "Everybody came and was ready to put on a show. Everybody knew they had to compete." Indeed, the HBCU All-Star Game was not just a game; it was a celebration of resilience, talent, and the enduring legacy of Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Founder Travis Williams expressed his gratitude for the overwhelming support received from leaders and organizations across Arizona, acknowledging the collective effort that made the event a resounding success. With plans to continue expanding and evolving, the HBCU All-Star Game is poised to become an enduring symbol of excellence and empowerment for years to come.



THE 3RD ANNUAL HBCU ALL-STAR GAME TEAM ROSTERS

Team Rick Mahorn (MEAC, SIAC, Independents All-Stars)

1. Fred Cleveland Jr, North Carolina Central University (MEAC) PG 5'9
 2. Chris Martin, Clark Atlanta University (SIAC) PG 6'2
 3. Raquan Brown, South Carolina State University (MEAC) SG 6'3
 4. Ja'Darius Harris, North Carolina Central University (MEAC) SG 6'3
 5. Christian Brown, Tennessee State University (INDEP) SG 6'6
 6. Allen Betrand, Norfolk State University (MEAC) SG 6'5
 7. Asanti Price, Benedict College (SIAC) SG 6'5
 8. Christian Wells, LeMoyne-Owen College (SIAC) SF 6'5
 9. Tedrick Wilcox Jr., Hampton University (INDEP) SF 6'6
 10. Seth Towns, Howard University (MEAC) SF/PF 6'9
 11. Jordan Simpson, Albany State University (SIAC) PF/C 6'9
 12. Jason Jitoboh, Tennessee State University (INDEP) C 6'11
- Coaches: Levelle Moton - Head Men's Basketball Coach at North Carolina Central University; Alfred Jordan, Head Men's Basketball Coach at Clark Atlanta University



Team Ben Wallace (SWAC & CIAA HBCU All-Stars)

1. PJ Henry, Texas Southern University (SWAC) PG 5'10
2. Dhashon Dyson, Bethune-Cookman University (SWAC) CG 6'1
3. Brandon Davis, Southern University (SWAC) CG 6'1
4. Rashad Williams, Univ. Arkansas at Pine Bluff (SWAC) SG 6'2
5. Tra'Michael Moton, Grambling State University (SWAC) SG 6'2
6. Jaylen Alston, Winston-Salem State University (CIAA) SF 6'4
7. Tre Richardson, Elizabeth City State University (CIAA) SF 6'4
8. Charles Smith, Prairie View A&M University (SWAC) SG 6'5
9. Rayquan Brown, Mississippi Valley State University (SWAC) SG 6'6
10. Jordan O'Neal, Jackson State University (SWAC) PF 6'7
11. Jeremiah Kendall, Alcorn State University (SWAC) PF 6'7
12. Jourdan Smith, Grambling State University (SWAC) PF 6'7

Coaches: Johnny Jones, Head Men's Basketball Coach at Texas Southern University; Jason Armstrong, Head Men's Basketball Coach at Lincoln University (PA)

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Curlia Troy: A Life of Service

Mrs. Curlia Mae Grady Troy

January 1, 1917 - March 11, 2024

By Laverna Hargrove



Sister Curlia Troy was a living testimony of God's promises. In the early hours of March 11, 2024, God called her, and she quietly transitioned from life into eternal life at her home in Leland, North Carolina, at the age of 107 years. She was the oldest member of the Eastern North Carolina Episcopal District and possibly the oldest member in the whole of the A.M.E. Zion Church. She was celebrated for being one of the centenarians of the Eastern North Carolina Episcopal District each year since the inception of this project.

Sister Troy was born on January 1, 1917, to the late William and Tamar Ballard Grady. She was the second of four children reared in Leland, NC. Early in life, she exhibited her commitment to her family and service to her community and church. She was a PTA president, and in her 30s, she became the Director of the Junior Choir of Summerville A.M.E. Zion Church. Her love of music led her to obtain a two-year certificate in music from the US School of Music. She became the Minister of Music and directed the Junior, Senior, and Men's Choir. As director of the Summerville Junior Choir, she would walk to the church for choir practice, encouraging and gathering the children and youth of the community to come with her. She made many attempts to teach

her ability to play and sing to her son and her nephew, but to no avail. Sister Curlia did not have formal schooling during her childhood years, yet she was a woman of much wisdom.

She met and married the love of her life, the late John Franklin Troy. Six children were the gifts of this union. They also reared three of their grandchildren. She was preceded in death by five of her children. Sister Curlia's love of gardening and cooking equaled her love of music. She and her husband Franklin started a thriving business of growing and selling vegetables and fruits at the Wilmington City Market. When her health prevented her from attending church services, she supported the church in as many ways. In 2020, the Wilmington District Lay Council awarded Sister Troy the Keeper of the Flame Award because, at the age of 103 years, she would still ask, 'What are they doing at the church?'. She has established a legacy of service to the A.M.E. Zion Church, serving as Chairperson of the Summerville Homecoming Event for 25 years. She also served as Secretary of the Trustee Board, President of the Summerville WH&OMS, and Leader of Class #5.

She led her children and a niece, Geraldine Newkirk, to Christ. Sister Newkirk served Summerville A.M.E. Zion Church at the side of her 'Aunt Curlia' and led her to become a leader of the church in her own right. Sister Curlia Troy has a granddaughter, Rev. Sherryl Bradford, who is an A.M.E. Zion preacher who serves as a member of the Summerville Ministerial Staff, and a great nephew, Rev. Tyquan Alston, who is the Senior Pastor of St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church, Salisbury, Maryland. Sister Markita Dye, the Pastor's Steward to Rev. Nathaniel Johnson for almost eight years, is the daughter of Geraldine Newkirk and great-niece of Sister Troy. The Wilmington District, led by Dr. Alexander Jones, envelops the family and friends of Sister Curlia Troy in our prayers and gives grateful praise to God for her service and her legacy.

Celebration of Life for Mr. Joe Nathan Berry

April 10, 1944 - April 1, 2024

Joe Nathan Berry was born on April 10, 1944, in Rock Hill, South Carolina, to the late Robert Berry and Florence Benjamin Barnette. He was raised by his paternal grandparents, the late John Wesley Berry and Alice Berry. He departed this earthly journey on Monday, April 1, 2024. He was preceded in death by five siblings: James Robert Lowery, Brenda E. Whitehead, Nancy J. Barnette, Willie E. Barnette, and Isaac L. Barnette.

Joe was a graduate of Emmett Scott High School. Upon graduation, he served his country in the United States Air Force. He retired from Celanese Corporation after thirty-two years of service.

Joe was a faithful, dedicated member of his beloved White Hill A.M. E. Zion Church, where he served as a Steward, Sunday School Teacher, and Hymn Choir Leader. He loved to sing and was



a member of The South Carolina Conference Hymn Choir, Rock Hill Prayer Band, Together As One Hymn Choir and the White Hill Hymn Choir.

Joe will be truly missed by everyone whose life he touched. He was kind to everyone he met and loved his family dearly. He was the leader of the Family Reunion Committee for many years. He also loved to hunt.

Joe leaves to cherish his memory, his beloved wife of thirty-nine years, Rev. Patricia R. Berry; siblings, Estelle Berry, Shirley Gadsen (Paul), Robert Lee Berry (Saddie), Sam Berry, Solomon Benjamin, James Lester Barnette, Jr., Alber Ruth Barnette, Hazeline Barnette, Jessie Lee Barnette, Mary Gibson (David), and Hezekiah Barnette; goddaughter, Deloris Ojetta Berry; godson, Charles A. Berry; and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends.



Rev. Ronald Nathan
World Politics Editor
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Barbados Punching Above Its' Weight

By Deborah Grant and Ronald Nathan



Barbados has emerged as a leading advocate in the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) group of nations. Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are in the Caribbean, the Pacific, the Atlantic, the Indian Ocean, and the South China Sea. The aggregate population of all the SIDS is 65 million, slightly less than 1% of the world's population,

yet this group faces unique social, economic, and environmental challenges.

At its 42nd annual conference, presided over by Bishop W. Darin Moore and Missionary Supervisor Devieta Moore, the State of the Country report was featured. Rev Deborah Grant introduced the dynamic role played by the 166-square-mile republic in addressing domestic issues such as crime, homelessness, and unemployment, as well as critical issues on the world stage. Two critical global issues were emphasized by the report, the Bridgetown Initiative and Reparations:



- Barbados has continued to lead the charge in climate change and economic development by presenting the Bridgetown Initiative. This initiative is designed to reform the global financial system by addressing development finance in the context of three intersecting global crises (debt, climate, and inflation). The Bridgetown Initiative proposes the creation of new instruments and reform of existing institutions to finance climate resilience and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



- Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley of Barbados believes that her country should be in the lead for the call for reparatory



justice, as it was on the island of Barbados that the system of enslavement of Africans in the sugar industry was established and perfected, then transferred to the wider Americas. Therefore, it should be a natural progression for Barbados to be in the lead on Reparations. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Committee on

Reparations has established the ten-point plan for Reparations and has lobbied the Organization of American States (OAS), the African Union (AU), and the United Nations (UN) on this very important issue of justice for all those persons of African descent.

With the acceptance of the State of the Country report, the Barbados Annual Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church is a prime example of how local congregations can have a global vision and a global reach.

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Pentecost and Early African Christianity

By Ronald A. Nathan
World Politics Editor

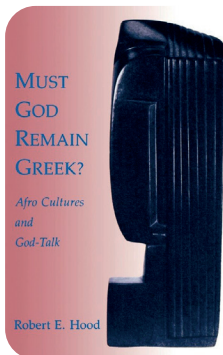
Pentecost is the last day of the Easter season in the Christian liturgical calendar and celebrates the Holy Spirit's outpouring. The event that transformed a small Jewish sect, Christianity, into a global multicultural movement.

The empowerment of the Christian community contained a linguistic phenomenon (speaking in tongues), which reflected the multicultural nature of the early Christian Church. The Christian faith was birthed in a region of North-Eastern Africa, which saw significant international traffic from Roman provinces located on the African continent, such as Egypt, Africa, Cyrenaica, and Mauretania. We know that the growth of Christianity southward followed the trade routes into the above Roman African provinces and beyond to Ethiopia, Eritrea, and parts of India.

When the late Rev. Dr Robert E. Hood, the African American Episcopal clergyman and director of the Center for African American Studies at Adelphi University, Long Island N.Y. USA posed the question 'Must God Remain Greek?' he was seeking to shed light on the African presence in the bible and to correct the false notion that the Christian Faith was exclusively attached to Western European cultural historiography.

Such a notion has distorted our understanding of the history of the early Christian Church and particularly Africa's role in its development. The importance of facts such as Egypt was the second wealthiest Roman province after Italy due to its position as the grain basket of the Roman Empire or that during the life and times of Jesus Christ and the early apostles, Alexandria, the capital of Egypt, was the empire's largest port.

This is why several scholars have taken issue with the dominance of Eurocentric Christian scholarship and its close association with West-



ern European political expansionism and propaganda. An example of how this academic fallacy have corrupted our thinking is the connection of the Roman Empire as synonymous with Europe and therefore so-called whiteness.

This bias, therefore, masks relevant information that would reveal the extent of African agency in Christianity and encourages the idea that Christianity is a 'white man's religion. So, very little is known of the adoption of Christianity as the official religion of Ethiopia and Eritrea in the 4th century AD or the Nubian Christian kingdoms of Nobadia, Makuria, and Alodia in the 6th century. Prominent in contemporary history books and popular Christian literature is the recognition of Christianity as the Roman Empire's official religion in 380 AD.

Even when notable African Christians such as Tertullian, Perpetua, Felicity, Clement and Origen of Alexandria, Cyprian, Athanasius, and Augustine are mentioned, they are spoken of as 'Latin Church Fathers' and as part of the 'Hellenized' civilizations, thereby academically isolating them from their African nexus.

As we celebrate Pentecost, let us rediscover African connectedness to the Early Christian Faith. While you are at it, check out the origins and sources of the modern Pentecostal movement, which is distinctively African and African American.

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Spirit of Ubuntu and the South African General Elections

By Ronald A. Nathan
World Politics Editor



On May 29, 2024, South Africa goes to the polls in what commentators are calling its most important and historic elections since the end of apartheid in 1990, thirty-four years ago.

South Africa's population of 61 million people is praying that the spirit of

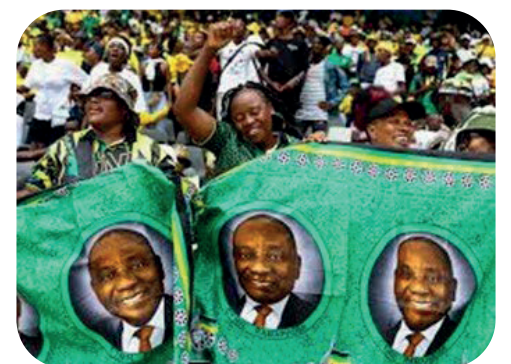
ubuntu will reign. 'Ubuntu', a Zulu philosophical value system, translates as "I am because we are." It speaks of togetherness and caring for one another. The upcoming elections take place in an atmosphere dominated by political sectarianism, militancy, a failing infrastructure, and a growing frustration with the slow progress towards black economic empowerment.

South Africa is Africa's third-largest economy, with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of \$405.71 billion in 2023. The economy is sustained by its thriving mining, manufacturing, and technological industries. However, the country is confronted with five major social issues: corruption, land reform, energy crisis, unemployment, and crime.

With over twenty-seven million registered voters, these general elections will determine the Presidency and the members of its two houses of parliament, the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP).

Through a system of proportional representation, the South African electorate would choose four hundred members to the National Assembly for a five-year term. It is the members of the National Assembly that would choose the President, usually the head of the largest party. They will also elect ninety delegates to the National Council of Provinces (NCOP), which acts as the nation's upper house. South Africa has nine provinces, each with their own legislature. Each province sends ten delegates to the NCOP to represent the interests of the provinces, with each province having its own legislature.

Peter Drucker, the world-famous management consultant, once said, "Culture eats strategy for breakfast." In South Africa, the stakes are high. Will the cultural philosophy of Ubuntu consume the divisive political environment and deliver a democratic, pragmatic, and optimistic governing formula? The wisdom of the prophet Elijah applied when he was asked, 'Can these bones live?' he stated, 'Only God knows.' For the people of South Africa, they continue to hope and pray that there will be a national coming together of bone and flesh in the spirit of Ubuntu.



sankofa

Looking Back to Move Forward A Time for Heroes

Written by, Dr. Anthony T. Browder
Presented by, Rev. Dr. Sarah Fleming

Everybody's searching for a hero. Everybody needs someone to look up to. These lyrics to the song *the Greatest Love of all*, Written by the late Linda Creed, express a basic and fundamental human need---the need to be loved, and more specifically, the need to love yourself. The degree of self-love is often determined by role models who instill a sense of self-worth.

These role models are often referred to as "Heroes." A hero is a person who is admired for their qualities or achievements and is regarded as an ideal (idol) or model. Heroes are very important to children, for they are source of inspiration. This is the purpose of cartoons. Superman, Batman, He-man, She-Ra, and all the others serve as bigger than-life role models for children to emulate.

Positive role models help to instill a strong sense of self-worth. Children who have been positively motivated usually become well-adjusted adults. One common characteristic of most criminals is lack of self-esteem, which often stems from exposure to negative role models during their childhood. Without a doubt, the influence of "heroes" in the lives of children is an essential element in their development.

A hero can be a father, mother, sister, brother or anyone who can make a positive contribution to the life of another person. Children, adolescents and adults can all have heroes.

The origin of the hero is rooted in the African/Egyptian allegory of **Heru** (often referred to as *Horus* by the Greeks). Heru was the child of Iris and Osiris; he avenged the murder of his father (Osiris), who was killed by Heru's evil uncle, Set. Set was the symbol of evil and is the origin of the word *Satan*.

The battle between Heru and Set is the origin of the classic confrontation between the forces of good and evil (also regarded as light and darkness). Heru was symbolic of the rising sun (the light). Set, on the other hand, was symbolic of the setting sun (the darkness), which is also the origin of the word *sunset*.

In the battle between good and evil (light and darkness), Heru emerged as the victor, when good triumphed over evil. Heru then became the prototype of the "Hero," the role model for humanity. This story is the symbolic origin of good guys wearing white and bad guys wearing black. White is a direct parallel light, and black is the representation for darkness. It has nothing at all to do with race. The story speaks of the eternal conflict between the forces of light (good/god) and the forces of darkness (evil/devil). The conflict is eternal because darkness always follows the light. Heru, therefore, must be ever vigilant.

This story reminds us that we are in constant need of heroes (Heru) to guide us through the darkness which is sure to come. We must therefore maintain the image and power of Heru (the hero) in minds in order to overcome the negativity of our lives. When this reality has been reinforced, only then will we have a constant source of strength to draw upon in times of need.

This is why heroes are crucial in the lives of developing the children, and also important to adults. We as African Americans must determine who our heroes will be, not only for our children, but for ourselves. For too long, the writers of American history have determined who will be our heroes. This is dangerous, for whenever our history is in the hands of our enemy, our heroes will become zeroes. Those people in whom we should believe, those who inspire and uplift us, will be replaced by individuals with little or no self-worth.

Since 1968, African Americans have fought to make the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a national holiday. Deservedly so, for King had a brilliant mind with incredible insight. Since the passage of the King Holiday Bill, I have witnessed some interesting distortions of his greatness.

1. The bust of King in the Capitol Rotunda is controversial to some because it portrays King as a weak and insecure man.
2. Dramatic portrayals of the life of King on film often show him as indecisive and totally dependent on Europeans for guidance.
3. The constant referral to King as the *dreamer* sends a subliminal message that he was someone who was not dealing with reality (an awakened state).

King was a man of peace---but he was also a fighter. He was a dreamer, but he also was aware of the harsh realities of racism which exist in the nation. Prior to his death, King was shifting his posture from civil rights to human rights. The image of the total man has been played down. We are currently presented with the image of someone who was less than the man King was. It is ridiculous to think that the same racist system which was responsible for King's death would portray him as he really was, and give the nation a true hero to admire. It is not in their best interest to do so.

May 19 is the birthday of Malcolm X. Like King, Malcolm was also an important hero. Yet Malcolm's memory and his accomplishments have not been embraced with the same enthusiasm. Is this because the image of Malcolm is too powerful and too demanding to portray him as a role model? Why would they portray an uncompromising individual when they can present someone whose image has become that of a weak insecure *dreamer*? Why provide the strong powerful image of a hero who can wake people up, when you can present the image of someone who will keep them sleep?

Now is the time for heroes. Now is the time when we must determine who will provide us with positive images of ourselves. We do not have to wait until a person is dead to view them as our hero. There are heroes walking among us today. There are people with insight and direction who can profoundly affect our lives and the lives of our children.

This is the time for heroes. We must embrace our heroes. We must take in all that they have to offer, for the darkness is upon us and it is the light which comes from the hero that see through to the dawn.

Since this article first appeared, I've seen American society reach out and embrace people and concepts that I never expected them to. For example, K-Mart and other mainstream establishments now carry "Afrocentric" fabric, masks and jewelry. The U.S. Post Office has expanded its roster of black stamps to include Kwanzaa and Malcolm X.

The rap group Public Enemy once sang that their heroes didn't appear on stamps. Well now that they do, it's a cause for celebration and concern. I celebrate the infusion of Kwanzaa and Malcolm X into the America mainstream because it introduces a large segment of the population to important people and their ideas. But I am also concerned because I don't want my culture to be whitewashed and exploited.

So what do we do? We buy the stamps, and encourage others to do so. We celebrate Kwanzaa and invite others to make the seven principles a part of their daily lives. We do like intelligent people and honor our heroes by remembering their names and the movements to which they devoted their lives. We continue to honor them by fighting for the issues they died for.

A struggle doesn't end just because someone gets a stamp or a holiday. These gestures are often tokens liberally dispensed to lull people into a false sense of accomplishment. The struggle must continue because the memory and hopes of the departed are at stake.

Take for example the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. He has a national holiday and a stamp, and he heralded as an American hero and champion of non-violent struggle. But the memory of King's life and struggle is slowly being diminished.

Several years ago, on Dr. King's birthday, I was invited to discuss his life on a radio program. I arrived early and sat in the waiting room listening as the host played a recording of Dr. King's "I See The Promise Land" speech. This was King's last public speech and it was recorded the evening before his assassination.

I had brought a book of King's speeches for interview and read along with the recording. I was shocked to discover that the most significant portion of King's speech (over one page of text) was edited out of the recording. I noted that this speech was recorded on Motown records, with liner notes by Mrs. King.

The text omitted from the recording was of a different image of the King we now know. This King discussed the power of the black dollar and urged the citizens of Memphis to take their money out of the white owned banks and insurance companies and put it in black owned institutions. This King called for an immediate boycott of Coca Cola, Sealtest Milk and Wonder Bread. This King never got an opportunity to implement his new strategies because he was killed the following

day.

Recently I've learned that King and Malcolm had talked of developing joint strategies for combating racism in the North and South. But Malcolm was assassinated before they had formulated a plan of action. King later became a marked man when he spoke out against the Viet Nam war in 1967, and advanced the call for human rights just Malcolm had done.



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Since Dr. King's assassination and the establishment of his holiday, his legacy has been reduced to one speech and four simple words... "I have a dream." Now Malcolm's image is being watered down so that it is more palatable to America's taste.

If we want to know the real Malcolm or Martin, or any other African or African American hero or shero, we must be willing to dig deep into their past. We must read their writings, listen to their speeches, and not be misled by Hollywood productions and made-for-TV movies of their lives. We must study the treasured lives of those near and dear to us and we should not expect their stories to be handed to us on a silver platter.

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Looking Back to Move Forward

Fulfilling The Need To Know

By Anthony T. Brower

Youth's Responsibility To The Future

Black History Month is always a good time to develop a greater appreciation for the African contributions to world culture and civilization. It offers an excellent opportunity to relish and glorify the accomplishments of our ancestors, but time should definitely be set aside to make a careful assessment of the status of our youth. After all, Black History Month is specifically designed to provide positive information for black children.

My personal observations, along with published research articles, have a history.

1. While lecturing at a junior high school, I was quite disturbed to see a minimum of 12 students ejected for disorderly conduct within a 30-minute period.
2. A survey at Boston University showed that 35 percent of the students thought Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was either a former entertainer or a basketball player.
3. A black history speaker in New York was approached by a student and asked, "Just who is this Malcolm 10, and what happened to the other nine."

These three examples represent just the tip of the iceberg. They reflect a frightening trend that is currently sweeping the nation. Maybe Black Month has become so trivialized that just isn't taken seriously anymore.

Personally, I think the problem is one of complacency. Many parents and adults are not fulfilling the obligations of their heritage by seeing to it that our history is preserved and passed on to the next generation.

The disciplinary problem that currently exists within our school system is not the fault of the teachers but the parents. I remember as a grade school student, a student wouldn't dare talk back to the teacher, let

alone get out of line. Today, this type of student is the exception, not the rule.

A child's behavior reflects his or her upbringing in the home, in the schools, or in the streets. The fact that so many of our youth disrespect authority figures indicates that they disrespect themselves. Self-respect is a trait that must be initiated and reinforced at home.

For whatever reason, many parents have forfeited their obligation to raise their children along specific guidelines.

While watching a recent segment of Eyes on the Prize concerning Dr. King's use of children at the forefront of the demonstrations, I learned that as many as 2,000 youths filled the jails within one week. Parents were willing not only to put their lives on the line but also the lives of their children.

This was 30 years ago, but we still find the same strategy being used in South African protests today.

I wonder how many parents in America today would be willing to put their necks on the line for the human rights struggle. I also wonder how many youths would be willing to sacrifice their gold chains, designer clothes, and stereos for the same struggle.

Fulfilling the Need to Know

I've often marveled at the inquisitive nature of a child. I have a young daughter, and every other word from her mouth is centered around a question. Why? How come? Where? When?

Children are born into this world with a natural desire to know. They are bright and observant; nothing escapes their gaze. They take information and formulate questions on what they've been exposed to

Children are born natural scientists. The word scientist is derived from the Latin word scire---which means to know. Somewhere between grades 4 and 8, many of our children lose this natural "God-given" talent. Their minds become stifled, and the door to the path of knowledge is slammed shut.

Since we are all born with a natural desire "to know," if we lose this desire somewhere along the road, we have to find out where we lost it



in order to get back on the path. Many people feel the educational system is at fault. Oftentimes, when we're seeking the answer as to who is at fault, if we look within ourselves, we'll find that the answer was right under our noses all the time.

We'll find the key to developing effective educational systems by understanding the meaning of the word education. The process of education is, therefore, the process of bringing out knowledge that is already inside you. This age-old methodology was first developed and cultivated by our African foreparents in ancient Egypt.

The institutions for learning called the Mystery Schools, gradually introduced education and progressed through varying levels of instruction. Students in educational environments that are conducive to learning will naturally learn more.

Contrast this situation to modern times. Today, people are force-fed information that often contradicts what they instinctively know to be true. Imagine being taught that in 1492, Columbus discovered America, when instinctively you know that there were people already living here who were fully aware of where they were. It's no wonder people don't learn!

The mind is like a computer. If you put nonsense in, you'll get nonsense out. Consistently feeding misinformation into a fertile mind causes it to stagnate. This process is referred to as atrophy. This is the failure of an organ to grow because of insufficient nourishment.

As apparent, I made a pledge to myself to keep my mind as fertile as possible so that I could provide positive and meaningful information for my child. In order to fulfill her need to know, I must fulfill mine.

Education is a continuous, ongoing process. It doesn't stop with elementary or high school, college, or graduate school. It continues until you die. A mind is a terrible thing to waste.

In the summer of '74, my first year out of college, I began to realize how much I didn't know. That year, I began my enrollment in a life-long educational program which has allowed me to view my existence from a totally new perspective.

For many years, I have devoted my time to the study of Ancient Egypt and its impact on world civilizations. I have experienced a profound reawakening and appreciation of knowledge and history. As I share this information with children and adults in my lectures and seminars, I see in their eyes and feel from their hearts a deep sense of gratitude.

There's more to it than that, however. The knowledge of prior accomplishments establishes a link with the past, which lays a foundation for the future. Everything is rooted in the past. Knowledge is the common pathway between the two. Knowledge can be obtained at any time.

If I were to suggest a daily regimen for African Americans, it would be that we rededicate ourselves to fulfilling the need to know. It is our birthright and our obligation to our children.

Commentary

When this article was first written, my daughter Atlantis was five years old and just beginning kindergarten. As a single parent, my responsibilities extended beyond overseeing her physical, spiritual, and mental well-being; I assumed responsibility for teaching her African history and culture.

My daughter attended most of my lectures. She operated the slide projector and took on other responsibilities as she grew older. Atlantis met all of the scholars who participated in the seminars I sponsored, and she attended numerous other forums. When she was seven, I felt she was ready to travel with me on one of my study tours to Egypt.

The following year, we co-authored her first book, which was appropriately titled My First Trip to Africa. She began doing her own lectures when she was eight, and we published her second book when she was 13. This second book detailed her trip to West Africa when she was ten.

Through her books and lectures, Atlantis has been teaching youth and adults about the history, culture, and people of Africa. "I've gotten many wonderful testimonials from people who gained favorable impressions of Africa as a result of hearing about it through the eyes of a child instead of a biased media.

My daughter is now 17 years-old, and she will be attending college in the fall. We are currently working on her next two books. One will be on her trip to South Africa, and the other will discuss her trip to Mexico and Brazil. It has been our intention, from the very beginning of our writing to the project, that her book sales would help pay for her college education.

I present an education, fulfilling the need to know and then sharing your knowledge with others. This desire was planted in me as a youth and I passed it on to my daughter. Together, we're passing it on to others. It is my hope that we have modeled a tradition that will be passed on down through the generations for centuries to come.

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