



Michael Cooper – see page A-6



Jayla Cigar-Dingle – see page D-3

Making Olympic History in Paris, Mayor Bass Keeps Eye on 2028 Games in L.A.

BY LILA BROWN
California Black Media

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass made history at the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris this week when she became the first Black woman mayor to ever receive an Olympic flag at the closing ceremony of the two-week-long global competition.

On Aug. 11, Mayor Bass received the Olympic flag as part of the handover ceremony from Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo, who is also the first woman to serve as mayor of France’s capital city.

“When we do that exchanging of the flag, we will be sending a message to girls all across the world that they can do anything,” Bass said Aug. 10, before the ceremony. “They can run for the gold, and they can run for office, or hopefully they’ll do both.”

Bass said the time she spent in Paris will help her and her team prepare to host the 2028 games in Los Angeles, a top priority for her administration.

“We must continue our urgent work ensuring that Angelenos benefit from the preparation for the Games,

as well as in the decades following,” said Bass, before leaving for Paris last week.

“Together, we will showcase Los Angeles -- not just the popular tourist destinations, but each of our beautiful neighborhoods and communities. We will leverage the Games to help local small businesses, create local jobs and create lasting environmental and transportation improvements throughout Los Angeles.”

During a tour of the media center in Paris, Bass answered questions posed by reporters.

“One of the things that I really hope we can replicate in Los Angeles is the 25% commitment that will go to smaller businesses,” she said, responding to a question asked by California Black Media about Los Angeles plan to ensure small and minority businesses participate equitably in the procurement process.

“Even the venues here allowed restaurants to have an opportunity. Our focus is on small businesses because we know small businesses hire Angelenos,” Bass added.

Bass also promised that



AP PHOTO/KIN CHEUNG

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass, left, holds a Olympic flag, San IOC President Thomas Bach, center, and Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo, right, look in during the 2024 Summer Olympics closing ceremony at the Stade de France, Sunday, Aug. 11, 2024, in Saint-Denis, France.

there will be diversity at every level – from the executive of the International Olympic Committee, the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee and

even the Los Angeles 2028 Local Organizing Committee.

To achieve this goal, the Mayor’s Office is hosting roundtables with busi-

ness associations to receive their input on how best to engage their members and other stakeholders regarding procurement and contract opportunities.

Bass said her office and city departments are also working closely with

{See **KAREN BASS RECEIVES OLYMPIC FLAG on A-11**}

Mayor Warren and the Impact of Local Officials

BY MYKO LYRIC
Contributing Writer

The main objective of every type of politician, whether a city council member, mayor, senator, governor, or president, is to act as a public servant. The qualities of leadership, patience, and empathy required to serve successfully are not for everyone, but some politicians find fulfillment in these responsibilities.

Acquanetta Warren is the first female and African American mayor of Fontana, CA, a mid-sized city in San Bernardino

County with almost a quarter of a million residents from diverse backgrounds. Mayor Warren expressed that her favorite part of the job is working with the residents. She shared, “I care about [these] people. Sometimes they’re mad at me, and you find if you can talk it out, you can work it out... you have to make sure you’re bringing value to your city.”

In fact, upon her reelection in 2014, Warren decided to retire from her position as Deputy Director of Public Works to focus on her role as mayor fully.

One of her remarkable



COURTESY PHOTO

Mayor Acquanetta Warren

initiatives is Healthy Fontana. Warren admitted, “When I was first elected, I was way overweight... Women were dying of heart disease at high levels, we had high rate obesity with children, and diabetes.” She shared an inspiring story about her personal weight loss journey and her goal to improve the health of her constituents.

In a dedicated fashion, she made a bet with the previous mayor of Fontana, Mark Nuaimi: if she lost 40 pounds, he had to shave his head. After achieving her weight loss goal, Warren became a significant figure

in the Fontana community, advocating for a safe, clean, and beautiful Fontana.

Mayor Warren’s current focus is on the downtown area, aiming to modernize it with housing, bars, restaurants, and theaters. She has partnered with rock singer, songwriter, and guitarist Sammy Hagar to restore the Center Stage Theater, which recently reopened.

Furthermore, she envisions Fontana as an educational hub, aiming to pro-

{See **MAYOR ACQUANETTA WARREN on A-11**}

Community Mourns Passing of Business Leader Arzella J. Valentine

STAFF AND WIRE REPORT

The Los Angeles Sentinel and the Bakewell family extend our deepest condolences to the Valentine Family on the passing of the family matriarch, Arzella J. Valentine.

Arzella Valentine, her late husband Fred, and the entire Valentine family have been prominent business leaders in the Pasadena community for more than 90 years. Woods-Valentine Mortuary is one of the pre-eminent Black-owned businesses in Pasadena and provides unwavering support to families during their times of bereavement and loss.

Her visitation service will be held on Thursday,

August 15, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., in the Woods-Valentine Mortuary



COURTESY PHOTO

Arzella J. Valentine

Chapel, located at 1455 N. Fair Oaks Avenue in Pasadena.

According to the Woods-Valentine Mortuary website, Arzella was

a licensed funeral director and life insurance agent. A native of Denver, Colorado, she was raised in Mount Olive, Arkansas. Later, she relocated to Pasadena, California where she met and married Fred W. Valentine in 1949. Together they purchased James Woods Mortuary from Fred’s aunt, Annie Mae Woods, and built the business known today as Woods-Valentine Mortuary.

Arzella earned an A.A. Degree from Pasadena City College and pursued her love for writing at U.C.L.A. In addition to being accomplished business woman, Arzella was also is a {See **ARZELLA J. VALENTINE on A-11**}

Inland Empire Philanthropist Reggie Webb Laid to Rest

BY BO TEFU AND ANTONIO RAY HARVEY
California Black Media

Reginald “Reggie” Webb, a philanthropist and one of the most successful fast-food restaurant owners in Southern California, was laid to rest last month after a long battle with leukemia. He was 76.

According to California State University, San Bernardino, Webb owned and operated 16 McDonald’s restaurants, employing over 1,100 workers. His expertise in business and passion for community involvement led to the creation of Webb Family Investments and Cooperative Economic Empowerment Movement, which provided support for Black-owned businesses as a



COURTESY PHOTO

Reginald “Reggie” Webb

means to build and circulate capital within the Black community.

Webb once led the National Black McDonald’s Operator Association, chaired the National Leadership Council, and was the founding chairperson of the

Global Operator Leadership Council, representing McDonald’s franchisees worldwide.

Webb was a committed supporter of California State University San Bernardino Black Faculty Staff and Student Association Pioneer Breakfast, a program that raises scholarship funds for Black students, according to CSUSB. He also raised funding for the Inland Empire Concerned African American Churches’ annual Martin Luther King breakfast at Cal State San Bernardino.

He received the 365Black Lifetime Achievement Award in 2002 in recognition of achievements of importance that bonded the African American community.

Sepulveda Transit Corridor Partners Developing New Rail Transit

The possible rail lines to be considered by Metro would connect the Valley and the Westside.

BY BRIAN W. CARTER
Contributing Writer

Recently, Sepulveda Transit Corridor Partners (STCP) held a briefing about developing a rail transit that would ease congestion on the 405 between the Valley and the Westside. Metro awarded STCP a contract to develop what Metro is calling Alternatives 4 & 5. The briefing was attended by STCP representatives, private parties and media outlets.

“We believe this will mean less traffic through the Valley and the Westside, but because this connects the entire regional transit network, you’re going to have less traffic and environmental benefits all across the base,” said



PHOTO BY BRIAN W. CARTER/LASENTINEL
Yusef Robb, spokesman for Sepulveda Transit Corridor Partners shares information about Alternatives 4 & 5.

going to be able to shop easier, they’re going to be able to decide maybe to

work a little bit farther from where they live, they might be able to decide,

“Hey, I can live in a more affordable neighborhood and still get to work on time,” said Robb. Metro is currently evaluating 6 alternatives for a transit line connecting the San Fernando Valley and the Westside. Alternative 4 & 5 would be integrated with current and future transit systems such as the D, E, G lines (formerly Purple, Expo and Orange) Metrolink, Amtrak and multiple bus lines. Alternative 4 would run above ground while Alternative 5 would be below ground.

“You can have tremendous benefits in the Valley, the Westside but across L.A. because we’re going to be knitted together with not just the local, immedi-

ate transit network but with the entire regional transit network as well, whether it’s tying to lines into downtown L.A., connections to lines in South L.A., connections all the way up to the Antelope Valley and beyond,” Robb added.

He shared that this transit rail system would be utilizing automated rail technology but wanted to make sure it’s clear—human beings are involved.

long getting in the door, the system is able to automatically space out the trains to maintain safety, distance and speed and traditional rolling stock that don’t have the technology that we do, you have to leave bigger gaps to make up for that, to make sure you’re safe.

“So, we can close the gaps because this automated technology, now I want to say, automated doesn’t

“You can get from Boyle heights to Van Nuys if this project is built. You can get from Universal Studios right to Santa Monica and the beach using this line, so it’s really going to have a huge impact on L.A.,” said Robb.

“It’s going to be a game changer for local residents in terms of the surface streets they use, in terms of the freeway they use every day.



COURTESY PHOTO COURTESY OF SEPULVEDA TRANSIT CORRIDOR PARTNERS
First image of a proposed train car for the line.

Yusef Robb, spokesman for Sepulveda Transit Corridor Partners.

“You’re going to have economic benefits across the base because people are

work a little bit farther from where they live, they might be able to decide, ‘Hey, I can live in a more affordable neighborhood and still get to work on



PHOTO BY BRIAN W. CARTER/LASENTINEL
Metro is currently evaluating 6 alternatives for a transit line connecting the San Fernando Valley and the Westside.

“I think people think automated like, ‘Oh God, the robots are taking over’—no,” said Robb.

He continued, “So, picture the lines and you have all the trains spaced out from a central command, they’re all kind of moving around right like slot cars.

“Inevitably, someone’s going to take a little too

mean peopleless. What it does [mean is], someone doesn’t need to be locked in the cabin with their hand on the throttle.

“We’re freeing up humans to do other things.”

STCP’s says their plan will get riders from the Antelope Valley to Westwood in 20 minutes if this project is built.

“It’s going to benefit all of us if we can get from Ventura Blvd. to West Westwood at 6 ½ minutes that’s more shopping, that’s more movies, that’s more restaurants, that’s more fun, that’s more life.”

For more information on Sepulveda Transit Corridor Partners, please visit www.sepulvedatransit.com.

TEC Leimert Selected to Participate in UCLA’s Innovation, Culture and Creativity Project

SENTINEL NEWS SERVICE

TEC Leimert, a leading advocate organization based in Los Angeles that strives to bridge the digital divide taking place in Los Angeles’ underserved communities, was chosen as one of seven thought leader organizations across the nation, and sole West Coast team selected to participate in UCLA’s “Innovation, Culture and Creativity Project.”

TEC Leimert will host the “Inclusive Innovation: Engaging Creative Technologists for Advanced Technology Tools Research and Initiatives” workshop on Saturday, Aug. 17 and

Sunday, Aug. 18, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Sony Picture Studios, located at 10202 Washington Blvd., in Culver City.

The yearlong nationwide workshop series led by UCLA and supported by the National Science Foundation (NSF) aims to connect cultural, creative, and technology stakeholder organizations together to discuss ideas that integrate research and innovation into the technology and creative sector.

“We are honored to be selected for this project that takes a creative approach to unlocking meaningful solutions to bridging the digital divide in underserved com-



FILE PHOTO
Rashidi Jones, left, with TEC Leimert team members.

munities,” said Rashidi Jones, TEC Leimert board chair.

“Confronting the digital divide needs to be a top priority in our nation and UCLA is doing the work necessary to shed light on discrepancies that obstruct South L.A. youth from competing for opportunities in the creative economy.”

The “Inclusive Innovation” workshop aims to explore artificial intelligence and advanced communications that can be utilized by talent in urban communities. Attendees will participate in a workshop to help identify pathways that support a more inclusive and accessible

ecosystem diversity.

TEC Leimert produces the Black to the Future, L.A.’s largest Black-owned technology and entertainment conference, which is set this year for September 20-22. The organization also operates several creative industry workforce development labs including Game Wizards SoLA (video game industry training), NXT LVL (social media career training), Audio Affect (music production training with Seralto) and the Sneaker Design Lab to prepare young professionals to compete in the creative economy.

To learn more, visit tecleimert.org.

Frierson Assumes Chairmanship of L.A. County Economic Development Corporation

SENTINEL NEWS SERVICE

The Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC) announced Ron Frierson as the new chairman of the Board of Governors. Frierson, a seasoned leader with an extensive background in business and economic development, assumes the role with immediate effect.

With over two decades of experience in fostering economic growth, job creation, and community development, Frierson will drive the LAEDC’s mission to



COURTESY PHOTO
Ron Frierson

elevate the standard of living for the residents of Los Angeles County. As the first Black chairman for the LAEDC, his appointment

marks a significant milestone in LAEDC’s role as a leader in the advancement of economic progress and inclusivity for all Angelenos.

“We are thrilled to welcome Ron Frierson as our new Chairman,” said Stephen Cheung, CEO of LAEDC.

“Ron’s extensive experience, innovative approach, and deep understanding of our community’s needs make him the ideal leader to steer our organization towards greater heights.”

Frierson’s career is high-

lighted by his commitment and success in building bridges of collaboration between the public and private sectors. He currently serves as director of Economic Development for the Western U.S. region at Amazon.

He served in various roles throughout his career, including NAI Capital, CBRE, Kansas Department of Commerce, and most recently as director of Economic Policy for the Los Angeles Mayor’s Office under former Mayor Eric Garcetti.

As chairman, Frierson plans to focus on key areas such as industry cluster development, workforce development, small business support, and sustainable innovation. He aims to build on LAEDC’s existing programs and introduce new strategies to address the evolving economic challenges faced by the county.

“I’m honored to lead LAEDC at such a pivotal time,” said Frierson.

“We will continue to work towards creating an equitable and thriving economy that benefits all resi-

dents of Los Angeles County. I look forward to working with the Board and collaborating with stakeholders to foster long-term prosperity.”

Under Frierson’s chairmanship, LAEDC is set to enhance its efforts in supporting local businesses, attracting new investments, and promoting sustainable development practices while ensuring growth opportunities are accessible and available to our diverse BIPOC communities throughout the Los Angeles region that are often underserved and underinvested.

Hochman Connects with African American Voters at Dulan’s on Crenshaw

SENTINEL NEWS SERVICE

Nathan Hochman took his District Attorney campaign to the Crenshaw District on Aug. 12, connecting with dozens of Black voters – a community that will play a key role in the Nov. 5 district attorney race.

Hochman, a former prosecutor and defense attorney, told voters at Dulan’s on Crenshaw that he wants to make them feel safe after four years of increasing crime in South Los Angeles and through-

out Los Angeles County.

“You need to have a message sent to the criminals that says, ‘We’re going to enforce the laws again,’” Hochman told an audience of more than 60 voters on a sun-drenched patio at the popular soul food restaurant.

Hochman said that as D.A. he will partner with the African American community to address concerns about policing and the criminal justice system. This includes building bridges with law enforcement so the community

feels comfortable interacting with police, and prosecuting cases appropriately so police understand there will be consequences for breaking the law.

Hochman emphasized that he does not want to go back to the 1970s and 1980s era of mass incarceration, but instead to 2014, a year that had some of the lowest crime rates in Los Angeles County. “When you called 911 in 2014, the police actually showed up,” Hochman said.

But it’s also important for the District Attorney to

proactively reach out to local schools and connect with teen-agers about how making the right choices can set them on a path of success.

Daphne Bradford, a White House Champion of Change Educator who organized Sunday’s event, said she agrees with Hochman’s message about the importance of education.

“I appreciate Nathan’s emphasis on education and his focus on connecting with youth,” Bradford said. “We need a D.A. who will

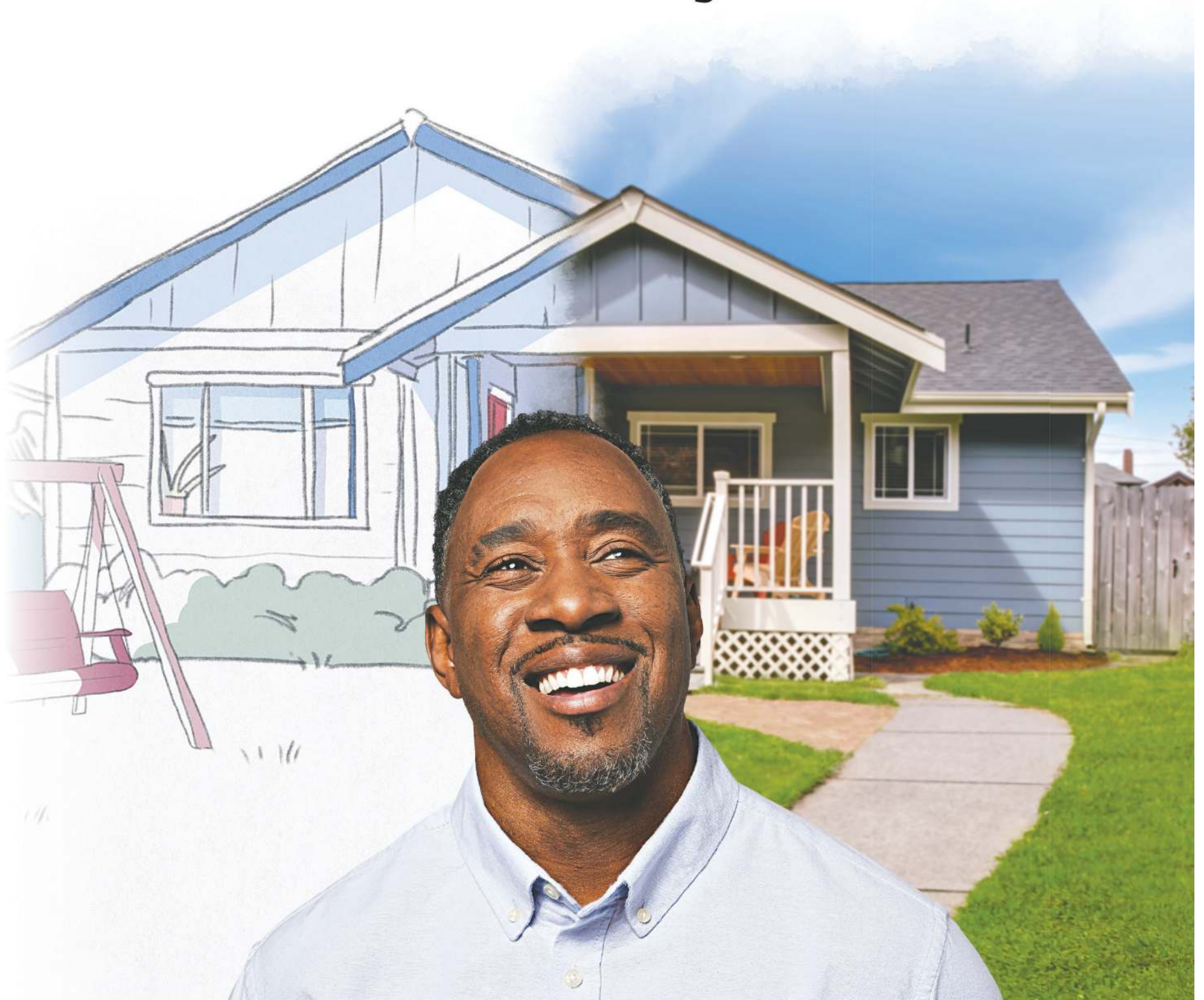


MALCOLM ALI
From left are Dai’Quiya Martinez, Greg Dulan, Nathan Hochman, and Daphne Bradford.

not only focus on enforcing the law, but also the impact that we can have on public

safety by sending the right message. **{See NATHAN HOCHMAN AT DULAN’S on A-11}**

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³ **Additional information about the America's Home Grant program:** The America's Home Grant program is a lender credit. Program funds can only be used for nonrecurring closing costs including title insurance, recording fees, and in certain situations, discount points that can be used to lower the interest rate. The grant cannot be applied toward down payment, prepaid items or recurring costs, such as property taxes and insurance. Borrowers cannot receive program funds as cash back.

⁴ Maximum income and loan amount limits apply. Fixed-rate mortgages (purchases or no cash out refinances), primary residences only. Certain property types are ineligible. Maximum loan-to-value ("LTV") is 97%, and maximum combined LTV is 105%. For LTV > 95%, any secondary financing must be from an approved Community Second Program. Homebuyer education may be required. Other restrictions apply.

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New Braids and Buzzes Gives Community Kids A Cécred Reason To Go Back-To-School

By XENNIA HAMILTON
Contributing Writer

On a lovely day in Los Angeles, the sun was shining, local radio station KJLH supplied musical vibes, and the kids were all lined up to become their best selves for their first day back to school.

Local McDonald's restaurant, located at 6904 La Tijera Boulevard, was the site to be seen due in part to their back-to-school event, Braids and Buzz, which helped many parents and kids in the community by offering free barber cuts and braids to celebrate their triumphant return to hitting the books.

"McDonald's believes in being a good neighbor and we want to show how we help the community. We know that school is coming up and we want to give parents something less to worry about," McDonald's supervisor



XENNIA HAMILTON/L.A. SENTINEL

Kulture Krib beauticians provide free braid styles to youngsters.

William Jones says.

"So we partnered with Kulture [Krib] Braid Bar and also one of our suppliers, Martin Brower, is donating backpacks for the

school supplies. And we're also lucky to have Dr. Kari Williams with us, who is supplying hair care products and also giving these children tips and their families so they can maintain their hair," he says. The children also played games such as tic-tac-toe and bingo and won prizes from KJLH.

Dr. Kari Williams, a Los Angeles native and director of education for Cécred hair care line, which is owned by Beyoncé Knowles-Carter, is no stranger to helping out her community.

"I volunteered with this organization and the Brotherhood Crusade about a year or so ago. After that partnership and whenever they have done things in the community, it's something I'm interested in doing," Dr. Williams says.

"So, they actually reached out to me, to see if I

would come and make a presence. So, because of my wonderful being from L.A. and my roots in the community, and also, my passion for giving back to the community, when they invited me I was like, 'sure, yeah,'" she says. Dr. Williams also gave free samples of Cécred to the children to help them maintain their hair during the school year.

"I think the same way we raise our children to take care of their bodies, take care of their teeth, clean yourself every day, we want to instill in them the practice of caring for their hair. Our hair is such an intricate part of how we identify," she says.

Justice Hall, the co-CEO of Kulture Krib Braid Bar, one of the companies who partnered with the local McDonald's to create the event, feels that this is helping the community as well as the children.

"I think it's important because we do quick and affordable styles for the community. That was one of our main things: we want to give so that way people could come out and get affordable styles," she says.

"My mom was a single mom and without the help of the community, sometimes we wouldn't have been fortunate enough to be blessed with. So, this was my way of giving back to the community and doing the same thing."

Parent Korin Kendall feels this is not only helping her child, but also is a great gift to the community. "A lot of parents need this. Times are tight, you know, so this is excellent."

She feels this will help

with her child's confidence in returning to learning. "He complains coming because he doesn't want to get his haircut but when he goes, he feels, you know, great."

Kiara Moreno, co-owner of photo partner Visi Booth, says that it's amazing to see people come together to support the community.

"This is really dope to see this give back to the community, see the people come out. So, any way we can support is great for us." She reiterated many parents' statements by feeling that

become a yearly occurrence, it is something that Jones is hoping to be able to do this for the community more often. "It's something we are looking into. So, I'm a supervisor. This is my family business. My mom and I been owning this location for over 20 years, and we definitely understand support of the community."

He also understands how one good look can make a child feel on top of the world while understanding that students can work together to achieve great heights.



XENNIA HAMILTON/L.A. SENTINEL

KJLH street team interacts with the children.

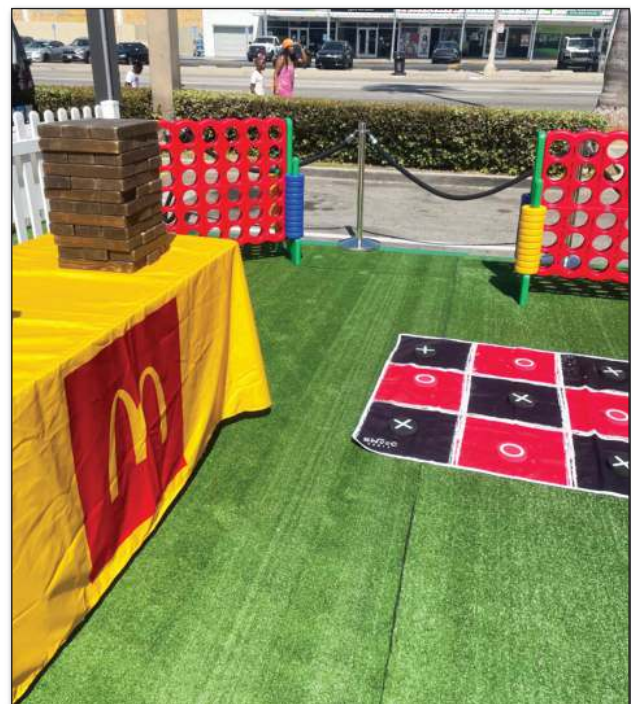
this does help children with confidence as well.

"Any encouragement that any kid can get, it's cool. It's a boost of confidence, they get to come out and play, they get their hair done so they can feel good on the first day of school. So it's dope," she adds.

When asked if this will

"Well, it's also personal pride because they're looking well," Jones says.

"Also, realizing that businesses can still connect, so, hopefully they'll understand when they go to become students, they can connect with each other that everyone can love in their own community."



XENNIA HAMILTON/L.A. SENTINEL

A range of games were available for kids to play.



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Drew Univ. of Medicine and Science Receives \$75 Million Gift

BY BO TEFU AND ANTONIO RAY HARVEY
California Black Media

Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science, a historically Black university (HBCU) in South Los Angeles, received a \$75 million gift last week, the largest donation in the history of the university.

The university, founded in 1966, received a donation from the Bloomberg Philanthropies' Greenwood Initiative. The program aims to accelerate wealth accumulation in the Black community, addressing underinvestment, said uni-

versity officials in a statement.

Dr. David M. Carlisle, the university president and chief executive officer, appreciated the initiative's generous donation.

"This monumental gift from Bloomberg Philanthropies is a transformative investment in the future of healthcare, our university, and most importantly, our students," Carlisle said.

"It will significantly enhance Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science's ability to educate and empower diverse healthcare professionals who are committed to serving underserved communi-



Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science is located in the Watts-Willowbrook neighborhood of Los Angeles.

ties," he said.

The university received the donations as part of a \$600 million initiative led by Bloomberg Philanthropies to support Black med-

ical schools. The organization also invested in Howard University College of Medicine in Washington, D.C., Meharry Medical College in

Nashville, and Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta. The initiative confirmed that it will also help launch the Xavier Ochsner College of Medicine in

New Orleans.

The Greenwood Initiative is led by the former New York City Mayor billionaire Michael Bloomberg, founder of Bloomberg Philanthropies and Bloomberg LP.

"Addressing health disparities and underrepresentation in the medical field are critical challenges, and Bloomberg Philanthropies is dedicated to making a difference. By building on our previous support, this gift will empower new generations of Black doctors to create a healthier and more equitable future for our country," said Bloomberg.

State Legislature Honors Lakers Legend Michael Cooper

BY ANTONIO RAY HARVEY
California Black Media

Accompanied by Assemblymember Chris Holden (D-Pasadena) and Sen. Steven Bradford (D-Inglewood), former Los Angeles Lakers legend Michael Cooper was honored on the Assembly and Senate floors of the California State Capitol on Aug. 5

portrait shots and selfies with lawmakers.

Cooper played for Pasadena High School and the University of New Mexico in the 1970s.

Holden, 64, who played for Pasadena High and played basketball for San Diego State University, said Cooper had exceptional defensive skills.

"He played the game

on the first floor, where California State Hall of Fame inductees are on exhibit. Weber said that recognition should also include Cooper, who was born and raised in the state.

"I was looking around, and Chris (Holden) said, 'he isn't on the wall,'" Weber said. "It is not my responsibility, but I am going to work on that. We're going to make sure California knows it has a person of honor and (Cooper) should be up on that wall."

Cooper said he is still getting used to the fact that he will be among 450-plus inductees after a remarkable career on and off the basketball court. The 2024 Hall of Fame induction ceremony will take place in Massachusetts, where basketball was invented by Dr. James Naismith in 1891.

"For a kid coming out of Pasadena, California, who had to fight and scratch just to be on the high school team, then



From left are Sen. Steven Bradford, Secretary of State Shirley Weber, former Los Angeles Lakers player Michael Cooper, and Assemblymember Chris Holden at a reception held for Cooper.



Former Los Angeles Lakers star Michael Cooper speaks at a reception for him at the California State Museum on Aug. 5 in Sacramento. Cooper was honored by the Assembly and Senate at the State Capitol earlier that day. He will be inducted into the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame in October.

Cooper, 68, will be inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame on October 13, in Springfield, MA. He spent his entire 12-year NBA career playing for the Lakers and helped the team win five NBA titles.

"What an honor to be at the State Capitol, honored by the Legislature, and have a chance to meet Gov. Gavin Newsom," Cooper told California Black Media. "Chris (Holden) and I go way back to high school. For him to bring me up here and bestow this honor is gratifying."

Alongside his wife Wanda Cooper, "Coop" had a full day of activities in the capital city. After he was presented on both floors of the State Capitol, he took

with heart, and he played it with intensity," Holden said. "When you think of the fact that you can have a player make it to the Naismith Hall of Fame as a defensive specialist...that is special. He had to defend the greats of the game. They knew when he stepped on the court with him, they were in for a battle."

After the Capitol honors, the Coopers attended a reception at the California State Museum hosted by Secretary of State Shirley Weber. There, Cooper met with youth from the San Diego Chapter of Jack and Jill of America. The organization nurtures Black American youth through community service, legislative advocacy, and philanthropy.

The reception was held



After a question-and-answer segment, Michael Cooper joins youth from the San Diego Chapter of Jack and Jill at the California State Museum in Sacramento.

finally my journey of going to the Lakers, and never been a starter or All-Star? For my footprint to be at the door of the Hall of Fame and it finally opens says a lot to me," Cooper said.

aged to make three NBA All-Defensive Second Teams as well (1981, 1983, 1986).

For the 1986-1987 season, he earned the NBA Defensive Player of the

or athletic trainer who provided outstanding service and dedication to the community.

"See that's another thing about the Naismith Hall of Fame," Cooper

said. "It's not all about being an NBA All-Star or anything. It's about your contributions to the game of basketball. It's about what you give back to the game that has given us so much."

Post retirement in 1991, Cooper coached the Los Angeles Sparks of the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA). In 2000, he earned the Coach of the Year honor and led the Sparks to back-to-back WNBA titles in 2001 and 2002. He is the only person in the world to win a championship as a player or coach in the NBA, WNBA, and NBA D-League (renamed the G-League).

Today, Cooper is an assistant coach for California State University Los Angeles' Men's Basketball Team. Jim Saia is the head coach for the Golden Eagles.

For up-and-coming basketball players, coaches, and trainers, Cooper has a message, "Keep working hard because dreams do come true. The true blessing will be fulfilled," Cooper said. "I can tell you those things happened to me. It's been a great ride."

Sacramento State University Inaugurates First-in-the-Nation Black Honors College

BY TANU HENRY
California Black Media

Last week, California State University (CSU), Sacramento (Sac State) celebrated 80 students who are enrolled in the inaugural class of its Black Honors College (BHC).

Dubbed a "college within a college," the BHC program is the first of its kind in the United States.

"Using the honors college model as a way to create a unique experience for students who are interested in Black history, life and culture," said Dr. J. Luke Wood, President of Sacramento State. Wood was speaking at the event organized to celebrate the students and launch the program, held the afternoon of Aug. 8 in the university ballroom.

"While in our minds we were creating this with the

intention of serving students from the Black community, we also want you to know that we are open to anyone and everyone. We do not want to be inclusive by being exclusive," continued Wood, who also challenged the students to leave Sacramento "better than they found it."

Former President Barack Obama was featured in a video sharing a congratulatory message with the Sac State family for launching the BHC.

Obama said the BHC told the students in the BHC's first cohort that they are "uniquely poised for success."

"Channel your energy to a cause higher than yourself," he encouraged them.

CSU Chancellor Mildred Garcia said the BHC serves a model that could be replicated at other campuses.



The inaugural class of the Sacramento State Black Honors College, shown here along with campus and national leaders, was introduced at a ceremony marking the opening of the new first-of-its-kind education initiative.

"Sac State is exemplifying what we can do across the CSU," said Garcia, adding that she is confident the BHC students will emerge as "courageous leaders" in California and around the world.

According to the Sac State, the BHC is "an enhanced co-curricular col-

lege for students providing specialized coursework, distinctive research opportunities and creative arts, residential living and learning programs, scholarships, and distinguished recognition."

It is "designed for students who are interested in Black history, life, culture, and contributions. All

incoming students who have a GPA of 3.5 or higher are encouraged to apply," the program's description continues.

Several state leaders, university leaders, elected officials, education advocates, Sacramento officials and international guests attended the event, includ-

ing Assemblymember Steven Bradford (D-Inglewood), Assemblymember Akilah Weber (D-La Mesa), Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg, Tanu Cantil-Sakuye, President and CEO of the Public Policy Institute of California, Morakane

{See BLACK HONORS COLLEGE on A-11}

Five Grants to Help Black-owned Businesses

BY BETTI HALSELL
Digital Editor and Staff
Writer



FILE IMAGE

Many Black business owners face racial biases that hinder expansion of their production, especially when it comes to traditional financial support to grow their business. The leading global financial institute, Goldman and Sachs, reported Black business owners are less likely to receive a loan and face predatory payment terms. As a result, Black business owners are experiencing difficulties in obtaining the proper funding needed to launch or expand, due to systematic biases in lending procedures, historical inequities in wealth and other factors. Grants can help level

the playing field by giving Black-owned businesses access to resources that they might not otherwise have, allowing them to expand their operations, hire workers and invest in infrastructure. Here are five grants that are looking to propel the Black dollar.

Keep It Local Business Fund

Nextdoor is a firm that

created an app where the collective community that consists of residents, local business owners and publications communicate the shared needs of the neighborhood. Through Nextdoor, the Keep it Local Business is available for businesses of color that are in the U.S., some other requirements for the micro-grant are to be a for-profit

business, have less than one million dollars in revenue and be community-driven. This innovative program is made possible by Hello Alice and a collaboration with the NAACP. The grant includes \$5,000 to support their business, ad credit for marketing and public recognition.

Wish Local Empowerment Program

The e-commerce company Wish created a grant to support Black-owned small businesses. They dedicated \$500-\$2,000 to go to small businesses with 20 employees or less in the U.S. and recipients of the grant would join the Wish Local program. Wish Local is a set of initiatives that makes it possible for small companies to collaborate

with Wish. They can acquire wholesale goods, serve as local Wish pickup sites, sell their merchandise on Wish, and more. Over 500 million people use the mobile shopping app Wish worldwide.

The Freed Fellowship Grant

People of color or women entrepreneurs can apply for \$500 awards each month from the Freed Fellowship. Grant recipients have the opportunity to earn an extra \$2,500 at the end of the year, and applications are taken on a rolling basis.

PowerShift

Entrepreneur Grants

Twenty Black entrepreneurs have a chance at winning \$25,000 to grow their businesses through this NAACP PowerShift Entre-

preneur grant, with support from Shark Tank's Daymond John. In addition to the grant funding, each entrepreneur receives mentorship and brand visibility. Applications are typically open in early to mid-October.

Feed the Soul's Restaurant Business Development Grant

In addition to receiving \$10,000 funding, participants in the Restaurant Business Development Program also gain access to educational training and advisory services for six months. In order to promote their growth and development, the curriculum focuses on menu consultation, customer service, human resources, merchandising, and other areas.

Local Student Athletes Honored by Team HEAL

BY DR. SHAWNA CHARLES
Contributing Writer

The community came together this weekend for a Jazz Luncheon event that honored student athletes who received scholarships as part of a partnership between Cedars-Sinai and Team HEAL.

The event, which was held at L.A.'s Luxe Sunset Boulevard Hotel on Saturday, Aug. 10, and hosted by Dr. and Mrs. Clarence Shields, recognized six

of "Helping Enrich Athletes Lives". This mission empowers student athletes from underserved communities with resources including medical care, scholarship funds, and grants for athletic facilities. For student athletes in marginalized communities, Team HEAL provides holistic wellbeing and a brighter future. Team HEAL has impacted the lives of over 50,000 student athletes and has awarded more than 60 scholarships to date since it was founded.



COURTESY PHOTO

Dr. Shawna Charles, Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurman, L.A. Councilwoman Heather Hutt, Barbara Shields, Yvette McNally, Dr. Clarence Shields, and Rickey Ivie.

personality Pat Prescott, who served as emcee. Entertainment was provided by Los Angeles Grammy nominated vocal group DW3.

Yvette McNally planned the afternoon's events, which attracted notable guests such as Norm Nixon, Debbie Allen, Rickey Ivie of Ivie McNeill Wyatt Purcell and Diggs, Councilwoman Heather Hutt and Art Ochoa, senior vice president of Advancement and Chief Advancement Officer for Cedars-Sinai.

Team HEAL supporters include Cedars-Sinai, Toyota, Kerlan-Jobe Institute, MicroMed Inc., BLOOM, Santa Monica Orthopedic Group, McNicholas & McNicholas, LLP, and Ivie McNeill Wyatt Purcell & Diggs.



COURTESY PHOTO

From left are Norm Nixon, Debbie Allen, Dr. Clarence Shields and Barbara Shields.

the organization is partnered with local schools including Banning, Carson, Crenshaw, Dorsey and Westchester High School. It continues to expand to reach more student athletes than ever in the L.A. area with in-school athletic trainers, continuing education for certified athletic trainers and school professionals, healthcare for athletes and more.

The Jazz Luncheon honored and celebrated six new scholarship recipients, who each received \$2,500 for their college education. The five recipients included Norma Alicia Ortega, Phineas Banning High School; Donce' Kailen Lamaj Lewis, Crenshaw

High STEM Magnet High School; Kam'Ryn Preston, Westchester Enriched Sciences Magnet; Jamey Aparicio, Dorsey High School; Ares Sampert S. Ordanez, Academy of Medical Arts at Carson High School; and Diego Camaril-

lo, Phineas Banning High School.

There were more than 200 attendees at this community event, which featured speeches from Tony Thurmond, California State Superintendent of Public Instruction and radio per-



COURTESY PHOTO

Each scholarship recipient received \$2,500 for their college education.

YG'S 4Hunnid Ways Foundation Gives Back to Over 2,000 Students



VINNY NOLAN AMPVINNY300

Students enjoy the back-to-school drive.

SENTINEL NEWS SERVICE

Over the weekend, Grammy-nominated artist and humanitarian YG and his 4Hunnid Ways Foundation partnered with Believe in Giving (B.I.G) for a back-to-school drive in Inglewood.

The drive served families in need, providing

them with essential resources to prepare for the upcoming school year. Resources included food boxes provided by the L.A. Mission, backpacks filled with school supplies, clothing from Ethika, and much more, with hotdogs, snow cones, and refreshments were also freely available

to attendees.

Guests could also enter the raffle giveaway and several winners took home prizes including a new laptop, a gaming chair, tickets to Los Angeles Lakers and Clippers games, and more. The drive provided over 2,000 backpacks and 2,000 boxes of food to families



VINNY NOLAN AMPVINNY300

Shonee Jackson, YG's mother, accepts a commendation from Councilmember Curren Price.

group, who performed an electrifying hip-hop routine, as well as petting and holding exotic reptiles brought by Wildlife People.

Several elected officials attended including L.A. City Attorney Hydee Feldstein Soto and L.A. Councilmember Curren D. Price Jr. Also, Price presented a certificate of recognition to YG's mother, Shonee Jackson, in acknowledgement of the work the recording artist has continuously done for his community.

from the community in need.

The drive welcomed partners including Chase, UNDEFEATED, Los Angeles Mission, Ethika, the Office of Mayor Karen Bass, Metro LA, El Camino College and more. The crowd got to enjoy a special performance by Tommy the Clown dance



VINNY NOLAN AMPVINNY300

Tommy the Clown entertains the crowd.



VINNY NOLAN AMPVINNY300

El Camino College staff share information about the school's classes.



VINNY NOLAN AMPVINNY300

JPMorgan Chase team member distributes free resources.

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Mothers In Action Provides 1,200+ Students with Loaded Backpacks, Dental Kits, and More

STAFF REPORT

More than 1,200 children and families received fully loaded backpacks, dental kits, fresh fruit, and more at the 26th Annual Back to School Health Fair hosted by Mothers In Action (MIA) on Aug. 10.

MIA volunteers also distributed educational, nutritional, health, and environmental resource information. In addition, the Good Provider Foodbank of Southern California, a minority-led nonprofit, donated boxes of groceries to food insecure families.

“Our village of sponsors, donors and volunteers showed up and out as always. We are so grateful for our village,” said MIA President Tracy Mitchell.

She added, “We served underserved youth, foster youth, group homes, the Danny J. Bakewell Primary Center, students from our mentoring program, and our college mentees.”

Parents and guardians were especially grateful for the free items, according to emails sent to Mitchell. B. Renee Norman wrote, “My nephew and his son are grateful for the backpack

and food.” Jessica F. Lopez Osuna stated, “The backpacks will help my kids to be better prepared for the upcoming school year, and your contribution has lifted a weight off our shoulders.”

Mitchell gave special thanks to L.A. Councilmembers Curren Price and Heather Hutt, Sherlette Newbill representing LAUSD Board Member Dr. George McKenna III, Bakewell Company Vice President Brandi Bakewell, the L.A. Sentinel and Taste of Soul staff who participated in distributing items at the event.

Other sponsors and contributors included Brotherhood Crusade (Premier Sponsor), Sandra Evers Manly, Cochran Firm of California, Metro, Councilmember Marqueece Harris Dawson, City National Bank, Healthnet, AEG Worldwide, RFP Insurance, LA County Federation of Labor, LA Sanitation, Blue Shield of CA Promise Health Plan, Oscar Joel Bryant Foundation, Children’s Dental Fun Zone, California Highway Patrol, CHP Explorers, Chase Bank, The Western States

Carpenters, Kaiser Permanente, SEIU 721, USC, Bank of America, Mothers Nutritional, It’s Bigger Than Us, ARCHES II, Office of Exposition Park Management, L.A. Football Club, BMO Stadium, and Bechtel.

“Also, we appreciate Mothers In Action’s invaluable volunteers and teens, and members of Pacific Asian Volunteer Association (PAVA), Brotherhood Crusade, L.A. Conservation Corps, and Community Build who helped us assemble and distribute the

backpacks, food boxes, and information bags. We could not have done this without them,” Mitchell said.

“Last, but not least, Mothers In Action and the Mitchell Family would like to thank and express our love for Danny J. Bakewell, Sr. and Jr., event chairs Fabian Wesson and Yvonne Wheeler, and PAVA world, who has been riding with us for more than 15 years now,” she noted.

“Thank you village for helping is provide quality service to our village!”

PHOTOS BY E. MESIYAH MCGINNIS/L.A. SENTINEL



{See MOTHERS IN ACTION on A-9}

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MOTHERS IN ACTION {Continued from A-8}



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Charging Ahead

Dr. Dre And Jimmy Iovine Open Iovine-Young Academy In Inglewood

By XENNIA HAMILTON
Contributing Writer

A fun and welcoming bash was held in Inglewood to announce that a new

show stopping performance by Inglewood High School's cheer/dance squad alongside the school's extravagant marching band. In attendance were

ents to want to put their children in Inglewood Unified School District because that's the only future that we have for this school district," the mayor said.

hire people who could speak technological language in regards to their infamous headphone line, Beats.

"Around 2006-07, we started a company - Beats Headphones - and we started hiring people and what we realized was that we couldn't find people that could speak different disciplines in work," Iovine said.

"For example, we had the people, engineers in technology. We needed designers, we needed arts people, and they couldn't speak to each other," he noted.

"And we realized, 'whoa this is a problem.' So Dre and I was speaking and we said, 'you know what? this is a problem in education.'"

Among the students who are satisfied with this project are Inglewood Unified School District student Patrick Cruz.

"Today marks a new day, a significant milestone for our district," Cruz said. "Together we will create a legacy of success, resiliency, and endless possibilities.

It is a new era where the power of education can and will transform lives."

The school will include classes teaching students job training skills such as coding, working with AI technology, and an impact lab to help students to create non-profit companies.

"This school is about giving kids in the inner city an advantage," Iovine said. "A differentiation, a different type of education that they can go on with and be covered in by some of these big companies."

County Administrator Dr. James Morris also feels this is an excellent move by the Inglewood Unified School District.

"We are so excited about this high school academy because it is the kind of education and environment that the students in our community deserve," he said.

"This is another symbol that Inglewood is up to amazing things. We have the YMCA coming in to build a new YMCA center, we have an early college program that's opening up



Jimmy Iovine, 3rd from left, poses with Inglewood city and school district officials.

school is coming to the Inglewood Unified School District this year, founded by rapper/producer/businessman Andre "Dr. Dre" Young and philanthropist Jimmy Iovine.

The school, named the Iovine-Young Center or IYC, will serve as a catalyst in teaching students what the duo feel students are missing in school.

The announcement was held at Morningside High School in Inglewood with a

Inglewood Mayor James T. Butts, Inglewood Unified School District Board President Carliss McGhee and Iovine himself. Although Dr. Dre was not present due to personal circumstances, the energy in the room was full of hope, fulfillment and excitement at what the new school will bring to the district.

Many feel that the center will be a welcome addition to the district that will change lives. "We want par-

The center was the result of the two minds of Dr. Dre and Iovine, who reached out to Dr. McGhee aiming to give the children of the community a better chance at life.

"They came to my home and we sat down and we realized Inglewood would be a great fit for this program," Dr. McGhee said.

Iovine explained how the concept came to fruition after he and longtime collaborator Dr. Dre needed to



Inglewood High School's cheer/dance squad performs a creative routine.

According to Iovine, this will be the third school after opening schools in Atlanta and South L.A. "We hope to expand from here. We have very, very big ambitions," he said.

at Inglewood High School, we have the Iovine-Young Academy that will be opening up a year from now, and we have so many good things happening for young people in this community."

City of Compton, I.C.E.H.O.T, and Key of Knowledge CDC Hold Back to School

SENTINEL NEWS SERVICE

The City of Compton and Councilmember Deidre Duhart partnered with I.C.E. H.O.T Nonprofit and Key of Knowledge CDC to host a Back-to-School Community Resource Giveaway. The event took place on Saturday, August 10, at Gonzalez Park in Compton.

"This initiative aimed to provide essential resources and support to students, educators, and



COURTESY PHOTO

families as they prepare for the upcoming school year," a spokesperson said.

"Whether attendees were returning to traditional

schooling or a trade school, they received free resources and services such as spa treatments, groceries, dog food, hygiene products, hair



COURTESY PHOTO

services, and more."

Also, the event featured live entertainment including a drumline performance and a dance team show. Attendees also enjoyed the outdoor pool, which was open throughout the day.



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Kinecta Federal Credit Union Hosts 15th Annual Back-to-School Drive

SENTINEL NEWS SERVICE

To help students prepare for the 2024-2025 school year, Kinecta Federal Credit Union hosted its 15th Annual Back-to-School Backpack Drive on Saturday, August 10.

More than 600 students were provided with backpacks filled with school supplies at the event. Students and their families received backpacks, school supplies, a sack lunch and an ice cream treat from the Kinecta ice cream truck.

"Making an impact in the communities we serve is an important part of the Kinecta culture," said Latrice McGlothlin, executive director of the Kinecta Community Foundation.

"One-way Kinecta does that is by fostering education and hosting an annual backpack drive; providing kids with the supplies they need is just one aspect of that."



Kinecta Community Foundation Executive Director Latrice McGlothlin with backpacks.

Last year, families spent an average of \$890.07 on back-to-school shopping, according to The National Retail Federation. This is a significant financial burden for families with limited resources. With recession fears, inflation and tight budgets, the importance of backpack drives is at a critical high.

Kinecta provided backpacks to students selected through community partners including Al Wooten Jr. Youth Center, Boys and Girls Club of Carson, Camp Good Days, Envi-

ronmental Charter School, East Side Riders Bike Club, Foster Love, Learn • Engage • Advocate • Partner (LEAP, LAPD Southeast Cadets, National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), Parents of Watts, Richstone Family Center, St. Albert the Great School, St. Lawrence of Brindisi School, Thomas House Family Shelter, Verbum Dei High School, and Watts/Century Latino Organization.

To learn more, visit kinecta.org/community.



COURTESY PHOTO

Representative Maxine Waters, Sweet Alice Harris, Kinecta executives and board of directors at the Back-to-School Drive.

KAREN BASS RECEIVES OLYMPIC FLAG {Continued from A-1}

LA28's Community Business Working Group, which will develop the plan and specific goals for small and local businesses as a key part of their procurement strategy.

When Bass arrived at LAX on Monday afternoon, she joined Angelenos and other well-wishers to celebrate the Olympic Flag's official return to Los Angeles for the first time in 40 years, alongside LA28, members of the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee, Delta executives, and members of Team USA.

In France, Bass visited communities away from the Paris city center to examine how they were involved with the Games, touring facilities focused on operational logistics and media relations.

The delegation included L.A. City Council President Paul Krekorian, Councilmember Traci Park, Councilmember Katy Yaroslavsky, LA Metro CEO Stephanie Wiggins, LA84 Foundation President and CEO Renata Simril, and Priscilla Cheng, Senior Vice President for Government Relations at LA28. All three Councilmembers sit on the Ad Hoc Committee for the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Councilmembers Park and Yaroslavsky serve as Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively, and President Krekorian was a member of the Ad



AP PHOTO/DAMIAN DOVARGANES

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass holds the official Olympic flag returning to Los Angeles at Los Angeles International Airport on Monday, Aug. 12, 2024.

be the first-ever Olympics event held without building new permanent venues. Instead, Los Angeles will rely exclusively on existing

lar building practices and significantly reducing waste at the games.

Los Angeles aims to host a "no-car" Games and

our cars, but we're already working to ensure that we can build a greener Los Angeles," said Bass.

Ahead of welcoming the world to Los Angeles in 2028, the city will also enhance water conservation by promoting water efficient fixtures, plant water saving landscapes and enhance existing open and green spaces.

Matt Szabo, City Administrative Officer of L.A., said the mayor's office is working closely with LA28 to ensure alignment and accelerate the City's sustainability goals.

"When a city gets to host the Olympics, it invests in the event, and then, that event invests back into that city for years and decades to come," said Szabo.

The Los Angeles region recently secured nearly \$80 million to electrify Metro buses to reduce air pollution. This followed \$900 million in federal

funding awarded to strengthen critical infrastructure, expand the Metro Rail system and reconnect communities ahead of the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games through a spending package signed into law by President Biden and new grant funding from the Biden-Harris Administration.

In addition, LA Metro will receive \$709.9 million from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Fiscal Year 2024 transportation spending law, which will go toward sections two and three of the D Line (Purple) Subway Extension Project, among other projects. The Los Angeles region will also receive \$160 million in new federal grant funding for street and transit infrastructure, traffic safety and to improve connections between neighborhoods. This includes \$139 million that will directly improve transportation mobility

access during the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games and create lasting enhancements for communities.

Before leaving Paris, Bass met with Deputy Mayor Krista Adams of Brisbane, Australia, to discuss expanding collaboration as Host Cities ahead of the 2028 and 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The 2028 Summer Olympic & Paralympic Games in Los Angeles will be the city's third time hosting the event. The other times were in 1932 and 1984.

"We are going to hold the Olympics for everybody in our community. We're very proud of that," said George Pla, President of the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. "We appreciate the best practices that we learned in Paris. We will take that home to Los Angeles and put on a great Olympic Games."



LILA BROWN/CBM

City of Los Angeles officials at the Paris Olympics were, from left, City Administrative Officer Matt Szabo, Councilwoman Traci Park, Mayor Karen Bass and Memorial Coliseum Commission President George Pla.

Hoc Committee when the host city contract was signed.

The 2028 Summer Games in Los Angeles will

and temporary venues. The city is also focused on lowering the overall carbon footprint of the Games by promoting the use of circ-

will also promote the use of zero-emission vehicles.

"That's a feat in Los Angeles, because we've always been in love with

ARZELLA J. VALENTINE {Continued from A-1}

published poet. Her books, "Growing Up In Mt. Olive" and "Return to Mt. Olive," contain beautiful poems and short stories

about her upbringing in the rural south.

In the area of community service, Arzella was a member of numerous

boards and active with many organizations including Pasadena NAACP, Pasadena Urban League, Jack and Jill of

America, Pasadena Altadena Links, and The Soroptimist Club. A faithful woman of God, she was a member of Friend-

ship Baptist Church where she served in many capacities throughout the years.

Community members recall Arzella as a loving

wife, mother, grandmother, great grandmother, godmother, and friend and all agree that her presence will be missed.

MAYOR ACQUANETTA WARREN {Continued from A-1}

vide students with exposure to career options and opportunities for higher

education. Additionally, she prioritizes public safety, highlighting the trust

and positive relationship between Fontana residents and the police department.

Mayor Warren's overarching message to voters across California is: "Your

vote counts. Vote in everything." She emphasizes the importance of local, state,

and presidential elections and the impact of every vote cast.

BLACK HONORS COLLEGE {Continued from A-6}

Mosupyoe, Speaker of the Guateng Provincial Legislature in South Africa, among others.

Stephen K. Benjamin, Senior White House Advisor to President Biden and Director of the White House

Office of Public Engagement delivered the keynote and read a statement from Vice President Kamala Harris.

"May you always dream with ambition and lead with conviction," Harris was

quoted in the statement read by Benjamin.

In his own words, Benjamin said, "History is indeed being made today with 'this bold vision.'"

"I hope that you are both humbled and excited,"

he said, reminding them that "titles don't make leaders."

"Leaders are servants," Benjamin continued. "Leaders give. Leaders build other leaders. Within each and every one of you is

the power to change this world."

During the event, Wood thanked Sacramento's Tsakopoulos family, who donated \$2.5 million to the BHC.

The college "will give

us a voice, a way to make change, and a family," said Savanna Beattie, a student in the BHC's inaugural class, who told guests that she will study nursing and hopes to work in a neonatal intensive care unit.

NATHAN HOCHMAN AT DULAN'S {Continued from A-2}

message early and often to our youth."

After explaining the policies he intended to implement, Hochman encouraged those in attendance to ask anything they wanted about his plans, telling them, "No question is off limits."

The first question was about his plans on the first

week in office. One key step, Hochman said, will be reversing the current D.A.'s policies that greatly reduce sentences for gun crimes - shootings, murders and robberies - and provide no penalties for juveniles who commit flash mob robberies and organized theft at retail stores.

Another question was

how he intended to get apathetic voters to actually cast their ballots on election day.

Hochman told them that he's working throughout the county, "I'm putting a lot of miles on my car," he said, meeting with communities to talk about how important the D.A.'s race is

to their quality of life.

He's visited voters from all corners of the county to explain his plan to improve public safety, which has worsened each of the last four years. "George Gascon has had more than three-and-a-half years to prove his game plan and he has failed," Hochman said.

After a spirited question-and-answer session with voters, Dulan's owner, Greg Dulan, took Hochman on a tour of his popular restaurant.

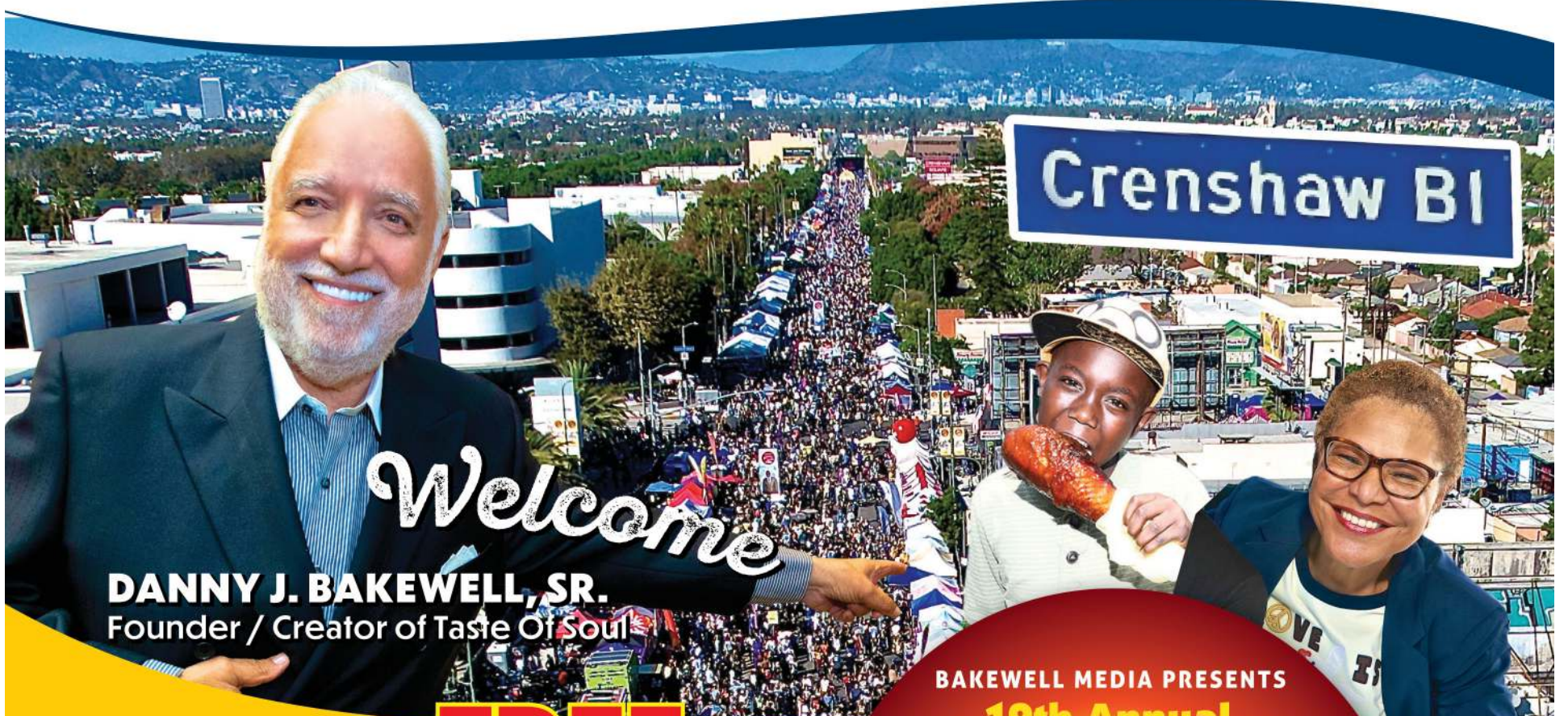
"Dulan's on Crenshaw is a community space that is open to anybody, any time who wants to hold a significant occasion here," Dulan said. "We're open to

all perspectives and all people who want to experience our Southern culture and our delicious food."

Hochman said he enjoyed the conversation with voters and looked forward to enjoying the food.

"If I become District Attorney, I'd love to make this a tradition," Hochman said.

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Zaya Campbell Wins Little Miss African American Scholarship Pageant

SENTINEL NEWS SERVICE

Zaya Campbell is the winner of the 30th Annual Little Miss African American Scholarship Pageant, announced Lisa Ruffin, LMAA founder and the judges.

Twelve-year-old Zaya is the daughter of Grammy-winner singer Erica Campbell, who is part of the gospel group Mary Mary, and music producer Warryn Campbell.

The educational pageant was held recently at Barnsdall Art Park to a packed audience. The event is designed to increase the confidence of little African American girls from across the country.

Celebrities and community leaders who donate their time to serve as judges or hosts were



Zaya Campbell, winner of LMAA, and Lisa Ruffin, pageant founder.

Michael Beach, James Pickens, Jr., Ella Joyce, Lamon Archey, Elia Cantu, Stacey McBride-Irby, Ingrid Hadley, Parker McKenna Posey, Kamilah Moore, and Norman

Towns. For the past 30 years, dozens of girls between the ages of 6-12 years old have participated in the program and hundreds of scholarships have been

awarded. The pageant provides an early introduction to the arts and training in public speaking while promoting individual creativity and stimulating a heightened cultural understanding. The pageant's core guidelines focus on confidence, awareness and pride.

To learn more, visit www.littlemissafricanamerican.org.



From left are judges Lamon Archey and Elia Cantu, LMAA host Michael Beach, LMAA founder Lisa Ruffin and judge James Pickens, Jr.



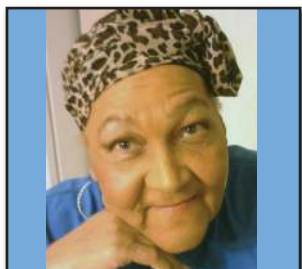
Zaya Campbell, center, and her court.

Honoring her Mother, Logan Launches Scholarship for First-Generation Special Education Students

SENTINEL NEWS SERVICE

Lesley Logan, inspired by her mother Janet Elizabeth Anderson, who graduated from California State University-Dominguez Hills, has launched a scholarship to honor her mom's legacy.

The J.E. Anderson Family Scholarship is aimed at first-generation college students majoring in special education,



Janet Elizabeth Anderson

reflecting Logan's dedication to education and community empowerment. "My mother passed

away four years ago at the age of 86, having lived a full and meaningful life. I wanted to find a way to honor her legacy, so I prayed for guidance," said Logan.

"The next day, I decided to start a college scholarship to continue her legacy and provide opportunities for students pursuing degrees in special education."

Reflecting on her mother's influence, Logan shared, "My mother was an

extraordinary teacher, deeply passionate about education. She worked at various schools including the Los Angeles Unified School District, Downey, Pasadena and Inglewood. She always emphasized the importance of education and giving back."

"She specialized in reading and math and adored her students, referring to them as 'at promise' rather than 'at risk.' She received her

Master's in Education from California State Dominguez Hills. I vividly remember accompanying her to classes on weekends during my middle school years, often feeling like a college student myself," she said.

Logan's mother inspired her to create the scholarship, aiming to assist first-generation students throughout the country – both undergraduate or graduate students – who aspire to make a differ-

ence in special education.

The J.E. Anderson Family College Scholarship, established in partnership with Bold.org, is available to all eligible U.S. college students. The application deadline is Oct. 1.

Contributions to the scholarship fund are tax-deductible.

To apply, visit <https://bold.org/scholarships/j-e-anderson-family-college-scholarship>.



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FREE

LMAA Alumni Graduate High School, Prepare for College

By SHAVON LUCKEY
Contributing Writer

Little Miss African Scholarship Pageant celebrated 30 years of pageantry and community outreach on Sunday, Aug. 4. In its long-standing lineage, Lisa Ruffin has seen countless young women embark on unique journeys two former LMAA participants who are 2024 high school graduates.

With an array of accomplishments on her belt, Morgan Omordia graduated from Viewpoint School this past spring. Viewpoint School is a K-12 private institution in Calabasas.

Omordia is a San Fernando Valley native who describes her time at Little Miss African American as motivating and fun. She especially appreciates the performance skills that

came from memorizing the poem she was required to memorize and perform. She even explains that this aided in her ability to deliver strong speeches during her time in grade school.

During her four years in high school, Omordia accumulated a list of achievements including earning the second-highest score in her division at the International Oratory Festival, ranking as

the seventh greatest long jumper and third greatest shotputter in her school's history, and receiving recognition as a STEM Scholar.

She was also a member of the Tri-M Music Honor Societies and the Cum Laude Society. In addition, Omordia obtained certifications in CPR, Basic Life Support, and Stop the Bleed.

As she prepares to attend Brown University and study Molecular Biology, Omordia shared insight into her goals for the future.

"I've always been fascinated by transmission genetics and developmental biology within the molecular, cellular, and developmental biology fields," she explained.

"That's why I'm interested in pursuing a career in reproductive health studies, with a particular focus on becoming an Obstetrician/Gynecologist specializing in reproductive endocrinology and infertility. Eventually, I'd love to open my own clinic, where I can provide compassionate care and promote the importance of sexual health."

Nasreen El-Shabazz is a Victor Valley High School alumnus. El-Shabazz is an Inglewood native who will major in pre-nursing at Grand Canyon University this fall. Her goals include completing medical school and becoming an OB-GYN doctor, after becoming a registered labor and delivery nurse.

Expressing how LMAA helped her to become the young lady that she is today, Omordia responded, "LMAA has impacted me in so many ways including building self-confidence and awareness in who I am and how I identify within my culture."

Nasreen earned and maintained a plethora of achievements during her experience in high school. Her commendations include being named Miss Black California Talented Teen 2022, serving as Black Student Union president, and selected as an Associated Student Body Spirit Commissioner.

She was also executive treasurer of the Heritage Committee and served two years as a varsity cheerleader. According to an admirer,



COURTESY PHOTO

Morgan Omordia

"These young women are a testament to Little Miss African American's commitment to instill confidence, awareness, and pride into their pupils."



COURTESY PHOTO

Nasreen El-Shabazz



COURTESY PHOTO

Nasreen crowned the 28th LMAA queen.

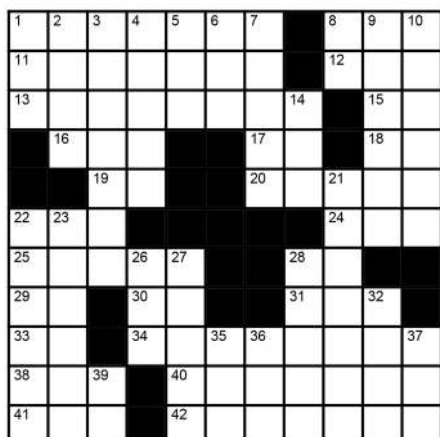
Simon Burriss: Africana Diaspora Black History Month II Crossword ICONIC BLACK LEADERS: PAST & PRESENT www.simonburriss700.com

Across

- 1. **South African patriot Nelson
- 8. **Ancestor of the Africans, Arabs and Babylonians (Genesis 10:6-20)
- 11. **Egyptian Christian evangelist and a disciple of John the Baptist (Acts 18)
- 12. *Songstress T ___ Turner
- 13. **African general who invaded Spain and Italy with war elephants (218 BC)
- 15. Water ___ I (waterway)
- 16. Notary Public Edit (abbr.)
- 17. ** ___ Bron James: Lakers captain
- 18. ** ___ Shall Overcome"
- 19. _ONG _EACH, CA.
- 20. Let up
- 22. ___NT (short trip)
- 24. *S ___H "Sassy" Vaughan singer
- 25. Actor Davis (married Ruby Dee)
- 28. _JO _RANDE
- 29. Short stop, briefly
- 30. En, en
- 31. Portugal's continent (abbr.)
- 33. That's a laugh!
- 34. **Anti-slavery activist/reformer Frederick
- 38. Keyboard trio after RTY
- 40. **Gen. Colin Powell, so to speak
- 41. **Boxer/activist Muhammad
- 42. **Mr. X; human rights leader

Down

- 1. * ___ alia Jackson: gospel singer
- 2. Tokyo, J ___
- 3. Confuse or perplex
- 4. Dodge Loup, Nebraska (initials)
- 5. Inventor Whitney
- 6. Easy toss



- 7. On the market (2 wds.)
- 8. Greeting
- 9. "A soft ___ turns away wrath" (Proverb 15:1)
- 10. **Wealthy queen of Sheba (Ethiopia/Arabia) who gifted King Solomon 9,000 pounds of gold (1 Kings 10:10)
- 14. Meadow
- 21. Arizona cactus
- 22. **Lead the conquest of Canaan (Israel); a descendant of Asenath, the African wife of Joseph (Genesis 41)
- 23. Attack
- 26. ___ IANA (State)
- 27. *Vast, to poet Maya Angelou
- 28. Object of worship
- 32. Bit (MO ___)
- 35. Pig sound (SQ ___ L)
- 36. Ghana/Togo/Libya (Afr. Union trio; initials)
- 37. South Dakota Mission, for short
- 39. Des M ___ nes, Iowa

(ANSWERS ON B-4)



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B-3

Grant AME Promotes Brain Health with 'Dementia Friendly Service'

By CORA JACKSON-FOSSETT
Religion Editor

Emphasizing the importance of brain health, Grant African Methodist Episcopal Church will hold a Dementia Friendly Service on Sunday, Sept. 19, at 9:30 a.m., in the edifice located at 10435 S. Central Ave., in Los Angeles.

According to Pastor Timothy O. Coston, Jr.,

the special worship will be guided by Dr. Fayron Epps, founder of the ALTER. The program supports building resources and awareness around dementia and brain health in African American and faith communities.

"The Alter program assists faith-based communities in meeting the needs of families based on three pillars - education, support and worship," explained



Pastor Timothy O. Coston, Jr.



Dr. Fayron Epps

the pastor.

"We believe that faith-based communities are important sources for providing health related information and offering connections to services, particularly for African Americans.

"Historically churches have been a safe haven for African American families, however, many churches do not currently have pro-

grams to support families/congregants living with dementia," he said.

"The greater Los Angeles community is invited to worship with us on Sept. 15 and learn how this program can benefit you and your family and your church."

For more information, call the office of Grant AME Church at (323) 564-1151.

Celebration of Life Services Set for Bishop Robert T. Douglas

By CORA JACKSON-FOSSETT
Religion Editor

The faith community expressed deep sadness over the passing of Bishop Robert T. Douglas, Sr., pastor of Jacob's Ladder Community Fellowship in Inglewood.

Bishop Douglas, who passed away on August 5 at the age of 71, was the presiding prelate of the 66th Episcopal District



Bishop Robert T. Douglas, Sr.,

of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World.

The celebration of his life begins on Thursday, August 22 with a public viewing from 12 p.m. to 7 p.m. followed by a memorial at Greater Emmanuel Temple, 3740 E. Imperial Highway in Lynwood. On Friday, August 23, at 10 a.m., the homegoing service will take place at West Angeles Cathedral, 3600

Crenshaw Blvd., in Los Angeles. The pre-service viewing will be held from 8 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

Bishop Douglas was a longtime advocate of religious education and chancellor of the California University of Theology. Also, he served as president of the Inglewood Area Ministers Association, charter member of the Inglewood Unified School District's Strategic Planning Com-

mittee, and a member of the LAUSD Measure K Oversight Committee.

His survivors are his wife, Dr. Paulette Douglas; children, Shakinah, Robert Jr., and Sondra Imani; six grandchildren, and a host of relatives, friends and church members.

In lieu of flowers, the family is requesting donations to the California University of Theology Dr. Robert T. Douglas Scholar-

ship.

"Your generous contributions will honor Bishop Douglas' commitment to academic excellence and support deserving theological students in their educational pursuits. Please Zelle donations to (951) 756-2898," said the family spokesperson.

Condolences can be mailed to 5009 Crenshaw Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90043.

Ollie Elizabeth Lawrence Leaves Legacy of Love and Service

By CORA JACKSON-FOSSETT
Religion Editor

Ollie Elizabeth Lawrence - community advocate, bank executive, foster mom, and woman of God - departed this world for eternal life with the Lord, leaving a legacy of kindness, compassion, laughter, brilliance, service, and love to all who knew her.

She passed away on July 27 at her home in Los Angeles. She was 84 years old.

Her homegoing service is Saturday, August 17, at 10 a.m., at Brookins-Kirkland Community AME Church, 3719 W. Slauson Ave., in L.A.

A native of Muskogee, Oklahoma, Ollie was born on February 23, 1940, the seventh child of nine children born to Hollis Logan and Bessie McIntosh Logan. Displaying exceptional intelligence from a young age, she excelled in her studies while attending New Hope Elementary School.

Ollie's beloved mother passed away when she was 12 years old, but God's

hand was upon her life, sending her to Los Angeles to live with her Aunt Dora and Uncle Eulysess in 1952. Ollie continued to succeed academically as a student at John Adams Junior High School and Manual Arts High School, both in Los Angeles.

After her high school graduation, she enrolled in classes at Los Angeles Trade Technical College and thought she was having the time of her life until she met Ellis Lawrence, Sr., who took her breath away. Considering Ellis as the love of her life, the two lovebirds joined in holy matrimony in 1958 and enjoyed a long and fruitful relationship that produced sons Byron Logan and Ellis Lawrence, Jr., and daughter La Juana Lawrence.

Ollie and Ellis were a perfect match - they loved children, laughter, and God. As a result of possessing such esteemed qualities, Ollie and Ellis fostered more than 50 Los Angeles youth over three decades after they both retired from their professions. According to relatives, "They took

children in from all nationalities and treated them as their own. Not only did she foster kids, but she also took in and raised all the family members' kids. Ollie loved children!"

In addition, Ollie gave comparable dedication and commitment to her career in the banking industry. As a respected executive in her field, she held high-level, decision-making positions at United Merchants, Crocker, and Wells Fargo Bank during her 40+ years in the industry. She retired in 1995.

Ollie's faithfulness to God was demonstrated throughout her long membership with Brookins Community AME Church, now known as Brookins-Kirkland Community AME Church. Upon uniting with the congregation in 1978, she freely shared her time, talents, and treasures in a variety of capacities until her passing.

Ollie held the distinction of being the longest continuously serving Steward Board member who

was consistently appointed to the



Ollie Elizabeth Lawrence

Board by all six pastors of the church starting from the first pastor, the Rev. Dr. T. Larry Kirkland, Sr., and continuing to the current pastor, the Rev. Dr. Mary S. Minor. Always valued for her business acumen, Ollie was also repeatedly appointed by each pastor to the Stewardship and Finance Commission and repeatedly elected by the membership to be the church treasurer.

Also, Ollie shared her gifts with other auxiliaries of the church.

She was a member of the Mary M. Kidd Women's Missionary Society, the Willie Waddell Lay Organization, and the Bereavement Ministry. She also freely contributed to the Youth and Young Adults Department, the Christian Education Department, and just served in any capacity that needed or required her assistance and/or many talents.

Her grandson, Anthony, recalled, "Ollie was a phenomenal woman. She loved her family, extended family, friends, and neighbors. She never met a stranger. She treated everyone like family. She was a mother to all, a grandmother to all, and a friend to all. She was

the person you could talk to about anything and everything, and it stayed between you and her."

Daughter La Juana remembered, "She was a wealth of knowledge. If you needed to know something, she would find an answer for you and would give the best advice as well."

Son Byron recollected, "She enjoyed vacations to Oklahoma, Texas, and Las Vegas with family and friends. She cooked every Sunday for her family and friends and loved playing ghetto bingo on Sundays and talking to her brother, Theodore Logan."

Ollie was preceded in death by her parents; son, Ellis Lawrence Jr.; husband, Ellis Lawrence Sr.; and eight siblings.

She leaves to cherish her memory her daughter, La Juana Lawrence, son Byron Logan, grandsons Anthony Harris and Keshawn Gray; special daughters, Janice Lawrence, and Rihanna Pittman-Lawrence; special niece, Etta Lagrone of Muskogee, Oklahoma; and many relatives, church family, and friends.

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Leimert Park Celebrates Life and Legacy of Sika Dwimfo

BY DEMI VAUGHN
 Contributing Writer

Community members gathered in Leimert Park on Aug. 10 to celebrate the life and legacy of Sika Dwimfo. Known as the “Master Jeweler,” “Baba,” or “Godfather of Leimert Park,” Sika was a fashion icon and community activist. His store, ‘Sika,’

opened in 1992 and continues to thrive today at 4330 Degnan Boulevard in Leimert Park, selling African-inspired goods. Jarrett MaGee, aka ‘J.P.,’ a volunteer from the “We Love Leimert” organization, emphasized the importance of this celebration.

“Sika’s been here for decades. He’s one of our

most celebrated elders in this community. We hope to continue celebrating our elders while they’re here and not just when they’re gone,” MaGee said.

“Laylow,” the owner of Grandma’s Remedy, recounted meeting Sika during the pandemic and recognized his pivotal role in the community.

“Sika has done so much for this community, and he is an icon and a legend that we’re going to miss. This day is for Sika; we need to name this day Sika! Sika actually has his own block now, as you can see many folks love Sika! Far and wide, people of many shades love Sika. It’s a lot of folks who came out here for Sika,” Laylow said.

The event was lively, featuring live entertainment and vendors selling handmade African-inspired goods and cuisines, including vegan dishes. Attendees



Members of the We Love Leimert social service organization.

DEMI VAUGHN/L.A. SENTINEL



DEMI VAUGHN/L.A. SENTINEL

Vendors displayed an array of creative artworks.



DEMI VAUGHN/L.A. SENTINEL

Live music by talented local artists entertained the crowd.



DEMI VAUGHN/L.A. SENTINEL

Colorful handmade hats and hair accessories were available for purchase.

had ample opportunities to learn about Sika’s legacy and the rich history of Leimert Park.

“We’re out here today celebrating Sika, Baba Sika. He pierces everybody. If you didn’t get pierced by Sika, you haven’t been pierced,”



DEMI VAUGHN/L.A. SENTINEL

Jarrett MaGee came out for the celebration of Sika Dwimfo.



DEMI VAUGHN/L.A. SENTINEL

An artist’s rendering of Sika Dwimfo hangs from a booth.

said Khufu Ankh Amun, a Leimert Park community member. “Sika, if I’m not mistaken, has had his store longer than anyone else in

Leimert Park. We miss him and love him dearly, and we know that he is still with us in spirit and soul.”

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• DR. MAULANA KARENGA •

Kamala and Our Pursuit of Joy and Justice: Building Relations of Reciprocity and Resistance

It is good to see the Kamala campaign centering on joy in the struggle to defeat those who would outlaw love, laughter and learning; arrest and lay waste the world; build segregation walls of steel and stone, hatred and hostility between persons and peoples; deny freedom and justice; and legalize narrow notions of shared and common good, favoring themselves and excluding others.

And it is also good, exceedingly good, that we as a people, a Black people, an African people, are standing Malcolm straight and Tubman strong as a key vanguard and central source of resistance to this social madness and moral evil and posing a compelling path forward to a new future.

We, as a people, come to this particular battlefield in the ongoing struggle for inclusive and shared good as all-seasons soldiers, steadfastly serving, sacrificing and fighting to secure and expand the realm of freedom and justice since we arrived here. And though we came in chains, we did not hug them, but every day aspired and acted to break them in varied internal and external ways.

Ours is a history of deep thought and righteous and relentless struggle for good in the world. Indeed, we bring to the talking table and battlefield a much discussed and most ancient moral commitment to bring good into the world, an inclusive and shared good. And our honored ancestors teach and tell us we are to do this in joy and justice for everyone.

In the sacred text of our ancestors, The Odu Ifa, we are taught we should do things with joy, for humans are chosen to bring, preserve and increase good in the world. The text says, "Let's do things with joy. . . For surely humans have been divinely chosen to bring good into the world."

And this, we discern and declare, is the fundamental mission and meaning of human life.

The sacred text says, we must "struggle to increase good in the world and not let any good be lost." Here we're reminded of Nana Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune teaching that "We must remake the world. The task is nothing less than that."

So, this is the beauty of this sacred text and teaching that all humans are chosen, and they are chosen, not over or against anyone, but chosen with everyone to bring, preserve and increase good in the world. And they are to do it with deep, delicious and ongoing joy. The Odu Ifa also says that in joyfully doing good in the world, we must "speak truth, do justice, be kind and do not do evil."

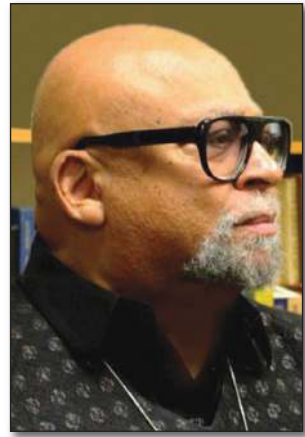
Joy must be and is in its most beautiful and satisfying form a shared good and one rooted and reaffirmed in our current and future relations with each other. Here our honored ancestors stress that the good world we seek to bring into being requires that we prefigure in our relations with each other, others and the earth, the good world and future we want and work for and clearly deserve. And we are to do this in caring, considerate and non-injurious ways.

This world, the new and good world, this future we collaborate, cooperate and commit to build must be one of not only joy, but also of justice. And it must be a joy of working and struggling not only for ourselves, but also for all, especially the most vulnerable among us in this country and the world.

Surely, there is something vulgarly selfish, sick and seriously wrong with preaching and practicing fake gladness and continuing gloom, doom, domination and destruction of others. But it is also immoral and unconscionable to be happy at the expense of

others or in depraved, callous or silent disregard for the death, suffering and oppression of others.

Joy, like justice and all great human goods, are



DR. MAULANA KARENGA

best shared. Indeed, Kawaida philosophy teaches that the greatest goods are shared goods – love and life; our freedom and our future; marriage, family and friendship; health and happiness; and joy and justice, all shared goods. So, let's do things with joy and work and struggle to make joy rooted in justice, freedom and other goods, a shared good for all peoples of the world.

To speak of building relations of reciprocity emphasizes the ethical obligation of returning the good we are given, responding rightfully to the needs and request of those who give, support and sustain us. Here, I refer to the practice of cherishing and challenging Kamala Harris and Tim Walz to live up to the promises they make, to come to and from the Democratic

Convention with a platform that recognizes and responds rightfully and reciprocally to the support given and promised from our people and others and to commit to principles, policies and practices that reaffirm and justify our joy and hope for the future.

And yes, we do need unity to defeat Trump, but it's not just Trump or his supporters, enablers and sustainers that must be defeated, but the system and way of life and death they peddle and push, represent and reinforce. And we cannot defeat it or radically change it by catering to it to win and thereby betray the trust of the people who rose up and rallied for a new way forward in hopeful, history-making, joyful and justice-seeking ways.

We are called not only to build relations of reciprocity with Kamala, cherishing and challenging her to keep the faith and hold the line she declares and promises, we must also practice righteous and relentless resistance internally and externally. This the meaning of Nana Frantz Fanon's assertion that real freedom from oppression, in this case colonialism, will mean "not only the disappearance of colonialism, but also the disappearance of the colonized person." In other words, it will not only mean the disappearance of the system of oppression in all its forms, but also the disappearance within us of the sensibilities, thought

and practice the system has embedded in us.

The principle and practice of resistance speaks to the ethical obligation to continue and intensify the struggle for good in this country and the world from every vantage point we can, and to achieve our own self-transformation in the process of radically transforming society. And resistance is not only opposition to our oppressor, but also affirmation of ourselves and our ongoing aspiration for a constantly expanding, inclusive and shared good in the world.

We say we must, in our lives, work and struggle, find ways to pursue the good regardless, to speak truth to the people and to power in the most difficult, dangerous and demanding times. We must, our sacred texts teach us, bear witness to truth and actively set the scales of justice in their proper place, especially among the vulnerable, the silenced and suffering, the poor and disempowered, the devalued and degraded, the dispossessed and downtrodden, and the victims of unfreedom, oppression, injustice and genocide.

And we must not talk of the country as an abstract and self-deluding ideal, "perfect and needing only to be made more perfect" which are phrases made for manipulation in campaign messages rather than the material out of which the good society and sustainable world can be made.

On the contrary, we must see this country, not as a White, finished and perfect product, but as an unfinished, multicultural, imperfect and ongoing project, a community constantly striving to achieve an ever expanding conception of itself through shared freedom, justice, power and peace. For still and everywhere the oppressed want freedom, the wronged and injured want justice, the people want power over their destiny and daily lives, and the world wants peace.

These are difficult, demanding and dangerous times and urgent in the most existential and ethical sense. But the ethical is always urgent and is more urgent the more serious the threat to and violation of the dignity and human rights of persons and peoples, and we must resist these violations and threats everywhere and all the time. And as we say in Kawaida philosophy and practice, "If not this, then what, and if we don't do it who will?"

Dr. Maulana Karenga, Professor and Chair of Africana Studies, California State University-Long Beach; Executive Director, African American Cultural Center (Us); Creator of Kwanzaa; and author of Kwanzaa: A Celebration of Family, Community and Culture and Introduction to Black Studies, 4th Edition, www.OfficialKwanzaaWebsite.org; www.MaulanaKarenga.org.

• DR. RYAN J. SMITH AND DANA HENRY •

The Untold Story

Gigi Jackson, a 63-year-old Black Angeleno, was homeless for years. After experiencing homelessness and the loss of her son, Gigi sought a better life. With rehabilitative assistance, mental health services, and support from a homeless service provider, she secured a new home. Reflecting on her new life, "I got my own place and I cook my own dinner. There's nothing like having your own," Ms. Jackson says.

Stories like Gigi's reflect progress in L.A. as the recent Los Angeles Homeless Count shows fewer people living on the street and more people moving into housing. However, Governor Newsom's recent executive order for state agencies to dismantle encampments, coupled with the Supreme Court's Grants Pass decision, could potentially set us back to criminalizing homelessness rather than addressing the crisis with humane and effective solutions. This is particularly troubling for Black people experiencing homelessness, who are disproportionately impacted by both the criminal justice system and the homelessness crisis.

In L.A., Black people represent roughly 7% of the city but account for nearly 30% of its homeless population. Statewide, Black Californians, who make up 7% of the population, represent more than a quarter of the state's homeless population.

To turn the corner on this data, we need to uplift the stories of our unhoused neighbors. We need to do a better job telling the success stories of the thousands of people who are housed each year, particularly the often-under-told stories of people of color. To fight the urge to criminalize our unhoused neighbors, we must center their humanity and lived experiences. And in a city renowned for storytelling,

Black narratives are too often ignored. A report by the Center for Media and Social Impact found that the media often overlooks that Black people are often

neighbors in the spirit of our collective humanity.

We must move away from narratives that place sole responsibility on individuals and instead educate

experiencing homelessness.

Including space for storytelling and lived-experts in policy-making and program development is essential for addressing disparities. Black-led organizations such as the Los Angeles Community Action Network, HOPICS, and the Empowerment Congress have long amplified the voices of unhoused Black people, leading successful initiatives focused on Black residents.

As we approach the 2028 Olympics and tell our story again on the world stage, let's reclaim the homelessness narrative too. For communities of color, homelessness is not a choice; it's a symptom of societal failure to address root causes of inequities. Thousands of stories like Gigi's can drive policy and fuel practice if we listen. Let's use the city's momentum to solve our housing crisis and finally get these stories right.

Dr. Ryan J. Smith is the president and CEO of the St. Joseph Center and serves as an Affordable Housing Commissioner for the City of Los Angeles. Dana Henry is the director of Black Justice and Healing for the Weingart Foundation.



Dr. Ryan J. Smith



Dana Henry

forced into homelessness due to systematic failures, like redlining, gentrification, and lack of affordable housing, not because of their individual misfortunes.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "riots are the language of the unheard." Similarly, homelessness is a result of our decision to stop listening. Ignoring the voices of marginalized Angelenos and the structural barriers they face perpetuates a cycle of oppression, trapping many into manufactured poverty. The current homeless meta-narrative, distorted by dehumanizing tropes, often leads to an out-of-sight, out-of-mind mentality rather than calling us to lift up our unhoused

on the systemic hindrances to economic participation. Government officials, philanthropists, and institutions are beginning to empower community voices to address homelessness. Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass has called on philanthropy and civic leaders to commit resources, including investments in storytelling for unhoused people.

Key reports like "Black People Experience Homelessness," "CA Reparations Task Force Executive Summary – Housing Section," and "The Black Experience Action Team: The Path to Justice Runs through Equity," provide opportunities to empower community voices and uplift Black people

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PARIS 2024

Black History
more than just a month!

Simone Biles
Born March 14, 1997

Simone Arianne Biles Owens is an African American artistic gymnast. Her 11 Olympic medals and 30 World Championship medals make her the most decorated gymnast in history, and she is widely considered the greatest gymnast of all time. With 11 Olympic medals, she is tied with Vera Caslavská as the second-most decorated female Olympic gymnast, and has the most Olympic medals by a U.S. gymnast.

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Coach Wendy

Life Strategist / Consultant
Author / Speaker

Black Business Month

I have been a small Black woman-owned business for close to three decades and I can tell you it is not easy. Although I have worked in various markets, I have always felt the sting of being judged because of my gender and the color of my skin whenever I was competing in the mainstream arena. I felt the need to under promise and always over deliver to just be considered.

However, my community has always embraced

me and provided me with the guidance and support that I needed to grow and expand over the years to be successful, and I am grateful. The support I have been given has allowed me the opportunity to hire several employees and independent contractors and help them with their careers and businesses. It is such a good feeling helping to not only put food on people's tables, but also helping them achieve their goals



and the things they desire.

For over two decades, we have been celebrating Black businesses during August to recognize the impact and contributions of Black businesses in our communities. African Americans have made huge strides in the business world over the years, however, entrepreneurship and starting your own business can still be a challenge.

During the month of August, special emphasis is placed on identifying problems Black businesses still face such as financing,

technology, and mentorship. There are different organizations and corporations doing their part to help close the divide for minorities to help them to not only survive, but also thrive. One such organization is the Black Business Association (BBA) under the leadership of Sarah Harris, president and CEO.

On Saturday, August 17, the BBA along with several community leaders and companies will hold the 2nd Annual Black Business Day Expo at L.A. Trade Tech College and it is free to the public. There will be over 60 business vendors with activities designed to celebrate and support Black-owned businesses. There will be music, speakers, a food court, and a beer and wine garden lounge among other things.

There will be an emphasis on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and making sure small businesses learn the information needed to grow and take their

businesses to a higher level. There will also be promotional opportunities for businesses to market their businesses and share throughout the community long after the Expo is over.

The Black Business Association has been a leading advocate for the advancement of Black and small businesses in California for close to 50 years. They champion equal access to capital and contract opportunities, provide education, training, and mentoring resources, and facilitate networking, collaborations, and strategic partnerships.

The BBA has been championing Black Business Month since the former president, Earl "Skip" Cooper II aligned with former Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley established it in 1987. The commitment to keeping Black businesses in the forefront is pivotal for the entire community.

Although the entire month of August is allotted

as Black Business Month, August 17 will make a major impact on the advancement of small Black businesses throughout Southern California. The demand is high for this event and although it is free, it is highly recommended that attendees contact the Black Business Association to register.

America has been compared to a salad bowl as a metaphor used to describe the United States as a country that integrates different cultures while still allowing people to maintain their cultural identities. Now is the time for everyone to come together and sit at the table and share in the bountiful of God's blessings and lift each other up.

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Visit www.WendyGladney.com and www.forgivingforliving.org to learn more. Wendy is a life strategist, coach, consultant, author, and speaker.

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"Be Not Deceived!?"

Don't you see that attitude and its accompanying attitude expression quite frequently?! I have seen people who want to be "in charge." On the contrary, sometimes what they may be saying in a round-a-bout way is that they say that, but not necessarily do they want to do the work it entails to say one thing and do something else.

In retrospect, Jesus would say something similar about the Pharisees, elders, and others. Don't do what they do. Don't do what they say, because it's contradictory. He called them hypocrites...saying one thing and doing something else.

Israel did many

wrongs. Many wrongs were committed against Israel. One commentator says something like, "No nation will go unpunished when they lash out at Israel." One might ask, "Why does the Lord watch over Israel so carefully?" Israel is the world's representative of what God loves and who He loves. He makes His point that He is for those who are for Him. So, that doesn't only mean Israel.

Israel is a portrait of His "love." And he tells us, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem." Yes, that's a commanding statement. Israel falls back, but the Lord doesn't forget the example He has chosen.



Israel backtracks, but He leans into Israel reminding them as an example of how much He cares for us all.

There is the repeated reminder of Jehovah bringing them out of Egypt after hundreds of years of slavery. He never lets them forget. As the Prophet Samuel was getting old, they wanted another kind of leadership. They didn't want "the Monarch" anymore. But, insisted on having a real king like the "other nations."

Samuel was (I believe) very hurt over this betrayal against the Almighty God. God said, (in effect) "Don't let it worry you, Samuel. They are not rejecting you.

They are rejecting me." God told Samuel, "The Lord told me to inform you what to expect this new king who reigns over you to do - your sons will serve with the chariots and horsemen in front of the chariots.

"Some will plow his grounds and reap his harvest. Your daughters will be perfumers, cooks, and bakers. He will take your property and the best of your fields and vineyard, olive groves and give them away. He will take the best of your cattle, a tenth of your grain to give to his attendants. Your sons and daughters will be weapons of war. He will take some (many) for slaves.

They still could not see the light. The Lord spoke to Samuel and "told him to let them have what they want. Give them a king."

Now, you may not be able to actually see or visualize what will happen to your property and other material belongings; but you may not realize what has happened until it's too late. In a socialist society is where you lose ownership all communities of society

operated by a community of people sharing in the work and the production.

When you think about this concept, it takes on many prongs. In this instance, we have the government take on the position of "the state," where the state owns everything and dictates what individuals are to do and not do. Individual decision-making is skimmed off. You have to go along with the masses because you're no longer thinking as an individual.

We have many things right now that are happening on that level. Our children are going away to schools and colleges in societies where individual thought is meshed into "whatever" and is being stirred up into a mishmash of unrealistic thinking where some young people see what others are doing and they lose track of their morals and come back being convinced they are girls, even they're born boys, or they're born girls, and they think they're boys.

Now, the last thing I want to point out to you and that is children need to

be taught at home. Some parents believe this, and some do not believe in it all. Abstinence. Raise your boys as young men and your girls as young women if that's what you want. Train up your child in the way he/she should go. Don't be afraid of them.

One more thing, I hope you are not deceived into thinking that God is going to change His mind. He will not.

Thanks for reading! Jeanette Grattan Parker is the founder-superintendent of Today's Fresh Start Charter School, 4514 Crenshaw Boulevard, L.A. 90043, 323-293-9826, www.todaysfreshstart.org, (Ask Dr. Jeanette TM) "Inquiring Minds Want to Know." All articles are copyright. All rights reserved © Errors? Or Questions? Please let me know. Join Sundays for music and calling at 11:30 a.m. by message (712) 775-8971, code 266751. References: The Holy Bible, 1 Samuel 8-9. Don't stop praying and hoping. "Today is another great day to do good and be successful."

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ENTERTAINMENT

Brotherhood Crusade Hosts 'Swinging for a Cause' Charity Golf Classic

STAFF REPORT

'Swinging for a Cause' Charity Golf Classic, sponsored by Brotherhood Crusade, was sold-out thanks to the support of "phenomenal partners," said Charisse Bremond Weaver, president/CEO of the social services organization.

"We at Brotherhood Crusade truly appreciate the love and support that our phenomenal partners continue to provide every year," Bremond Weaver said about the event held on Friday, August 9, at the Industry Hills Golf Club in the City of Industry.

Partners included

UDW, Los Angeles Lakers, Golden State Foods, Community Builders Group, Sandra Evers-Manly, Ralph Jackson, Deon Ried, Coca-Cola, Kinecta Wealth Management, Dr. Diandra Bremond, Southwest Airlines, BJ's Restaurant & Brewery, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, CAAP, KIS Founda-

tion, Torrey Pines Bank, City National Bank, AHF, Arnold Hackett, JGM, U.S. Bank, Deserving of Dignity, Derek Richardson, Viscount Foundation, Comerica Bank, SMS Transportation, Stewart Manhattan, Uncle Nearest, Los Angeles Dodgers Foundation, LAFC, Los Angeles Kings,

Los Angeles Galaxy, Los Angeles Rams, Los Angeles Clippers, Los Angeles Urban League, Mercedes Benz of Beverly Hills, Servicon Cares, Downtown Honda, and Pepsi-Co.

"A special thank you to my sisters and sponsors of the Tequila Hole, Jennifer Wiltz, Danielle Wiltz,

Danielle Wiltz, Kiesha Nix, Lisa Woodson, Nicole Butts, Carla Davis-Drisdorn, Schelle Bohanon, Marsel Watts, Stewart Manhattan, SMS Transportation and so many other volunteers that I am missing," added Bremond Weaver.

To learn more, visit brotherhoodcrusade.org.

COURTESY PHOTOS



Pasadena African American Film Foundation Holds Black August Film Festival

SENTINEL NEWS SERVICE

The 3rd Annual Black August Film Festival, organized by the Pasadena African American Film Foundation (PAAFF), will take place on Aug. 17-18 at the Flintridge Center, 236 West Mountain St., Suite 106, in Pasadena.

The lineup includes impactful films addressing a range of social issues from colorism and criminal record expungement to the cultural debate in two states surrounding the right to braid hair without a cosmetology license.

Also, PAAFF will premiere the inaugural Pasadena Sports Legends documentary, "Walter Butler: The Jet," which celebrates the life and achievements of the renowned athlete and mentor. Butler is a Pasadena High School record holder

and state champion at Pasadena City College. He has been the owner of a sporting goods store for more than three decades.

In addition, the festival features a compelling selection of artistic works from 13 different countries such as Australia, India, Brazil, and Colombia. Films from many African countries will be screened as well as productions from Iran, Switzerland, Bulgaria and Italy.

Since its inception, the Black August Film Festival has experience significant growth, both in attendance and quality of submissions. Last year's Best Featured Documentary, "26.2 to Life," was acquired by ESPN Films and premiered earlier this year.

For tickets or more information, visit paaffoundation.org.

PAAFFFOUNDATION.ORG

BLACK AUGUST FILM FESTIVAL

AUGUST 17-18, 2024
@FLINTRIDGE CENTER
PASADENA, CA
11:00 AM - 8:00 PM

2 DAYS
50 FILMS
13 COUNTRIES

COURTESY PHOTO

Jordan Cooper and Jack Mizrahi Are Having a Ball at Debbie Allen Dance Academy



BY KEITH L. UNDERWOOD
Contributing Writer

Jordan E. Cooper is the executive producer, showrunner and creator of the Emmy-nominated BET sitcom, “The Ms. Pat Show.” Cooper is also recognized for his work as a playwright; his stage play “Ain’t No Mo,” was nominated for six Tony Awards and won an Obie Award.

Jack Mizrahi is the co-creator of the voguing dance competition TV show “Legendary.” He was also a writer and consultant on the FX drama series, “Pose.” Mizrahi is an LGBTQIA+ icon of the ballroom scene, as well as a well-respected emcee.

They are both the

on runways, dancing, and lip-syncing in different talent categories. The goal of the contestants is to receive a perfect score of 10s across the board from the judges.

Ballroom was fashioned to characterize and parody archaic thoughts about gender, jobs, and the social class system. It has been an important part of the LGBTQIA+ community for decades, and the houses within that culture have been refuges for young people of color.

“The aspect of building a house is building a home for kids and queer people who would consider themselves misfits,” said Mizrahi. “They surrounded themselves together and they built a social network, and that became a house.”

Mizrahi said within the house structure there are two leaders – a mother and



Jordan E. Cooper

you’re protected from the rest of the world and everything that may harm you outside of this building.”

Mizrahi said ballroom exists because there was a need for ballroom to exist. He called it an “enact need” to feel a sense of belonging,

pioneer or in a category as one of our voguers,” said Mizrahi. “Everybody who comes to ballroom gets a supercharged sense of self.”

Mizrahi said ballroom is now seen around the world, and those looking in from the outside might just think

just about dressing up, dancing, and showing talent. He said it is about “thriving and surviving.”

Cooper said ballroom should not be a “spectator sport.” “I hate it when people go to balls, and they sit by, watch as if people are monkeys in a zoo,” said Cooper. “Know that you’re a monkey too, so get in this damn cage... and have a good time.”

Debbie Allen has been a strong public ally of the LGBTQIA+ community for a long time, but Cooper was surprised to learn she had

Mizrahi. “And combining her ‘iconicness’ with our ‘iconicness’ -- we’re going to create something iconic for the good of art and for the good of culture.”

Mizrahi said anyone who attends the 2nd Annual Remember My Name Ball will get a real ballroom experience.

“This year we’re presenting the Battle of the Ultimate Houses, so you will see the likes of the House of Mugler...the House of Gucci, the iconic House of Ebony, the pioneering House of Ninja, just



Jack Mizrahi, center



Jack Mizrahi, left on stage, at the 1st Remember My Name Ball.

visionary minds responsible for bringing the 2nd Annual Remember My Name Ball to the Debbie Allen Dance Academy, located at the Rhimes Performing Arts Center, on Saturday, Aug. 17, 6 pm-11 pm.

Ballroom is a cultural experience where contestants compete by modeling

a father – who help guide and protect LGBTQIA+ kids. He said the houses were not just designed for ballroom and battling, but also to guide them through life.

“Ballroom is one of those spaces where community thrives,” said Cooper. “Once you’re inside this building [a ballroom]



Scene from last year's Remember My Name Ball.

to be heard, to release energy, and to show talent.

“Whether it’s as a commentator or as a ballroom promoter or as an icon or

it’s about dressing up and having fun, but he contends it is much more than that.

Cooper agrees with Mizrahi that ballroom is not

never attended a ball.

“All of this came about because I was having a conversation with Debbie, and I was asking her if she had ever been to a ball,” said Cooper. “She was like, ‘No, I’ve never been to a ball,’ and I could not believe it because it’s Debbie Allen!”

Cooper said instead of taking Allen to a ball, they decided to collaborate on throwing one together. “I could not think of anybody else but the iconic Jack Mizrahi to lead the charge and making that happen,” said Cooper.

“Debbie Allen has been somebody that has been for our community since I was a child watching everything – she’s an icon,” said

to name a few,” said Mizrahi. “They’ll be competing in five categories: face, sex siren, best-dressed, runway, vogue, and it’s a battle of supremacy.”

In addition to Cooper, Mizrahi and Allen, the celebrity judges for the Remember My Name Ball include Tina Knowles, Lena Waithe, and Billy Porter. The special honoree of the night’s festivities is Lee Daniels.

Mizrahi said the one house that’s left standing at the end will be the winner.

For more information on the 2nd Annual Remember My Name Ball, please visit www.debbiealldanceacademy.com. Must be 18 or over to attend.

Faly Rakotohavana Back for Season 2 of ‘UnPrisoned’ on Hulu

BY KEITH L. UNDERWOOD
Contributing Writer

Faly Rakotohavana stars as Fin alongside Kerry Washington and Delroy Lindo in the Hulu comedy series “UnPrisoned.”

Fin is the son of Washington’s character Paige and the grandson of Lindo’s character Edwin. It is produced by the Onyx Collective and streams on Hulu.

Rakotohavana hails from the East African island country of Madagascar. He joked and said the biggest misconception about Madagascar is that the animals talk like they do in the DreamWorks animated film of the same name. In fact, Rakotohavana said most of the animals in the cartoon are not even native to his birthplace.

“There are no lions, hippos, zebras -- wait,” he said. “Dad, are there hippos in Madagascar?” Rakotohavana asked his father.

“No there are not – no hippos, no zebras, and no giraffes,” he continued. “They’re all from a zoo in New York, and they took a boat there.”

From a very young age, Rakotohavana said he



Faly Rakotohavana

always wanted to be an actor. When he was six years old, his family moved to Phoenix, Arizona in the United States.

He first started pursuing acting there but found it challenging because he had a speech impediment. “I did speech therapy for a while,” he said, “then I got over the stutter.”

After overcoming his impediment, Rakotohavana and his family moved to Texas to pursue new opportunities. He discovered the theatre there, and Rakotohavana said the theatre

made him fall in love with acting.

“I did local theatre there,” he said. “I loved doing theatre, but you know, I want[ed] to be on TV.” He learned of an audition for the Disney Channel in Phoenix, AZ., and he said his father drove him there to pursue the opportunity.

“It turned out it was for a camp called CGTV,” said Rakotohavana. “I did that, then I met my agent, my manager, and then everything just kind of worked itself out after that.”

When asked what it feels like to have a supportive family while on his acting quest, Rakotohavana replied, “My dad is right here, so I’m about to inflate his ego. They moved to Los Angeles for me, essentially. My parents have stuck through it – I would be nothing without them.”

Before joining the cast of “UnPrisoned,” Rakotohavana had a supporting role in the Disney channel family sitcom “Raven’s Home” and the Disney

original movie, “The Secret Society of Second-Born Royals.”

When talking about his character Fin in “UnPrisoned” Rakotohavana said he brought much of his own personality to the character. “I’m a very dry and sarcastic person,” he said, “and getting to bring that to Fin, especially with Kerry and Delroy – that was just so fun to do.”

He continued, “I enjoy working with them [Washington and Lindo] so much, and Fin is such a fun character. He’s got so much going on in his head, and he has to deal with Paige and Edwin at the same time as he’s dealing with himself. He’s got the craziest parental dynamic ever.”

“UnPrisoned” as described on the official Hulu site, is a half-hour comedy about a messy but perfectionist relationship therapist and single mom whose life is turned right-side-up when her dad gets out of prison and moves in with her and her teenage son.

Rakotohavana said some of his favorite moments while filming “UnPrisoned” are when Fin turns Paige’s therapy advice back on her.

“Although Fin is growing into his own, and in some ways, he does have to be the adult,” said Rakotohavana, “he really has learned a lot from his mother, and he does pay attention to what she says, and he loves her. It’s crazy to see the impact these different dynamics have on his life.”

Rakotohavana said he was very familiar with Washington’s work before “UnPrisoned.” He was also

familiar with Lindo’s work, although initially, he didn’t know who Lindo was by name.

“He’s [Lindo] amazing,” said Rakotohavana. “On set, I watch him all the time, like a stalker. I am zoned in on him. I love seeing how he works.”

Rakotohavana said there is a “sense of pressure” working with Washington and Lindo because he always wants to deliver a performance that is on

par with his co-stars. “These guys are the top of the top,” he said. “I’m just the guy that was lucky enough to be cast to work with them.”

But Rakotohavana said he has worked hard to earn his place on “UnPrisoned,” and he constantly reminds himself that he was cast for a reason, so he always puts his best effort forward.

Season 2 of “UnPrisoned” is currently streaming on Hulu.



Faly Rakotohavana, center, Kerry Washington, left, and Delroy Lindo, right in a scene from the Hulu comedy series “UnPrisoned.”

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THURSDAY, AUGUST 15, 2024

Student Athlete of the Week: Jayla Cigar-Dingle

BY AMANDA SCURLOCK
Sports Editor

With St. Mary's Academy last season, Jayla Cigar-Dingle reached the CIF State championship meet. She will be heading to Sacramento State University on a full-ride and will be competing on their track and field team under the tutelage of Kyra Jefferson.

Cigar-Dingle came in second place in the 100m and third place in the 200m in the 2024 Southern Section meet. However, she normally runs the 400m.

"My coach, he wanted me to go easy on my legs because I'm going to

Sacramento State," Cigar-Dingle said. "I made it to State in the 100 and 200 ... that's a good thing."

Cigar-Dingle came to St. Mary's track and field team during the COVID-19 pandemic. She had to learn several aspects of track and field, including the college recruitment process, on her own. The track team had few members at the time, but has since flourished. As a senior Cigar-Dingle encouraged, inspired, and aided her classmates.

"I feel like St. Mary's has taught me leadership skills on a different type of level," she said. "To see me leading all these little girls



COURTESY PHOTO

Jayla Cigar-Dingle will be attending Sacramento State University on a full ride this fall.

to get scholarships ... I set the bar high."

To be a leader, Cigar-Dingle learned that she can not show any sad emotions while competing as it might lessen the confidence of teammates. It could also impact her performance.

"Mental is a big part of track, so when you step on that track you better know you got to beat all these girls," Cigar-Dingle said. "If you don't, who is gonna think you are the best?"

Cigar-Dingle began running track at a young age with the L.A. Jets Track Club. With the L.A. Jets, she became the 8U National Champion in the 400m.

"I broke the 400-meter record," she said. "I was like track is gonna be my sport forever."

Athleticism runs in the family for Cigar-Dingle as her mother also ran track and her father played basketball.

Cigar-Dingle noted how being a student athlete means to take on extra tasks that go far beyond school work.

"Most people, they can say they're students but they can't say they're a student and then they also went to practice for three to four hours," she said. "I feel like student athletes, they're not recognized enough for everything they do."

Bridgette Robinson Wants to Improve the Soccer iQ of Youth

BY AMANDA SCURLOCK
Sports Editor

Educator Bridgette Robinson created Soccer iQ Institute to provide a unique academic experience for student athletes from sixth-12th grade. At Soccer iQ Institute, athletic training for soccer is incorporated into a schedule with academics.

The school operates like a European-style soccer academy instead of a typical public school format.

"It is a full academy model," Robinson said. "[Students] get treated like professional athletes but the model functions as a private school."

The campus is located in Los Alamitos. Along with having classrooms for hybrid learning, Soc-



COURTESY PHOTO

Bridgette Robinson is the director of operations and education at Soccer iQ Institute.

cer iQ has two indoor practice fields and a virtual reality room. Soccer iQ also has a recovery lounge that provides compression

therapy, a cold plunge and a sauna.

The academics are provided via a partnership with CTL Academy. The stu-

dents learn virtually and with teachers on-site. Tutors are also provided for students who need extra assistance.

Students start their day off at 7:00 a.m. with drills. Academic learning goes on from 8:05 a.m. to 12:05 p.m.; academic sessions entail two hours of both virtual learning and learning with a teacher present. The afternoon consists of skills training in soccer. Students also get recovery sessions once a week.

"I wanted to have a well-built out in-person curriculum that's engaging and interactive for the students," Robinson said. "We're talking about soccer kids who probably have a really hard time in average educational environments where they have to sit in a chair all day and

they're already hyperactive."

The CTL Academy provides common core education that also aligns with United Nation policies.

"That's great for soccer because soccer is an international sport," Robinson said. "When these kids are attending CTL Academy, they have the opportunity to get accepted to schools internationally."

The athletic training is done in partnership with Deft Touch Soccer Center. Staff members facilitate the daily soccer training while the Deft Touch president and director Trey Brocksen Scharlin manages the weekly recovery sessions.

Robinson, who has a Masters degree in elementary education, developed a passion for teaching during

her time working in public schools. Robinson then created a school for toddlers and kids not yet old enough for elementary. The school focused on STEAM learning and had as much as 87 kids and 20 staff members.

"When COVID came, I applied for every grant, all kinds of funding," Robinson said. "I got everything I asked for ... so I doubled the capacity to 87."

She sold the school to run Soccer iQ. Going into its second year, Soccer iQ has seven students.

"We can have a max of 10 for this year," Robinson said. "I'm excited to see how the kids work this program."

For more information about the Soccer iQ Institute, please visit <https://www.socceriqinstitute.com/>.

Allyson Felix Joins the IOC Athletes' Commission

BY AMANDA SCURLOCK
Sports Editor

Olympic legend Allyson Felix has been elected to the International

Olympic Committee (IOC) Athletics Commission. Her membership was confirmed during the Closing Ceremony of the 2024 Paris Summer Olympics.

"This is a great honor, and I am very happy to have the confidence of the athletes of the world to continue in my role as member of the IOC Athletes' Commission," said Felix. "We should always strive to improve the athlete experience, and ensure athlete perspective is elevated in conversations around the present and future of the Olympic and Paralympic Movement."

Felix will also become a member of the USOPC board of directors.

The IOC Athletes Commission advocates for and supports Olympic athletes through their careers. Felix has been an appointed athlete representative in the IOC Athletes Commission since 2022. The Team USA Athletes Commission elected her to be the United States candidate.

"Allyson set a gold standard for performance on the field of play and has continued her commitment to excellence by advocating for parity and opportunity in both sport and the broader community after retiring from competition," said USOC CEO Sarah Hirshland. "In her time on the Team USA AC, and in two years on the IOC AC, she's added important perspective and future vision. We are thrilled she will continue to use her voice in support of athletes from the United States and around the world as a member of

the Athletes' Commission."

Felix has been making positive changes for the Olympians. She implemented an initiative to have a nursery in the Olympic Village for the first time in history. The nursery is meant to provide a cozy environment for athletes to spend time and nurse their young children.

The nursery was created in partnership with Pampers and was available for athletes for 12 hours daily.

"It was top of mind to support athletes who are mothers," Felix said. "It's a space where families can get away from it all and have some of the comforts of home. They can have playtime and have places to feed their babies."

Felix has competed in



AP PHOTO/CHARLIE RIEDEL

Felix helped implement a nursery in Olympic Village for athletes.

five Olympiads earning seven gold, three silver and one bronze medal. She was a member of the women's 4x100m relay team who broke the world record during the 2012 London Games.

Felix retired during the 2020 Tokyo Olympics as

the most decorated track and field athlete and as a parent. After her retirement, Felix became a member of the LA28 Organizing Committee Athlete's Commission. She also owns the shoe and apparel brand Saysh with her brother Wes.



AP PHOTO/ASHLEY LANDIS

Allyson Felix has 11 Olympic medals.