



# Mayor Butts Holds State of the City Economic Summit at Intuit Dome

*The mayor shared that it was people working together that helped Inglewood begin a new chapter.*



BRIAN W. CARTER/L.A. SENTINEL



CITY OF INGLEWOOD

The City of Inglewood State of the City: An Economic Summit 2024 was held at the Intuit Dome.

Mayor Butts delivered a TED Talk style keynote presentation, showcasing key performance indicators for the city over the past 12 months and the overall growth and prosperity of Inglewood since he took office in 2011.

BY BRIAN W. CARTER  
Contributing Writer

“There will be a significant peace to fully realize the renaissance of our city,” said, Inglewood Mayor James T. Butts Jr. during the “City of Inglewood State of the City: An Economic Summit 2024” at the Intuit Dome.

“Two words and two concepts, the first is synergy, the second is collabo-

rate. There can be no synergy without collaboration.”

Butts made it very clear at the Intuit Dome on Friday, June 28, in front of local legislation, public servants and guests, very appreciative of the support, collaborations and partners that have helped bring the city of Inglewood to this moment.

Inglewood’s 12th mayor has over 50 years of

public safety and municipal government experience. He holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration from California State University and a Master’s Degree in Business Administration from California Polytechnic University.

He has held the rank of CEO, general manager and assistant general manager of three large municipal organizations. Butts served

19 years in the Inglewood Police Department, becoming deputy chief, 15 years as the chief of police for the City of Santa Monica, and five years as an assistant general manager for Los Angeles World Airports in charge of Public Safety and Counterterrorism, taking LAX to number 1 ranking nationwide by the TSA in 2009. He is also a seven-year board member and past chairman

of the Los Angeles Metro Board of Directors.

“When I got to Santa Monica, I said, ‘Man, it can’t get any better than this,’ when I got to the airport, I had a \$114,000,000 budget, I had 1,100 employees and I said, ‘It can’t get any better than this,’ came back to Inglewood — all we had was Sizzler and a big donut —

and an \$18 million deficit,” said Butts.

“I said, ‘it doesn’t get any worse than this,’ but I found out there are great people ready to coalesce behind me.

“A vision that they could be a part of something bigger than themselves.”

{See CITY OF INGLEWOOD on B-5}

# California Lawmakers Debate the Future of Journalism

BY ANTONIO RAY HARVEY  
California Black Media

Last month, Sen. Steven Glazer (D-Orinda) vowed to bring back a journalism support bill he authored that had hit a snag in the legislative process.

A few weeks later, the lawmaker lived up to his promise.

On June 27, the California Senate moved to advance Senate Bill (SB) 1327 with a 27-7 vote under the Urgency Clause — special language contained in legislation that privileges it to take immediate effect after the governor signs it.

SB 1327 would impose a charge — called a “Data Extraction Mitigation Fee” in the bill — on major digital technology platforms

such as Meta, Amazon, and Google to fund local news. Glazer pulled the bill from the floor in May when he discovered he didn’t have the minimum two-thirds votes for passage. Now, that he has generated enough support to move the bill forward, Glazer called his push to pass it a “rescue effort.”

SB 1327 is now on its way to the Assembly for review.

“We are in a moment of peril in our democracy, and our hollowed-out newsrooms are in the center of that crisis. Let me provide some context — democracies are the exception in human history. It’s not if they will fail, it’s a matter of when they will fail,” Glazer said during the opening of his presentation during a



COURTESY PHOTO  
Sen. Lola Smallwood-Cuevas

hearing for the bill on the Senate floor.

Glazer continued, “Ours is 248 years young. Seventy-one percent of the world’s population is under autocrac-



COURTESY PHOTO  
Sen. Steven Glazer

ies. Now, in countries such as Hungary, Argentina, and Turkey, we see these democracies teetering. You simply have to see their actions to curtail and take control of

independent news media that was keeping these democracies honest. The canary in the democracy mine is independent news.”

A vote on the urgency clause must precede a vote on the bill and requires a two-thirds vote for passage. Glazer’s bill got exactly the amount needed to move off the Senate floor.

Seven Senate Republicans voted against SB 1327, including Senate Majority Leader Brian Dahle (R-Bieber). Sen. Scott Thomas Wilk (R-Lancaster) was the lone member of the party that voted in favor of the bill.

SB 1327 has been getting pushback from digital tech giants and some publishers that are worried about losing advertising, the

supposed threat of government influence, discrimination against larger publishers, and nonprofit newsrooms getting a slice of the mitigation fee.

Sen. Roger Niello (R-Roseville) voted against the bill. During the debate on the floor, Niello said it gives him “great pause to entertain a proposal” where over half the journalism industries today are “owned by hedge funds and individual investors,” he said.

The lawmaker who owns several high-end car dealerships added that the bill could bring “unintended consequences such as capital venture groups reaping the profits, should SB 1327 become law.

{See JOURNALISM BILL on B-5}

## Environmental Justice Leader Bill Burke Appointed to ARCHES Board

BY CORA JACKSON-FOSSETT  
Managing Editor

Dr. William “Bill” Burke, renowned environmental justice advocate, has been nominated to serve on the Alliance for Renewable Clean Hydrogen Energy Systems (ARCHES) Board of Directors. In this position, Burke will assume the Renewables 100 Policy Institute board seat.

His appointment was announced on June 14, by Angelina Galiteva, Renewables 100 founder and board chair; and Diane Moss, Renewables 100 founder, board secretary and executive director. The board also includes Josephine Gonzalez, board treasurer; and Sona Coffee and Carol Hamilton, board members.

Dr. Burke was truly humbled by the appointment and vowed to do everything



COURTESY PHOTO  
Dr. William “Bill” Burke

within his power to ensure that the Black and Brown community were able to participate in this program.

“If gasoline was the backbone of the U.S. economy for the past 150 years, then hydrogen is the new gasoline. While California has received \$1.2 Billion in initial funding for this project, the overall investment into hydrogen is in excess of \$60 Billion and makes it the largest grant ever

awarded,” he stated.

“My goal is to ensure that these dollars and this opportunity will strengthen and enrich the economic position of the minority community throughout America. But as a community we must get on the train and as a board member it will be my job to make sure there are seats on the train for those who have traditionally been excluded from participating,” added Dr. Burke.

Outlining Burke’s qualifications, Galiteva and Moss said, “Your contribution and dedication to the causes of clean air, climate change mitigation, renewable resource integration and overall health and community benefits are widely acknowledged. We are confident that your remarkable environmental leadership,

{See DR. WILLIAM BURKE on B-5}

## Tavis Smiley, KBLA Delivers Historic National Climate Change Simulcast

BY RODD A. AMOS  
Contributing Writer

KBLA Talk 1580 embarked on a historic national townhall entitled “Climate Change and Social Justice,” to launch its \$2 million, 12-month Climate Justice Campaign that was originally announced on January 12 during a press conference at Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area.

The June 18 summit occurred at the California Science Center in Exposit-

ion Park and simulcast live on C-Span and KBLA.

“The purpose of this townhall is to raise the civic IQ of Black people, poor people, and communities of color concerning climate health, to ensure persons that are impacted by climate change get the right resources they need, and to ensure that these climate justice crusaders of color get a platform to continue their work,” stated KBLA Talk

{See KBLA CLIMATE SUMMIT on B-5}



RODD A. AMOS/L.A. SENTINEL

Tavis Smiley moderated the summit.



RODD A. AMOS/L.A. SENTINEL

Several community members served on the panel.

# Groundbreaking Held for Two Affordable Housing in South L.A.

119 new affordable homes stabilize families and offer permanent supportive housing to Transition-Age Youth

SENTINEL NEWS SERVICE

Nonprofit affordable housing developer Abode Communities began construction of Central Avenue Apartments and The Carlton, transforming two properties in South L.A. into permanent affordable housing for families and supportive housing for Transition Age Youth (TAY), respectively.

In total, the residential communities will bring 119 new rental homes. The Carlton is located at 5407 S. Western Avenue and Central Avenue Apartments is located at 8911 S. Central Avenue. The Carlton is expected to complete construction in January 2026 and Central in summer 2026.

"It's our goal to prevent families from falling into homelessness and ensure that young people exiting foster care have a high quality place to call home and the supportive services needed to navigate a complex public system," said Holly Benson, President & CEO of Abode Communities.

"I am so proud to bring these investments to South L.A. and provide a much-needed place for families and TAY to find their independence and achieve their

personal goals."

The 2024 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count showed that both the City



COURTESY PHOTO  
Rendering for The Carlton Apartments designed by Abode Communities, located at 5407 S. Western Avenue in Los Angeles.

and County of Los Angeles saw an overall decrease in people experiencing homelessness. Homelessness in Los Angeles County decreased by 0.27% to an estimated 75,312 people. Homelessness in the City of Los Angeles was down 2.2% to an estimated 45,252 people. Permanent housing is up 18% at an all-time high. 28,000 housing placements were made this year, bringing the total over the last seven years to more than 110,000.

"We earned this decrease in homelessness through collaborative efforts and leadership of our Mayor. Our con-

tinued teamwork in South L.A. exemplifies the City's dedication to providing affordable permanent sup-

portive housing for our families and youth," said Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson (CD 8).

Both developments will feature amenity-rich communities with courtyards, playgrounds, a community room, bicycle parking, onsite property management, and space for supportive and resident services. Abode Communities offers its signature Beyond Homes program to all residents with the goal to build skills, provide access to resources, and promote multi-generational housing stability. Abode Communities will partner with St. Joseph Center to meet the

unique supportive service needs of TAY residents.

The 2024 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count saw a 16% decrease of unhoused transition age youth, totaling 3,050 young people experiencing homelessness. Among young people, exits from the foster system are leading causes of homelessness. TAY are one of the fastest growing populations of homelessness nationwide, often linked to justice system involvement or trauma.

In a UCSF study on homelessness, 32% of unhoused Transition-Age Youth reported experiencing a mental health-related hospitalization.

"Increasing the availability of affordable housing in South LA is crucial to preventing homelessness," said Councilmember Curren Price (CD 9).

"To stem the tide of individuals entering homelessness faster than we can house them, prevention must be at the heart of our strategy. Our comprehensive approach must focus on keeping existing housing affordable and creating more affordable options. This is essential to effectively address and prevent

homelessness across the region."

The 2024 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count saw a 7% increase in people experiencing homelessness in the South L.A. Service Provision Area (SPA 6) — the second highest among the eight SPAs below only Skid Row. The count estimated that on any given night there are 13,886 people experiencing homelessness in SPA 6.



COURTESY PHOTO  
Rendering for Central Avenue Apartments designed by KFA Architecture, located at 8911 S. Central Avenue in Los Angeles.

"It's good to see that a higher proportion of people experiencing homelessness are inside and sheltered where it's safer and smoother to transition to permanent housing, but that means that the work of affordable housing builders is more important than ever," said Benson.

"By keeping our focus on creating affordable homes, we can make sure that people in shelters get to come home permanently."

Both developments are financed utilizing a combination of permanent financing, Low Income Housing Tax Credits, funding from California Dept. of Housing & Community Development's (HCD) Multifamily Family Program, funding from

Affordable Housing Managed Pipeline from the Los Angeles Housing Department, and \$32.9 million in project-based rental subsidies from Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles. Central also benefited from a \$4.5 million grant from HCD's Infill Infrastructure Grant Program.

## Postal Service Holding Job Fairs in Los Angeles

SENTINEL NEWS SERVICE

The Postal Service is hosting job fairs throughout the month of July to fill immediate openings for letter carriers and other positions.

A postal career offers employees the ability to work where they live, good pay, stability, life-long benefits and career advancement opportunities throughout the entire agency.

Make plans to become the newest member of the more than 637,000 postal employees throughout the nation by attending one of the upcoming job fairs or by going to [www.usps.com/careers](http://www.usps.com/careers) for steps on how to apply. No appointment is necessary.

In-person application processing will be conducted at the location below:



USPS.COM  
The Postal Service has immediate openings for letter carriers and other positions.

CA 5 (Los Angeles) District Office  
7001 S Central Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90052  
Job Fairs are every Tuesday and Thursday,

from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. (Closed Thursday, July 4, 2024)

As part of its 10-year plan, Delivering for America, the United States Postal

Service is focused on building a more stable and empowered workforce.

The available postal positions, which include seasonal, part-time, and full-time opportunities, offer starting pay from \$18.22 to \$21.17 an hour. Anyone seeking a fast-paced and rewarding work environment are encouraged to apply.

The Postal Service offers benefits packages to include medical, dental, vision, sick time, and vacation leave to its workforce; see online job announcement for full details.

Applicants must be 18 years of age (or 16 years of age with a high school diploma or GED), be able to pass a criminal background investigation and must be available to work weekends and holidays. Job postings are updated

frequently, so check our website often for additional opportunities.

To learn more or complete an online application, visit [usps.com/careers](http://usps.com/careers).

## Hawthorne Parks and Recreation Foundation Awards 100 Summer Swim Lesson Scholarships



COURTESY PHOTO  
Children can learn vital water safety skills at the city's pools.

SENTINEL NEWS SERVICE

which will be installed in Memorial Park.

Continuing its mission to empower youth, the Hawthorne Parks and Recreation Foundation announces the continuation of its Summer Swim Lesson Scholarships. These scholarships provide vital water safety skills to children within the community, ensuring they have the opportunity to learn and enjoy swimming in a safe environment.

Each year, swim lesson scholarships are awarded to 100 community members ages 4 to 15. Interested community members can apply for 2024 summer scholarships by visiting the Community Services office at 3901 West El Segundo Blvd., Hawthorne, CA 90250.

"The Parks and Recreation Foundation has made a positive mark in Hawthorne for the past four decades," said City Manager Vontray Norris. "The funds that they have raised have impacted countless community members, and they're not slowing down anytime soon!"

In mid-March, the Parks and Recreation Foundation hosts an annual Golf Tournament to raise funds for Summer Swim Lesson Scholarships. The Tournament also benefits other community projects; this year, it helped sponsor the city's new digital marquee

The foundation also raises funds through its Beach Boys Landmark Brick Program. The Beach Boys Historic Landmark, located near the boyhood home of the Wilson Brothers, is one of Hawthorne's most popular tourist attractions. Community members can commemorate their love for the Beach Boys and support the Parks and Recreation Foundation by purchasing an inscribed brick for \$150.

Many former swim school participants have become pool aides, eventually becoming lifeguards at Hawthorne's local pools. The Hawthorne junior lifeguard program was created with the explicit goal of increasing participants' water confidence and preparing the next generation of local lifeguards.

The foundation hopes to expand its local impact and will also be launching a new youth sports scholarship program for the 2024-2025 season. More information about the scholarship program will be released in the coming months.

For more information on how to support or apply for these scholarships, visit [cityofhawthorne.org/departments/community-services](http://cityofhawthorne.org/departments/community-services) or contact the Community Services Department at 310-349-1640.

# Save the Date

Saturday, August 10, 2024

8:00am - 12:00pm



## Back to School Health Fair

26th Anniversary!

Healthy Kids Learn Better

Drive through only to pick-up fully loaded backpack and more.....

Pre-registration is required

# See You There!!!

# Jocelyn C. Chambers Makes Significant Impact with BLKEventsLA

By **SHELBY STEPHENS**  
Contributing Writer

Close to 1 million African Americans live in Los Angeles County and make up most of the area's cultural, economic, and political landscape. Between influencing the culture and fighting for equity in underrepresented fields, Black residents still deserve space to have fun, enjoy each other's compa-

a platform dedicated to linking the Black community through curated events throughout the city. In addition to her platform, she is also a co-founder in the development of the JoinLinks App which also connects individuals with similar interests.

Chambers is an advocate for diversity and representation and relocated to L.A. to write music for movies, but quickly real-

and commercials. She is a classically trained pianist, and her work spans genres from neoclassical to hip-hop. She is culturally impacting society through multiple avenues with her community involvement via her social platforms.

In a recent interview with the Los Angeles Sentinel, Chambers dives into the who, what, where, how, and why behind BLKEventsLA's mission to



COURTESY PHOTO

Jocelyn C. Chambers

JoinLinks app within the next five to ten years throughout the states to help Black individuals find where they can do, what they can go, and who they can go with.

She explained, "I know for certain I want Black people in all parts of the country and eventually all parts of the world, to feel like they can immediately integrate into a flourishing Black community. If I were to start over and go to a different city, I would want to be able to walk into a place where Black experiences



COURTESY PHOTO

BLKEvents LA

ny, and create new experiences. Jocelyn C. Chambers moved to Los Angeles in July 2018, from Austin, TX in search for community and connection.

Chambers is the founder of BLKEventsLA,

ized the need for Black resources for the culture.

As a multifaceted composer, Chambers is a community champion who has cultivated a diverse portfolio of emotionally resonant music for film, television,

engage the Black community in L.A. through a weekly list of parties, art exhibitions, group gatherings, and live music. Reflecting on her community impact, Chambers shared, "creating

BLKEventsLA has shown me the immense need for such a platform. This summer, we have exciting events lined up that are crucial for fostering unity and celebrating our culture."

Post pandemic Chambers noticed L.A. needed a revival, "I think it has taken awhile for the city to get back to where it wanted to be after COVID and a lot of Black events were resurrected after the pandemic, but a lot of things didn't survive. I'm excited for the summer because there are so many great things happening that deserve to be shared.

"One of my favorite events is Love, Peace, and Spades. They have a monthly game night at the Line Hotel in Korea Town, they do all the Black family classics. It's a great event to meet new people and get closer to the friends you already have. It feels like the highlight reel of a family cookout."

Launching in June of 2023, BLKEventsLA received an immense amount of support and quickly resonated with thousands of followers,

and travelers alike, looking to experience and build community in more ways than one. The weekly event roundups on TikTok and Instagram, plus a Tuesday newsletter featuring 80+ events, has garnered the attention of Issa Rae and Donald Glover.

Chambers has curated multiple community walks and events to support Black-owned businesses. Earlier this month, BLKEventsLA hosted a walk in collaboration with Glover and Jellyman Tea, to support the actor's boba shop. Chambers' partner in the JoinLinks app and founder Terence Simpson, developed The Saturday Hike Crew. The hiking group grew 5,000 followers in 30 days after their first community event, a mid-city walk with a guided architectural and historical tour of the lost Black neighborhood Sugar Hill. Being unapologetically Black has made both platforms an instant success.

After celebrating BLKEventsLA's first year in business, Chambers hopes to expand BLKEventsLA and the



COURTESY PHOTO

BLKEvents LA

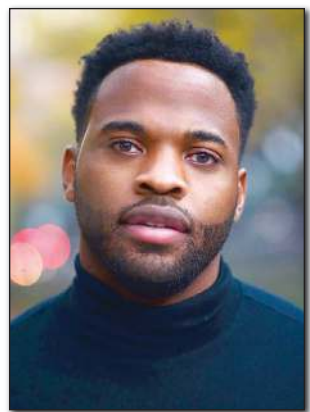
are happening regularly. To have these platforms and build these networks that keep us connected, would be a great across America in a very beautiful way."

Chambers' dedication and covenant to her community is evident in her work. Stay connected and follow @BLKEventsLA on TikTok and Instagram for daily and weekly updates about what is happening in Black L.A.

## Terence Simpson and Team Build Community with JoinLinks

By **SI-MONE GRANT**  
Contributing Writer

When Terence Simpson moved to Los Angeles from Long Island, New York three years ago, he knew no one. He assumed that with his personality he would figure out how to meet new



COURTESY PHOTO

Founder of JoinLinks, Terence Simpson aims to help foster a sense of community on a larger scale to give more people access to one another through technology.

people, but he was wrong. He even contemplated going back home his first couple of weeks in L.A. because of how lonely he felt.

Things slowly, but surely, started to improve for Simpson as he made friends through different third or community spaces. He noticed how others struggled to find their community of people and utilized his experience to create JoinLinks - "an app that helps people find fun things to do each week and meet cool people to do them with."

Growing up as a middle child, Simpson was full of curiosity. He has always had an interest in business, whether it was trading stocks or building websites. He also had a passion for sports, having played tennis and basketball. His passion for basketball led him to The Hotchkiss School, and later, he attended Northeastern University.

Now, years later, he is

utilizing his love for business to run his own. His team consists of Matt Greene, who runs the coding side of things; Tamara Hendley, who is in charge of designing and finances; and Jocelyn Chambers, their marketer and community organizer. Together, they ensure the community has a platform to meet and network with people they normally wouldn't on a daily basis.

JoinLinks has received great feedback in relation to how easy it is to use the app, and the excitement on knowing the happenings in L.A.

"...but also multiple people have come up to me to say that they found new friends through the app and have hung out multiple times since attending a LINK," he added. "Which is a blessing and I'm really happy it's helping others build community."

Simpson originally wanted his app to be called "Links," which to him means to "link up" with people but came to realize that name was too common and could potentially be difficult to find in an app store or online. Ultimately, Simpson and his team added the "Join" in the front of it, which made more sense for them because the goal was to get people to "join - links around the city."

The thought of creating an app could be nerve wrecking for many. The questions, "Where do I begin?" Or "How will I pay for this?" may come to mind. Simpson described the process as something that "is not for the faint of heart."

It took him and his team two years to get a working app, and after building a basic version of the app in a year, they realized that it was not usable and had to scrap it, starting over with a new code base.

He revealed that they had to let go of those engineers and two of their marketers and designers from the founding team due to the delays, which he called "both frustrating and disheartening." He added that everyone faced "a healthy dose of imposter syndrome."

"Ultimately, it's been a grind just to reach the point where people have a workable application to use. But that's only the starting line, because what good is an app if no one uses it? Getting users to incorporate JoinLinks into their daily routines has been a challenging, yet rewarding experience," he emphasized.

"Honestly, I could write a short story on the ups and downs of the process. But the ends truly do justify the means as we are now growing pretty fast."

His short-term goal for his app is to continue learning from his users and to solve what he calls the "pain point of loneliness."

"In the mid to long term we would like to raise an angel or pre-seed funding round to help expand to other cities around the country including my home state NY," he said.

Simpson wants people to know that JoinLinks is for the community.

"It's designed to show you what to do each week and connect you with people to join you, so you never feel alone," he ended.

"Additionally, it aims to create third spaces around the city where you can meet amazing people, build friendships, POTENTIALLY find love, and experience the joy of discovering new connections in the place you live."

For more information on JoinLinks, visit: <https://linktr.ee/joinlinksapp>.

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EVERYDAY SAFE

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES Public Health

LOS ANGELES COUNTY OVP OFFICE OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION

# Personalizing SoCalGas' Customer Assistance Programs and Making Utilities Accessible

SPECIAL TO THE SENTINEL

Jesikah Osborne, community assistance outreach specialist at SoCalGas, has worked for the company for 15 years. She started her career in meter reading, moved through the customer contact center, and then into various managerial roles. For the past two years, Jesikah has focused on customer assistance programs and capital projects outreach.



Jesikah Osborne

## 1. What does your role in customer programs entail?

I support the public outreach and awareness of various customer assistance programs and billing options to help eligible customers. Once our customers know that SoCalGas offers options to receive assistance, they can find the best solution to meet their needs.

We have four programs available throughout the year, including California Alternative Rates for Energy (CARE), Energy Savings Assistance Program, Past Due Bill Forgiveness, and Medical Baseline, which support qualified customers to conserve energy and save money. We also partner with United Way of Greater Los

Angeles to offer customers a one-time grant to help with their natural gas bills through the Gas Assistance Fund (GAF). This year, there is \$1 million available in GAF funding for income-qualified customers.

## 2. Why are you passionate about this work?

Growing up in a low-income household, it was sometimes a struggle to maintain our home and pay for necessary services, so this work is incredibly personal to me. I am committed to helping those with financial challenges access resources to conserve energy and save money. I understand hardship, and giving back is an empowering and humbling experience. I want

to remind our customers that this is not a hopeless effort. SoCalGas' customer programs are here to equip them with the knowledge, steps, and resources to keep their gas service running.

## 3. Do you have a mantra or philosophy of life that has guided you in your career?

A mantra that I keep close is "each one, reach one." This quote embodies the work that I am passionate about and reminds me that helping one person has the power to change the world. I believe that the essence of leadership lies in serving others, and by leading with empathy and transparency, I can discern people's needs and the most effective ways to support them.

As I've moved through leadership positions, this mantra has also guided the support I provide to co-workers for their career development. I have been lucky enough to work in my purpose, paying it forward, and continuing to make our services more accessible to customers.

## 4. How do you see your role and future customer programs expanding?

Most recently, we've been working with tribal and

indigenous communities to raise awareness for our supportive services, especially our customer assistance programs. This is an incredible experience for me, as I am part Cherokee and Blackfoot, and working in these communities means that I'm

even greater support to our customers.

## 5. How does customer engagement inform your role and planning?

Meeting community members where they're at means that we're able to gather insights on the issues

and assess how our programs are reaching them. We're able to collect feedback from community partners and customers through supporting events and conducting pilot programs. This informs our process of reaching areas throughout our service area and assesses

## 6. What goals do you have in mind for supporting SoCalGas customers?

We are evaluating ways to expand our reach. For instance, we coordinate with SoCalGas' Americans with Disabilities (ADA) advisor, who provides us with organizations and community events to help us better connect with the disabled community, as well as providing modification of our materials so that we are more inclusive in our outreach approach. By sharing these materials in a more accessible manner, and reaching more people, we can inform our next steps. Guided by my "each one, reach one" philosophy, we are always looking to the next steps for how to support more customers.

At SoCalGas, we believe every Californian deserves a clean, affordable, and resilient energy future. We are working to achieve that future through innovation, collaboration, and decarbonization.



Osborne and Cedric Williams, SCG Chief Safety Officer and Executive Sponsor for VIBE ERG (SCG Black ERG) at 2023 Brotherhood Crusade Turkey Giveaway event in Los Angeles.

able to learn more about my own culture while helping them meet their needs. The work that we are doing is essential for providing services and learning about the diverse cultures throughout our service area. By providing outreach that is culturally mindful, we can provide

and assess how our programs are reaching them. We're able to collect feedback from community partners and customers through supporting events and conducting pilot programs. This informs our process of reaching areas throughout our service area and assesses

# California Diversity Awards Celebrates Achievements and Highlights Growth of Diverse Small Businesses

CALIFORNIA BLACK MEDIA

The California African American Chamber of Commerce, the CalAsian Chamber of Commerce and Hispanic Chambers of Commerce hosted their third Annual Diversity Awards on June 27 in Sacramento.

The awards luncheon

celebrated corporate, legislative, and business leaders who are champions of small diverse businesses in California. The program also featured highlights from a report commissioned by the California Office of the Small Business Advocates (CalOSBA), aimed at understanding the significant

impact small businesses have on the state.

"We like to think of the economy as something where there's always some government agency collecting information, but it's remarkably hard to get into the trenches and figure out what's really happening at the ground level," said Chris

Thornberg, an economist who authored the report.

"Last year was the beginning of pulling this together with the help of CalOSBA, the chambers and sponsors. This year, we expanded and improved the processes, adding data from the American Community Survey to get a better sense of the diverse business community."

The report's findings highlight the importance of small and diverse businesses in California. Collectively, they generated about \$443 billion in 2019, representing nearly half a trillion dollars. Although this figure dropped slightly in 2020 due to the pandemic, their impact remained above \$400 billion, accounting for about 8% of California's overall output.

"That \$414 billion would make our diverse small business sector the 24th largest state economy, larger than Oregon or South Carolina," Thornberg noted. "These businesses support about 3.6 million jobs directly or indirectly."

The report also indicated that diverse small businesses have shown resilience and growth in recent years.

"Despite various challenges, diverse small busi-



At the Ethnic Chamber Diversity Luncheon held in Sacramento on June 27, the audience listens to the report on the state of small diverse businesses in California.

nesses have performed well," said Thornberg. "The number of self-employed individuals and minorities in the state is up 10% from 2016, while overall small business numbers have contracted by about 15% over the same period. This growth is particularly evident in major regions like Los Angeles and San Bernardino, where a significant portion of the labor force comprises self-employed minorities."

Pat Fong Kushida, President and CEO of the California Asian Pacific Chamber of Commerce thanked everyone for attending the event and highlighted the need for continuing to work together.

"Thank you so much for leaning in on that first report and giving us a strong foundation. We all push and pull. This is what we're doing in the room today. There are a lot of pushers and a lot of pullers. Let's work better together, and then we'll achieve some of the goals that Chris outlined for all of us," said Fong.

almost a third of the entire labor force is made up of self-employed minorities, showcasing the power and influence of these communities."

Pat Fong Kushida, President and CEO of the California Asian Pacific Chamber of Commerce thanked everyone for attending the event and highlighted the need for continuing to work together.

"Thank you so much for leaning in on that first report and giving us a strong foundation. We all push and pull. This is what we're doing in the room today. There are a lot of pushers and a lot of pullers. Let's work better together, and then we'll achieve some of the goals that Chris outlined for all of us," said Fong.

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## Controller Cohen 'Cautiously Optimistic' After Newsom Signs Budget

BY BO TEFU  
California Black Media

California State Controller Malia Cohen said she is "cautiously optimistic" after Gov. Gavin Newsom signed the 2-24-25 state budget on June 29.

Cohen, who serves as the state's chief fiscal officer, said the agreement Newsom signed balances the budget, closing a \$45 billion shortfall.

Cohen said although the budget will continue to support critical programs and services most Californians rely on, "its impact on economically disadvantaged communities is yet to be determined."

"I commend Governor Newsom and the Legisla-

ture for including tools in this budget that would further protect the fiscal integrity of the budget in

audit services to ensure that the money appropriated is used for its intended purpose."



State Controller Malia Cohen

future years," Cohen continued. "I look forward to providing California taxpayers and the Governor and the Legislature critical

According to the Governor's office, the budget will also maintain \$22.2 billion in reserves at the end of the fiscal year.

Newsom called the agreement "responsible."

"Thanks to careful stewardship of the budget over the past few years, we're able to meet this moment while protecting our progress on housing, homelessness, education, health care and other priorities that matter deeply to Californians," Newsom wrote in a statement. "I thank the Legislature for their partnership in delivering this sound and balanced plan."

# 14th Annual Festival of Masks Continues to Honor Ancestors

*This year's festival celebrated the late Leimert Park master jeweler and business owner Sika Dwimfo.*

BY BRIAN W. CARTER  
Contributing Writer

L.A. Commons hosted its 14th annual Day of the Ancestors: Festival of Masks in Leimert Park Sunday, June 30. The festival featured live musical performances, a parade procession down Leimert Blvd and more. This year's theme was Bese Saka—Our Wealth is Our Togetherness.

"Bese Saka is an Adinkra symbol that is in the shape of cola nuts and in Ghana, traditionally, those natural elements really represented wealth and affluence and people used them actually for currency," said Karen Mack, founder of L.A. Commons. "Our focus at L.A. Commons is really on bringing people together."

Founded in 2003, L.A. Commons was created with the intention of creating a place where Black culture and the surrounding communities could come together. Held in the African American cultural hub of Los Angeles, Leimert Park, the community celebrates the global African village, calling on the ancestors, and paying homage to a shared heritage through mask-making and dance.

"At this time when things



This year's theme was Bese Saka—Our Wealth is Our Togetherness.

are so crazy and divided, coming together means more than ever and this is such a perfect opportunity to do that and we're more successful this year than we've ever been having different elements of the community like the Harmony Project Drumline, the Lula Washington dancers all of these different elements of the community coming together to celebrate these people that meant so much to them," said Mack.

The Leimert Park community is mourning the recent loss of master jeweler and business owner Sika Dwimfo. He was a beloved fixture in Leimert Park and was celebrated amongst other ancestors such as John Outterbridge, Alfred and Bernice Ligon, Lady Walquer Vereen, Harold Ham-

brick and Snake Doctor.

"One of the most significant things that happened was Sika died last week," said Mack. "We weren't planning on having him be an ancestor but since he became one, we added a sixth ancestor."

"We really wanted to create space for him because he was so important to the community."

The festival started with its traditional Yoruba blessing to cleanse the area and bring everyone together. After the blessing, the parade began with music, dancing, puppetry and beautifully handmade masks. The post parade festivities consisted of drummers and dance performances.

The festival is produced in partnership with the

Leimert Park Art Walk as an effort to promote the vibrancy, culture, legacy, and economy of the historic area. It's made possible through partnerships through Leimert Park businesses and organizations including KAOS Network, Leimert Park Art-Walk, The World Stage, Barbara Morrison Performing

Arts Center, ECWA Empowerment Congress West Area, Leimert Park Jazz Festival, Fernando Pullum Community Arts, Lula Washington Dance Theater, Fowler Museum, Community Coalition, Wellnest LA, Urban Soul Farmer, SoLA Impact, Black Women for Wellness, Jenesse, YWCA Greater Los Angeles, Nappily Naturals, William Grant Still Art Center, Aziz Gallerie, Ackee Bamboo and ORA

"I feel overjoyed," said Kaya D. about the Festival of Masks. "I've been a part of the celebration and coming to it since 2014 and it's beautiful to be able to celebrate our ancestors."

"I'm here to pay my respects to Sika, the master jeweler of Leimert Park," said Miesha. "He pierced my nose the first time when I

was a child and then as an adult, I got re-pierced about five years ago and I liked how spiritual the connection is when he does pierce you and the space is just amazing.

"We're going to definitely miss him in Leimert Park. "Rest well Sika."

"I think this is a great way to honor our ancestors in a culturally significant way that resonates with the community," said Brent T.

"Not only does that bring everybody in the community together after a transition but it shows you that it's a day of celebration."

"You know, people I think, are craving this kind of connection to both each other and the spirits and our heritage, which is so powerful," said Mack

For more information, visit [www.lacommons.org](http://www.lacommons.org).



The festival featured live musical performances, a parade procession and more.



Courtney L. Branch Co-Founder of the Micheaux Film Fest with Steven Caple Jr., recipient of the Oscar Micheaux Trailblazer of Excellence Award and Noel Braham, Founder of the Micheaux Film Fest.

BY ZON D'AMOUR  
Contributing Writer

The Micheaux Film Festival continues to champion an often underrepresented demographic of creatives who may not always feel seen within the media. Ahead of the forthcoming submission deadline, Co-Founders Noel Braham and Courtney L. Branch spoke with the L.A. Sentinel about the continued importance of the Micheaux Film Festival as planning and preparation is underway for its sixth year.

**LAS:** With nearly 40 film festivals that take place in Los Angeles throughout the year, why is the Micheaux Film Festival important and necessary?

**Braham and Branch:** The Micheaux Film Festival, now in its sixth year, holds critical importance among thousands of filmmakers in LA due to its dedication to celebrating the legacy of Oscar Micheaux, a pioneering African American filmmaker who wrote, directed, and produced over 44 feature films independently from the 1920s to the 1940s. Micheaux worked outside the traditional Hollywood financing system, bridging diverse communities that otherwise might not intersect. The festival's mission aligns with Micheaux's ambition of bringing together these disparate worlds—Black and white, rich and poor, rural and urban—under the banner of a film legend. It aims to provide a platform where filmmakers can not only derive value but also contribute, fostering a sense of community and acknowledging Micheaux's significant contributions to both American and global cine-

ma. Thus, the Micheaux Film Festival is essential because it offers both multicultural and BIPOC filmmakers the opportunity to showcase their unique art. It supports a community where people can understand, celebrate, and recognize each other's stories and experiences, continuing the legacy of breaking barriers and fostering inclusivity in the film industry as a way of life rather than a trend of the moment.

**LAS:** What initially inspired the idea for the festival and does that initial inspiration help you to stay motivated until this day?

**Braham:** The inception of the Micheaux Film Festival was inspired by a confluence of events and personal experiences that deeply resonate with me. Twelve years ago, I created a web series. Upon completion, I was unsure how to proceed with marketing and distribution. However, the idea of submitting it to a film festival materialized when I came across the LA Web Fest, founded by the late Michael Ajakwe Jr. A quiet internal voice urged me to submit it. That festival, the only one I submitted the project to, not only accepted us but also nominated us for several awards. I was able to travel to Rome, Italy, and Seoul, Korea, for screenings as part of a syndicate formed by Michael among global web festival directors, underscoring the power of platforms.

Mike was pivotal in my early days in Los Angeles, helping me appreciate the power of my gifts and the importance of community support and generosity. This was transformative, teaching me the value of giving back

## Micheaux Film Festival Is Back For Year Six

*Calling all film and TV enthusiasts passes for "MFF6" are now on sale*

and selflessness in an otherwise transactional city.

Another profound influence was a personal encounter with a production assistant on one of my sets who was living in a tent encampment and told me about his situation after we wrapped production. This assistant worked tirelessly, never complaining, arriving early, and leaving late and his situation opened my eyes to the stark realities that I often ignored in my own community. This revelation, at a time when I was also struggling financially and living in a hostel to support my film project, struck a deep chord. It highlighted the disconnect between my daily environment and the community that I was a part of.

These experiences catalyzed the creation of the Micheaux Film Festival, named to honor not only the legendary filmmaker Oscar Micheaux but also to reflect the stories of individuals like Michael Ajakwe Jr. and my production assistant. The festival aims to embody the spirit of overcoming barriers and supporting those who face them, much like Micheaux, Michael, and countless other filmmakers who navigate the challenges of the industry.

Our mission is to bridge the gap between indie filmmakers and the broader industry, fostering a space where new voices can be heard and validated, and where community and identity are central themes. We focus on elevating those who might otherwise be overlooked, supporting them in finding and affirming their identities through the cinematic arts.

**LAS:** What are some of the important dates and deadlines to keep in mind for those wanting to be involved? Why was it moved from the summer to October?

**Braham and Branch:** July 11 is the last chance for filmmakers, writers, directors, and actors to submit their short films, documentaries, podcasts, and music videos. Submissions can be made through Film Freeway or directly on the festival's website at [micheauxfilm-fest.com](http://micheauxfilm-fest.com). Don't miss this opportunity to have your work featured at the festival!

August 1 — Creative Mixer and Official Selections and Theme Announcement Party at Elevate Lounge, Downtown Los Angeles.

This event serves as a networking opportunity where this year's festival theme will be revealed. It's a chance for writers, directors, producers, distributors, and sponsors to connect, celebrate, and support each other's projects.

The festival will take place from Oct. 21 to Oct. 27. We found it best to move the festival to the fall to better focus on delivering a meaningful experience during a less crowded time in the film industry calendar.

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• DR. MAULANA KARENGA •

# Havoc in the House, Douglass at the Door: July 4th, November 5th and Unavoidable Struggle

As we mark the Fourth of July and treat an epidemic of anxiety about the outcome of November 5th, we would be well served by recognizing that annual hard knock and powerful presence at the door of the honored abolitionist, freedom fighter and most insightful activist intellectual, Nana Frederick Douglass. For by every metric of good sense and every measure of a good life, there is havoc in this house called America.

It is a very dangerous and self-destructive disorder of rampant conflict, varied oppression, cultivated confusion and emerging fascism, not only detrimental to democracy, but also to any conception, practice and enjoyment of freedom, justice, security of personhood and peoplehood, and other shared social goods for all.

The problem is not simply the pernicious and prattle and blusterous pretensions of Trump or the weak self-presentation of Biden in debate. It is something deeper and systemic, i.e., the loss of even a claimed moral center, let alone a real one, which would, when realized, be free from the racial and religious claims and savage practices of White supremacy, racial capitalism and empire.

Clearly, in spite of the danger and the persistent panic expressed in public and private spaces, America is not going to be saved from itself and its addiction to hypocrisy, Hollywood hype, AI dependence or internet trivia, trash and mutual savaging. It can only save itself by moving beyond the diversionary discussions of problematic candidates to craft an inclusive moral vision and concrete program of doing justice and supporting freedom for all the people. And revisiting Nana Douglass reminds us and teaches us lessons on these issues from which we will certainly benefit.

In his classic 4th of July speech in 1852, Douglass begins by calling rightful attention to U.S. society's

congenital hypocrisy, inconsistencies and the systemic and savage violence and treatment they are imposing on Black people and others. Moreover, he tells them, he could be hypocritical himself and be welcomed of a sort among them by turning a blind eye to injustice and a deaf ear to the truth of the barbaric enslavement of his people while claiming a tenuous status of being "semi-free" among them. But he defiantly refuses.

He says, "To side with the right, against the wrong, with the weak against the strong, and with the oppressed against the oppressor! here lies the merit, and the one which, of all others, seems unfashionable in our day." And he concludes, he will not forget his people or their severe suffering and brutal oppression.

For "to forget them, to pass lightly over their wrongs, and to chime in with the popular theme, would be treason most scandalous and shocking, and would make me a reproach before God and the world." Indeed, he says, "I will, in the name of humanity, which is outraged, in the name of liberty, which is fettered, in the name of the constitution and the Bible, which are disregarded and trampled upon, dare to call in question and to denounce, with all the emphasis I can command, everything that serves to perpetuate slavery - the great sin and shame of America!"

Of course, enslavement is the ultimate unfreedom, but there are also today, as then, many other forms of unfreedom involving exploitation, domination, deprivation, and degradation, and these too must be resisted, overcome and decisively ended.

Continuing, he tells them, that they are betraying their own best principles, denying others the freedom and justice they, themselves, speak of in self-congratulatory narratives about their forefathers. He says, "The cause of liberty may be stabbed by the men who glory in the deeds of

your fathers."

Speaking in terms reflective of what is going on in this country today and concerning Israel's genocidal



DR. MAULANA KARENGA

campaign in Palestine, he states, "It was fashionable, hundreds of years ago, for the children of Jacob to boast, we have 'Abraham to our father,' when they had long lost Abraham's faith and spirit. That people contented themselves under the shadow of Abraham's great name, while they repudiated the deeds which made his name great. Need I remind you that a similar thing is being done all over this country today?"

It is an insistent observation being made by the young people and others struggling on campus, in community and in society against genocide in Palestine and oppression in all forms and every place by the claimants and violators of the best of the Abrahamic tradition. And they are confronting Jew, Gentile and other claimants to the faith, refusing to allow them to commit genocide,

injustice and other atrocities in their names or the names of their faiths.

Nana Douglass will not let them or any of us borrow the names and achievements of the worthy models and values of the past and betray them in their names. Therefore, he states, "We have to do with the past only as we can make it useful to the present and to the future. To all inspiring motives, to noble deeds which can be gained from the past, we are welcome. But now is the time, the important time."

We point to the past, not claim and betray its great achievements, but emulate them in the present even correcting errors and completing the tasks they left unfinished or failed to envision themselves. Thus, we say in Kawaida philosophy, "This is our duty: to know our past and honor it; to engage the present and improve it; and to imagine a whole new future and forge it in the most ethical, effective and expansive ways."

Clearly, Nana Douglass is appalled and morally repelled by the savage hypocrisy of the church, which is a metaphor for all claiming a religion worthy of its name. He expected more from them, as is expected now in reordering the moral priorities and practices of this country and positively influencing others.

He says, criticizing their betrayal of silence and active complicity, "At the very moment that they are thanking God for the enjoyment of civil and religious liberty,

and for the right to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences, they are utterly silent in respect to a law which robs religion of its chief significance, and makes it utterly worthless to a world lying in wickedness."

He condemns such a corrupt community of faith, saying, "A worship that can be conducted by persons who refuse to give shelter to the houseless, to give bread to the hungry, clothing to the naked, and who enjoin obedience to a law forbidding these acts of mercy, is a curse, not a blessing to mankind." Indeed, it "is a religion for oppressors, tyrants, man-stealers, and thugs" and "they convert the very name of religion into an engine of tyranny and barbarous cruelty."

Nana Frederick Douglass gave such attention to the fundamental role of religion, not only because it serves as a source of our earliest and continuing concepts of morality, but also because he recognized that people were misusing it to enslave and oppress and to claim biblical teachings to justify satanic or radically evil practices as now.

That is why it was critical for the Black church and temples of original African religions as well as mosques, also of the Abrahamic tradition, to stand in solidarity with Palestine and resist genocide and oppression everywhere.

For America still attempts to make the biblical claim of being a city set upon a hill as

a beacon of hope and moral guidance for peoples of the world. But Nana Douglass recognized, then as now, that it is a society built on a mountain of mendacity and morally monstrous practices, and an official and unofficial litany of daily lies that seeks to hide its past, deny its current radically evil racial and social injustice and unfreedom at home and complicity in genocide, unjust war and empire abroad.

And he tells us, as we say so often, that in a context of oppression, there is no reliable remedy except righteous and relentless struggle. For he says, in his classic teaching on the ethical imperative and urgency of struggle, "Without struggle there is no progress. This struggle may be a moral one, or it may be a physical one, and it may be both moral and physical, but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will."

Thus, let's continue the struggle, keep the faith and hold the line.

*Dr. Maulana Karenga, Professor and Chair of African 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 Essays on Struggle: Position and Analysis, www.AfricanAmericanCulturalCenter-LA.org; www.OfficialKwanzaaWebsite.org; www.MaulanaKarenga.org.*

• SARAH R. HARRIS, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF THE BLACK BUSINESS ASSOCIATION •

## California Must Ensure the Participation of Black Businesses in Upcoming Global Events

The upcoming 2026 Men's FIFA World Cup and the 2028 Summer Olympics and Summer Paralympic Games present Los Angeles with remarkable opportunities.

These world sports events are not only a celebration of athletic excellence, but also a unique opportunity to stimulate economic growth, cultivate cultural pride, and advance social equity. To fully capitalize on the economic boom these opportunities could bring to our state and communities, it is imperative that we ensure the inclusion of Black businesses in every facet of the preparations and operations.

Reflecting on history, we must acknowledge the significant legacy of former Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley. His tireless efforts, in collaboration with Peter Ueberroth, the chairman of the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, and businessman, Dr. William (Bill) Burke, were instrumental in bringing the 1984 Summer Olympics to our state.

Bradley's determination and vision transformed Los Angeles, and its surrounding areas, into an international hub of economic dynamism. The 1984 Olympics demonstrated the power of inclusive leadership and strategic planning.

Bradley's commitment to inclusivity and economic empowerment remains a guiding light for us today. His success in the 1984 Games was not just a personal triumph but a victory for the community. The economic uplift and international recognition that Los Angeles received were a direct result of his unwavering dedication and strategic alliances with key leaders. Bradley, Ueberroth, and their team embodied what was called the "Dream Business Team," a model of collaboration and innovative thinking that we must aspire to replicate.

As we approach the 2026 FIFA Men's World Cup and

the 2028 Summer Olympics, we must build on Bradley's legacy. The inclusion of Black



Sarah R. Harris

businesses in these global events is not just a matter of equity; it is an economic imperative.

Studies consistently show that diverse and inclusive business practices drive innovation and economic growth. By actively including Black businesses, we ensure that the economic benefits of these events are broadly shared, fostering a more robust and resilient local economy.

Currently, we are witnessing a promising continuation of this legacy with Mayor Karen Bass leading the way. Recently, she led an L.A. delegation to Paris, the host city for the 2024 Summer Olympic games. Bass was accompanied by Council President Paul Krekorian, Metro CEO Stephanie Wiggins, LA84 Foundation President and

CEO Renata Simril and others, to engage with international stakeholders and learn best practices for major event planning. Upon returning, she convened a Business Roundtable with leaders of local business chambers and associations to discuss small business growth and economic development as top priorities.

"I'm grateful for the opportunity to engage with Business France and Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield CEO Jean-Marie Tritant to witness first-hand the collaborative nature of businesses and consumer engagement during major events," Bass said at a press conference during the Paris trip.

"We are working urgently to ensure that Los Angeles will grow economically during the 2028 games and that our small businesses will grow and thrive past the 2028 games."

The Black Business Association (BBA), the oldest ethnic business support organization in California, has long championed the cause of economic empowerment for Black businesses. Under the visionary leadership of Earl "Skip" Cooper, II, the BBA has made significant strides in supporting Black entrepreneurs and advocating for their inclusion in major economic opportunities. Now, as the President and CEO, I am com-

mitted to continuing this vital work and ensuring that Black businesses are front and center in the preparations for these upcoming events.

Tom Bradley's legacy teaches us that with determination, strategic vision, and collaborative effort, we can achieve remarkable success. As we prepare for the world to turn its eyes once again to Los Angeles, let us ensure that our Black businesses are not just spectators but active participants and beneficiaries of the economic opportunities these events will bring.

Together, we can create a legacy of inclusion, equity, and economic empowerment that will endure long after the final whistle of the World Cup and the closing ceremony of the Olympics. Let's honor the spirit of Tom Bradley by working diligently to ensure that the 2026 and 2028 games are a testament to our commitment to diversity and inclusion.

I invite you to follow the Black Business Association's efforts and initiatives at [bbaa.org](http://bbaa.org) or on social media @blackbusinessassociation.

*Sarah R. Harris is president and CEO of the Black Business Association and serves on the Los Angeles County Small Business Commission as the 2nd District Commissioner.*

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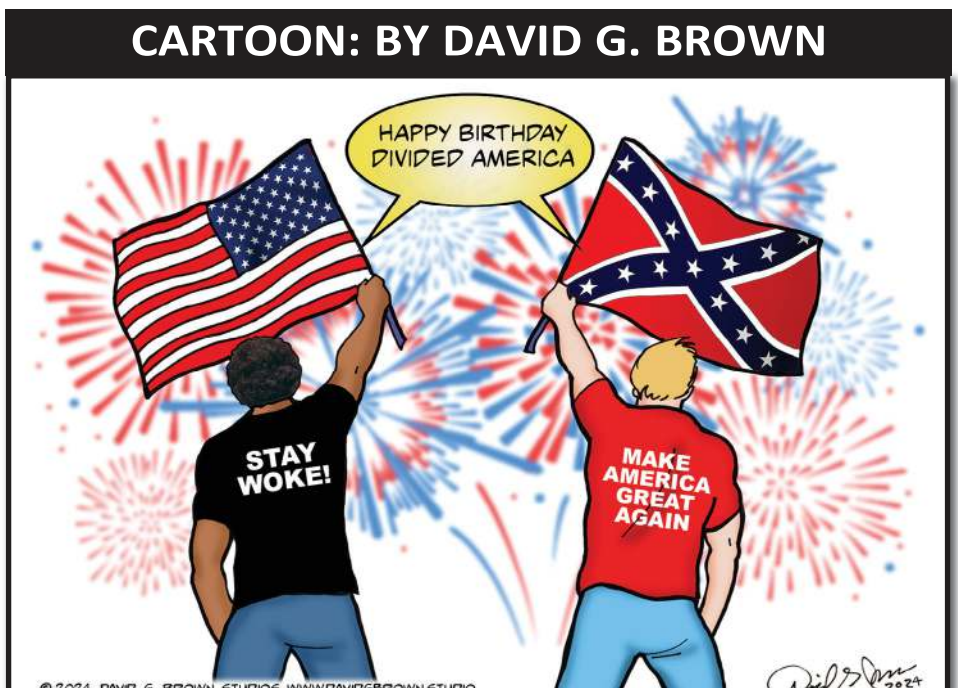
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# Coach Wendy

Life Strategist / Consultant  
Author / Speaker

## Independence Day is Still Dependent Upon Us Becoming United

The fourth of July is the day we celebrate the United States of America's independence and establishing it as a country free from tyranny and foreign rule. The original 13 colonies would now be free from British control.

Ironically, our country may be free from foreign rule, but are we influenced by powers that cause an internal rift creating a great divide. We as a country are yet to be truly a united coun-

try. Even though we are no longer ruled by a foreign power, if we are not careful, America could be headed towards external influences that could be our downfall.

If we want to maintain the freedoms and liberties that all our forefathers (black, white, brown, and red), died for we must figure out how to be more united and stand together in what is best for all Americans.

The United States of America is made up of peo-



ple from all nations. We all came to this country under different circumstances and the only original people here were the Native Americans, also known as the American Indian. The rest of us either came here either by force or choice. No matter what our origins, it is up to each of us to determine what we will do to contribute to making us one nation under God indivisible with liberty and justice for all.

Being united does not mean we will not have differences and it is okay to be proud of your family roots

and heritage because that is part of what makes each of us unique. However, we must dig deep for what we have in common to build a strong foundation for our country to survive the attacks that could come against us, internally and externally. Relatively speaking we are still a young country compared to other empires and governments. Remember, a country divided is at the mercy of any storm that could come against us.

I have had the privilege of traveling all around the world, and although I have enjoyed so many of the places I have visited, there is still no place like home. The United States of America, although we are not perfect, I believe we are the best country with the best opportunities for all its citizens. It is the hope that so many of our ancestors held onto for equal opportunity for everyone.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. talked about what he

envisioned in his "I Have a Dream" speech. I too hold onto the hope and belief that my grandchildren and their children will be able to live a life of prosperity and contribute to making it the best place on earth.

The freedoms and opportunities that we can experience here are unlike so many other places around the globe. You can come from a poor background with little education and still build a thriving business. Every little girl and boy can grow up with the thought of one day being the President of the United States and it can be a reality. This is not so in every country.

This month, American flags will be flying high honoring not only the 4th of July, but also our citizens that will be participating in the 2024 Olympics in Paris. Let us also try and keep in mind what our flag stands for. The red and white stripes represent the original 13 colonies, and the fifty

stars represent all our states coming together as one.

The color white signifies purity and innocence. Red stands for hardiness and valor. Blue signifies vigilance, perseverance, and justice.

I know today with all the political divide that we have in our country there are people with mixed emotions about what our flag may stand for, but remember, we are all in this together and some kind of way we must figure out how to forgive, love, honor, and respect each other for the hope of future generations. The American flag belongs to all of us. I want to wish everyone a happy and blessed Independence Day.

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## "Art of Politics"

Radio Show

By Art Blackwell

### Presidential Debate Debacle? Not So Fast!!!

If you're a supporter of former President Donald Trump, after last Thursday's presidential debate, you're probably elated. If you're a supporter of President Joe Biden, there is a great deal of disappointment and sadness. Many Democrats entered into full panic mode, with some even calling for President Biden, the presumptive Democratic nominee, to be replaced.

As time passed, Democratic leaders like former President Barack Obama, Governor Gavin Newsom, and House Minority Leader, Hakeem Jeffries rallied to the President's

aid. Vice President Kamala Harris gave a full-throated defense of her partner in the executive branch of government. On the other side, former President Trump had his usual supporters rally around him, despite fact-checkers noting that he misled or lied during the debate approximately 30 times.

To be fair, President Biden also misled on more than 11 occasions. For instance, Biden incorrectly stated that drug prices for insulin were capped at \$15 instead of the actual \$35, and that out-of-pocket costs for seniors' prescription drugs would be capped



at \$200 instead of \$2,000. Despite these inaccuracies, many observers thought Biden was honest and intentional in defending his record.

As a political scientist with a degree from North Carolina A&T State University and a strategist with experience on numerous political campaigns at various levels, I believe the Biden campaign needs an immediate makeover. Whoever recommended a debate this early in the campaign schedule should be replaced. If the President came up with the idea, then the person who couldn't talk him out of it should

be replaced. Whoever prepared Biden for the debate should also be replaced. Debating Donald Trump and getting into the weeds with specific facts and details is a losing strategy.

Political debates are much like sports. It's fierce competition where over-training your candidate can be detrimental. Muhammad Ali, considered the greatest heavyweight fighter of all time, lost his title to Leon Spinks on February 15, 1978, at the age of 36. Many boxing pundits had varying opinions on whether Ali was over-trained or if he took Spinks, who was 12 years younger, for granted.

President Joe Biden has been training all his life for this battle. On December 18, 1972, his wife and daughter were killed in a fatal car accident, and his two sons, Hunter and Beau, were seriously injured. This tragedy occurred shortly after he was elected junior senator from Delaware at the age of 30. Many thought he would

resign before being sworn in due to the tremendous grief, but Senate Democratic leadership convinced him to stay. They traveled to Delaware to swear him in at his sons' hospital room. Biden traveled home every day by train after Senate sessions to be with his sons, a practice that continued until he married Jill and they had their daughter, Ashley.

So, for those Democratic operatives and pundits feeling defeated, grow a spine. The day after the debate, Joe Biden bounced back, stating, "I don't walk as easily as I used to. I don't speak as smoothly as I used to. I don't debate as well as I used to. But I know what I do know. I know how to tell the truth." One of my mentors, Uncle Charlie, once said to me, "When you get knocked down, just get up before they count to 10." President Joe got up before they counted to 10.

Finally, as a political scientist, one of the greatest presidents in American

history, in my opinion, was Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He led the nation through the Great Depression and reluctantly entered World War II after the attack on Pearl Harbor. When Roosevelt entered office in 1933, he was in a wheelchair, having been stricken with polio almost a decade earlier. Despite his illness, he was elected to four terms, showing that the American people valued his leadership and the Democratic Party's programs. After his death in 1945, Vice President Harry Truman succeeded him and won the 1948 election, continuing Roosevelt's legacy.

So, Papa Joe may move a little slow, but he knows what he knows, and that is the truth. And by the way, Muhammad Ali came back to fight Leon Spinks and convincingly won back his title. So it ain't over till it's over, and my money is on President Biden.

Art Blackwell is the host of the "Art of Politics" radio show.

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# CITY OF INGLEWOOD {Continued from A-1}

Since 2012, Inglewood has become an economic and societal success, achieving national recognition as the sports and entertainment destination in the United States. This is due to the renovation of landmark destinations and new developments

ing was BBB-minus and our unemployment rate was 17.5 percent, the highest in the nation.

“Our roads were a mess; we had 19,000 trees and were trimming about 600 trees a year.”

Butts shared it was all

the city and its residents,” said Butts. “This is a project that will be built with union workers, many of which will be local hires.”

Butts continued, “With \$1.9 billion, local, state, federal funds, we’re on track to build and design the ITC and expect to see construction in the beginning of the next year.”

The event was hosted by Butts and co-host Steve Ballmer, owner of the Los Angeles Clippers. NBC

Shiong (Los Angeles Times) and other prominent figures.

The event was attended by L.A. city and county leaders including L.A. County Board of Supervisors Hilda L. Solis, Holly J. Mitchell, Kathryn Barger, Janice Hahn, and Lindsey P. Horvath. L.A. Mayor Karen Bass and former L.A. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, underscored the significance of the occasion. Butts also honored and awarded city administrators, county part-

“Mr. Mayor, we love you with our whole heart, we love serving with you on the Metro Board and you are a man of vision,” said Mitchell.

“All of us are elected policymakers, big thinkers just like you and with this partnership, more great things will happen for this region and for the city of Inglewood.”

“I love celebrating in Inglewood,” said Horvath. “I’m so thrilled to see the progress that’s happened in Inglewood and to have a partnership with the city. Count on us, call on us, we’re ready to be here when you need us.”

“I grew up in Ingle-

wood, I grew up at Crenshaw and Florence, all three of my children were born at Daniel Freeman Hospital,” said Hahn.

“I love Inglewood, but Mayor Butts, what you have done is absolutely spectacular and as the new incoming chair of Metro Board of Directors, I look forward to doing whatever we can to improve transportation opportunities here in Inglewood, which really will benefit our entire region.

“You are an incredible man; this city is lucky to have you as its mayor.”

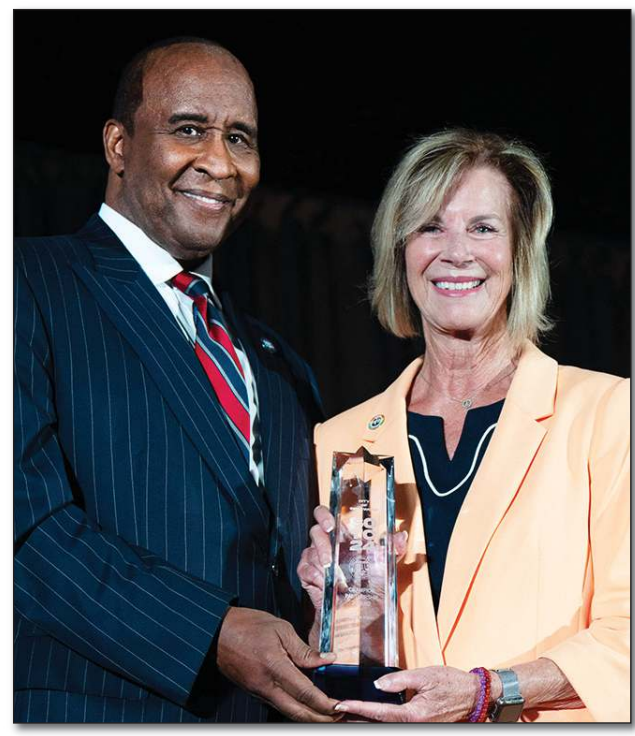
For more information about what’s going on in the city of Inglewood, visit [www.cityofinglewood.org](http://www.cityofinglewood.org).



Mayor Butts honors and awards L.A. County Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell.



Mayor Butts honors and awards Councilwoman Gloria Gray.



Mayor Butts honors and awards L.A. County Supervisor Janice Hahn.

such as the Fabulous Forum, the opening of SoFi Stadium, NFL Network facility, YouTube Theater, Showtime Production Studio, L.A. Philharmonic Youth Orchestra building and the construction of the Intuit Dome.

“When I took office in February 2011, we had zero dollars,” said Mayor Butts. “By June, we would not make payroll, our bond rat-

turned around using synergy and collaboration with partners, city officials and the community, which has helped Inglewood becoming a hub for just about everything. He also shared how the coming Inglewood Transit Connector (ITC) will bring more jobs, revenue and opportunities to the city.

“The ITC is going to create meaningful jobs for

Sports Fred Roggin exceed a business panel featuring Butts and Ballmer (Clippers), Casey Wasserman (LA28), Kevin Demoff (COO Rams) Patrick Soon

ners and community leaders for their part in helping the city. Mitchell, Hahn and Horvath shared remarks about Butts and his accomplishments.

# KBLA CLIMATE SUMMIT {Continued from A-1}

1580 Chief Visionary Officer Tavis Smiley, who moderated the summit.

“Climate justice is the preeminent issue of the day, and yet those persons who are the most often victimized by these climate maladies, those who suffer from these climate catastrophes have been left out of the conversation. These are silent killers, but we ought not to be silent in the conversation about these issues in this vitally important election season,” he said.

To discuss the intersection of climate change and racial justice, climate

impacts on low income and communities of color, the role of transportation, and the green energy transition, the panel featured Metro CEO Stephanie Wiggins, Sierra Club Executive Director Ben Jealous, Majora Carter, Mustafa Santiago Ali, Peggy Shepard, Jacqueline Patterson, Glory Dolphin Hammes, Leah Thomas, Denise Fairchild, Rev. Lennox Yearwood, Shakari Byerly, and 2024 Presidential candidate Cornel West. Mayor Karen Bass delivered the keynote address.

“To my administration, climate change is very

important,” she declared. “We’ve just established a climate cabinet to focus on implementation and actions that Los Angeles can do to have a more sustainable, resilient, and equitable city for all of our residents.

“We must never allow people to think that Black folks are not concerned about climate change. We understand when our communities are at risk and when our health is at risk. We’re going to do whatever we can to make sure that we don’t continue to be the brunt. We’ll continue to make our voices heard, and when we fight for

change in our community, everyone benefits,” she said.

Similar comments were expressed by Dr. Robert Bullard, executive director of The Bullard Center for Environmental Justice at Texas Southern University, who is considered the “father of environmental justice.”

“We have an opportunity today to deal with the number one threat to humanity—that’s climate impacts,” he said.

“Thanks to the Biden-Harris administration, the Bullard Center now has \$50 million as a grant-making program from the [U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency] to solarize [Historic Black Colleges and Universities] and green infrastructure at our community centers and schools.

“We have to go for those dollars and not leave one penny on the table, because we don’t know when these resources will be available again. We have to get this money into the community. Not allow money to follow power, and money to follow Whites, as it has in the past. It’s money to follow needs, and that’s where we are today in our climate justice

movement,” said Bullard.

The summit was powered by public and private partners LADWP, Metro, South Coast AQMD, Caltrans, the Sierra Club, Southern California MWD, Port of Los Angeles, California Wellness Foundation, The California Endowment, California Community Foundation, and Los Angeles Councilmember Curren D. Price, Jr.

KBLA Talk 1580 is the only Black-owned and operated talk radio station west of the Mississippi.

For more information, visit <https://kbla1580.com>.

# JOURNALISM BILL {Continued from A-1}

“That’s one of the things that happens when an industry goes through a drastic evolution ... investors come in to take advantage of potential profit opportunities and investment opportunities,” Niello said of his concerns with SB 1327. “I am an unabashed capitalist myself. But they are not buying these newspaper groups for the sake of the mission of news reporting. To them it’s a business deal.”

Sen. Bill Dodd (D-

Napa), who voted in favor of the bill, also had some concerns. He wants to make sure SB 1327 is legislation that would not fall into the hands of hedge fund that would purchase newspapers solely to reap funds because of the mitigation fee.

“What I’d like to see, by the time it comes back to the floor is that we have an opportunity to kind of see -- maybe not a firm spending program -- but at least something that has been

thought out particularly so we’re not funding hedge funds,” Dodd said.

To qualify for the tax credit, news media outlets must initially circulate or distribute news content within the state of California and operate internet platforms.

SB 1327 proposes a 7.25% on gross receipts derived from data extraction transactions, according to the bill’s language. At the end of his presentation,

Glazer made it clear that media outlets do not have to accept funds through the tax credit.

“This measure is content neutral (and) ownership neutral,” Glazer said. “If a publisher of an outlet doesn’t want to have the connection with a government through a tax credit, they don’t have to take it.”

Fees extracted from digital technology companies with a minimum of \$2.5 billion in annual advertising

revenue would provide \$500 million in employment tax credits to news organizations in California. An additional \$400 million in extracted fees would go directly to schools.

Sen. Lola Smallwood-Cuevas (D-Los Angeles) spoke the ways public opinion, politics and civic life have been influenced by misinformation and disinformation since the decline of the journalism industry. A member of the California Legisla-

tive Black Caucus (CLBC), Smallwood-Cuevas is a former journalist.

“These are efforts to make a difference,” Smallwood said of SB 1327. “I must applaud the author for his work particularly because the alternative must also include building a representative workforce within the newspaper industry, which this bill takes into account—ensuring that those who look like California tell the story of California.”

# DR. WILLIAM BURKE {Continued from A-1}

along with your deep technical and business experience will greatly benefit the ARCHES Board.”

“Dr. William Burke is the ideal selection for our community to serve on the ARCHES Board. His commitment to Environmental Justice and his reputation in the environmental space for fighting for Black People and underserved communities and inclusiveness

is respected and appreciated throughout this nation. Having Bill serve on this board will ensure that our community reaps some of the many benefits and an equitable share of the \$1.2 Billion Dollars allocated to this program,” noted Danny J. Bakewell, Sr., veteran community activist and chairman of the Los Angeles Brotherhood Crusade and Bakewell Media.

Burke served 27 years on governing board of the South Coast Air Quality Management District, included 23 years as the chairman. His accomplishments include establishing the Asthma and Outdoor Air Quality Consortium to better understand the relationship between air pollution exposure and asthma, creating the Helping Hands Initiative to sponsor green job training,

and founding AQMD’s Environmental Justice Community Partnership to strengthen relations with environmental justice groups and local communities.

His environmental efforts received national acclaim in 2023 when he became the first African American to receive the Thomas W. Zosel Outstanding Individual Achievement Award from

the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

According to Galiteva and Moss, ARCHES Board members focus on “building out California’s sustainable and renewable clean hydrogen ecosystem and marketplace while benefitting disadvantaged communities, achieving ambitious State air quality and climate goals, and accelerating the State transition to a carbon neutral

economy by 2045.”

Burke will be the founding member representative on the ARCHES Board where he “will be involved in the strategic decision-making process and help guide the future direction of California’s multi-billion-dollar hydrogen hub that was recently awarded \$1.2 billion by the U.S. Department of Energy,” added Galiteva and Moss.

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granted unless an interested person files an objection to the petition and shows good cause why the court should not grant the authority. A HEARING on the petition will be held in this court as follows: 07/22/24 at 8:30AM in Dept. 9 located at 111 N.

HILL ST., LOS ANGELES, CA 90012 IF YOU OBJECT to the granting of the petition, you should appear at the hearing and state your objections or file written objections with the court before the hearing. Your appearance may be in person

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the date of first issuance of letters to a general personal representative, as defined in section 58(b) of the California Probate Code, or (2) 60 days from the date of mailing or personal delivery to you of a notice under section 9052 of the California Probate Code.

Other California statutes and legal authority may affect your rights as a creditor. You may want to consult with an attorney knowledgeable in California law. YOU MAY EXAMINE the file kept by the court. If you are a person interested in the

estate, you may file with the court a Request for Special Notice (form DE-154) of the filing of an inventory and appraisal of estate assets or of any petition or account as provided in Probate Code section 1250. A Request for Special Notice form is available from the court clerk. In Pro Per Petitioner PAULETTE BAILEY 3458 KNOLL CREST AVENUE VIEW PARK CA 90043 7/4, 7/11, 7/18/24 CNS-3829752# LOS ANGELES SENTINEL

# Indulging in Fun at the 2024 BETX Fan Fest

By MYKO LYRIC  
 Contributing Writer

The 2024 BETX Fan Fest Experience took over the Los Angeles Convention Center last weekend and provided resources, entertainment, and connection to attendees from around the world.

Feature offerings on Friday, June 28, and Saturday, June 29, included a BET Open Casting Call for aspiring actors, panels and interactive activities at SVP of Talent and Casting Robi Reed's Love Healthy Lounge & Wellness Pavilion, a pop-up roller skating rink, celebrity basketball coached by Master P with a

Perry's "Sista Salon" panels, an outdoor flea market to highlight black businesses, and main stage performances from Cardi B, Big Latto, DoeChii, and Flo Milli. Suffice to say, this year's BETX FanFest Experience provided something for each of the thousands of attendees to enjoy.

The plethora of panels allowed for a wide range of topics, from technology to entrepreneurship. On Love Healthy's panel focusing on the technology of wellness, one panelist emphasized the necessity of Black people in tech, saying, "We have to democratize the technology industry to include us...the future of



Shea Moisture pop-up show.

Tate, DoeChii, and Big Latto. Nearly all attendees remaining in the convention center gathered around the stage, anticipating performances from these artists in which the audience wouldn't necessarily be able to snag front-row seats outside of the BET Experience.

Whether a guest came for hair and skin care knowledge and products from Shea Moisture and Dove, wellness tips from Love Healthy, Black businesses in the outdoor flea market, musical performances, or a fantastic game of basketball, each attendee could relish in the knowing that the team behind the 2024 BETX Fan Fest curated a weekend for them to indulge in their enjoyment.



MYKO LYRIC/LA. SENTINEL

A panel at Tyler Perry's Sistas Salon.

and enhance their own health through technology.

Another panel at Tyler Perry's Sistas Salon included comedian, actress, and rapper Pretty Vee, who elaborated on what entrepreneurs really need when starting a business.

"It's not a lot of money, it's not a lot of people. You can get by with one great friend who can help and support you. What you need is a lawyer," insisted Pretty Vee.

The crowd quickly erupted in laughter, only imagining the multitude of unfortunate scenarios that come when your business is not legally protected. Even though this is something many businesspeople know in the back of their minds, it is helpful to hear someone who has created and maintained a successful brand and business validate that notion and bring it to the forefront.

The main event on Sat-

urday was the BET celebrity basketball game with Wallo and

Gillie. Players and notable guests included DC Young Fly, Lil Mama, Soulja Boy, G Herbo, Queen Naija, Omarion, and Marsha Ambrosius.

Coached by American rapper Master P and his sons, Hercy and Mercy Miller, the BET Team won the game and the entire crowd ran onto the court to rejoice.

In an exclusive interview with the L.A. Sentinel, Master P remarked about coaching with his sons: "It was amazing, to be able to do something with your kids. When you look at Black fathers and be one who is able to be with your kids, nothing is more precious!"

As for the game, he joked, "We out-thought 'em! I could coach anywhere!"

Following the basket-

ball game were performances from rappers Baby



MYKO LYRIC/LA. SENTINEL

Omarion enjoying the celebrity basketball game.

half time performance from Soulja Boy, Nipsey Husle's The Marathon Continues x BET limited edition clothing collection pop-up shop, Shea Moisture and Dove pop-up shop, Tyler

technology is Black."

During this panel, online wellness apps such as Apple Health, ORA, and Therabody were recommended to leave the audience with tools to improve

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 JESUS IS OUR JUBILEE COGIC CHURCH  
 1129 E. DOMINGUEZ ST. STE #B  
 CARSON, CA 90746 (BLOCK EAST OF IKEA)  
 24/7 PRAYER LINE (877) 858-2453

**Crenshaw United Methodist Church**  
 3740 Don Felipe Drive., Los Angeles, CA 90008  
 (323) 292-0141

Sunday Worship Service 10:30 AM  
 Youtube and Facebook 10:30 AM  
 TriumphKids Adventure 10:30 AM  
 TriumphYouth Expedition 10:30 AM

Produce on Wednesdays @ 10 AM  
 Food Giveaway Saturdays @ Noon  
 First Friday Senior Lunch Outings

Rev. Royce V. Porter Sr.

**Truth and Love Christian Church**  
 1129 E. Dominguez St., Suite B, Carson, CA 90746  
 truthandlovecc@gmail.com

Sunday Worship (In Person) 10:00 am  
 Wednesday Bible Study 6:30 pm  
 View from our website:  
 www.truthandlovecc.net

Prayer Line - Monday - Friday, 6:30 - 8:00 am  
 (720) 527-5842, Access code: 5727194  
 Giving options: Cash app: \$truthandlovecc  
 Zelle: truthandlovecc@gmail.com



# RELIGION



COURTESY PHOTO



COURTESY PHOTO

Above, an aerial view of the solar panel installation at Watts-Willowbrook Church of Christ. At right, the team celebrates the event. From left are Andreas Karelas, RE-volv executive director; Mario Holten, Wells Fargo Foundation, vice president of Philanthropy and Community Impact; Linda Cleveland, church secretary and long-time environmental activist; Jacquelyn Badejo, chair of the Climate Emergency Mobilization Office, Pastor Ernest Garrett; and Bekah Estrada, Interfaith Power & Light Southern California Director.

## COMPTON CHURCH CHAMPIONS CLEAN AIR AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE BY GOING SOLAR

Watts-Willowbrook Church of Christ now serves as a beacon of clean energy education and resilience, with hopes of providing critical services during electrical outages, heatwaves, or unhealthy air quality days.

SENTINEL NEWS SERVICE

Watts-Willowbrook Church of Christ, known as "The Brook," located at 13204 Mona Blvd. in Compton, in collaboration with RE-volv and California Interfaith Power & Light (CIPL), celebrated the commissioning of their new 12-kW rooftop solar and upcoming battery storage installation on Saturday, June 29.

The church's move to adopt solar energy aims to alleviate financial strains, build community resilience, and bolster local clean energy projects and advocacy efforts.

The celebration included a ribbon-cutting ceremony, a speaking program featuring remarks from the Compton Mayor Emma Sharif, and a resiliency workshop. The mayor presented two awards, recognizing The Brook and Ms. Linda Cleveland, long time community activist and church secretary, for their environmental leadership and contributions.

"While there is significant clean air and energy progress underway in South Central LA, more work needs to be done to

educate community members on its benefits and how solar and other clean energy technologies are accessible to them today," said Jacquelyn Badejo, chair of the Climate Emergency Mobilization Commission, City of Los Angeles.

"Since The Brook church uniquely serves three neighboring communities, it is the perfect home base to spread awareness, educate, and accelerate local clean energy adoption."

During the ribbon cutting ceremony, Compton Mayor Emma Sharif stated, "This is a significant moment for our community and for the future of Compton."

Leticia Vasquez Wilson, Central Basin Water Board Director, on behalf of Laura Richardson, former US Representative, followed by explaining, "The installation of solar panels at the Watts-Willowbrook Church of Christ represents more than just a move towards renewable energy - it represents hope, resilience, and progress for our community."

With solar energy, the church is set to save \$184,033 on electricity costs over the next 20



COURTESY PHOTO

From left are Sweet Alice Harris, Compton Mayor Emma Sharif, and Leticia Vasquez-Wilson, Central Basin Water Board Director.

years, thanks in part to the direct pay, also known as elective pay, provision available through the Inflation Reduction Act.

This provision allows tax-exempt organizations to receive 30% or more in cash back on the cost of a solar system. A grant from the Wells Fargo Foundation supported RE-volv bringing their innovative solar finance model to The Brook, allowing them to go solar for zero down and start saving on their energy bills on day one. Additionally, their solar system will allow The Brook to avoid emitting 646,378 lbs of CO2 emissions over the lifetime of the system, equivalent to

the carbon sequestered by 350 acres of trees every year.

"The solar installation at the Watts-Willowbrook Church of Christ is an excellent example of how the Biden-Harris Administration is helping community-based institutions, especially in communities of color, make clean energy upgrades that reduce costs and lead to quality-of-life improvements. The Elective Pay tool in the Inflation Reduction Act continues to be a game-changer," said Ronald Newman, senior advisor, IRA Implementation, U.S. Department of the Treasury

Andreas Karelas, execu-

tive director of RE-volv, highlighted, "Recent data suggests that when a non-profit or house of worship goes solar, you can expect

up to 80 residences in the area to follow suit over the next five years." Karelas expresses gratitude for The Brook's leadership and their commitment to educating community members about clean energy and community resiliency.

The solar and soon-to-be battery storage system yields significant benefits beyond producing clean, affordable power. With support from CIPL, WATTSKANDA consulted the community during the resiliency workshop to customize their emergency services, including air filtration on unhealthy air quality days and air conditioning during heatwaves.

The event also provided resources for residents, churches, and nonprofits interested in adopting solar energy, leveraging federal tax credits and funding opportunities through the Inflation Reduction Act.

"Our partnership with The Brook highlights the core mission of CIPL - to help faith communities take bold and just climate

action," said Bekah Estrada, Southern California Director of California Interfaith Power & Light.

"The church's new solar system will lower their carbon emissions and help save money, while building the foundation for a resiliency hub in Compton."

RE-volv, in partnership with Interfaith Power & Light (IPL) and Green the Church, with support from NREL's Solar Energy Innovation Network, recently developed an initiative to bring solar to BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color)-led Houses of Worship. The Brook is the first completed project of the initiative.

"The Wells Fargo Foundation is pleased to see that our support of RE-volv's work is playing a key role in making this project happen," said John Moon, senior vice president and sustainability philanthropy lead for Wells Fargo.

"Accessing the direct pay provision from the IRA is a game-changer for non-profits and community organizations to be able to access affordable clean energy solutions and support community resiliency."

## LOS ANGELES WELCOMES NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF NEGRO MUSICIANS NATIONAL CONVENTION

BY CORA JACKSON-FOSSETT  
Religion Editor

The National Association of Negro Musicians will hold their 2024 National Convention at the Sheraton Grand Hotel, 711 S. Hope Street, in downtown Los Angeles.

The convention begins Sunday, July 14, and continues through Thursday, July 18. The theme is "Lift Every Voice and Sing."

The NANM Western Region Branches will host the gathering, which is expected to attract hundreds of people.

The branches are the Edna Hammett Porter Music Association -

sociation where Bettye Randall and Rose Kimball serve as co-presidents; and Georgia Laster Association of Musicians where Yolanda Mitchell West is president.

Also co-hosting are the Taylor Benjamin Smith Performing Arts Society, Ethel Williams and Ashay Mathieu, co-presidents; and George Robert Garner III Branch, Timothy Davis, Jr., president.

Kicking off the convention will be a concert by the Inner City Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles at Walt Disney Concert Hall. The event is open to the public. For ticket information, call (213) 788-4260.

On Monday, July 15, at 9 a.m., the plenary session will feature Mi-

chael Abels, 2023 Pulitzer Prize-winning composer known for his opera, "Omar." The Emmy and Grammy-nominated artist also wrote scores for the films "Get Out," "Us," and "Nope."

The Spirit Chorale of Los Angeles, directed by Byron J. Smith, will perform at 7:30 p.m. The event, sponsored by the Living Heritage Foundation, will also include the Richard "88 Fingers" Turner Jr. Band. The tickets are \$30.

Heading the agenda for Tuesday, July 16, at 8 a.m., is Marcos K. Merrick, founding director of the Community Choir of Baltimore and former coordinator for performing arts at Morgan State University. He served under Dr. Nathan Carter, producer at WBZ-TV in Boston and WJZ-TV in Baltimore.

At 12 noon, the Life Member Luncheon takes place honoring Byron J. Smith, NANM President Emeritus, who served from 2014 to 2019.

To learn more or obtain tickets for all events, visit [www.nanm.org/convention](http://www.nanm.org/convention).



Byron J. Smith

COURTESY PHOTO

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF NEGRO MUSICIANS, INC.

2024 NATIONAL CONVENTION

LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING

Sunday, July 14 - Thursday, July 18, 2024

SHERATON GRAND LOS ANGELES  
711 S. HOPE STREET, LOS ANGELES, CA 90017



2024 Teen Leadership Conference: Stepping into Your Success

By MYKO LYRIC
Contributing Writer

The Regalettes, Inc., founded by former L.A. Sentinel Entertainment Editor Gertrude Gipson-Penland and currently led by President Lois Buckman, are once again following through on their promise to give back to the Los Angeles Black community.

The Regalettes have joined forces with Sisters Involved in Linking Knowledge (SIILK) to host the 2024 Teen Leadership Conference: Stepping Into Your Success for girls ages 11-17 to discover and deep-



President Lois Buckman with attendees from last year's Teen Leadership Conference.

event will be held Saturday, July 13, at the South L.A. Best Buy Teen Tech Center from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

dent Buckman expounded upon the background, purpose, and workshops of the Teen Leadership Conference.

"We found there was a great need to provide additional expertise to young girls in the L.A. Community. This is an opportunity to provide workshops in various subject matters, allow the girls to connect with mentors, and assist them in processing their day-to-day life. The reason for the conference is to help young Black girls see Black entrepreneurs and workers, to expose them to things they normally would not see," she said.

Included in this confer-

ence are workshops that most people certainly are not exposed to frequently - a Robotics/AI workshop will assist the girls in not only designing and building a robot, but also learning to code.

"We're pretty exciting about (this workshop) ... we're hoping that this will trigger their imagination and get them into STEM," remarked Buckman.

Other activities include a fashion design workshops, a panel with past and current Regalettes scholarship recipients, financial literacy workshop, etiquette class, vision board creation, and a parent workshop. The latter was developed over the course of multiple teen leadership conferences to educate the parents about the types of classes their children need to be taking, particularly in high school.

"We had a retired dean speak to them about their children's preparation for college. The curriculum is so important. The parents were taken aback...they know their kids are taking classes, but are they the right classes," recalled Buckman.

She added that this

event is the evidence of a promise made by the founding Regalettes over 65 years ago.

"The Regalettes are still here and still doing the mission," said Buckman.

"Not one year has passed - not even during COVID - where we didn't



COURTESY PHOTO

2024 TEEN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE Stepping into Your Success. Saturday, July 13th, 2024. 9am-3pm | Registration Starts at 8:30am. In person event hosted at: South LA Best Buy Teen Tech Center. Amazing Workshops: Careers in Fashion Design, Robotics/AI, Scholarship Presentation.

COURTESY PHOTO

2024 Teen Leadership Conference information and QR code.



Previous attendees gather for a picture.

en their passions, knowledge, collaboration, and leadership skills. This free

During an exclusive interview with the L.A. Sentinel, Regalettes Presi-

follow through on our commitment. I think out of everything, that's the thing I'm most proud of: we keep

delivering." To register for the event, scan the QR code.

Leatha Joyner - 2024 Winner of Teen Miss Juneteenth America

By SHELBY STEPHENS
Contributing Writer

Juneteenth is the oldest internationally recognized commemoration that ended slavery in the United States. Black Americans are the focus of this holiday as Galveston, Texas is the home and center where the final group of slaves

The inaugural Miss Juneteenth programs are a unique pageantry experience for young ladies nationwide between the ages 13 and 18. This pageant experience aims to showcase the inherent beauty of the participants and minimize stereotypes; develop a sense of self-confidence and pride; and deepen the understanding of

really inspired me during the pageant," she said.

In addition to her family, Joyner had the opportunity to research and share about an unknown African American Sherro, Mary Ellen Pleasant, who's story also inspired during her campaign to becoming Teen Miss Juneteenth.

During the competition, Joyner was asked, "Why do you want to be crowned Teen Miss Juneteenth America?" She responded, "I want to be crowned Miss Juneteenth America to show everyone that they can be whatever they dream to be, and that if they keep on keeping on, their dreams can become a reality."

"I want to be a role model for younger people of color and share with them African American history. I want to encourage them and show them all that we can be. I also want them to know their skin color is more than just a color, but that it is a story of your family, your ancestors, and that it is power."

Although there have been many highlights and challenges in her journey, Joyner credits her mother and her family for keeping her motivated and encouraging her to continue the pageant process during moments when she felt overwhelmed. Joyner recalls the day she won the pageant and how it felt to be crowned Teen Miss Juneteenth, "when I woke up that morning, I was really excited but also really tired from the activities the day before. I was at peace as well as nervous."

"We had rehearsal and did a rundown of the show, then I recited all my key points, and finally got ready for the pageant. I prayed right before pageant time and after completing all the components. One of my favorite components was Be You-tiful where we got to wear something we felt comfortable and confident in and

share about our historical figures. During the talent component I sung Angel by Halle Bailey, I wanted to sing a song that had great meaning with a story to tell. The song also reflected what I want my legacy to be.

"The final component was Juneteenth where we talked about what Juneteenth meant to us and our Juneteenth colors red, white, and blue. I wore a blue and gold African print dress from Coquette Kouture on Market Street. We got to the crowning ceremony where I won, and I began to pray and thank God for the honor."

This summer Joyner will travel to Germany as the youngest Black participant of the CSU Summer Arts Program and in the fall of 2024, she will attend CSU Channel Islands in Oxnard, CA. Joyner received a scholarship to the university and in turn, she donated some of that allotment to other young women looking to make a difference, proving that being a good role model is to show acts of selflessness.

"I plan to continue to act and do theatre. I want to branch out in my acting and singing and through the

Maynard 4 Foundation I've been able to step out of my comfort zone. To young women following my path I would tell them to keep on keeping on. Although there might be bumps, tests, and trials, keep doing what you love, keep striving, keep going, don't quit. Gods got something for you."

Learn more about Joyner and what's to come by following her on Instagram at @lele\_joy\_, and for more information about the Maynard 4 Foundation or to obtain an application, email info@themaynard4foundation.org.



Leatha Joyner Winning Teen Miss Juneteenth

received news that they were free.

Juneteenth is an opportunity to honor and show respect to those who have transitioned, those still living with the affects, and those who continue to fight for our liberation. Since 1865, African Americans have revered this holiday with decades of traditions, community gatherings, and educating the masses.

On June 17, 2021, President Joe Biden signed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act into law establishing Juneteenth as a federal holiday.

A new Juneteenth tradition has emerged in the South, the Miss Juneteenth America Pageant presented by the Maynard 4 Foundation. The Maynard 4 Foundation is a national organization extending various resources in the interest of furthering education, health equity, culture, and social justice. The foundation seeks to serve as a champion for those of all backgrounds who are in need, so that they may thoroughly and equally share in the American dream.

African and Black/ African American history and culture. The Miss Juneteenth programs include Junior Miss Juneteenth (ages 13-15); and Teen Miss Juneteenth (ages 16-18).

2024 marks the third year of the pageant and 17-year-old Los Angeles native Leatha Joyner won this year's Teen Miss Juneteenth America. Joyner graduated from Blue Ridge Academy, where she was involved in music, performing arts, and acting. She is a SAG actress and is the far regional western president of Top Teens of America. Joyner traveled from L.A. to the national event in Mobile, Alabama and as the only one in her family to participate in pageants, she won the national title to represent Juneteenth.

Joyner believes that Juneteenth is so important because it signifies power and unity amongst Black Americans.

"Our ancestors are the roots, and we are the trees that have blossomed from them and their resilience through slavery. My grandmother was the daughter of a sharecropper, and she has

Simon Burris: Africana Diaspora Black History Month II Crossword

DENZEL THE GREAT II

www.simonburris700.com

Across

- 1. \*\*Denzel Washington [DW] first Oscar winning film (1989)
6. \*\*DW's Academy, Tony or Emmy, for example
11. Seoul country
12. \*\*13-time \_\_\_ Image Award winner
13. \*\*Theme of this puzzle
15. After 9,999
16. \*\*Denzel's birthplace: Mount \_\_, NY
19. "Unforgettable" singer and namesakes
23. \* \_\_\_ \_oker; NBC weather news icon
24. \*\*DW's Religion affiliation: West Angeles Church of \_\_\_ in Christ
25. \*\*\*"Man on \_\_\_" (2004)
27. \*\*\* \_\_\_; co-star Viola Davis (2016)
30. View, once more
32. \*\*\* \_\_\_ won Best Actor Oscar (2001)
38. \*\*\*"The Magnificent \_\_\_" (2016)
39. Delete
40. Overweight
41. \*\*\* \_\_\_ J. Israel, Esq." (2017)

Down

- 1. \*Greek data (abbr.)
2. "Pride brings a person \_\_\_" (Proverb 29:23)
3. Are you a man \_\_\_ mouse?
4. Varnish base
5. Email option
6. C \_\_\_ \_N (Civil War weapon)
7. Vehicle
8. \*Albany Arts Times (abbr.)
9. Barbecue fuel (CHA \_\_\_ \_AL)
10. Dallas Press network (initials)
14. Tiny bit



- 16. Virginia firm (abbr.)
17. \*\*\*"The Book of \_\_\_" (2010)
18. Letters
20. Algeria/Ghana/Congo: Afr. Union trio (initials)
21. Foot digit
22. Abbr. for South Dakota Saints (sports)
26. Pennsylvania city/port/canal
27. Florida State Institute, for short
28. More sharp (K \_\_\_ \_ \_)
29. Black, in Mexico
31. Place for a dog (K \_\_\_ \_ \_L)
32. Time-sharing option (abbr.)
33. Civil War soldier
34. Short street
35. Beaver's work
36. 'Fit \_\_\_ \_ fiddle'
37. Appetite

(ANSWERS ON D-2)



# ENTERTAINMENT

## So, You Think You Know Leon? The Actor and the Musician.

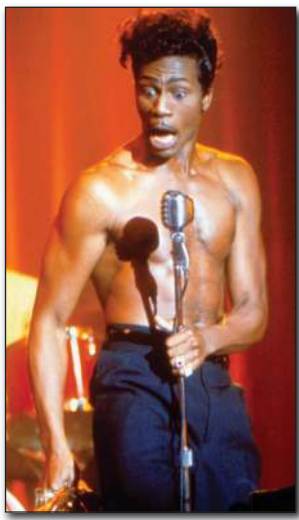


BY KEITH L. UNDERWOOD  
Contributing Writer

Although it may seem like he is always a working actor, Leon -- yes, famously known as just "Leon" -- said there have been dips and valleys in his career.

"Little Richard," "The Temptations," "The Five Heartbeats," and "Cool Runnings" are some of Leon's projects of note, which helped to catapult his career into the stratosphere in the 1990s.

More recently, Leon can be seen in the satirical Amazon Prime thriller "Swarm" and the Showtime drama series "The Chi."



COURTESY PHOTO

Leon as Little Richard.

"Sometimes, I haven't been working as much," said Leon. "Sometimes, I'm concentrating on my music, and I'm not thinking about acting. In my eyes, I always feel

like I'm underutilized."

When Leon is not acting, he's performing with his band, "Leon and the Peoples."

"I've always dealt with life as it is," he said. "I'm not swept up in the make-believe of Hollywood or what people might believe. I'm always going to be real with myself and real with others."

Leon said he never wanted to act to gain fortune or fame. He remembered that being the case for many of his peers, too. They were focused on being good at their craft, and if anything, he said, they also wanted to stand out.

Growing up in Mount Vernon and the Bronx in New York, Leon recalled sneaking into the Wakefield Movie Theater to watch an Elvis Presley movie, which moved him to take up acting.

Leon believes natural actors who are also trained actors tend to have the best control over their body instrument. "They can give you a variety of performances because they know how to do that," said Leon. "They've worked. They've practiced it. They've put it out there, and usually on a stage."

Leon said any actor can excel playing themselves, but real talent can be seen in those who can embody others.

"In your practice [as an actor], you may go through many teachers, and different plays, and things that you do while you're training that will allow you to have more control over exactly what



COURTESY PHOTO

Leon

you're doing [as a performer]," said Leon.

But Leon said he doesn't think he was prepared for a career in acting. He said he grew up as a city kid and knew nothing about the entertainment industry or Hollywood. He initially came to Los Angeles on a basketball scholarship at Loyola Marymount, where he was later discovered as an actor.

Though Leon was always a student of acting and the theatre, he said he didn't know anything about the entertainment business.

"I didn't know what I would have to go through to get roles, and consistently get roles," said Leon. "When I first started auditioning, I could see how ruthless it was. It was interesting when I started to realize it wasn't just about being good."

Leon said he's grateful to have loyal fans. But from time to time, he said his supporters ask him why he doesn't land more standout roles. What they don't know, Leon said, is that talent has very little to do with who gets which roles.

"The Hollywood game is so different. Then there's the Hollywood game that you think you know. Then you discover there's a whole [other] Hollywood game that most people aren't even privy to," said Leon. "I think we're hearing about it right now. It's all over the news."

He credits his dad for his perseverance and confidence, which have helped him to endure in a very difficult business.

Another thing Leon said his father passed on to him was his love of music, and he could always fall back on it

to navigate through the sometimes-uncertain world of acting.

"My love of music came from my dad," said Leon. "In college, I wrote and performed a song for the Special Olympics. Music was always something that was a love of mine. And I think that once I became popular as an actor, I've had opportunities to be around really great musicians."

Leon has portrayed several musical artists over the course of his career.

He played the fictional character "J.T." in "The Five Heartbeats," Motown great "David Ruffin" in "The Temptations," and the titular character in "Little Richard," which is based on the life of the "architect of rock and roll," Little Richard.

"Maybe I look like a singer -- I guess I look like a singer," said Leon. "Now, even if I didn't look like a singer, I look like a singer because of how many roles I've played."

Nonetheless, Leon said he has never felt typecast because those roles are just a small part of his larger career and legacy as an actor.

"If I were to be typecast, then yeah, I'm cool with that," he said. "I would rather be typecast as a singer than a cop or a doctor. I think that's a lot more grown and sexy."

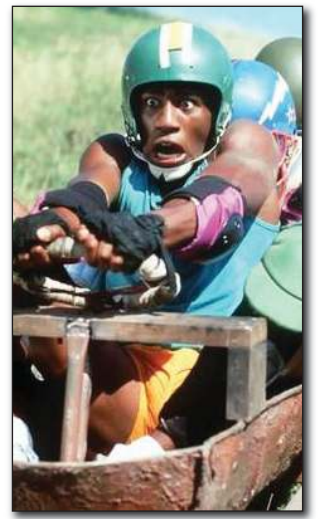
Leon said music continues to inspire him, comfort him, and keep him sane through all the dips and valleys of his life and career. He said the soundtrack to his life right now is the kind of music he likes to play with

Leon and the Peoples -- a fusion of reggae and soul.

"We're like the Sly and the Family Stones of reggae," said Leon. "We talk about all aspects of life and love."

The band is currently doing several spur-of-the-moment performances, and their song "Love is a Beautiful Thing" hit the Billboard Top 20 Hot Singles chart.

As an actor, Leon called himself a method actor. Method acting is a technique or type of acting where an actor aims to deliver a believable performance by fully becoming the character. Some professional actors have even said the process



COURTESY PHOTO

Leon in "Cool Runnings."

can sometimes make one lose themselves.

Leon said he has a profound sense of self, so this has never been a problem for him. "I like Leon," he said. "So as soon as the role is over, I miss me -- no matter how much acting I've done. I've been me more than I've been any other character."

## More Than A Doll, 'Black Barbie' Is Black History

The Netflix documentary shines light on the historic legacy of Black dolls

BY ZON D'AMOUR  
Contributing Writer

In the new Netflix documentary, "Black Barbie," director Lagueria Davis explores how the Black Barbie is more than a doll, it's a part of Black history.

Executive produced by Shonda Rhimes, the film features commentary from a plethora of actresses including Ashley Blaine Featherston-Jenkins and Gabourey Sidibe as well as Congresswoman Maxine Waters, and women that have had the coveted honor of receiving their own Barbie including Shonda Rhimes, ballerina Misty Copeland and Olympic sabre fencer Ibtihaj Muhammad.



DAVID MENDOZA III/NETFLIX

Beulah Mae Mitchell, one of Mattel's first Black employees, and her great niece, director Lagueria Davis.

Growing up, Davis wasn't necessarily fond of Barbie dolls, so she was perplexed by her great aunt Beulah Mae Mitchell's extensive doll col-



DAVID MENDOZA III/NETFLIX

Former Mattel Designers Stacey McBride-Irby and Kitty Black Perkins, Producer Aaliyah Williams, Former Mattel Employee Beulah Mae Mitchell and Director Lagueria Davis.

lection. Upon learning that Mitchell's presence at Mattel as one of the company's first Black employees helped to lay the foundation for there to be the first Black Barbie, the idea for Davis' documentary was born. The film explores the timelines between the creation of Barbie in 1959 and the two decades that passed before Mattel released "Black Barbie" in 1980.

Within that 21 years, Mattel released several "friends" of Barbie that were Black including "Francie" and "Christie." However, it was the hiring of the first Black doll designer, Kitty Black Perkins in 1976, who helped to finally usher in the historic moment of 1980 when the first official "Black Barbie" was released. Unlike her predecessors, the "Black Barbie" had more Afrocentric facial features along with a textured Afro and a red dress with red and gold

accessories designed by Perkins.

The documentary goes on to share how Perkins hired fellow L.A. Trade Tech alumna Stacey McBride-Irby to be a designer at Mattel in the 1990s. During her 15 years at Mattel, McBride-Irby's many accomplishments include designing the official Alpha Kappa Alpha Centennial Barbie Doll as well as helping to update Barbie's image with the creation of the "So In Style" line.

McBride-Irby shared advice that she gleaned from Perkins. "You have to learn your craft so that you can set the bar high as with any industry, we have to be the best and Kitty was instrumental in letting me know that."

While sharing Perkins and McBride-Irby's historic contributions to Mattel, the documentary also highlights the unfortunate fact that the

company is currently without any Black doll designers. For fashion enthusiasts who may be interested in careers in doll design, Perkins gives insight into what skills were integral to her work at Mattel.

"L.A. Trade Tech took me through all of the steps of becoming a designer. You have to know sketching, flat pattern making, draping, and grading," she said. "They teach you how to make fashions for adults and once you learn that, then you have to learn to miniaturize it because Barbie is only 11 and a half inches!"

Speaking of resilience, it was a decade-long journey for Davis to secure the funding needed to bring the documentary to fruition. She cites the Barbie Heroes collection in 2015 which included the popular Ava DuVernay doll that motivated her to take the project "off the shelf again."

After becoming a finalist at ABFF (American Black Film Festival) in 2016, the next milestones she accomplished was securing a producer in 2017 and an agent to rep the film in 2018. During this time, Davis would remind herself, "I have to keep going. I didn't come this far just to get this far. You're almost there, you're gonna do it."

Amid the digital age when many children have tablets as a primary form of entertainment, we asked Davis if she thinks Barbie dolls are still relevant today.

"Yes, I think they're relevant in tandem [with tablets]. Kids are watching Barbie vlogs, and Barbie has a lot of movies. So, they're interacting with Barbie that way,



DAVID MENDOZA III/NETFLIX

Kitty Black Perkins, Mattel's first Black doll designer with the first Black Barbie from 1980.

which then kind of informs what they buy. For instance, in the movie 'Barbie: Big City, Big Dreams' after seeing Barbie 'Brooklyn' Roberts, children want the doll, so I think they're working in tandem, and it gives

the dolls relevance today."

Echoing similar sentiments about the continual prevalence of Barbie even to this day, Stacey McBride-Irby said, "Dolls are still important because they're the first image that children see themselves in."

Perkins added, "Dolls are a representation of us and they're hands-on play. You can't take a cell phone and dress it or comb its hair. I know that everything is geared towards technology but at some point, there still needs to be hands-on imagination involved when kids play."

Concluding, when asked what she hopes audiences take away from her film, Davis shared, "When you think of how long it took for the Black Barbie to come into existence, the lack of marketing, and the lack of support that she had, she still soared."

"So, for me, my Aunt Beulah Mae, Kitty, and Stacy, the Black Barbie's existence is validation of being seen and heard at a company where they didn't have a voice. The 'Black Barbie' documentary has taken on that same significance, the same sort of being seen and heard in a dark space where there aren't a lot of Black women doing this."

"So I would say the call to action is that content for Black women, about Black women, by Black women performs well."

Watch "Black Barbie" on Netflix.

## Student Athlete of the Week Brooklyn Walker

By AMANDA SCURLOCK  
Sports Editor

King/Drew junior Brooklyn Walker is a highly motivated athlete who pours her talents and leadership skills into the girl's volleyball and softball teams.

Her efforts would take both teams to the playoffs during her junior year. In girl's volleyball, the Golden Eagles had a 10-6-1 overall record; they came in second in the Coliseum League with a 9-3 record.

"Volleyball, it's such a fast-paced sport, you have to move all the time or you're gonna get left behind," Walker said. "When I transitioned to softball, that hustle

mentality was already there, I didn't have to learn it ... I was already a hustler."

Walker is the captain of the girl's volleyball team. Playing volleyball helped her be more vocal; it also built her toughness.

"I had a coach this year who was extremely hard on me for volleyball," she said. "Overall I think that built up a thicker skin than I had last year."

The softball team had an 11-17 overall record and a 6-4 Coliseum League record. She aided both teams in reaching the second round of the CIF Division II City Section playoffs. This past season was the first full season Walker played in soft-

ball.

As a sophomore, she joined the team during the playoffs. Although she did not play much, she learned the importance of remaining optimistic and competitive. She noted how that helped as the Golden Eagles secured an 8-6 victory over Mendez in the first round of the playoffs.

"I saw the pressure that they had and I saw how they handled it and I took the good and the bad from that," Walker said. "I realized that remaining calm and keeping a positive attitude, that really got me through [that] game."

For Walker, being able to handle the rigors of being

both a student and an athlete is "the highest award." She admires anyone who can motivate themselves to do their best in both fields.

"Neither is easy and they're both demanding," she said. "For my team specifically, discipline and determination is our biggest motto."

As the oldest of nine, Walker is a natural leader. All students who want to compete on the softball team are required to submit an essay so softball head coach Chay Robinson can get a background of the players. Walker talked about her relationship with her siblings and how sports have helped with her social life,

mentality, and academics.

"I talked about being the oldest and how that experience in being pressured to be the leader," she said. "This team helped me grow so much."

A favorite class for Walker is her emergency medicine class. While in that class, she learned neonatal CPR and how the body works as well as other topics.

"I realized how hard two minutes is, how long two minutes feel when you're beating a chest of a baby," Walker said. "As an athlete, you don't understand everything that's going on with you."

Walker is considering



AMANDA SCURLOCK/L.A. SENTINEL  
King/Drew junior Brooklyn Walker helped the girl's softball and volleyball teams reach the CIF City Section playoffs

having a career in pediatric psychiatry or labor and delivery. She strives to be an advocate for African American women and women of color in healthcare.



AMANDA SCURLOCK/L.A. SENTINEL  
Two-time Paralympic gold medalist Matt Scott (left) presents Carolanne Link with The Hartford Adaptive Sports Equipment.

By AMANDA SCURLOCK  
Sports Editor

Angel City Sports hosted its 10th Annual Angel City Games at Cerritos College from June 28-30. The three-day festival featured clinics and competitions for 18 different adaptive sports, including goalball, blind soccer, para golf, and powerlifting.

Angel City Sports co-founder and Paralympian Ezra Frech noted how the festival provides a safe space for people with different abilities.

"It's about people who find their community, their people," Frech said. "This is a real home, a real community for these athletes ... I'm just honored to be a part of such a special organization."

## Angel City Games Turns 10

Since the inception of the Games, Angel City Sports has went on to provide sports clinics and programming throughout the year. A new goal is to make the Games like the Paralympics for every athlete by 2028, in time for the Los Angeles Paralympics.

"We have an opportunity to educate the fans and even volunteers that might help with [the 2028 Paralympics]," said Angel City Sports co-founder Clayton Frech. "Then finding athletes that get inspired, want to train for the Paralympics."

Allen Fowlkes attended the Games this year to participate in wheelchair basketball and powerlifting. Fowlkes, a husband and father of three, attended to not only compete but to network.

"There's one organization that's gonna help me get a basketball chair so I can

get on a team," Fowlkes said. "Some of the guys I was playing with, they were professional, and they were saying, 'you got a shot, you should get on a team.'"

The Games have also attracted countless Paralympians throughout the years who have returned to mentor young and novice athletes. Matt Scott, a two-time Paralympic gold medalist who competed in five Paralympics, frequents the Games. He is an athlete ambassador for The Hartford, a company that donates adaptive sports equipment to para-athletes.

When Scott started his wheelchair basketball career at 15, being a recipient of a proper wheelchair for competition helped him become a Team USA athlete.

At the Games, The Hartford awarded young athlete Carolanne Link with adaptive sports equipment.

Another young athlete, Chris Adamson, won The Hartford Achievement Award.

"At the Angel City Games, I've been coming probably since the second one, I've seen a lot of these donations happen," Scott said. "I've seen some of these kids go from little kids to Paralympians. It's been a very, very amazing journey."

In previous years, Damon Whittaker participated in archery clinics at the Angel City Games. This year, he coached the archery clinics. Whittaker recently competed in the archery Paralympic trials.

"The individuals and people with Angel City [Sports] has helped me a lot. They assisted me with getting my equipment," Whittaker said. "What I'm trying to do is bring more awareness, not just with the individuals with disabilities but also individuals in my



AMANDA SCURLOCK/L.A. SENTINEL  
Damon Whittaker coached archery clinics during the 2024 Angel City Games.

community to come out and start trying it."

One of his students during the weekend was Yadria Perdomo who has dreams of going to the Paralympics and being a pro archer.

"I want to continue to practice my sport because I feel fly when I shoot," Perdomo said. "If you'd like to improve, you have to practice every day, so that's what I do."

## Rams Provide Heart Screenings at SoFi Stadium

By AMANDA SCURLOCK  
Sports Editor

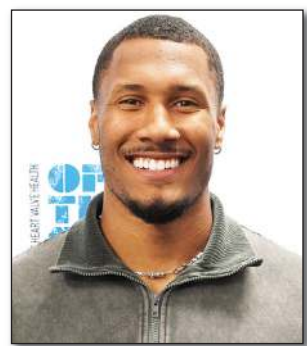
The Rams partnered with Edwards Lifesciences to host the "Off the Sidelines" heart screening event for community members in their locker room at SoFi Stadium. The attendees also participated in information sessions with cardiologists where they learned about various heart valve diseases.

"I think the population at risk for cardiovascular

amount of blood being pumped into the body.

"This area is extremely underserved for many years. As you know, some of the hospitals around here have closed," said Dr. Dimitri Sherev. "Access to care is very important."

Along with the one-on-one screening, the community members got a tour of SoFi Stadium. Rams safety Quentin Lake and his father, NFL legend Camell Lake, also attended the informa-



AMANDA SCURLOCK/L.A. SENTINEL  
Rams safety Quentin Lake made 50 solo tackles during his first two seasons.



AMANDA SCURLOCK/L.A. SENTINEL  
Camell Lake played for the UCLA Bruins, Pittsburgh Steelers, Jacksonville Jaguars, and the Baltimore Ravens.

ethnic groups.

"Heart health is a serious issue globally but also in Los Angeles and it's been an issue with our own family," Camell said. "We want to make sure that people can at least be aware that there's resources out there for them."

The doctors also explained how exercise and healthy eating choices can aid in the prevention of heart disease. Dr. Robert Gillespie mentioned the importance of

knowing personal metrics like blood pressure, hemoglobin, and heart valve issues.

"These are things that we have to do in our communities because we are the ones dying the most of heart-related diseases," Gillespie said. "The Rams to do this and to bring a knowledge about heart disease to our communities ... it all comes together."

Nina Franqui Holloman

learned how Black women are more likely to get heart disease compared to their white counterparts.

"The statistics blew me away, African American women are on the top of every single one of those statistics and that's pitiful," Franqui Holloman said. "We're being decimated by the things we don't know."

Randy Danner learned

about the event through his perks from being a season ticket holder. The info sessions showed him how to make lifestyle changes to prevent heart disease.

"I've never done anything like that before," Danner said about the heart screening. "The Rams, they're always been involved in the L.A. community, from kids to adults."



AMANDA SCURLOCK/L.A. SENTINEL  
Participants learned more about heart disease in an information session.

disease is relatively high in this part of the city," said Dr. Naddi Marah. "It's extremely important that we promote heart health and raise awareness about unaligned cardiovascular conditions that are under-treated in this community."

The community members were able to get their blood pressure checked along with an EKG and echocardiogram. An echocardiogram is an ultrasound of the heart which checks the chambers, valves, and muscles of the heart. It also checks the

tion sessions and got heart screenings.

"As athletes, sometimes you just don't know what your body is dealing with, what your heart is dealing with," Quentin said. "For the Rams to be able to provide this opportunity to do a screening for 80 individuals, it's fantastic."

The info session explained how heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States, regardless of gender or ethnic group. Black Americans tend to develop heart disease at a younger age than other



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