



Marqueece Harris-Dawson Elected as L.A. City Council President

BY LILA BROWN
Contributing Writer

The vibrant heart of South Los Angeles was abuzz with anticipation as guests gathered at The Beehive to celebrate the newly elected L.A. City Council President Marqueece Har-

ris-Dawson on Sept. 20. The Beehive, an innovative space nestled on 60th Street, served as the perfect backdrop for an evening of camaraderie, reflection, and a renewed sense of purpose for the city.

Harris-Dawson, who represents the very soul of

L.A.'s Black community, has long been a champion of the people, from his early days as an organizer to his tenure on the City Council. His leadership, rooted in the spirit of South L.A.'s dreamers, doers, and innovators, now extends to the entire city, as he steps

into this critical role. Friday night was a celebration of that commitment to progress.

Before the festivities began, the City Council President sent out a heartfelt letter titled "Leading Our City Forward." In it, Harris-Dawson called upon

the city to dream bigger, collaborate deeper, and modernize for the future.

"This is our moment to shape the future of our city," he declared, setting the tone for the evening. His words resonated, especially in a city that has seen its share of triumphs and challenges, particularly within Black and Brown communities.

The evening was as electrifying as the message. The Beehive was buzzing with L.A.'s finest —civic leaders, creatives, entrepreneurs, and long-standing residents who embody the spirit of resilience that Harris-Dawson spoke of. The spacious warehouse still provided an intimate lounge setting adorned with twinkling lights, reflecting the optimistic energy that filled the night.

"It wasn't always that you could come and hang out on 60th and Avalon on a Friday night and it'd be alright." Harris-Dawson

{See MARQUEECE HARRIS-DAWSON on A-6}



LILA BROWN/L.A. SENTINEL
Council President Marqueece Harris-Dawson greets supporters at The Beehive.



CD 8 staff gathered to salute Harris-Dawson..

LILA BROWN/L.A. SENTINEL

Q&A on Taste of Soul with Crystal Williams, Community Relations Manager at SoCalGas

STAFF REPORT

The 19th Annual Taste of Soul Family Festival is set for Saturday, Oct. 19, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., along Crenshaw Blvd., from Obama Blvd to Stocker Ave. It takes a multitude of individuals and agencies to successfully present the largest street gathering on the West Coast. One of the premier sponsors of Taste of Soul is SoCalGas and Community Relations Manager Crystal Williams shares about the organization's involvement.

Why does SoCalGas support Taste of Soul?



COURTESY PHOTO
Crystal Williams

The Taste of Soul is an annual family-friendly festival that celebrates Black culture and community.

SoCalGas has been a proud sponsor of the Taste of Soul (TOS) event for many years. TOS is Los Angeles' largest one-day street festival that attracts roughly 350,000 attendees and 150 vendors.

Supporting local community events, celebrating food, music, culture and traditions, is one way in which SoCalGas' employees forge connections and ties with the diverse communities we have served for more than 150 years.

What are 1-3 messages SoCalGas hopes to share with the public via Taste of Soul?

{See SOCALGAS on A-6}



COURTESY PHOTO
SoCalGas staff with Brotherhood Crusade President Charisse Bremond Weaver.

Attorney Fani Willis Addresses L.A. Community Members Supporting Her Race in Georgia



E. MESIYAH MCGINNIS/L.A. SENTINEL
District Attorney Fani Willis of Fulton County, Georgia in front of the L.A. Sentinel.

BY ANNDRETTA LYLE, PHD
Contributing Writer

District Attorney Fani Willis of Fulton County Georgia received a warm

welcome home on Sept. 17 with two fundraising events in Los Angeles.

At a reception at the L.A. Sentinel, Willis, a native of Inglewood, was

introduced by Danny Bakewell, Sr., and surrounded with affirmations from supporters who gave

{See ATTORNEY FANI WILLIS on A-6}

Costco is Coming to South Los Angeles

The mix-use development is the first in the nation and will be located on Coliseum St. in Baldwin Village.

BY BRIAN W. CARTER
Contributing Writer

Recently, city and community leaders gathered in the Baldwin Village community in South Los Angeles for the groundbreaking of a new Costco Wholesale on Coliseum St. The mixed-use

project will feature a store at the street level with 800 units of rental housing above. This is the first mixed-use development in the nation to have Costco as the anchor retail tenant.

"The status quo is over, waiting around for projects to get started and to fail and

for opportunities to die," said Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass. "Today we stand before you bringing change, change to L.A. not just a new store, but today we are breaking ground.

"We are breaking with doing things the old way." {See COSTCO on A-6}



BRIAN W. CARTER/L.A. SENTINEL
City and community leaders gathered in the Baldwin Village community in South Los Angeles for the groundbreaking of a new Costco Wholesale on Coliseum St.

Los Angeles Community Organizations Oppose Costly L.A. City Restaurant Ordinance

SENTINEL NEWS SERVICE

Six Los Angeles area NAACP branches, the Los Angeles Urban League, Brotherhood Crusade, National Action Network and other long-time civil rights leaders announced their staunch opposition to the Costly Restaurant Ordinance proposed by the L.A. City Council.

The groups joined the Protect L.A. Restaurants coalition, stressing their concerns that the ordinance would threaten the viability of minority-owned small businesses, lead to more employee layoffs and reduced worker hours, and further increase food prices for L.A. families.

“This ordinance unjustifiably targets minority-owned restaurants – once again – by imposing costly burdens that no other industry is forced to

abide by,” said Darrell Goode, Area Director, NAACP Southwest Area.

“Owning a local restaurant has long served as a viable pathway to economic empowerment for people of color. This ordinance would punish these traditionally marginalized communities who worked hard to beat the odds and achieve small business ownership. The L.A. City Council should investigate and reject this discriminatory ordinance.”

“Since April, I’ve had to raise my prices and cut worker hours to make ends meet,” said Rob Kirksey, Local Wingstop Franchise Restaurant Owner, Los Angeles. “If additional cost mandates are piled on to my local restaurants, I’m not sure I’ll be able to stay in business. I hope Councilmembers realize that they’re putting minority-

owned small businesses like mine at risk if they pass this ordinance.”

Los Angeles is home to



Darrell Goode

more than 1,500 quick-service restaurants. Nearly 60% of California’s local restaurants are owned by people of color, and approximately 70% of franchisees only own one restaurant. Owning a local restaurant

has long helped people of color build successful small businesses and close the wealth gap. The L.A. ordi-



Charisse Bremond Weaver

nance would significantly hurt the very community it purports to help.

Director Goode added, “We’ve heard serious concerns from minority small business owners, citing that this ordinance would be the

final straw that forces many of them to close their doors for good. We cannot allow one of the strongholds of Black business ownership to be attacked in this fashion.”

“Many local restaurant owners first started as crew members and worked their way up to management, then eventually invested their life’s savings into buying a local restaurant,” said Charisee Bremond Weaver, president & CEO, Brotherhood Crusade.

“Recently imposed mandates singling out local restaurant owners have already limited employee hours and have resulted in staff reductions.”

California just established a statewide Fast Food Council specifically charged with developing minimum standards for training, worker protections, and health and safety standards for fast

food workers. Passing the potentially conflicting city ordinance would further strain local restaurants before the Fast Food Council has the chance to function as intended.

“California already has the most robust worker protections in the country, including in the very areas this ordinance seeks to address,” added Weaver. “If the L.A. City Council passes this unnecessary and costly ordinance, they will be imposing significant barriers to business ownership opportunities that will have damaging effects across the community. That’s why the L.A. City Council must oppose this ordinance.”

The Costly Restaurant Ordinance was referred to the Travel and Tourism Committee, but has not yet been set for a hearing.

City National Bank Increases Ladder Up Home Loan Grant to \$50,000 in Certain L.A. Markets

SENTINEL NEWS SERVICE

City National Bank today announced it has increased its Ladder Up Home Loan Grant to as much as \$50,000 in majority Black or Hispanic census tracts within the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Glendale, Calif., Metropolitan Statistical Area. The newly enhanced resource is designed to increase access to credit for individuals and families looking to pur-



City National provides borrowers with grant assistance, a mortgage program, and credit education.

chase a home in eligible areas.

The Ladder Up Home Loan Grant is part of a Spe-

cial Purpose Credit Program (SPCP) that City National developed to help empower communities and bridge the housing affordability gap.

Through the SPCP, City National provides borrowers with grant assistance, a mortgage program, credit education and excellent service to help them navigate the homebuying process. Qualifying homebuyers may use the grant toward a down payment,

closing costs or buying down the interest rate on their mortgage. In addition, with the Ladder Up Home Loan grant, mortgage insurance is not currently required regardless of the down payment amount.

“Home ownership strengthens our communities and can help individuals and families ascend the ladder of financial success and generational wealth building,” said David Cameron, head of Con-

sumer Banking, City National Bank. “We are proud to offer one of the largest grants available to help more people in our community become homeowners.”

In addition to the significant grant increase in certain areas of Los Angeles, City National also offers home loan grants of up to \$20,000 in other qualifying geographies in Southern California, New Jersey and New York.

Patricia Ann Auzout Clarke Passes Away

SENTINEL NEWS SERVICE

Patricia Ann Auzout Clarke peacefully entered eternal rest on Friday, Sept. 6, at the age of 77. A private service will be held on October 7, at 11 a.m.

Patricia was born in New Orleans, LA to the late Lloyd F. Auzout Sr. and Odette Ralph Auzout on June 14, 1947. She attended Corpus Christi Elementary School in New Orleans, Louisiana from 1st through 8th

grade, then continued her education at Xavier Preparatory High School.

After graduating from high school, Patricia enrolled into the University of New Orleans to continue her education for 2 years. While attending UNO she met Theodore Clarke. They eventually migrated from New Orleans to Los Angeles. Patricia Auzout married Theodore N. Clarke in 1971 and from their union came a beautiful baby girl, Tanya Clarke.

Pat secured employment at Builder’s Emporium located in the Midtown Shopping Center in Los Angeles. She started out as a sales associate and soon became the first woman to become manager in 1975. Her next work venture led her into the banking industry where she served as a loan officer for some years.

In 1993, Pat joined Brotherhood Business Development & Capital Fund (BBDCF) located in the Los Angeles Brother-



Patricia Auzout Clarke

hood Crusade headquarters on Slauson Ave and Los Angeles Street. She served as the vice president of the nonprofit organization where she oversaw the daily operations for the company for over two decades.

She eagerly provided technical assistance and business loans to Black businesses throughout Los Angeles with funds secured with the help of the late Congressman Julian Dixon and Danny J. Bakewell, Sr. who was the

president of Brotherhood Crusade at the time.

Patricia was preceded in death by her parents, Lloyd Auzout Sr., and Odette Ralph Auzout, and her sister, Linda Auzout Young. She leaves behind her only child and daughter, Tanya Clarke, her two granddaughters, Haleema Gordon, and Jameela Carr. She also leaves behind her great grandson, Haleem Gordon; her brother, Lloyd Auzout, Jr; her niece, Kelly Auzout, and a host of cousins.

JOIN THE HOLLENBECK POLICE ACTIVITIES LEAGUE 17TH ANNUAL Gala EVENT

Celebrating 20 Years of Restorative Justice Services!

Supporting youth and families with behavioral case management, trainings, mental health sessions and keeping kids on the right track!

October 3, 2024, 6-9 pm

The Taglyan Complex | 1201 Vine Street | Los Angeles CA 90038

Cocktail reception, Dinner, Silent & Live Auction, and Awards Program

For more info on our GALA: call 213-819-4451 or visit palgala.org

Hollenbeck Police Activities League is a 501(c)3 nonprofit.
126 N. St Louis Street | Los Angeles CA 90033 | info@lapdpal.org

SAY NO TO PROP 33

If Prop 33 were to pass, it would:



Reduce the Supply of Affordable Housing



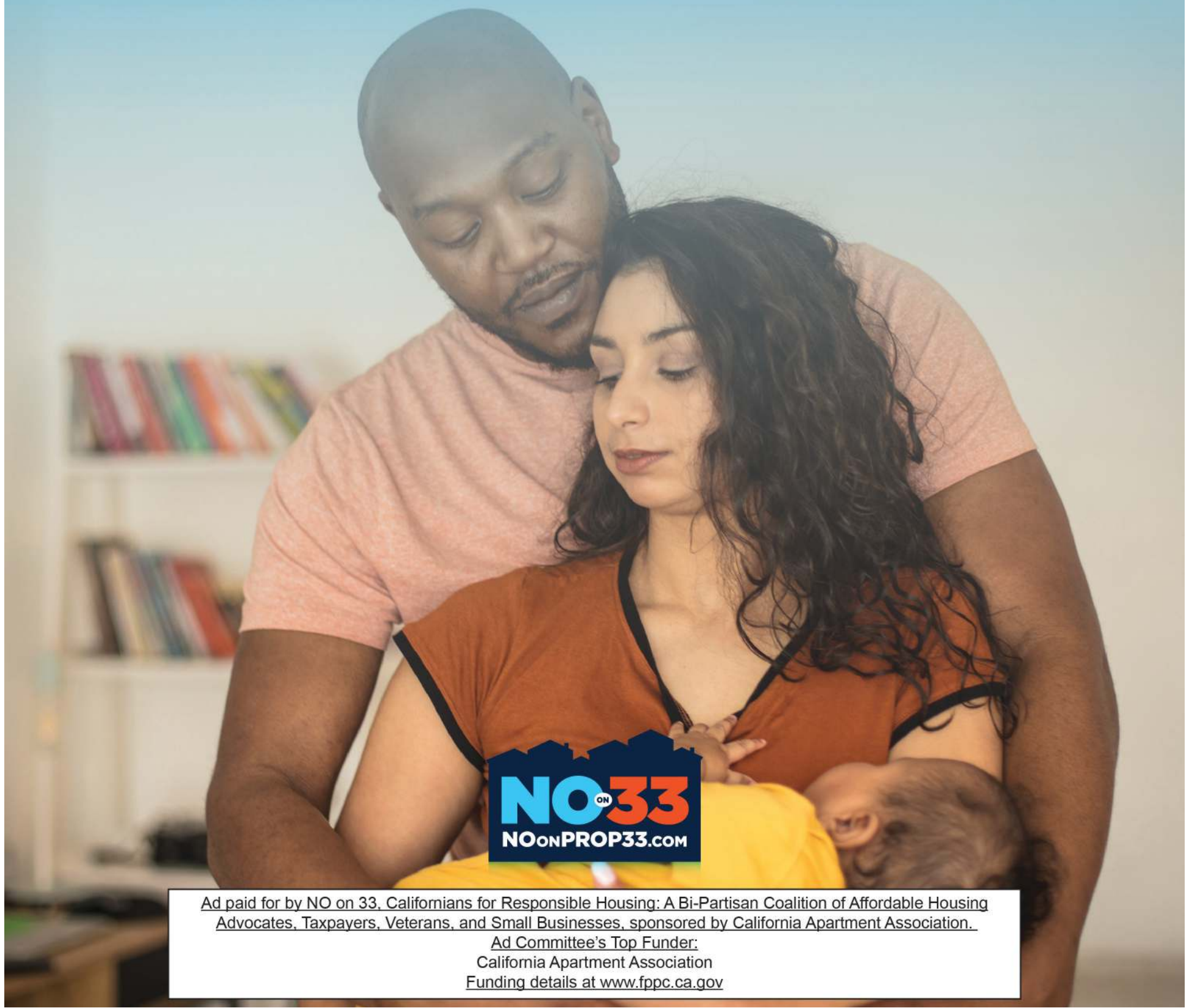
Eliminate Homeowner Protections



Harm Small Mom-And-Pop Landlords Who Struggled through the COVID-19 Pandemic



Dismantle Existing Protections that has Shielded Renters from High Rent Increases



Ad paid for by NO on 33. Californians for Responsible Housing: A Bi-Partisan Coalition of Affordable Housing Advocates, Taxpayers, Veterans, and Small Businesses, sponsored by California Apartment Association. Ad Committee's Top Funder: California Apartment Association. Funding details at www.fppc.ca.gov

Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson Appears at Wilshire Ebell

BY DANIELLA MASTERSON
Contributing Writer

Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson has been on a high-profile book tour to promote her new memoir, "Lovely One," about her journey to the highest court in our land. The Ebell of LA and Writers Bloc recently hosted "An Evening with Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson" where she read from her book, which is already a #1 New York Times Bestseller.

An overwhelming response caused the event sponsors to add a second presentation — one in the afternoon and another in the evening. And to the audience's surprise, she was interviewed by award-winning actress Angela Bassett, highly acclaimed for her



DANIELLA MASTERSON/L.A. SENTINEL
Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson and Oscar-Award-winning actress Angeles Bassett.

into a standing ovation. The atmosphere was electric, and it was evident that

tions (noting that her heart was "jumping through her chest"), the justice read an excerpt of her book. Although small in frame and girlish in appearance, her intellect and moral clarity gave attendees a clear understanding of why she was nominated to the court.

Jackson's selection demonstrated that she clearly understood the significance of her extraordinary nomination as she compared her ascent to the court to its dark history of racial oppression.

"Nominated by President Joe Biden four months earlier, I, the daughter of African American parents who had come of age in the segregated south during the 1950s and early 1960s, would become the 116th justice and the first Black woman to sit on the Supreme Court in its 233-year history.

"... I thought about the

justices of (Justice John Marshall) Harland's era who collectively decided in the Plessy v. Ferguson opinion that state laws mandating the separation of people by race did not violate the 14th Amendment in the Constitution so long as the separate facilities were equal.

"Harland had been the sole dissenter in the notorious 1896 case, and now here I was affixing my signature to his Bible in black fountain pen ink. Only one generation after my mother and father had experienced the spirit-crushing effects of racial segregation in housing, schooling, and transportation while growing up in Florida, their daughter was standing on the threshold of history, the embodiment of our ancestor's dreams, ascending to a position that Justice Harland and his colleagues likely never imagined possible for someone like me."

Although not a journalist, Bassett's interview



DANIELLA MASTERSON/L.A. SENTINEL
Judge Mablean Ephriam and actress Sheryl Lee Ralph attended the event.

demonstrated the commonality of women who are high achievers. They discussed the dance of balancing their demanding jobs with their spouses and children. They found commonalities in their backgrounds as Jackson loved the arts and dramatic oratory.

"I thought she was fabulous," said Courtney B. Vance, who gave his wife's interviewing skills a gold star.

"It really didn't matter what questions she asked; people were glad to see two titans up there just having a conversation. They were funny, silly, warm, and wonderful."

Many of Bassett's friends in Hollywood also attended the event and enjoyed the presentation.

"Seeing the justice in person was so informative and it gave you a sense of her personality," said Anne Haley, the wife of actor-producer-director Wren Brown.

"We knew she was brilliant, but we learned that she is so approachable like she could be your best girlfriend."

"Lovely One" by Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson is available on Amazon.com and wherever books are sold.



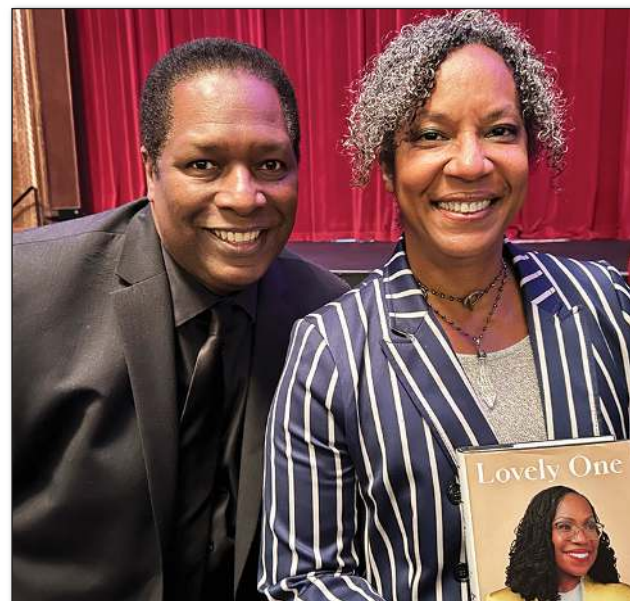
DANIELLA MASTERSON/L.A. SENTINEL
Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson reads an excerpt from her book.

role as the queen of Wakanda in "The Black Panther" movies.

As soon as the two ladies stepped onto the stage, the audience erupted

these two women were nothing short of queens who had reached the pinnacle of their careers.

Before Bassett launched into her well-balanced ques-



DANIELLA MASTERSON/L.A. SENTINEL
Actor, producer, director Wren Brown and his wife, Anne Haley.

L.A. Family-Owned Businesses Cannot Afford the City Council's Costly Restaurant Ordinance

UNFAIRLY

singles out minority-owned small businesses

INCREASES

food costs for struggling families

THREATENS

to shut down local restaurants

"The Costly Restaurant Ordinance could force many local restaurants like mine to go out of business."

~ Kerri H. | L.A. Restaurant Owner

JOIN US IN OPPOSING The Costly Restaurant Ordinance



Sign the Petition Today!

Tell the L.A. City Council to **REJECT** the Costly Restaurant Ordinance



ProtectLARestaurants.com

COMMUNITY HEALTH MATTERS

OCTOBER 19, 2024

10AM - 7PM



TASTE OF SOUL FIRST AID COOLING STATIONS

FOR MEDICAL AND SAFETY ISSUES LOOK FOR THE RED BALLONS



FIRST AID/ COOLING STATION #1
W.KING HEALTHCARE GROUP
CRENSHAW BLVD. BETWEEN STOCKER & KING

FOR MEDICAL AND SAFETY ISSUES



FIRST AID/ COOLING STATION #2
INNOVAGE
CRENSHAW BLVD. BETWEEN COLISEUM AND OBAMA BLVD.



MAIN FIRST AID / COOLING STATION #3
CRENSHAW BLVD. BETWEEN 39TH AND COLISEUM



FIRST AID/ COOLING STATION #4
WATTS HEALTH
CRENSHAW BLVD. BETWEEN 39TH AND COLISEUM



FIRST AID/ COOLING STATION #5
ST. FRANCIS HOSPITAL
CHARLES R. DREW UNIVERSITY
LA COUNTY DEPT. OF HEALTH & LOS ANGELES WELLNESS STATION
CRENSHAW BLVD. BETWEEN 39TH & KING

FREE HEALTH SERVICES:

Flu Shots, Massages, Glucose test, Blood pressure checks	KAISER PERMANENTE
Blood Pressure testing, glucose finger checks, HIV and Hepatitis C testing	W. KING HEALTHCARE GROUP
Blood pressure, Mammograms, Hep C Testing, A1C, Dental, Cholesterol and HIV testing	WATTS HEALTH
Blood pressure checks, Glucose (blood sugar) screening (for diabetes) Flu vaccines, Health education consultation (with nurses and residents), Medicare and other health insurance education and assistance (plus education on our outpatient service offerings)	MLK COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE
Eyes Exams, Dental Exams and general health testing	UCLA HEALTH
Flu Shots Community Resource Navigation for food, housing, public benefits, medical, transportation, caregiving mental health and more.	CEDARS-SINAI
Blood Pressure Screening, HgA1c Screening Cholesterol Screening, Education on Fentanyl and Narcan, Substance abuse education, Free HIV 20 minutes Ora Quick home test kits available and HIV testing on-site using the Ora Quick home test kits given away. Face Mask give away	CHARLES R. DREW UNIVERSITY MOBILE UNIT

MARQUEECE HARRIS-DAWSON {Continued from A-1}

said as he took the stage. Those words echoed through the crowd, a poignant reminder of the transformation the neighborhood has experienced.

Partygoers weren't just celebrating Harris-Dawson's rise to Council President, they were honoring the entire community who have worked tirelessly alongside him. He took a moment to give special recognition to the 8th District staff, saying,

"These are the hardest working people inside City Hall. They get up early in the morning, stay up late, occasionally lose sleep over our work in the 8th district. I'm grateful to see each and every one of you."

From organizing in South L.A. to leading with dignity on the City Council, Harris-Dawson has always embodied the spirit of service. In his remarks, he reflected on how the day

began with prayer at Bethesda Apostolic Church on Crenshaw Boulevard, with local preachers laying hands on him.

"It was important to me to start this day in the Black church because that's where I started," he said. Also, Harris-Dawson made it clear that the evening wasn't meant to be formal, but rather a gathering of friends, allies, and supporters.

"We didn't want to

make it obligatory. We wanted to make it comfortable," he said. And that's exactly what it was—a comfortable, joyous celebration of the years of struggles that had led to this moment.

Highlighting the unique opportunity before L.A., Harris Dawson noted, "Never before has the city had the kind of council that we have at this moment, and a relationship between

the leadership of the council and the mayor of the city of Los Angeles

"I feel so blessed to be a part of our story, a part of the story of this city. So blessed that all of you are part of the story and come here to celebrate tonight," concluded Harris-Dawson as the night ended. Supporters mingled, laughed, and stayed until the music faded, grateful to be part of the historic moment.



LILA BROWN/LA SENTINEL
Harris-Dawson is congratulated by his wife, Karrie.

COSTCO {Continued from A-1}

This project is being developed by Thrive Living, a national real estate firm that acquires underutilized properties in communities and transforms those properties into vibrant new housing and retail uses. The project will breathe life into an old and stagnant lot with office buildings at Coliseum St. and Stevely Ave. This redevelopment plan, like all of Thrive's other projects, is privately financed, without the use of government subsidies such as Low-Income Housing Tax Credits.

pital and this is where my little sister was born.

"I feel like it is a rebirth of something wonderful and I'm really excited about what will happen."

When completed, the housing part of the project will have a total of 184 apartments, or 23% of the total units, will be dedicated to low-income households. The balance of the units will be non-subsidized affordable and workforce housing. The site will be designed to support families, seniors, and other residents to move



BRIAN W. CARTER/LA SENTINEL
Mayor Bass and officials take a picture with members of the Western States Regional Carpenters.

Buffy Wicks, the lead author of AB 2011, a new state law that provides for by-right approval of housing and mixed-use projects that meet specified affordability, environmental, zoning, and labor criteria, and are located in infill areas currently zoned for office, retail, and parking uses.

Wicks continued, "What I've grown to realize is that trailer provided for me housing security, that trailer allowed me to go to community college and to transfer it to get my degree, that trailer allowed me to access the ladder up in the middle class to become from working class to middle class to eventually work for President Obama for six years.

"That trailer allowed me to be who I am today, to be serving in the California State Legislature to be fighting for more housing so that young people coming up in

low-income and working-class families can have that same access, that ladder up to the middle class because they need the housing security, they need a roof over their head."

"There's also no question that without the enormous effort led by Southwest Regional Council Carpenters, support of AB 2011, we wouldn't be here today," said Ben Shaoul, founder of Thrive Living.

"This is the first mixed-use development in the nation to have Costco as the anchor retail tenant and this is the first mix-use development of this size and scope for Thrive Living in Los Angeles."

"The number one reason I'm here is that I'm a neighbor on 6th Ave," said Miguel Santana president and CEO, Foundation-LA 4 L.A. "When my neighborhood

heard that there was a Costco coming down the street, it was the talk of the town.

"We get to come down the street, in our own neighborhood and support our community so, thank you for making an investment in this community."

"You know, getting additional Costcos in Los Angeles is difficult, there's not a lot of free land and through creative efforts and creative means, this is going to be the first of its kind in the United States for Costco," Sean Mackin, Costco regional administrative manager.

"We're excited to be here and at our 53rd Los Angeles location."

"Many of our carpenters live near here and because the labor standards that were put in here, it gives legitimate employers a shot at building the project and hiring people from the neigh-

borhood and paying them a living wage as outlined, black and white, in AB 2011," said Frank Hawk, executive secretary-treasurer of the Western States Regional Council of Carpenters.

Hawk continued, "We can assure that the project's going to be a springboard, not just a job, but to a career. The people building this, that come into the apprenticeship programs that we have to offer and start off into this new career, they're not going to get rich, but they risk their lives to build things every single day that they can't afford to go into and all that they ask for is a living wage so that they can provide for their families.

"I'd like to also thank Governor Newsom for his support and his understanding that we need something like that working with legislators to get this thing passed and to take it seriously and so, thank you Governor Newsom for everything that you do."

Community Build was part of a large group of leading Los Angeles-based organizations to support AB 2011. Other supporters included Brotherhood Crusade, InnerCity Struggle, West Angeles Community Development Corporation, and the Los Angeles Business Council.



BRIAN W. CARTER/LA SENTINEL
The mixed-use project will feature a store at the street level with 800 units of rental housing and is the first mixed-use development in the nation to have Costco as the anchor retail tenant.

"When they first came to me about this project, I thought wonderful things are born here, wonderful things are born on this land," said Councilwoman Heather Hutt. "This was once a hos-

laterally from within the community.

"I grew up in a trailer and you know, I was a little embarrassed growing up in a trailer when I was little," said Assemblymember

ATTORNEY FANI WILLIS {Continued from A-1}

financial contributions as well.

Willis shared, "I'm very humbled to be here getting the support of California. As you know, this is my home. But I think this significance is that we need to make sure that our entire community is safe. And that impacts Atlanta and Los Angeles just like it impacts Chicago [...] we want to make sure that people are treated equitably and that the law applies to everyone."

After addressing those who gathered, she took time to greet people individually and pose for photos with them. Members of that generous group, including notable community leaders, shared their sentiments about the importance of the event.

Dr. Jesse Sherrod,



E. MESIAH MCGINNIS/LA SENTINEL
Danny Bakewell, Sr. introduces attorney Fani Willis.

founder of the Association of Black Women Physicians of Los Angeles:

"It is important for us to support our own, but also support the truth. And I think that Attorney Willis has been standing in her truth and trying to make sure we get justice and that people are held accountable for their misdeeds as well as their deeds.

Oh, I applaud her for her courage, especially in the state of Georgia. I'm from Mississippi, so that was a big step for her to stand up and to put the team together to bring it to court so that it could be addressed. So I'm just so proud of her for standing in her truth and for supporting justice and trying to make sure we enforce the

Constitution of the United States of America."

Laura Daniels Ball, president of Our Authors Study Club, Inc.:

"As we chart a new path. And so, it's very important for us to make sure that we support those that are standing firm. You know, as the winds of change are trying to take us away from everything that our forefathers fought for, we know there needs to be change, but the basic principles need to remain. And so, we need to support those that understand that while we're making law, we're making a new way."

Ayuko Babu, executive director of the Pan African Film Festival:

"I am here today, first of all, because it's a Black space. I wanted to see her in



E. MESIAH MCGINNIS/LA SENTINEL
Community supporters including Dr. Jesse Sherrod (2nd from left) and Ayuko Babu (2nd from right).

a Black progressive space. [...] And because Fani is one of our daughters. I knew her father extremely well."

Jewett A. Walker, Jr., president emeritus of the 100 Black Men of Los Angeles:

"It's important that we support Fanny because we need people who are independent, who have the perspective of the people. Atlanta The Georgia community needs someone like her because she's not beholden to

special interests, and that's rare in a person like her. And so when you can stand up against the powers that be and speak the truth, that's someone we have to support."

Attorney Fani Willis recently released a promotion video on X (formerly known as Twitter) using her @FaniForDA account to amplify her work and her mission. Learn more about her campaign and how to donate by visiting fanifor-da.com.

SOCALGAS {Continued from A-1}

SoCalGas offers many helpful programs and services that benefit customers, including rebates for energy-efficient appliances, assistance programs for customers with limited income or special medical needs, safety and emergency response services, and bill payment options. We even provide rebates and offerings for our business customers as well.

We offer meaningful and fulfilling career opportunities – with positions ranging from our field service technicians to our call center representatives, to positions in engineering, accounting and finance, and information technologies.

SoCalGas is on a mis-



COURTESY PHOTO
Trijani Gibbs and Antoine Phillips participate in the Stamp Out Hunger campaign.

sion to be the cleanest, safest, most innovative energy infrastructure company in North America. We are investing in new technologies and solutions to

help California meet its energy goals.

What are 1-3 ways that SoCalGas is working to improve the public's everyday quality of life?

In addition to the items mentioned above, SoCalGas also gives back to the communities we serve.

Since 2020, SoCalGas has supported the Restaurant Resilience Fund - helping over 560 independently owned restaurants in its service area! This year, 90 restaurants will receive a \$5,000 grant, including the Serving Spoon in Inglewood. Helping independent restaurants sustain and thrive helps create more vibrant communities for us all.

In 2023, SoCalGas invested over \$19 million to nonprofits serving the 12 counties in our service area, with a focus on helping to improve safety, environmental sustainability, and social impacts through pro-

grams like S.T.E.M. education, scholarships, workforce training and more.

As part of the \$19 million donation last year, \$4 million provided support in addressing food insecurity through SoCalGas' Fueling Our Communities initiative. We partnered with 59 organizations throughout our 12 counties to provide meals and groceries to those in need.

Are there any programs or projects that SoCalGas wants the public to know about?

Last year, SoCalGas unveiled its Hydrogen Innovation Experience (H2IE), located in Downey, CA. This demonstration project features a microgrid that could provide enough energy to power 100 homes, and

a modular home. The micro-grid delivers the electricity to power the home through solar panels and battery storage. The excess solar energy is converted to hydrogen, that is stored in a fuel cell and is blended with natural gas to fuel the gas appliances in the home.

This 80-20 blended fuel, (80% traditional natural gas and 20% green hydrogen), can provide the energy the home needs, at a reduced greenhouse gas footprint. To date, policy makers, community and business leaders, schools, and nonprofit groups have toured H2IE to learn about this technology and how it can help California achieve its environmental goals.

To learn more, visit socalgas.com.

Honey Blu is Creating Her Legacy

By MYKO LYRIC
Contributing Writer

Honey Blu is an MC, singer-songwriter, and community organizer born, raised, and based in Los Angeles. She has performed throughout Los Angeles for over a decade, while also being consistently involved in community activism through organizations including the Afrikan Black Coalition, the Black Student Union at CSU Long Beach where she aided in booking Fred Hampton Jr. as a keynote speaker, New Era Long Beach, and her own Black woman's book club, Revolutionary Stillness.

Growing up in various areas of L.A. County including Long Beach, Hawthorne, and Compton left an indelible mark on Honey as a creator.

"I think it made me really diverse in the arts," Honey shared in an interview with the Sentinel.

"I went to Renaissance High School for the Arts in Long Beach and focused on dance. But my dad was a musician, so I would go to the studio with him, and I learned how to record and going to an art school introduced me to theater. It inspired me not to have cre-

ative barriers."

Blending hip-hop, neo-soul, and R&B with her viscerally real and, at times, boldly political lyrics, are certainly a result of this casting away of barriers.

"I don't feel like all my songs have to be political. Sometimes I want to write about love or my family life. I just want to be real," she



Honey Blu with a Pan-African flag.

explained. In an industry where authenticity is dissipating, Blu's songs offer a refreshing dive into a life that is relatable and honest.

"When I do have shows, I like to spread knowledge. I had a show in Leimert Park, and I gave a brief background on Juneteenth. Also,

now we have social media, so I can share what's going on and bring awareness through that," Honey mentioned.

"I have a [compilation of links] with all my music on all my social media. In there, I also put links like ones to support Palestine and Congo."

Honey was heavily influenced by the music that her father, Lamont Edmundson (A.K.A. 'Cat Iz' [pronounced 'cat eyes']) made and played for her as a younger teen.

"He's an MC, he's a rapper, but I like to refer to him more as a lyricist and storyteller. He played Ice Cube, Common, Ole Dirty Bastard. He taught me how to write a hook, write a verse, and structure and song," she said.

This type of influential, masterful teaching has marked multiple turning points in Honey's life. While at El Camino College, she took an Africana Psychology class that quickly clarified her trajectory.

"That class was so important to me. I learned how everyone's psyche is not the same, and the culture impacts how you think. That is how I decided to

major in Africana Studies," she explained.

While learning more about African history, she also devoted time to her community through food and clothing giveaways, speaker recruitments, coordinating the Black Consciousness Conference and currently resuming her book club, Revolutionary Stillness.

"That idea came to me in 2020. I loved reading revolutionary political theory, but I was organizing so much for people, sometimes I [neglected] my own mental health. I wanted to make sure this community that I was creating, we're trying to prioritize wellness. If not, [we're] gonna get burned out," Honey advised.

The current members of Revolutionary Stillness are reading Araba Ofori-Acquah's "Return to the Power of African-Centered Wellness."

"I think it's important to have Black women have a space where they feel safe to learn. You have to be really informed about the community you work in, so I felt as though starting this would help me start to introduce our history, and it would ignite the other sis-



Honey Blu

ters' consciousness. That's what led me to be an organizer, because you have a responsibility to your people," she admitted.

For those looking to begin their journey into Black revolutionary readings, Honey recommends

"Assata" by Assata Shakur, "Still Black, Still Strong" by Dhoruba Bin Wahad, Assata Shakur, and Mumia Abu-Jamal, "No Disrespect" by Sista Souljah, and "Black Power 50," a compilation of interviews with key figures from the Black Power Movement.

Among Honey's life goals is a deep desire to inspire growth through learning; the type of learning that is not typically

taught in our euro-centric schooling system.

"I really would love to open a school, an independent school similar to [Marcus Garvey School]. I really want to give back to youth. I want the curriculum centered in history that's related to the students," she noted.

Ultimately, her goal is to teach the next generation their real, empowering history.

"I love music, but I don't want to be the world's biggest star," Honey said.

"I want to leave a legacy. I love kids; they're the ones who are going to make this world what it's going to be."

Engage with Honey Blu's music and activism on Instagram: @honeybluu

Watts Towers Announces Lineup for Day of the Drum and Jazz Festivals

SENTINEL NEWS SERVICE

The Watts Towers Arts Center Campus announced the lineup for its annual two-day entertain-

ment extravaganza featuring jazz, drum-based music, poetry and dance from around the world. On Saturday, Sept. 28, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., the 42nd Annual Watts Towers Day of the Drum Festival will be held. On Sun-

day, Sept. 29, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., the 47th Annual Simon Rodia Watts Towers Jazz Festival takes place. Both festivals are free and will be held at the Watts Campus, the Day of the Drum Festival on Saturday features drum-based music, poetry and dance from around the world. Performers include Danza Azteca Xochipilli, Hemant Kulkarni accompanied by Makheer Singh on Dilruba, African Peruvian Experience, TAIKOPROJECT, and IGABA. Also on stage will be the Jaz Sawyer Drum Summit teaming with two young percussionists Emi Desiré and Aisha Gaillard and Leon Mobley - Da Lion presenting traditional African American drum music.

The Jazz Festival features a lineup of internationally acclaimed musicians including Alaadun, R&B artist Kevin Flournoy, Italian jazz by The Jasmine Tommaso Group, Delta-Chicago Jazz by Kirk Andrés Wilson, Tai Chi Chuan, community musician and artist Nedra Wheeler & Friends, and Munyungo's Jungle Jazz.

"This year's lineup reflects a very dynamic and eclectic combination of next generation jazz musicians who reflect the diverse tapestry of jazz and its genres" said Hooks.

"It's a celebration of drums, jazz and cultures that offers an opportunity for families to enjoy and create lasting memories. We always make these annual festivals truly memorable. More musicians and visual artists have come from Watts than any other

similar community in Southern California."

Both Festivals feature children's workshops, tours of the Noah Purifoy & Charles Mingus galleries, universal drum circle, craft stalls, vendors and a food court offering a variety of cuisines.

"These family-friendly events blend traditional and contemporary jazz and multicultural percussions, offering a delightful outing for music and rhythm enthusiasts of all ages," added Hooks.

For more information, visit wattstowers.org/events.



Nedra Wheeler will perform at the 47th Annual Simon Rodia Watts Towers Jazz Festival.

ment extravaganza featuring jazz, drum-based music, poetry and dance from around the world.

On Saturday, Sept. 28, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., the 42nd Annual Watts Towers Day of the Drum Festival will be held. On Sun-

day, Sept. 29, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., the 47th Annual Simon Rodia Watts Towers Jazz Festival takes place.

Both festivals are free and will be held at the Watts Towers Arts Center Campus, 1727 E. 107th Street, Los Angeles, CA

Presented by the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs and produced by Rosie Lee Hooks, director and curator of the Watts Towers Arts Center

CD 10 & L.A. Civil Rights Dept. Hold 3rd Annual Clean Up Day

SENTINEL NEWS SERVICE

The Los Angeles City Civil + Human Rights and Equity Department (LA Civil Rights) will co-host a cleanup event with Council District 10, L.A. Sanitation, and the family of late L.A. City Councilmember Tom LaBonge, affectionately known as "Mr. Los Angeles," to honor his life and legacy of public service.

The event will be held on Saturday, Sept. 28, from 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. The public is invited to participate by meeting at the CD 10 District Office, 1819 S. Western Avenue, in Los Angeles. The clean-up location is at Pico and Western Avenue.

"On the morning of community beautifica-

tion, we'll be picking up small trash items in the area around Pico Blvd. Water fill-up stations and snacks will be provided. Please bring a reusable water bottle and wear comfortable shoes and clothing. City Departments and Together in Service will be on hand to provide resources to the community," said a spokesperson.

"Tom was always rolling up his sleeves to make a difference and make Los Angeles more beautiful," said Capri Maddox, LA Civil Rights executive director.

"He gave so much to this city, and he loved the rich diversity of Los Angeles. This day of service isn't just about cleaning neighborhoods; it's

about coming together, supporting one another, and loving Los Angeles — just the way Tom did."

LaBonge served the City of LA for nearly 40 years, working with Mayors Tom Bradley and Richard Riordan, as well as Council President John Ferraro. Elected to represent Council District 4 in 2001, LaBonge served his community for 14 years. Known for his hands-on approach and deep love for Los Angeles, he was often seen pulling over his vehicle to personally clean our streets.

To register to participate in the event, visit https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1yjIPHwMzJdKtsxxn-Fsk7tuTBkC5nKl_D11Zs5Lrx0M4/viewform?edit_requested=true.



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Mel's Fish Transforms to New & Improved Mel's Farmhouse

STAFF REPORT

After 16 years at its Farmdale Ave. location, Mel's Fish is winding down and expanding its reach with the new name – Mel's Farmhouse – and including healthier fare and fresh farm foods.

The new and improved Mel's Farmhouse will offer produce grown at their 20-acre farm located in the Angeles National Forest as well as its Louisiana fried and grilled favorites devel-

oped by its original owner, Mel Powell.

"Mel's Fish is becoming farm-to-fork as part of our move back to the corner of Jefferson and Buckingham. This transition allows us to offer our customers a healthier menu, with our existing options enhanced and new items introduced from Day 1," says Georgette Powell, daughter of Mel Powell.

"We're also introducing a lighter, healthier menu with vegan, gluten-free, and vegetarian options. Savor

our delicious vegan and gluten-free chocolate cake—undeniably one of the best you'll ever taste! And don't miss our vegetarian crab cakes made with lion's mane mushrooms, which will send your taste buds to the moon," she added.

To celebrate the transition, the business will host Customer Appreciation Day on Sunday, Sept. 29, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., at the Farmdale Ave. and Jefferson Blvd. site. Patrons will

receive a 22% discount on all orders while supplies last.

Starting Nov. 1, Mel's Fish will only be available via online ordering for delivery or pickup at www.melsfarmhouse.com. Mel's Farmhouse plans to resume operations in Spring 2025 under new ownership at its original location at 4026 W. Jefferson Blvd, in Los Angeles.

For updates, follow on Instagram @melsfarmhouse or email info@melsfarmhouse.com.



COURTESY PHOTO

Mel's Fish will hold Customer Appreciation Day on Sunday, Sept. 29.

Hundreds of People Attend Central Avenue Jazz Festival

By JOANIE HARMON
Contributing Writer

The history of jazz in Los Angeles was celebrated once again in grand style on Saturday, Oct. 21, when the 29th Central Avenue Jazz Festival took place in the historic corridor between MLK Blvd. and Vernon Avenue.

The lineup included the John Beasley Big Band; Chief Adjah; Las Chikas; Matthew Whitaker; the USC Jazz Ensemble; the Diego-Fernandez Kim Quartet; Michael Mayo; Extra Ancestral featuring Eduardo Palo Cuero; Charles McPherson; and the Devin Daniels Quintet.

Mayor Karen Bass



DEDEE VERDIN/CITY OF L.A.

From left are Jose Rizo, Councilman Curren D. Price Jr., Mayor Karen Bass, and Michael Dolphin.

The free, family-friendly event was presented by Councilman Curren D. Price, Jr. and The New Ninth, in conjunction with the Coalition for Responsible Community Development and Concerned Citizens of South-Central Los Angeles.

commended Price for his continuing the tradition of the festival and expressed her hopes to share Central Avenue more globally when Los Angeles hosts the 2028 Olympics.

"I remember my parents tell me all about Central Avenue, the legacy, the his-



JOANIE HARMON/L.A. SENTINEL

Grammy nominated vocalist and composer Carmen Lundy graced the Marlena Shaw Stage at the 29th Central Avenue Jazz Festival on Oct. 21.

tory that is here," said Bass. "I love the fact that the Councilman has made sure we continue the legacy.

"During the Olympics, I think we should have jazz on Central Avenue. People need to come here... they need to know about Los Angeles as a whole," she said.

Michael Dolphin, whose father owned Dolphin's of Hollywood, one of the first Black-owned record stores in Los Angeles, helped kick off the event with KJAZZ's

Jose Rizo, host of "Jazz on the Latin Side." Dolphin underscored the history that still exists in the area with landmarks such as the restored Dunbar Hotel.

"This is legitimate," said Dolphin. "This is the legacy of Black L.A. In the 40s and 50s, you could walk down the street and bump into Duke Ellington, Count Basic, Billie Holliday, or Etta James. It was literally the birthplace of West Coast jazz and West Coast R&B.

Carmen Lundy, one of the festival headliners this year, shared her perspective on the legacy of women at Central Avenue, including the late vocalist Barbara Morrison and trumpet player Clora Bryant.

"The fact that I'm female is essential to the growth and the exponential impact of the music," said Lundy after her set on the Marlena Shaw Stage.

"That song I sang about, 'Women have the power to change the world'... I wrote two years before we knew we would have a female [presidential] candidate. It has another resonance because of that.

"Whatever other contri-



JOANIE HARMON/L.A. SENTINEL

Kenneth Dixon, saxophonist and alumnus of the JazzAmerica program, is currently earning his master's degree in music at CSU Northridge.

butions women make, you can't have a music like jazz without the contribution of women," said Lundy.

Looking to the future of jazz is an integral part of the festival. Bass player and educator Richard Simon leads JazzAmerica, a tuition-free that offers music education and personal growth opportunities to middle and high school students in Los Angeles.

He shared the story of Buddy Collette's vision of inclusion as a co-founder of JazzAmerica in 1994, and as one of the driving forces that integrated the L.A. separate musicians' unions—one Black and one white—in 1953.

"Buddy... helped create

this integrated orchestra, called it the Humanist Symphony," said Simon.

"They were playing classical pieces, just so the whites and the Blacks could get together and trust one another. He played a flute passage from some opera, and the musical director of the Groucho Marx TV show...heard him. He was the first Black [musician] on a national TV broadcast.

"The next year, he was hired as the first Black in the orchestra for the Academy Awards. Afterward, they said, 'That was great. We'd like to have you back next year.' And he said, 'Only if I'm not the only one.'"

Hertz Nazaire Exhibit Highlights Pain, Exemplifies Triumph

By BRIAN W. CARTER
Contributing Writer

Hertz "Naz" Nazaire was an immigrant, and artist and a sickle cell warrior. His journey was recently on display as a traveling exhibit, "The Nod to Naz," at the Marriot in Torrance.

The exhibit ran from Sept. 18 through Sept. 21 with two

threatening genetic blood disorder. The disease causes red blood cells to have a unique "sickle" shape, which can lead to vaso-occlusive events or vaso-occlusive crises that are very painful and damage organs. Sickle cell disease is predominant among African Americans. Despite sickle cell, Nazaire lived and left countless sto-

ence from his battle with sickle cell disease. Even in losing his vision, Nazaire continued to express himself through his art. Rowley shared how his art ended up a part of this traveling exhibit and has become a powerful tool for sickle cell awareness.

"He had a warehouse full of his items and those items were gifted to SCDAA (Sickle Cell Disease Association of America)," said Rowley.

"This is literally only a handful of what they acquired and so through the support of Agios, which is a pharmaceutical company, they were able to convert all of this into a traveling art exhibit. It first, actually, was shown at their convention last year, the SCDAA has an annual convention in October."

"Agios Pharmaceuticals is very proud and honored to be a sponsor of this traveling exhibit that is the second leg of a third of three cities exhibit and we are happy to support the sickle cell community especially during sickle cell awareness month," said Janie Davis, Agios director of patient advocacy.

"Sickle cell is disruptive, it's a large type of thing that changes your life and for me, as a caregiver, has changed my life so, just to be a part of this and see it, with this magnitude, has really just helped me say this is where I need to be," said Cole-Cavins.

"Sometimes your pain becomes your purpose and that's what it is for me."

For more information on Cayenne Wellness Center, visit cayennewellness.org. For information on the Sickle Cell Disease Association of America, visit www.sicklecelldisease.org. For more on The Nod to Naz exhibit, visit www.hertznazairegallery.com



COURTESY PHOTO

Artist and sickle cell warrior, Hertz Nazaire

galleries, one being an immersive and interactive creation. Sponsored by Agios, Vertex and Cayenne Wellness Center, the exhibit is more than a tribute to Nazaire — it's a blueprint for overcoming.

"As a warrior, he wanted to be able to share what it was like living with this experience of sickle cell disease through his paintings, through his artwork," said Dr. Carolyn Rowley, executive director and founder of Cayenne Wellness Center.

Nazaire was born in Haiti and immigrated to the U.S. where he lived with his mother in New York City before moving to Bridgeport, Connecticut. He studied at the Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale and the University of Bridgeport. In 2021, he passed away at the age of 48 due to sickle cell-related complications.

Sickle cell disease is a rare, debilitating, and life-

threatening genetic blood disorder. The disease causes red blood cells to have a unique "sickle" shape, which can lead to vaso-occlusive events or vaso-occlusive crises that are very painful and damage organs. Sickle cell disease is predominant among African Americans. Despite sickle cell, Nazaire lived and left countless sto-

ries and a part of himself in his artwork. "This art exhibit is just tremendously important to me because it is a way for him to live on and for us, as a world, to really see what sickle cell looks like visually," said Harley Cole-Cavins, Cayenne Wellness Center marketing manager and caregiver.

"I had the awesome honor of being able to meet Hertz while he was alive. My children are twins, but only one has sickle cell. In that moment, hearing him, it really gave me a purpose and I changed the way I looked at my child because as a parent, you first think of what is being taken away, but when I heard him, I was able to see what was being given and so I then found a community and said I'm going to find a way to advocate just like he does."

A lot of Nazaire's work, colorful and vibrant, captures a lot of emotion and experi-

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John Singleton's African American Cinema Society Thrives at USC

By MYKO LYRIC
Contributing Writer

Within the 1,000 student-led organizations at USC, the African American Cinema Society (AACS) has emerged as the only club that caters specifically toward Black filmmakers.

AACS was created 34 years ago by acclaimed alums John Singleton and David L. Watts to provide a community for Black students to create and consume cinema, gain network opportunities, attend special events and workshops, and develop a support system of like-minded individuals.

The current president of AACS, Mikayah Lee,

try's like, how to navigate it once you're out of college," Mikayah explained.

"College is a safety net, so we want to make sure we are preparing our members with the knowledge and resources that they need to make supported and informed decisions after college."

Another AACS offering are their workshops and meetings. Tyler Holmes, the graduate advisor of AACS, recently coordinated a workshop on animation, recruiting animator Chevez Sanchez Jr.

"We learned about the process of animation from start to finish. And we also talked about underrepresentation within animation



The AACS board.

COURTESY PHOTO



Mikayah Lee

COURTESY PHOTO

engaged in an exclusive interview with the Sentinel to expound on the organization's current offerings and future intentions.

"One of the biggest things we do is connect current students with industry professionals. They give them advice, what types of things they should be thinking about right now, what the indus-

and had a panel on the subject," Tyler noted.

The general body meetings are described by Mikayah as "...our safe space. That's where [we] come to talk freely about what's going on in your life as a creator, to not have to code switch."

Other benefits of being a member of AACS include attending special guest

events with previous speakers being Robert Townsend, Paula Patton, Prentice Penny (executive producer of "Insecure"), and Juel Taylor (writer and director of "They Cloned Tyrone").

"We had a really memorable event with Paula Patton. She really dove into her spiritual practices and the type of mindset she's had to have, how that mindset has changed through the course of her role in the industry, and how she's kept herself grounded," Mikayah recalled.

"There's a saying 'wait and it will come' and that's the perspective [Patton] shared with us. If you have a burning passion, focus on the people that will help you get there, focus your energy on the avenues that are available to you. If you don't know what's available to you, focus on finding out," Mikayah advised.

Looking forward, Mikayah and the presidential team are focused on making decisions that will expand the reach of AACS.

"I want to see AACS continue to grow, I want to create an alumni chapter the previous

president, Isaiah Simon, and I have been discussing this."

"One thing [the team is] talking about is programming our 'Below The Line' series. 'Above the line' is considered producer, director, writer, and director of photography. Below the line are all of those crew members in the film who aren't talked about," explained Mikayah.

"We want to bring in production designers, script supervisors, visual effects supervisors, gaffers, grips...because everyone wants to be a director. But it's not realistic for being

the one thing that you do for your career starting out, so we're bringing in these [below the line] people who are in the industry and love what they do and have an amazing lifestyle."

A new venture for AACS is on the horizon, thanks to a private donor who provided funds for AACS to collaboratively create a 10-15 minute short film.

"We're in pre-production right now, next semester will be production, and we'll show it at our student film festival in April."

While a few of AACS' events are offered to USC students only, most of them are open to the public and welcome to anyone passionate about cinema. For those who are interested in learning the history of Black filmmaking and representation, Mikayah suggests her personal favorites,

"Boyz N the Hood," "Set it Off," and "Just Mercy." The organization runs successfully not only because of the contributions of its predecessors, but also the current presidential board, including Vice President Dovely King, Director of Communications Jaden Bakerr, and Graduate Advisor Tyler Holmes.

The spirit that fuels the success of this group is one of curiosity, Mikayah said. "I think something that's so special about AACS, when we bring people and have conversation, we really seek to talk about the things that aren't talked about. We see the product of the film but tell me the moment where you wanted to stop. What made you continue?"

Stay updated on AACS' future events on Instagram: @uscaacs or email them aacs@usc.edu.

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B-1

Pullum Community Arts Center Awarded Grant for \$10,000

The Band Together For Music Education initiative and the John Lennon Educational Tour Bus made a special visit to Leimert Park.

BY BRIAN W. CARTER
Contributing Writer

"It is like a dream come true that I never thought was possible," said Fernando Pullum about his community center receiving a \$10,000 grant from Band Together For Music Education recently in Leimert Park.

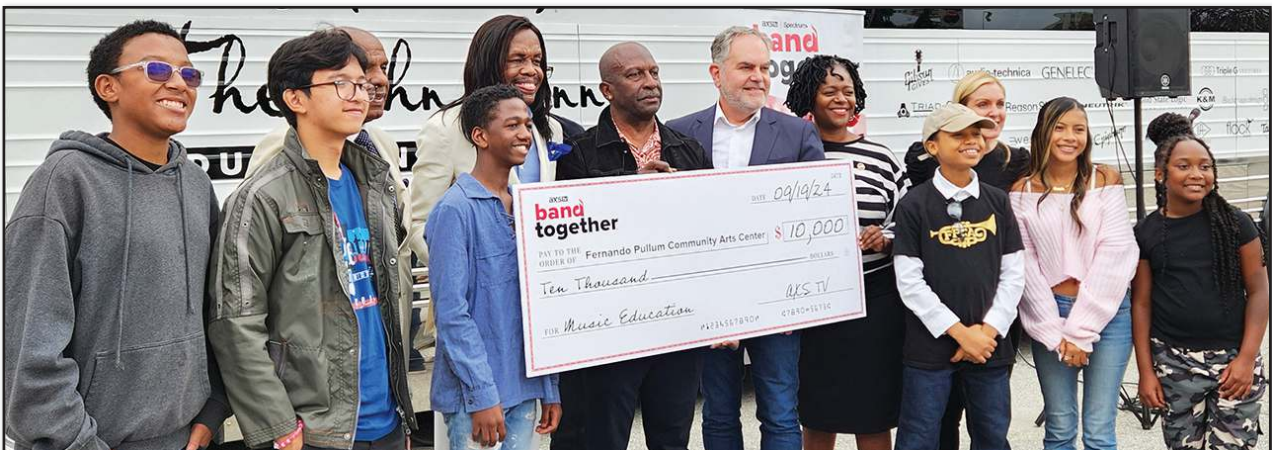
"I'm so thrilled for the students in our community and the community at large to see this bus in our hood.

"It gives people the opportunity to wish and desire more things."

The bus Pullum mentioned is the John Lennon Educational Tour Bus, which announced its partnership with AXS TV and Spectrum to sponsor the mobile music and video

Tour Bus. "As technology has evolved, the Lennon buses have evolved but the mission has always remained the same and that is to provide young people with free hands-on opportunities to create original music and videos projects that reflect their ideas and their concerns."

Established in 2022, Band Together For Music Education has connected AXS TV with affiliates, local communities, and schools nationwide, in support of vital music education programs. The Band Together initiative helps provide resources to underserved music programs that best exemplify quality instruction, participation, and leadership. AXS TV



Band Together For Music Education presents Pullum Community Arts Center with a \$10,000 grant.

school is so important.

"It's clearly important to AXS and Spectrum, it's important to me personally, I've been on the board of Teach for America, my wife's been on the board of PS Arts here, locally, for over 10 years.

"I was part of the founding team for the initiative that we had saved the music at another network earlier so, it's been a huge part of my life, it fits like a glove to be at AXS working with Spectrum and now the John Lennon Educational Tour Bus."

"We are so happy to be here today and partnering with AXS TV to provide this grant for this amazing community center that offers so many benefits to the children and giving them the access and the resources and the tools that they need to have these hands-on experiences with music," said Kara Bush associate vice president at Charter Communications/ Spectrum.

"We like to take the opportunity to recognize Fernando Pullum for all of his great work in this com-

munity because he's amazing and if not for him, we wouldn't have these opportunities and be able to support the efforts that he does and charter spectrum is very proud to support this effort."

The event was attended by special guests and local leaders and representatives including California State Senators Steven Bradford (35th District) and Lola Smallwood-Cuevas (28th District), Los Angeles Councilwoman Heather Hutt (10th District), Los Angeles County Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell (2nd District) and legendary bass player Verdine White from Earth, Wind & Fire.

"Thank you everybody, thank you for having me here," said White. "Thank you so much and all these beautiful young artists, who were conceived on our music.

White continued, "Regardless of what technology is going to be doing nothing really takes the place of talent and nothing takes the place of love and support that we give to them.

"They asked me, 'what's the secret?' The secret is just have fun, you're only going to be young one time, so have fun with it because the studio is fun.

"It's fun at my age and

they have to drag me out of the studio because I have to go to work and do concerts and things like that, but it's a pleasure to be here."

"This is a great example of community partnership with our corporate partners here in the community this would not be possible and I want to thank this amazing bus," said Bradford. "Music is that connective tissue that keeps young folks in school because it's more than about music, you got to learn how to write, you got to know math, to do timing in your music—all of those things."

"Twenty-six years ago, when the bus first opened, I saw them out in Anaheim and I thought, 'Wow, that bus would never come to my neighborhood,'" said Pullum. "We don't have access like that but low and behold, they've been here, now about, five times and me personally, I gauge people's sincerity and what they really want to do for kids in our community by them showing up and I look behind me and I see these guys showed up."

Spectrum's support and assistance with AXS TV's Band Together has awarded a combined total of \$160,000 in grants to 24 schools across 20 cities. The Lennon Bus programs have served hundreds of thousands of stu-

dents around the world with events, workshops, and interactive experiences completely free of charge.

"To see what happens here is exactly why we have to support the arts in schools because an idea becomes art, becomes a song and then hopefully becomes part of our lives at a special moment as music always does," said Schuon.

For information on Band Together For Music Education, visit axs.tv/band-together. For information on John Lennon Educational Tour Bus, visit lennonbus.org. For more on Pullum Community Arts Center, visit www.pullumcenter.org.



BRIAN W. CARTER/L.A. SENTINEL

A look inside the John Lennon Educational Tour Bus.

recording experience as it makes stops at three schools across the country.

"This is a project that I started with Yoko Ono 26 years ago," said Brian Rothschild, co-founder and executive director at the John Lennon Educational

President Andy Schuon shared that this kind of initiative is a part of his personal mission statement.

"It's great to see this program enhanced by this bus," said Schuon. "The beauty of this and education and music and arts in

UCLA Students Gain Organizing Experience Working with Black Worker Centers

BY CORA JACKSON-FOSSETT
Managing Editor

Nine UCLA students were recognized as Freedom Fellows at a special ceremony on Sept. 14 at the Los Angeles Black Worker Center in South L.A.

The young adults were saluted for completing a 10-week program where they learned how to advance civic and economic justice for Black workers. The students received real-world training by working directly with activists and community organizers affiliated with Black Worker Centers throughout California.

According to Saba Waheed, director of the UCLA Labor Center, the Freedom Fellowship is a program operating under the UCLA CARE at Work initiative. The students are recruited through the We Gone Be Alright class, but the Freedom Fellowship takes place during the summer and is only available to students who have taken the We Gon' Be Alright: Developing the Next Generation of Black Organizers class in the spring quarter. In spring 2025, the class will be open to local community college students.

Many of the students expressed appreciation for the learning opportunity and committed to sharing



COURTESY PHOTO

The UCLA Freedom Fellows are, top from left, Jessica Ojukwu, Saul Murillo Alvarez, Shaeveon Sisson, Alexis Molden, Bethel Dagnu, Lydia Dixon, and bottom, Dagoberto "Dago" Sanchez, Bobbie Sturge, and Sophia Middleton.

this knowledge with friends and associates. Several young people also gave testimonies about the benefits of being a Freedom Fellow.

Regarding the students' comments, Waheed noted, "I found it very inspiring. You can really see the theme of the roots and truth in terms of laying down foundations to develop future leaders, develop leadership skills, organizing and the connection to systemic issues and how they can address things like racism and why it's important to focus on Black leaders and Black labor justice."

Offering similar insight, Andrea Slater, director of UCLA CARE at Work, said, "I thought this was a phenomenal group of students. They come from very diverse backgrounds and very

diverse academic areas of study. For them to have meshed so well and really helping each other along and taking the work so seriously really made our lives very wonderful.

"The goal and hope are that they take the information that they learned to not only empower their peers, empower their community and will take these lessons into the workplace and advance worker's rights," she added.

The students recognized were Saul Murillo Alvarez, Bethel Dagnu, Lydia Dixon, Sophia Middleton, Alexis Molden, Jessica Ojukwu, Dagoberto "Dago" Sanchez, Shaeveon Sisson, and Bobbie Sturge.

To learn more, visit https://labor.ucla.edu/our-projects/center-for-the-advancement-of-racial-equity/.

Simon Burris: Africana Diaspora Black History Month II Crossword

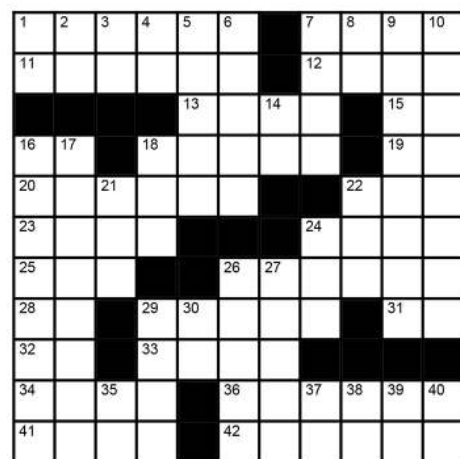
THEY'RE PLAYING MY SONG
www.simonburris700.com

Across

- 1. **Finally, Etta James' signature song (2 wds.)
7. *Usain __; Jamaican sprinter
11. **Cab Calloway's Moocher
12. Querying sounders
13. Mount Milan, Georgia (initials)
15. _bbott _lementary (TV series)
16. **"__ I Blue" (Billie Holiday)
18. Go __ (decay)
19. Brief "night"
20. Cast a negative ballot (2 wds.)
22. " __ abundant are the good things" (Psalm 31:19)
23. Oklahoma city
24. *Beloved" author Morrison
25. **"Old __ River" (Paul Robeson)
26. Groups of women
28. ** __ Jarreau "We are the World"
29. **" __ Bryson "Beauty and the Beast"
31. Film visitor from space
32. Providence, __
33. **"The Banana Boat Song" (Belafonte)
34. Small island
36. **"Santa Baby" singer Kitt
41. Small battery size
42. **" __ Weather" (Lena Horne)

Down

- 1. **" __ I Blue") Billie Holiday)
2. **Songstress __na Turner
3. Loan (abbr.)
4. One
5. *African passerby who carried the cross of Jesus (Mark 15:21)
6. Rhythm
7. **" __ It" (Michael Jackson)
8. ** __, Happy Day" (Aaron Neville)



- 9. **Bill Withers' signature song (3 wds.)
10. **Chubby Checker classic (2 wds.)
14. **" __ Tell it on the Mountain" (Mahalia Jackson)
16. **Schubert's song (Marian Anderson)
17. **Nat King Cole's classic
18. Boy's nickname
21. Light metal
22. Garden tool
24. Streetcar (__ _lley)
26. **Go Down, Moses" (Roland __)
27. One canoe, for example (2 wds.)
29. Primary Deacon, for short
30. Each (abbr.)
35. " __ vic en rose" (Edith Piaf)
37. Abbr. for right order
38. Treble (abbr.)
39. **Actress McDaniel's monogram
40. *Civil rights activist Young's monogram

(ANSWERS ON D-2)

TEC Leimert's Annual Black to the Future Tech & Entertainment Conference

By **SHELBY STEPHENS**
Contributing Writer

Los Angeles' largest Black-owned and operated tech and entertainment conference, Black to the Future, returns for 2024, powered by Technology Entertainment Convergence (TEC) Leimert. The annual conference brings creative industry professionals into Leimert Park for a day of networking, digital activations, immer-

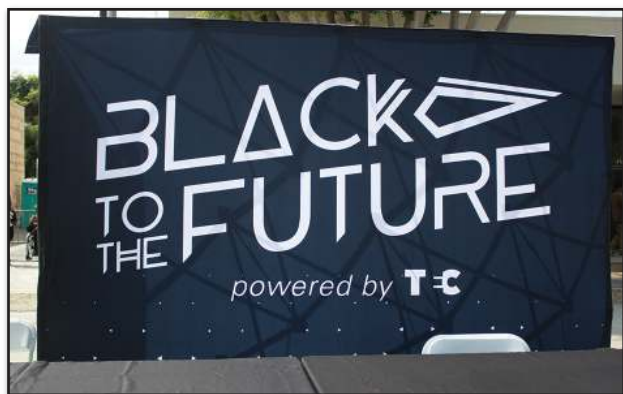
tainment Conference took over Degnan on Saturday, Sept. 21, to shed light on the emerging innovative trends coming from creative technologists in the tech and entertainment industry. The event featured special activations and development labs for students and residents to enjoy.

TEC Leimert seeks to connect individuals in the L.A. community to art and tech while exposing them to innovations in entertain-



SHELBY STEPHENS/L.A. SENTINEL

Black Animation 101 panel discussion



SHELBY STEPHENS/L.A. SENTINEL

Black to the Future

sive experiences, music, food, and creative industry-led panel discussions with top professionals.

TEC Leimert's Black to the Future Tech & Enter-

tainment and technology. The organization produces programming to bridge the digital divide including the annual TEC Conference. Through these collabora-

tive, community-based platforms, TEC Leimert works to build a blueprint for urban communities to harness the power of creativity to help cultivate an empowering space for underserved communities to thrive.

On Saturday, attendees had the unique opportunity to connect with the latest advancements and creatives in the Creative Lounge, engage with live activations like test driving the latest EV vehicles at the EV Village, listen in on panel discussions: Young (NEO) Professionals, Black Animation 101, Young Black Hollywood, the EnviroTech Panel, and

the AI and Creative Technologists conversation.

The highlights of each installation like Artificial Intelligence and Creative Technologists regarded the new vanguard of innovation, and how can Black and Brown communities benefit from a robust discussion with industry professionals driving the trend. The EV Village honored Crenshaw's automotive culture and guests could test drive EV's and learn more about stationary charging station models, while paying homage to L.A. with a special lowrider showcase. Young Professionals Brunch, a networking session and discussion, explored the creative economy and what it means for young professionals aspiring to excel in their career.

Amongst the many activities and vendor markets, actor Kareem Grimes was in attendance, Black Excellence Brunch Founder Trell Thomas participated in the Young Black Hollywood panel, local faces Etienne Maurice, wellness entrepreneur and Founder of WalkGoodLA, and famous dancer Storm DeBarge, could be seen enjoying the conference. When asked about TEC Leimert and their community presence, DeBarge

shared, "two years ago I was asked to speak at TEC Leimert through Chrissy B and today I came to see Ashley Imani for the Young Hollywood Panel, to see her and show my support."

Connection and purpose are two themes TEC Leimert embodies when taking inventory of the guests that participate in

and more, help cultivate an uplifting space for underserved minority communities to engage, learn, and network with industry experts, urban professionals, and entrepreneurs.

TEC Leimert has been instrumental in bringing resources to the community and giving opportunities to create involvement in



SHELBY STEPHENS/L.A. SENTINEL

Etienne Maurice of WalkGoodLA

Sean Mason Quintet Debuts at Segerstrom Center for the Arts

SENTINEL NEWS SERVICE

The Sean Mason Quintet will perform on Saturday, Oct. 5, at 7 p.m. and 9 p.m., at Segerstrom Center for the Arts, 600 Town Center Drive in Costa Mesa.

A jazz pianist and composer, Mason is considered a premier talent of his generation. Hailed by NPR's "Youngbloods" series as a



COURTESY PHOTO

Sean Mason

musician on the rise, Sean has already toured with Branford Marsalis, Wynton Marsalis, and Catherine Russell, and was featured on the soundtrack of the Netflix movie, "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom." In 2023, he released his debut album, "The Southern Suite."

For tickets or information, visit scfta.org or call (714) 556-2787.

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RELIGION

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2024

www.lasentinel.net

B-3

Westminster Presbyterian Church Observes 120th Anniversary

By CORA JACKSON-FOSSETT
Religion Editor

The members of Westminster Presbyterian Church will observe their 120th Anniversary during the worship service on Sunday, Oct. 20, at 11 a.m., at 2230 W. Jefferson Blvd. in Los Angeles.

The Rev. Carlton A. Rhoden is the pastor of the fellowship known as the oldest African American Presbyterian congregation in L.A. According to its website, “the fellowship began in the early 20th century with eighteen



Pastor Carlton A. Rhoden

“Colored” people whose background, training and education came from schools operated by the Presbyterian Church in the Carolinas.

“The new church de-

velopment committee appealed to the then-Los Angeles Presbytery to come under ‘care and development.’ On October 21, 1904, the church was enrolled in the then-Presbytery of Los Angeles.

“The new Westminster Presbyterian Church not only marked the birth of a Colored Presbyterian Church in Los Angeles, it was also to be the first of its kind in the state of California and west of the Mississippi,” the website stated. The first edifice was erected in 1906 at West 35th Place and Denker Av-

enue. In 1948, the congregation purchased its current edifice.

“Over the years, Westminster Presbyterian Church has provided countless blessings to many people - hope, in a time of discouragement; help in re-building broken relationships; and a pathway to a deep, and satisfying relationship with God,” one member shared.

In addition, the congregation has hosted many ministers and musicians including the Rev. Dr. Jeremiah Wright and organist Billy Preston.



Westminster Presbyterian Church of Los Angeles

The public is invited to vice. To learn more, visit attend the celebratory ser- wpcofla.org .

Words of the Week - Game Plan for Glory: Working Out Your Faith Like a Champion

By BISHOP BYRON L. SMITH
Contributing Writer

Scripture: Phil. 2:12-18

Just as a great athlete has a game plan to reach success, we as followers of Christ have a game plan for our spiritual journey for success. Today, let us examine our lives and see how we can work out our faith with intention and purpose, just like the athletes we admire.

Take LeBron James, for instance, one of the most gifted athletes of our time, who started out with no father, no college degree, and the odds against him. His success didn't come without careful strategy, hard work, dedication, and God's grace. Much like him, God calls us to have a game plan for our faith, a plan to live out our potential for His glory as outlined

by the Apostle Paul in Philippians 2:12-18. Just like the writer of Philippians the Apostle Paul, states, the only way we can live out our full potential is by turning our lives over to God through Christ Jesus. In turning our lives to reach our full potential, despite our past mistakes and shortcomings, a person must be open to:

Point 1: Work Out Your Salvation with Fear and Trembling (Philippians 2:12) My dear brothers and sisters, just like a champion athlete trains with discipline and focus, we are called to “work out” our salvation with fear and trembling. This isn't about earning salvation—it's already a gift from God. Rather, it's about living out that gift with respect and reverence for God's grace, just as athletes respect their

sport. LeBron didn't make it to where he is by accident, and neither can we reach our full potential as believers without actively engaging in our spiritual growth.

Point 2: Work Out Without Grum-

bling or Arguing (Philippians 2:14) Imagine a basketball team constantly complaining or arguing during a game. What would that do to their performance? In the same way, Paul tells us to work out our salvation without grumbling or arguing. Like a team in harmony, the church must

unite in purpose and attitude. Our “game plan” requires unity, cooperation, and a positive spirit—because just like in sports, discord can lead to defeat. We are called to work out our salvation joyfully and together, reflecting Christ's love in all we do.

Point 3: Hold Firm to the Word of Life (Philippians 2:16) No championship team can succeed without a solid strategy and play book. For us, the

Word of God is our playbook—the “Word of Life” that guides our every move. Athletes study their game, memorize plays, and follow their coach's direction. Likewise, we are to hold firmly to Scripture, letting it guide our thoughts, decisions, and actions. In a world full of distractions and

shifting values, the Bible provides us with a game plan for living a life that pleases God and leads us to victory.

Point 4: Work Out and Be Glad and Rejoice (Philippians 2:18) Finally, the journey of working out our faith should be filled with joy. Just as athletes celebrate their victories on the court, we are called to rejoice in the Lord and in the progress we make in our faith journey. Paul, even in prison, found joy in the faithful work of the believers in Philippi.

Our “game plan for glory” doesn't end with hardship or trials—it leads to eternal joy in Christ where God and God alone will be pleased with our faithfulness. In the same way, LeBron and Bronny James and many other athletes strive for greatness on the court or the field,

we are called to strive for spiritual greatness in Christ.

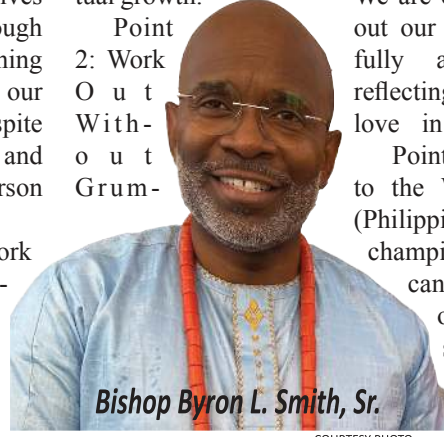
Our “game plan for glory” is laid out clearly in Philippians 2:12-18. We work out our salvation with reverence, we avoid grumbling, we hold firm to the Word of God, and we rejoice in the progress we make. As we commit to this plan, we glorify God and reflect His light in a world that desperately needs it the most.

Let us all work out our salvation with faith, focus, and joy, just like champions in the game of life. Jesus is the true Champion because He went to Calvary cross for the sins of the world. Christ died and gave up the Holy Ghost. Jesus was buried, but on the third day, God spoke from heaven and commanded Him to get up. Jesus responded and got up! Got up

with all power in His hands, which signifies victory over sin and death. All who call on the name of Jesus will be saved and become a Champion. To God be the Glory!

Let us pray: O God. I come to you because of know you are the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. Forgive me for my sins and shortcomings, and strengthen me so that I will have a clean heart and the right spirit to work as the Champion you have called me to be as you bless me, strengthen me, and make me whole. I promise to bless you back by blessing your name and your people. In Jesus's name, I pray, Amen.

Bishop Byron L. Smith Sr., is the senior pastor of Gethsemane Christian Love M.B. Church, located at 9616 S. Avalon Blvd., in Los Angeles.



Bishop Byron L. Smith, Sr.

COURTESY PHOTO

SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH POSTS PULPIT VACANCY FOR SENIOR PASTOR

The Second Baptist Church of Los Angeles (SBCLA) has posted a notice of pulpit vacancy for a Senior Pastor to lead their traditional African American congregation into the next phase of the 21st century. Founded in 1885, SBCLA has enjoyed an uninterrupted presence in the Los Angeles community for 139 years. For the past 37 years, the church has been under the leadership of the Reverend Doctor William Saxe Epps and First Lady Agretta Epps.

The mission of SBCLA is to acknowledge that “God was in Christ redeeming, reconciling and restoring the world unto himself” (2 Corinthians 5:19) and their vision is to continue the work of Christ by developing Ministries that address the needs of contemporary society.

Completed application packets for the pulpit vacancy will be accepted through **October 7, 2024.**

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

- Lead and oversee the spiritual wellbeing of the church with preaching and teaching the Word of God. Ability to lead within the framework of the Church Constitution. Administer the Church Ordinances: The Lord's Supper and Baptism.
- Implement a visionary plan to increase membership and a culture of church giving (stewardship).
- Lead the church in an effective evangelism program.
- Embrace traditional and contemporary forms of music and worship and understand the intergenerational and cultural nuances that are critical in the continuing growth of the church.

Preferred Qualifications and Practical Experiences

The ideology of the ideal candidate is supported by the teachings of the Holy Bible, as well as in the African American experience, spirituality, consciousness, and culture. Specific qualifications include:

- Sound interpretation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the traditional African American pastoral preaching. Employ a preaching style that is textual, narrative, challenging, personal, engaging and makes God's Word applicable to everyday life.
- Superior oral and written communication skills that reach various ages and demographics.
- Strong leadership, business and financial skills relative to the church's interest in economic development, grants, projects, non-profit programs and investments.

Minimum Requirements

- At a minimum, the Candidate must be a baptized believer who is passionately committed and dedicated to the Ministry of Jesus Christ.
- At a minimum, the Candidate must have experience at a church similar or larger in size as an Associate pastor but preferably as the Senior Pastor.
- Adhere to a schedule that enables availability to members of the congregation, as needed.
- Experience leading in growing or rebuilding a church.
- Have Accreditation/Licensing/Ordination with the Baptist denomination.
- Hold undergraduate and graduate degrees, with a Master of Divinity and/or preferably, a Doctorate from an accredited Theological Seminary.
- Candidate must possess the following attributes: personal relationship with Jesus Christ, integrity, passion, vision, humility, fiscal responsibility, purpose driven, encourager, mentor, teacher and a peaceful patient man/woman of God.

Application Packet

- Applicant packets are confidential and not returnable to the applicants. Applicants must submit the following to the Pastoral Search Committee as part of the completed application packet:
 - Short Biography and Photo (recent photo of at least six months)
 - Letter of Interest (please answer the following questions)
 - Why do you believe that you might be a good fit as the Senior Pastor of Second Baptist Church Los Angeles? (Theoretical)
 - Describe your experiences in ministry and how you might be qualified to serve as Senior Pastor at our church? (Examples)
 - Resume
 - One public sermon and one recent public Sunday School or Bible Class teaching session. Please submit via thumb drive (examples include YouTube, video, etc.)

Application packets must be submitted electronically via email to SBCLASearch24@gmail.com or Priority Mail with tracking to **Second Baptist Church, 6695 Green Valley Circle, P.O. Box 2605, Culver City, CA 90230-9997.** No calls to the church will be accepted regarding the search process.

Once application packets have been reviewed, the Pastoral Search Committee will contact potential candidates regarding the next steps in the process. All candidates will be subject to a background check as part of the application process.



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• DR. MAULANA KARENGA •

The Meaning and Moral Imperative of Struggle: Some Instructive Insights From the Odu Ifa

In the midst of our and other ongoing struggles for liberation, freedom, justice and other indispensable and indivisible goods in the world, I turn constantly to the sacred texts of our ancestors for grounding and guidance, for constantly deepening insight, urgently needed answers, and uplifting and liberating inspiration. This is especially important to me, to Us, in these difficult, dangerous and demanding times in which evil seems ascendant, shape shifting oppression appears ever-enduring, genocide is shamelessly “justified” by the would-be “superior” and “civilized,” and righteous resistance is denounced and outlawed on campus, in Congress and society.

But still we must bear witness to truth and set the scales of justice in their proper place especially among the voiceless, devalued, downtrodden, dispossessed and oppressed. And this requires resistance, righteous and relentless struggle to oppose evil, injustice and oppression, to affirm and enhance the good in us and the world, and to aspire to, in imagination and action, a whole new world of shared and sustained good.

Clearly, for the members of Us, the sacred texts, the Husia of ancient Egypt and the Odu Ifa of ancient Yorubaland are, as the Husia teaches, a sacred gift of “that which endures in the midst of that which is overthrown.” And as the Odu Ifa states, it is teachings of a vital truth, a truth that “guides rightly, cannot fail, cannot be ruined” and is “a great power” in the world and “an everlasting good” (219:1).

Thus, both sacred texts teach us, urge and inspire us to focus on and continue to wage struggle. And this waging of righteous struggle is laid out and lifted up as a moral imperative and a

transformative and liberating good. Although both the Husia and Odu Ifa offer excellent lessons on the moral imperative and moral good of struggle, I want to share insights from the Odu in this discussion.

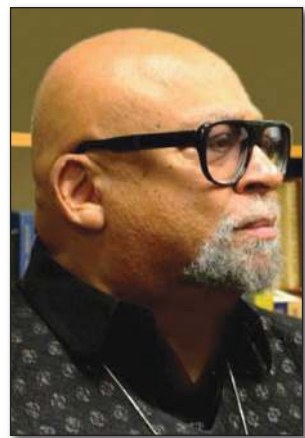
Now, the Odu teaches the value of both internal struggle and external struggle. But I want to focus on external struggle while not minimizing the importance of internal struggle which is indispensable to the quality and success of the external struggle. The Odu tells us that struggle is essential to life, to our growth, to our success, well-being and flourishing in life and our victory over evil, injustice and oppression.

In regard to internal struggle, the Odu stresses the need for humbleness saying that given the demands of growth, development and good in the world, “We are constantly struggling, all of us. We are constantly struggling” to grow, to develop, flourish and come into the fullness of ourselves (10:6).”

But given the need to create the conditions and capacities for human good and the well-being of the world, and to overcome evil, injustice and oppression, we must wage righteous and relentless struggle. Indeed, the Odu (78:1) states we should engage life and struggle with joy, saying “Let’s do things with joy. . . For surely humans have been divinely chosen to bring good in the world.”

And this, Kawaida teaches, is the fundamental meaning and mission of human life. As the sacred text says later, we are also to struggle to not let any good be lost. Indeed, in the same chapter, it says that what is needed to achieve a good world is “the eagerness and struggle to increase good in the world and not let any good be lost.”

Now, if the struggle we wage is to be a good and meaningful struggle, we must always be rightfully



DR. MAULANA KARENGA

attentive to its character and conduct, the Odu Ifa teaches us to commit ourselves to this teaching, i.e., “May the struggle we wage always add to our honor.” We read this concept of adding to our honor (iyi) as expanding and enriching our sense of ourselves and increasing the respect of significant others for us. The Yoruba word, iyi, means respect that we gain in the way we conduct ourselves, urging us to be attentive to the moral means and goals of our struggle.

Here Nana Amilcar Cabral reaffirms this teaching when he speaks of our liberation struggle saying, “if national liberation is essentially a political problem, the conditions for its development give it certain characteristics which belong to the sphere of morals.” And Nana Dr. Anna Julia Cooper teaches us that while not denying our own peoplehood, we must “take our stand on the solidarity of humanity, the oneness of life and the unnaturalness (emphasis mine) of all favoritism (all oppressive sentiments,

thought and practice) whether of sex, race, condition or country.” She thus defines freedom, justice and equality as natural and unfreedom, injustice and inequality as unnatural and compelling righteous and relentless resistance.

The Odu Ifa also teaches moral and psychological courage in struggle, the courage to hold moral ground in the midst of the powerful and oppressive majority or minority. The teachings harshly criticize the way of the coward, who bends with the wind, spits in the air to see which way the popular wind is blowing and walks that way. And the coward, the sacred text teaches, is one who “runs on the day of battle,” “who breathes in fear and who is half-dead before the struggle begins (153:1; 204:1).”

In contrast, the courageous one imitates and embodies the courage, commitment and steadfastness of the lion. They are in the tradition of the Simba Wachanga, the Young Lions of Us in the 1960s, and all the lions, young and old, who preceded us and made us possible, lion-hearted and lion-minded. To be Simba-hearted and Simba-minded for Us, then, is to be noble in conduct, courageous in combat, and uncompromisingly committed to victory that adds to our honor. Thus, again, the text teaches, the struggles we wage must add to our honor and “the battle, the struggle, that brings honor belongs to the lion (150:2).”

Also, the sacred text Odu Ifa teaches us that in our struggles we must be thoughtful. That is to say,

giving careful consideration in both the moral and rational sense. In the moral sense, this means moral sensitivity to others and especially in struggle, not to be morally blinded by hate or have a depraved disregard for the life, well-being and interest of others. In verse 170:1, there is an emphasis on the need to respect human life in our struggle for liberation and good in the world.

And the text suggests that weighed against the heavy value of preserving human life, other issues are as light as a basket of dry leaves. Indeed, the text (170:1) says, “a basket of dry leaves is not heavy enough that its content should cause the death of a human being.” This recalls Nana Cabral’s teaching that we must be “reluctant soldiers”, never ever committed to antagonistic struggle or war as a way of life or imitate the genocidists whose bloodlust knows no end and admits no ethics. And as Nana Dr. Martin Luther King taught, as Kawaida interprets, our highest aim is to struggle in ways that win allies not leave victims, especially among ourselves.

Furthermore, the Odu Ifa teaches us that we must persevere in our ongoing righteous and relentless struggle for a good world. We must, it says, “be able to suffer without surrendering and persevere in what (we) do (150:1).” And we must, the Odu Ifa teaches us, sacrifice in the self-strengthening practice of self-giving. In Kawaida, sacrifice, as self-giving, is a dedicated and disciplined giving of our heart and mind; our efforts; our time;

our resources; and eventually the wholeness of ourselves to the struggle for good in and for the world.

Finally, the sacred texts of Odu Ifa tells us we must be constant soldiers in the struggle in the interests of human good and the well-being of the world and all in it (199:1). It defines this soldier saying, “a constant soldier is never unready, not even once.” Indeed, the sacred text says, “One who stands ready to act for the good is supported by Ogun (the divine spirit of righteous struggle) on the day of battle (185:1).” The constant soldier knows with Nana Haji Malcolm that “wherever there are Black people, there is a battle-line.”

And thus as we say in Kawaida reaffirming this, “Everywhere a battleline; every day a call to struggle.” And these constant soldiers know that the struggle is worldwide as the Odu teaches saying, we are all divinely chosen to increase and sustain good in the world. And bringing good in the world requires that we accept the teaching of Nana Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune that “We must remake the world. The task is nothing less than this.” Ase. Ase. Ase.

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

• TONY WAFFORD •

Rabbit Hunting Ain’t No Fun When the Rabbit Got a Gun

Isn’t it interesting that Republicans and the Red “Mad” Hatters are all flipping out because one crazy white boy (who was a bad shot) tried to kill Trump? And another didn’t get the opportunity to test his marksmanship before being ran off by Secret Service — this white-on-white crime is just getting out of hand!

I wonder if “60 Minutes” is going to do a segment called, “The Hate that Hate Produced?” Some of you may remember, back in July of 1959, Mike Wallace of “60 Minutes” became interested in the Nation of Islam after being told of the growing influence they were having in the Black community.

“60 Minutes” was given access to the organization and aired a segment entitled “The Hate that Hate Produced” (just look at how they framed it) in which all of America was then introduced to a strong young soldier by the name of Malcolm X (el-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz). Wallace did his best to characterize Brother Malcolm, the Nation of Islam, and by extension, Black people as a whole, in the most negative, hateful and frightening way possible.

Now, let’s fast forward to 2024. Trump is operating from the same old playbook; doing all he can to frighten white folks so he can get back in the White House and keep himself out of jail. Have you listened to this guy lately? Trump says Black killers are coming here from the Congo. Haitian migrants are eating

your dogs and cats — remember white folks use to say that about our Asian brothers and sisters. Kamala ain’t really Black and Barack ain’t really an American.

And just so you know, Trump is an equal opportunity hater! Trump also said that there are millions of people coming across our borders — hope you’re listening Billy Joe Bob — from Latin American countries, being released from prisons, insane asylums, and gang members — they’re coming here taken all the Black jobs, in between raping our pretty white girls.

Now this is going to throw you guys off, so don’t let me lose you, but I’ve got to say this. Yes all of this is race baiting, but I really don’t see Trump as a racist. Oh, sure he throws bloody red meat out there to his Appalachian cousins to get them all riled up, hoping they’ll go to the vot-

ing booth and vote for him. But you can bet you will NEVER see any of those



Tony Wafford

coverall-wearing, tobacco chewing, rednecks at Mar-a-Lago! He’s not a racist he’s just evil (the devil). I truly believe that Trump would pimp-out Melania, Ivanka, Trump Jr., Eric and Baron if the price was right.

What we’ve got to do is stay focused and don’t start feeling sad, sorry and acting silly because two of his own tried to take him out.

Trump is evil, and yes, I know all my good Christian brothers and sisters really want to try and look at him and find some good in him, but it’s just not there.

I’m just being honest, and as a believer, I don’t like evil, as a matter of fact I hate evil! I’m not a Bible scholar but I believe that’s what the Bible says that we should do; hate evil. Psalm 97:10 in the New International Version says, “Let those who love the LORD hate evil, for he guards the lives of his faithful ones and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.”

Now that others are speaking to Trump and his followers in a language that they all understand (the gun), they’re trying to tell us to dial back the rhetoric, feel sorry for Trump and give him a pass.

I say let’s stay focused on the scriptures. Can I get an Amen?

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PRESIDENTIAL RACE POLLS

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• Awoenam Mauna-Woanya, Christopher Rhie, Christopher K. Tokita, Abundant Housing LA & Urban Environmentalists •

Dear Mayor Bass: Infill Housing Can Help L.A. Become Both Affordable and Sustainable

Los Angeles faces two urgent challenges: a severe housing shortage driving up housing costs and increasingly intense climate change impacts—like the recent heat wave. These crises are deeply connected, rooted in our city’s history of artificial-ly low-density, sprawling development, which has worsened both affordability and the environment.

Fortunately, Mayor Bass and other local leaders can address both issues through a single solution: infill housing, the practice of building new homes on vacant or underused land within existing urban areas.

Housing operates as a regional system. When LA fails to produce enough housing, prices and rents increase, and residents are pushed to more affordable areas like the Santa Clarita Valley and the Inland Empire. This urban sprawl destroys wild habitats and leads to longer commutes, greater heat exposure, and homes that require more water and air conditioning. It worsens traffic, air

pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions, all exacerbating climate change.

The better alternative for our wallets, health, and environment is to “fill in” our city through infill housing. This could mean replacing a parking lot with apartments or building townhomes where a single-family home once stood. Infill housing helps alleviate the housing shortage while reducing the city’s environmental footprint by creating walkable neighborhoods where people are less dependent on cars for their day-to-day lives.

Unfortunately, most of LA is locked into single-family zoning, a rule that only allows standalone homes—often the most expensive and land-intensive type. This outdated policy blocks affordable options like duplexes, townhomes, and garden apartments, keeping many Angelenos from accessing neighborhoods with better schools, jobs, and amenities. Meanwhile, areas that do allow affordable forms



COURTESY PHOTO
Christopher K. Tokita



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Christopher Rhie

of housing, such as South LA and Koreatown, carry an unfair burden in developing the new units that our city desperately needs.

Los Angeles has a long history of powerful people using housing policies to segregate people by race and income. While current residents didn’t create single-family zoning, its continued existence perpetuates inequality and environmental harm. Lower-income residents are pushed farther from job-rich areas in search of affordable housing. This pattern is so pervasive

across American cities that, at the recent 2024 Democratic National Convention, President Obama urged, “We need to build more units and clear away some of the outdated laws and regulations that make it harder to build homes for working people in this country.”

Mayor Bass has a crucial opportunity to lead by allowing more diverse housing types across all neighborhoods, not just the 12% zoned for multi-family housing. Encouraging more affordable and walkable housing options

can make high-opportunity areas accessible to more people. The Westside, for instance, has four times as many jobs as homes, highlighting a clear need for more housing.

Infill housing is essential for a sustainable future. Research shows that for every 1% increase in housing density, carbon emissions per person decrease almost equally. Denser, multi-family housing fosters walkable communities and efficient public transit, reducing reliance on cars—a major source of emissions and

air pollution. Allowing more homes to be built in existing neighborhoods, especially near jobs and transit, could cut LA’s carbon emissions by 40% or more.

Imagine a city where people can walk to work or local spots, where excellent public transit and safe sidewalks are accessible to all, and where housing is abundant and affordable. This vision is possible in LA if we embrace infill housing and the inclusive, sustainable neighborhoods it brings.

We must urge Mayor Bass and our city leaders to adopt overdue housing reforms. Contact your City Councilmember and ask for more affordable, climate-friendly housing in your neighborhood. For more information on how to get involved, visit AbundantHousingLA.org.

Awoenam Mauna-Woanya, Christopher Rhie, Christopher K. Tokita represent Abundant Housing LA & Urban Environmentalists.

• ALISSA BERNSTEIN, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE OFFICE, LOS ANGELES •

Anti-Israel Activists Can’t Handle the Truth

Maulana Karenga has demonstrated, time and again, a profound lack of understanding of the complexities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This has not changed as we near the one-year anniversary of the Hamas massacre on Israelis on Oct. 7, 2023.

In his Sept. 4 Sentinel column, Karenga implored readers to consider the importance of all having a seat at the table, invoking American voting and women’s rights activist Nana Fannie Lou Hamer.

Yet it begs the question – just how big is that table really? Given Karenga’s track record, there doesn’t appear to be a seat for Israel or its supporters.

When it comes to the

Middle East, Karenga plays a blame game where Israel always comes out the loser.

He speciously labels Israel’s military tactics as an act of genocide. At the same time, Karenga fails to address the fact that Hamas, the genocidal terrorist organization whose very charter includes the destruction of Israel and the murder of all the world’s Jews, hides among the very people killed in Israel’s retaliatory strikes, and ignores the fact that Israel has a right to defend itself, like any other nation.

Hamas also hides in Gaza’s churches, mosques, hospitals, schools and homes, and steals or destroys humanitarian aid,



COURTESY PHOTO
Alissa Bernstein

thousands of tons of which are brought into Gaza daily by the Israel Defense Forces, preventing those who need it most from accessing it.

Those like Karenga, who reflexively fault Israel for everything tied to this war, place a premium on

negotiating with terrorists over destroying their genocidal regime, while seeking to cut off vital aid to Israel. That is absurd on its face.

If the United States were to halt all aid to Israel, that would leave Israel vulnerable to attack by Iran’s proxies—Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and the Houthis in Yemen. Let’s bear in mind that 21% of the Israeli population are Palestinian Arabs. In an attack against Israel, they would die too.

I’d like to think even for Karenga that is too steep a price to pay. Yet, there are too many people who are quick to condemn Israel and say nothing about the atrocities committed by Hamas, including

on Oct. 7 when 1,200 men, women, children, and babies were ruthlessly slaughtered and more than 250 were kidnapped.

There are still 101 hostages being held in Gaza. Yet, their freedom is not demanded by many pro-Palestinian activists. When you mention the depravity of Hamas, the sound of crickets soon follows.

What Karenga and others who share his beliefs should do is visit the Nova Exhibit, which has been thoughtfully and painstakingly organized and brought to Los Angeles to highlight one of the worst atrocities of Oct. 7.

Look into the bright, beautiful faces of the

young people who came together near the Gaza border at the Nova Music Festival in the name of peace, to dance and listen to music. After Hamas attacked, 364 people lay dead with others brutalized, raped, and taken hostage.

At the exhibit you can come face to face with the survivors of the attack and hear their testimonies. Only then will you truly be able to understand the dire need to eradicate Hamas.

I would be pleased to accompany Karenga on a walk through the exhibit. Consider it an open invitation to hear the truth.

Alissa Bernstein is Assistant Director of the American Jewish Committee office in Los Angeles.

• FELTON T. NEWELL, ESQ., PRESIDENT OF THE LANGSTON ENDORSEMENT ORG •

Governor Newsom Should Help Unclog the California Court System by Signing AB 1755 Now

One of the biggest challenges I have faced in providing zealous advocacy to my clients as an attorney for the past 25 years is the delay resulting from California’s clogged court system. The old saying that “justice delayed is justice denied” is even more apt in the digital age than it was when civil rights leaders used it in the 1960s.

These days, one particular category of cases is exacerbating this problem in Los Angeles County courthouses. In so-called “lemon law” cases, plaintiffs seek replacement or reimbursement after purchasing defective vehicles. The Song-Beverly Consumer Warranty Act passed in Sacramento incentivizes consumers to file lawsuits instead of informally attempting to resolve dis-



FILE PHOTO
Felton Newell

putes before the case enters the court system.

In 2023, 22,655 lemon law cases were filed in California up 52% from 2022. In Los Angeles County Superior Court, the number of lemon law cases filed exploded 1400 percent between 2021 and 2023. Some Los Angeles County

judges have as many as 750 cases on their dockets, making it impossible to hold hearings or trials in a reasonable time frame. I sympathize with these judges and for the parties who are forced to wait years to get their day in court.

Once these lemon law lawsuits are filed, often simple and straightforward disputes can drag on for years, tying up judicial time and resources that could better be spent on more factually complex disputes. I am not diminishing the harm consumers suffer when they buy a defective car or truck – there just needs to be a way to more efficiently resolve these relatively simple disputes.

Fortunately, the California legislature recently

passed legislation that would go a long way towards restoring order. AB 1755, a bill sponsored by Assemblymember Ash Kalra and Senator Tom Umberg, would expedite recovery for consumers who purchase defective vehicles by making the following specific fixes to the currently broken system:

- Consumers would be required to notify a manufacturer of their request for a buy-back or replacement in writing to be eligible to recover double civil penalties and recovery of attorneys fees;
- A manufacturer would be required to provide its offer of repurchase or replacement to the consumer within 30 days of receiving the written notice and to fully replace the vehicle within 60 days of

receiving the written notice;

- The time a consumer has to bring a claim would be shortened to one year after the expiration of a vehicle warranty and six years from the date of the vehicle’s delivery; and
- Once a lawsuit has been filed, the bill would shorten discovery timelines, permit early depositions and require parties to mediate disputes, all of which will result in a faster resolution.

AB 1755 is currently sitting on the desk of Governor Gavin Newsom, along with hundreds of other proposed laws passed by lawmakers in the recently completed legislative session. Governor Newsom has an excellent track record in diversifying the bench and

encouraging good judges to continue to serve by increasing financial security for bench officers. On behalf of all who seek swift justice in the Los Angeles Superior Court, I strongly encourage Governor Newsom to take the next step in alleviating the burden on judges that results from punishing docket loads by signing AB 1755. If this bill were to become law, it would make it easier for California consumers with legitimate lemon law claims to get a faster resolution, and it would free up the courts for other matters.

Felton T. Newell, Esq. is president of the Langston Endorsement Org. He previously served as president of the John M. Langston Bar Association of Los Angeles.

Coach Wendy

Life Strategist / Consultant
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Your Failure Can Lead to Your Success

Around 10 years ago, while attending the Congressional Black Caucus, I decided to convince a few friends to go on a drive into Virginia to visit a place called the Salamander Resort & Spa. I was fascinated by it because it was the brainchild of Sheila Johnson, co-founder of Black Entertainment Television (BET) and the CEO of Salamander Hotels and Resorts.

As a successful African American businesswoman who made a conscious effort to have an amazing

and prosperous third act of her life, she set out to do things she had only dreamed of previously. Our third act usually falls around the time we are about to retire somewhere between the age of 60 and 70. However, today many of us are pausing retirement due to several reasons such as good health, newfound interest, or financial need.

By the time we reach our third act, we tend to have more time and wisdom that can help us accomplish things that before were just a mere



thought. If we are one of the fortunate people that by the time we reach our third act we can pursue the things that touch our hearts and we are passionate about, the sky can be the limit. It is also a time when many of us are reinventing who we want to be when we grow up. We are using our past failures as steppingstones to the success that is still yet before us.

Ten years ago, when my friends and I visited the Salamander Resort, we were pleasantly surprised when we noticed Ms. Johnson in the lobby. She was a quiet lady, but very gra-

acious. I walked up to her and introduced myself and shared with her that I had been following her work regarding her resort and it was of interest to me as an African American businesswoman, but also because I had a history in the hospitality industry.

Recently, I came across an article about Ms. Johnson, and one of the questions they asked her was, what advice would you give people who are about to enter their third act? What really caught my attention was when she said do not be afraid to take risks and it is okay if you fail. Failing and being a failure are two different things. She shared that no matter what age you are it is okay if you do not get something right. She admitted that even in this season of her life, she still fails when it comes to certain things. Her answer to herself is to try again even if she must go in a different direction.

We must realize that sometimes we may not always have the answers,

but we can get a little closer to our goal when we learn what something is not. Sometimes we must make mistakes to figure it out. Making mistakes can help us find out who we are not. The question we must ask ourselves is do we just go through things, or do we do not grow, then we will not learn the lesson.

What is failure anyway? The dictionary defines it as the lack of success, but to me, it is only failure if you do not learn the lesson and you stop trying. We have many examples of great success stories where people failed many times before they succeeded in something they were working on. When I was in my twenties, I was part of a women's bible study and one day as we were talking about the subject matter the discussion turned to sharing with each other what we thought each other's gifts and talents were. When it came to me, everyone said the same thing. They said I have the gift of

encouragement and hospitality and sure enough almost everything I put my hands to do has something to do with one of those two themes.

When I look back over the six decades of my life, I have tried several things that interest me, but not all of them turned into successful businesses. What I have learned is that there is a central theme in all that I do. I love being involved with helping people discover their best selves and encouraging them on their journey. I also enjoy helping people understand the power of forgiveness and that healing starts with ourselves. As you look back over your life, do not let any of your failures hold you back from the success that can still be yours.

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

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Make the Right Choice At The Time

Everything is going to be all right. It's up to you. "What do you mean? It's all up to me?" There's a stream of hope that runs through "believers." That stream speaks to us. That stream assures us. It comforts. It guides. It's the voice that speaks to us with quiet certainty and assurance. Everything is all right, but you need to make the right choices.

Yes, it is true you can choose but think through your thoughts to determine if it is the right choice. Just because it's glamorous doesn't make it right. The wrong choice or the choice that the world wants you to make may not be what the

Lord is advising you. And the clamorous joy in the world that makes everything look glorious and fun, fun, fun feeling good all the time... watch out.

Remember, a wrong choice made impulsively and/or instantaneously could cost your life or others' lives. What your choice is does not always stop just at you. It affects others too. If you are a family, your choice bears on them too and could bear on your employment and your entire life and future. Well, what do I need to do to get this and keep it?

The woman at the well who faithfully came to draw water was right on



time. She apparently had been coming to the well with a vision of hope... perhaps thinking about the multiple husbands she previously had. She must have worn discouragement and disappointment for years. She's now living with another man who is not her husband.

Her sadness was seen by the Messiah. He was a distance away but took another route to get to Samaria. He had gone a roundabout way to get to see the woman of Samaria at the well. Did he know she would be there? Knowing Jesus, He may have known because He is omniscient. Whichever

way it was, there she was at the well right on time to have her questions answered, her hope fulfilled.

Jesus and the woman of Samaria had a long conversation (John 4:1--42). She says, "They say the Messiah is coming. He will show us all things." His reply was, "I am He who speaks to you." I am your eternal hope who will answer your questions and give you "the living water, the gift of life." She was delighted and wanted that everlasting water and her well would not run dry.

The eternal water will be the Holy Spirit that will spring up in you with the attributes and blessings of the Christ. It will refresh you daily and at all times. Not only will you be refreshed with cool water, but once you accept Him as the Messiah, you will bear that light that He has and will share it with you through the Holy Spirit. His light pierces through the darkness. Even the darkness is light to Him. He opens up a way when you don't know the way.

He takes little steps for you and bigger steps to guide you out of the darkness.

He spoke to the sons of Zebedee who were guided by their mother to seek greed instead of humility and service to others. They wanted the choice of seats in His kingdom. Jesus answered them, "You can participate in the same kinds of suffering as I; but the kingdom seating arrangements, that's reserved seating left up to the Father who has prepared those for whom they are reserved (Mark 10:35-45)."

He begins to talk to them about unselfish servant leadership and following. Serving first, rewards later. You can't climb in on the top. You have to do some work. What kind of work could that be? Develop and commit the heart to serve. Thirst for righteousness, right attitude, humility, patience, calm, quiet thinking {thinking things through}, a peaceful spirit, spending time with the Master to hear His voice, and willingness to follow His wisdom-guided advice

transmitted by Christ. What is the teaching? Pray. He is the link.

Do not listen to the cluttering voices of the world. What's the world? Greed, selfishness, empty-headed boisterous illusions that suck you in and suck you up, hypocritical thinking and actions. Saying one thing and doing something else; lying, deceit, just to name a few.

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

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Nicole Byer's One-Night Only Comedy Show at the Annenberg



BY KEITH L. UNDERWOOD
Contributing Writer

Nicole Byer is a comedian and actress best associated with her work as host of the Emmy-nominated baking show "Nailed It." She was also one of the stars of the NBC sitcom "Grand Crew."

More recently, Byer performed at the "Netflix is a Joke Festival" and in her own Netflix comedy special "BBW (Big Beautiful Weirdo)." Additionally, she has an upcoming one-night comedy show at the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts scheduled for Friday, Oct. 4.

Hailing from Middletown Township, New Jersey, Byer said one of the biggest stereotypes about people from New Jersey is that they are "trashy." But



Nicole Byer

We used to have this chain of stores [in Jersey] called Joyce Leslie, and every-

"It's the people I grew up with, so it has a special place in my heart," continued Byer. "I think people from Jersey are just good people. Some of my best friends from high school are still my best friends. I just think East Coast people are more upfront with intention."

Byer gave an example of how West Coast people can sometimes not be "upfront with intention" in conversation. "When I moved to the West Coast, I didn't realize that when people were like, 'Oh, we should hang out,' that didn't mean anytime soon,"

said Byer.

Byer chuckled at poking a little fun at the West Coast, and she is naturally

funny. But when it comes to doing comedy profes-

sionally, Byer does have a process. "The way I write jokes is I either come up with a premise or punchline, and then I talk on stage to see what happens," she said.

"Sometimes if a joke is not working, I'm not a comedian who will hammer it out," Byer elaborated. She said she also does not shy away from talking about her personal life in her standup routine.

"I truly tell everybody my business," said Byer. "I guess I just feel comfort-

able sharing that with people because I think my sto-

ries are relatable, but there is a ton of stuff I keep for myself." Byer hopes the audience has a great time at her upcoming one-night show at the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, and she mentioned recently doing a live script reading of the classic comedy film "Wayne's World" there.

Byer said the tone of the show at The Wallis will be similar in style to her Netflix special, and she will focus on matters like



Nicole Byer in "Grand Crew."



Nicole Byer in "Nailed It."

Byer said she believes the stereotype is true.

"I think that's an okay thing," said Byer. "I don't think trashy equates as bad.

thing was made out of spandex, and everything was super tight and trashy, but I loved Joyce Leslie, and I miss it so much."



Nicole Byer in "Big Beautiful Weirdo (BBW)."

dating, working, and love.

In addition to hosting TV shows, acting, and standup, Byer also hosts several podcasts including "Why Won't You Date Me," "Best Friends!" with Sasheer Zamata, "90 Day Bae," and "Newcomers."

For more information about Nicole Byer's one-night only comedy performance at the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, visit <https://thewallis.org/show-details/nicole-byer>.

Deborah Byrd Books A-List Talent for Award Shows

BY KEITH L. UNDERWOOD
Contributing Writer

Deborah Byrd is a producer, talent producer, and BET talent consultant at AK Blackbyrd Productions. She is the founder and CEO of Blackbyrd, which specializes in acquiring A-list talent for televised award ceremonies and music specials.

Some of Byrd's credits include the Primetime Emmy Awards, the Stellar Awards, Black Girls Rock, the ESPYs, and literally hundreds more. Byrd said every day is a blessing.

Byrd was raised by ex-military parents in Anchorage, Alaska. Her father was originally from New York, and her mother's roots were in Georgia. "I really feel like where I'm from is majestic," said Byrd. "When I realized I wanted to do something in television - I had to get over



Deborah Byrd

those mountains."

Byrd said "over those mountains" landed her in Los Angeles, and once she arrived it gave her an appreciation for her home back in Alaska. She believes being reared in Anchorage by a parent from the north and the

other from the south taught her how to talk to a variety of people.

Today, Byrd said she uses her learned communication skills all the time in her profession. "It's a matter of talking and communicating - especially what you need and what needs to be done, and the ability to handle conflict," said Byrd. "That's the gift God gave me."

Byrd said she also knows how to effectively stay calm, even when she is under pressure. "I've got to look like I've got this, and I've got it under control," she said. "It calms them [the client, talent, and staff] down to see me calm."

Additionally, Byrd said she loves working with talent, but it was a learning process for her, because artists can be eccentric. However, once she realized they were regular people it changed her entire perspec-

tive about them.

The Stellar Music Awards was one of Byrd's first jobs as a talent booker. The event is a yearly presentation ceremony with performances by well-known gospel artists. It also recognizes outstanding achievements in the gospel music industry.

"I knew very little about the gospel industry," said Byrd. "I knew the music - I just didn't know the people behind the scenes."

From there, Byrd said she booked talent for a few smaller awards before landing at the BET Awards.

builds you," said Byrd. "Your team is really important, and I can't do this by myself. I can take on five shows, but if my team is not able to hold me up, we don't move. Really, it's a team mentality."

Byrd said trust is very important to her when picking team members, especially if there is a problem that needs to be solved. "I expect things to go left or wrong or in different directions," she said. "It's the recovery that's important."

Byrd continued, "As a team, the person that I trust needs to say, 'Hey Deb, I

we help one another."

Byrd said she also appreciates team members who are ambitious and willing to learn. "I'll give you the opportunity. I'll give you the shot," said Byrd.

Byrd noted as a final thought that even if the person's goal is not to work in talent, if they're interested in being a director, makeup artist, producer, etc., she will give aspirants with tenacity a chance to pursue their dreams.

Keith L. Underwood is the creator and owner of the entertainment news and



Deborah Byrd, left, with the 2024 BET Experience talent team.



Deborah Byrd, center, with the 2023 BET Awards Pre-Show talent team.

"I've been on 25 years of BET," she said. And Byrd acknowledged that she would not have been able to do it without the support of a good team.

"The team that works with you is the team that

messed this up, and I don't know how to fix it, but I'm coming to you before everybody else finds out we messed it up.' You can fix it or adjust it... two minds are better than one. We can fix it... that's how

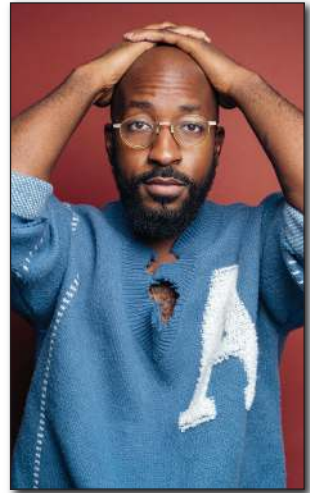
interviews platform "Black in the Green Room," which currently broadcasts on KBLA Talk 1580 radio, and it also podcasts across multiple platforms, including YouTube @blackinthegreenroom.

Dave Harris: A Writer's Journey, Turning Life into Story

BY NATHAN J. LEE
Contributing Writer

Dave Harris is a storyteller whose words transcend the stage, challenging societal norms and inviting audiences into profound reflection. Whether through plays, films, or television, his fearless approach to writing is rooted in vulnerability and a deep interrogation of race, class, and identity.

For playwright and poet Dave Harris, storytelling is more than a craft—it's a



COURTESY PHOTO

way of being. "To be a writer is not just the action of writing but to walk through life as a writer," Harris shares, recalling the words of his Yale University professor, Deb Margolin.

"Once I adopted that mindset, I understood that everything I encountered in life contributed to my ability to write." Writing became more than just filling pages—it became a way of confronting life itself.

Growing up in Philadelphia with his mother and sister, Harris learned the power of words early.



COURTESY PHOTO

His mother, an avid reader, instilled in him a deep love for literature. "My mom was the fastest reader I've ever seen," Harris reminisces. "She devoured books, especially Stephen King, and read to me every night. That's where my love of stories started." By second grade, she had already predicted his future, telling him, "You're going to be a writer."

In seventh grade, Harris wrote his first play, "Nerds 101," a comedic piece about three nerds learning to embrace themselves.

This play won a contest with Philadelphia Young Playwrights, launching him into a world where his words could have a real impact. "It started as just something fun for summer camp," Harris reflects, "but it became so much more." This passion for storytelling carried Harris all the way to Yale University, where he wrote "Exceptions to the Rule," his Off-Broadway debut. The play, raw, fearless, and boldly honest, reflects Harris's belief that vulnerability is power.

Harris's life took a pivotal turn when he entered graduate school. Reflecting on his journey, he says, "We grew up really poor. Getting into college was such a big thing." When he moved to a new city for grad school, he had only \$100 in his bank account and no clear idea of how he would support himself. "I wasn't very open about money, but I had only \$100 when I moved into grad school," Harris recalls. His circumstances changed when he received a fellowship that provided financial stability. "Suddenly, I could shop without counting every price," he adds.

This fellowship allowed Harris to live with

a newfound sense of financial security, which led him to question the deeper implications of capitalism. This interrogation culminated in his award-winning play "Tambo & Bones," where he used the work to explore the intersection of race and capitalism. Through humor and emotional depth, "Tambo & Bones" challenges audiences to grapple with uncomfortable truths about freedom and whether it can ever truly exist under a capitalist system.

Harris's work consis-



COURTESY PHOTO

tently confronts and questions the world's assumptions about race, class, and identity, pushing both himself and his audiences to



COURTESY PHOTO

Dave Harris

face the complexities of these issues. His self-assured approach to storytelling challenges societal norms while inviting reflection and dialogue.

Yet, Harris's talents extend far beyond the stage. His transition to film and television has been equally bold and impactful. His feature film "Summer-time" premiered at Sundance, earning praise for its heart and authenticity.

Additionally, Harris has lent his emotional depth and unique perspective to major television projects like "Interview with a Vampire" and "The Fortress of Solitude." By expanding into new mediums, Harris continues to broaden his reach, captivating audiences across genres. As he pushes the boundaries of storytelling, one thing is certain—Dave Harris is a name to remember.

Natasha Rothwell Takes Flight in 'How To Die Alone'

The highly anticipated series from the breakout star of "Insecure" and "White Lotus" has landed

BY ZON D'AMOUR
Contributing Writer

While the title may be jarring to some, the Onyx Collective and Hulu series, "How To Die Alone" is the dramedy (comedy with dramatic elements) that Black women need. Created, written, and executive produced by Natasha Rothwell, who also stars in the leading role as Melissa, a 35-year-old airport employee whose brush with death is the catalyst for her to begin to live life to the fullest.

The series was partly inspired by the uncertainty that Rothwell faced in her 20s when she wondered if she would die alone, without experiencing a romantic relationship. On-screen, Rothwell takes her character on a self-actualization journey where she learns that "being alone" isn't synonymous with being "lone-



DISNEY

(L-to-R) Conrad Ricamora, Jocko Sims, Vera Santamaria, Natasha Rothwell and KeiLyn Durrel Jones attend the Los Angeles premiere of Hulu And Onyx Collective's "How To Die Alone."

tion while also empowering aloneness."

During Melissa's self-love journey, she also has to grapple with her tendency to self-sabotage which includes what could have been a healthy and loving relationship with Alex played by actor Jocko Sims. When Alex is ready to take the next step in their rela-

tion while also empowering aloneness."



DISNEY

Jocko Sims as Alex in the Onyx Collective / Hulu series, "How to Die Alone."

ways to give herself permission to fly, literally and figuratively."

Echoing similar sentiments, KeiLyn Durrel Jones said, "You can't pour into somebody else's cup if your cup is empty. So being lonely isn't necessarily a pejorative as it pertains to loneliness. If you can find the time and space to be alone it can lead to self-exploration, self-improvement, self-care,

self-love, and self-enlightenment. Then you can open yourself up to be loved and to love someone else."

The series also does a masterful job of exploring how friends who were once bonded by codependency have their relationship put to the test. When Melissa begins to feel more self-assured and aspires to advance in her career by participating in a managerial training program, her best friend Rory (actor Conrad Ricamora) doesn't want her to take the opportunity and he projects his insecurities onto her.

Giving insight into one of the most emotionally charged scenes in the series, Ricamora said, "We all have those friendships in our 20s and our 30s, where you go out together and have a good time, you console and comfort each other all the time, but then, when you start to grow into the person that you want to be, that puts a strain on those relationships."

He adds, "What Natasha lays out so beautifully in this show are two people

becoming who they need to be while desperately trying to maintain their friendship and as in real life, it doesn't always go smoothly."

For viewers who see themselves in Melissa and want to take steps towards changing their circumstances, Santamaria shares this advice, "It starts with the recognition that change isn't always going to be a straight line trajectory. When you decide

going. There's beauty in trying even if you fail.

So, if I were to meet someone who's similar to pre-accident Mel, I would say, identify the thing that you want and start small knowing that a lot of baby steps can make something really beautiful in the end. And there's no shame in making one small change and seeing how that works, it can happen in your own time."



DISNEY

Natasha Rothwell as Melissa and KeiLyn Durrel Jones as Terrance in the Onyx Collective / Hulu series, "How to Die Alone."

to change your life, understand that there'll be regressions. It's going to look good for a while and then there'll be setbacks. But don't let that stop you, keep

New episodes of "How To Die Alone" produced by ABC Signature in association with Big Hattie Productions are released on Fridays on Hulu.



DISNEY

(L-to-R) Jocko Sims, Vera Santamaria and Natasha Rothwell and KeiLyn Durrel Jones promote their Hulu and Onyx Collective series, "How To Die Alone."

ly." Within the 8-episode first season, Melissa learns to live a full life by embracing new experiences and deepening her platonic and familial relationships.

In addition to Rothwell, Vera Santamaria, also serves as the series co-creator and executive producer. When asked what she hopes audiences will take away from the series, Santamaria said, "Being alone can be a beautiful thing, if you're content, and if you have people in your life to the extent that you want them, you have that agency within.

"Whereas, with loneliness, there's a longing where you wish that there was something different happening in your life. So hopefully through the show, we're making that distinc-

tionship Melissa suddenly ends things because she doesn't feel worthy of the love she truly desires. To Melissa's dismay, Alex quickly moves on and begins dating a new woman who becomes his fiancé.

Throughout the season, audiences see Melissa become determined to rekindle her relationship with Alex so much so that she overlooks another potential suitor in her good friend and sounding board Terrance, (actor KeiLyn Durrel Jones). When asked what he hopes audiences take away from Melissa and Alex's complicated relationship, Sims said, "I hope that the audiences watching Mel's journey leave believing that they're good enough. I hope they feel confident in doing things to



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AMANDA SCURLOCK/L.A. SENTINEL
L.A. High senior Ka'yon Richardson has played several positions in football.

Student Athlete of the Week: Ka'yon Richardson

BY AMANDA SCURLOCK
Sports Editor

Los Angeles High School senior Ka'yon Richardson wants to leave his mark this season. He has helped the Romans to a 2-3 overall record.

"My senior year, I was like 'This is my last chance to show out and ball out,'" Richardson said. "I want to make it a memory for myself to look back and say I did my stuff."

Growing up, he was inspired by his older cousins to play football. Richardson

played for the El Segundo Eagles but the COVID-19 pandemic cut his time there short. He started playing for the Romans as a sophomore and worked to earn playing time.

"I learned that it takes heart, just take your opportunities when you can, whenever coach puts you out there," Richardson said. "I started at tight end but I still played as if I knew what I was doing, but I learned a lot."

As he teaches his teammates about football, he hopes that they understand the effort it takes to com-

pete. As he competes, he grows concerned about his teammates getting injured because he wants to continue playing alongside them in the coming weeks.

"A lot of young people, they want to come out here, ball out too but it takes a lot to do that," Richardson said. "You have to worry about a lot of things on the field."

Richardson knows that being a student athlete means showing a high level of competence to both teachers and coaches.

"Just do your work and pay attention ... make sure

you do everything on time," he said. "After that, just come to the field and ball out and show your coach that you could do what you need to do."

One class that Richardson enjoyed was theatre; he mentioned that he enjoyed acting.

"I got to show myself that I have a certain voice for certain things," he said. "I could be myself and I don't have to worry about nobody judging because of that."

Richardson has played several positions on offense and defense, wide receiver is the position he enjoys the

most.

"My favorite part about being a wide receiver is being able to run the ball hard, especially looking out for the ball and showing that you could get open any time," Richardson said.

In the future, Richardson aspires to learn engineering and become a welder like his father.

"I grew up around my dad always welding stuff and I asked him 'could you show me how to weld?'" and he was like "yeah," Richardson said. "I always love welding after that."

Michael Cooper Visits Youth at Lakers Field Day

BY AMANDA SCURLOCK
Sports Editor

The Los Angeles Lakers hosted a field day and backpack giveaway for students from Crete Academy and Carr Elementary School. Showtime Laker Michael Cooper was a surprise guest, giving youth advice while joining in on



AMANDA SCURLOCK/L.A. SENTINEL
Lakers Legend Michael Cooper packs backpacks for the students of Crete Academy and Carr Elementary School.

their field day activities.

"This is a great event the Los Angeles Lakers are doing for our community," Cooper said. "Sometimes it takes a good mind, body and spirit to be a good person and when the Lakers are in the community, it makes life better."



Copper participated with the Lakers Field Day activities.

The Lakers hosted the event as a part of their TEAM UP initiative that allows staff members a chance to give back to the community. The youth were divided into four groups and competed in several activi-

ties, including an ultimate Rock, Paper, Scissors tournament, a relay race, and a Hula Hoop relay.

"Being here is really fun, all my friends are here," Crete Academy student Cahnyi Dyer said. "[The Lakers] gave us hats and

"It's called determination, dedication, desire, discipline, decision making," Cooper said. "I try to tell kids in saying that the five D's will help them on and off the court. Athletics is a small portion of who they are."

Cooper also got



AMANDA SCURLOCK/L.A. SENTINEL
Youth competed in an ultimate rock, paper, scissors tournament.

and notebooks.

Students also received Lakers gear, including a branded folder and water bottle along with a toy basketball and foam finger.

"I like meeting [Cooper], he played with the Showtime Lakers and he's the NBA history player," said Carr Elementary school student Aiden Bolden. "He's really tall and he likes to dance."

Cooper will have his no. 21 jersey retired on January 13 when the Lakers battle the San Antonio Spurs. He

helped the Lakers win five championships during his 12-year career. He also had success as a coach, guiding the Los Angeles Sparks to two WNBA championship titles.

"I kind of encompassed all basketball, what it has to do here in Los Angeles, at the professional level and that means a lot to me," Cooper said. "Dr. Buss and the Lakers have been very significant in the growth of not only the NBA but the WNBA and I'm glad and proud to be a part of it."

'We All Win' Campaign Shows Black Triumph

BY AMANDA SCURLOCK
Sports Editor

Throughout the summer, Xfinity showcased Olympic gold medalists Grant Holloway, Jewell Loyd, and Sophia Smith in their "We All Win" advertisement campaign.

The commercial features a young, Black boy who sees everyone in his community wearing gold medals. As he

walks with his father, he sees a mural of Loyd and a billboard of Smith. When they reach a local barbershop, the boy witnesses a track and field race where Holloway wins.

"We wanted to speak to the sense of community that Comcast enables by bringing events like the Olympics," said Burrell Communications creative director Lynn Pitts said. "In Black communities, there's another layer

culturally about the way that we feel when we see Black athletes, especially on a global stage like the Olympics."

The campaign displays the extra feeling of pride Black people feel when they see Black athletes excel at the Games. The goal was to make the ad like a coming-of-age story for the main character.

"The first time you experience watching an Olympic

athlete win and watching it in community, it's such a powerful experience," Pitts said. "To have him there with his father ... and to have him there in a place that really symbolizes community in Black culture in the barbershop was also another layer."

When Burrell Communications and Comcast collaborated on the campaign, emphasis was put on how the Black community honors the achievements of its individuals.

"That's why 'We All Win' is the title of the campaign because we celebrate everyone's achievements because it is like it's our own," said Comcast vice president of multicultural strategy, operations and community engagement Jose Velez Silva. "That's something that, for me, was very strong and very meaningful to use that as the epicenter of everything."

The campaign also shows how the Olympics inspires youth, giving them hope that they too can compete amongst the best in the world.

Malik Hassan Sayeed directed the commercial. His movie credits include, "The Original Kings of Comedy," "He Got Game," and "Belly." The crew was made up of mostly Black and Brown people; the cast was also predominantly Black.

"We're very proud that



AP PHOTO/MARTIN MEISSNER
Grant Holloway, of the United States, competes in the men's 110-meters hurdles final at the 2024 Summer Olympics, Thursday, Aug. 8, 2024, in Saint-Denis, France.



COURTESY PHOTO
The "We All Win" campaign featured a billboard of Olympic gold medalist Sophia Smith.



AP PHOTO/MICHAEL CONROY, POOL
United States' Jewell Loyd, right, shoots as Belgium's Antonia Delaere defends in a women's basketball game at the 2024 Summer Olympics, Thursday, Aug. 1, 2024, in Villeneuve-d'Ascq, France.

we tell the stories by the people who are making the stories," Silva said. "We presented the concept that

Burrell put together, some of them cried when they saw the end result. They cried of pride."

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#TOS2024



COMING OCT. 19 ON CRENSHAW BLVD (btwn Stocker St. & Obama Blvd.)

September 1, 2024

Dear Crenshaw Residents, Businesses and Taste of Soul Nation:

Bakewell Media, the Los Angeles Sentinel, Mothers in Action and Radio FREE 102.3 KJLH will be hosting the

19TH ANNUAL "TASTE OF SOUL FAMILY FESTIVAL" SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2024 FROM 10:00 AM TO 7:00 PM

"Historic" Crenshaw Blvd. between Stocker Street and Obama Blvd.

The purpose of this event is to capture a "taste" of the diverse creativity that exists in the "Crenshaw" community in a festive atmosphere. This event will feature live melodic music, tantalizing food, awesome arts, tremendous trade, free health screenings and resource information, as well as, fun for the entire family. Both public and private entities are joining together, in their own unique way to display their means of improving life in our community and we hope you will attend.

NO PARKING will be allowed on Crenshaw Boulevard, or its service roads between Stocker Street and Obama Blvd. from Friday, October 18, 2024 12:00 p.m. to Sunday, October 20, 2024, 6:00 a.m.

VIOLATORS PARKED IN NO PARKING AREAS WILL BE TOWED THIS YEAR - NO EXCEPTIONS - by Swanney and McDonald Towing Services (323) 733-6898.

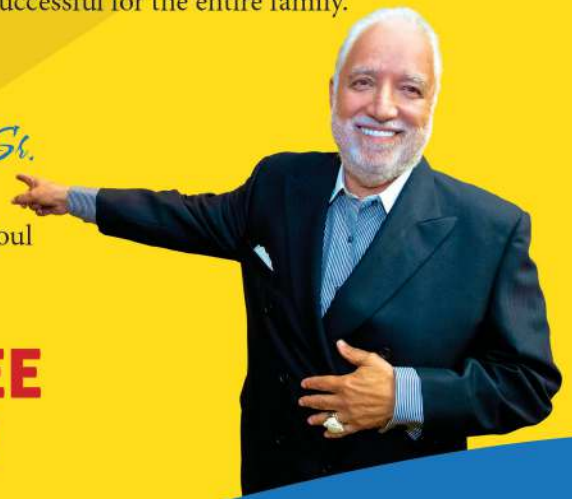
It is our sincere hope this will not be a major inconvenience to you and your schedule will allow you to attend.

Thank you for your cooperation and being the best neighbors who have helped us to make this event successful for the entire family. Hope to see you there.

Sincerely,

Danny J. Bakewell, Sr.

Danny J. Bakewell, Sr. Creator/Founder of Taste of Soul



HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE

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STREET CLOSURES NO PARKING

- 39th St. between Buckingham Rd. and Westside Ave.
Bronson Ave. between MLK Blvd. and Coliseum St.
Coliseum Place between Victoria Ave. and Crenshaw Blvd.
Coliseum St. between Degnan Blvd. and Buckingham Rd.
MLK Blvd. between Degnan Blvd. and Marlton Ave.
Victoria Ave. between MLK Blvd. and Obama Blvd.
Somerset, Wellington, and Virginia between 39th & MLK Blvd.
Rodeo Place between Victoria Ave. and Crenshaw Blvd.
McClung Dr. between 39th St. and Stocker St.

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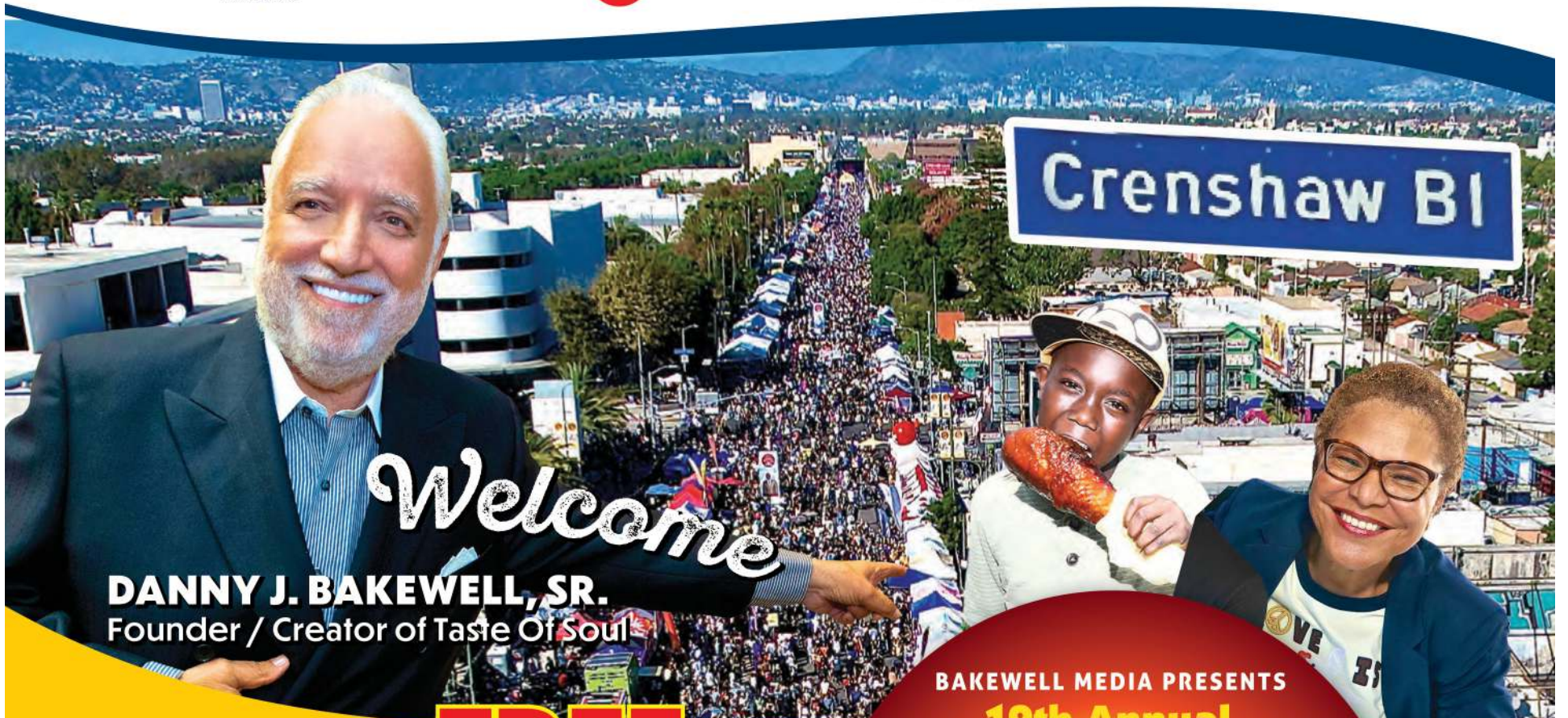


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