



Local Black Artist Keeping Dayton's Art Scene Alive



Taliaferro Sebastian

Dayton is well known for its diverse art scene, from music to poetry to visual artistry, and one artist has been nominated for the best in Dayton.

Walking in the shadow of giants, while becoming one himself, Taliaferro Sebastian is keeping the Dayton art scene alive for generations to come.

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Mayor Mims Announces City of Dayton's First Poet Laureate



Sierra Leone named Poet Laureate

Dayton Mayor Jeffrey J. Mims announced poet and educator Sierra Leone as the City of Dayton's first Poet Laureate this morning at the Paul Laurence Dunbar House Visitor Center. Sierra Leone will serve one two-year term as Dayton's Poet Laureate, with the goal of representing Dayton and promoting the importance of literacy and the arts in the region.

"Today, we make history in Dayton as we proudly announce our city's first-ever Poet Laureate," says Mayor Mims. "This moment is a testament to the power of words, storytelling, and the vibrant artistic spirit that runs through our community. Poetry has the unique ability to connect us, inspire us, and reflect the heart of our city. We

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Valerie Thomas: The NASA Scientist Who Invented 3D Technology

As we celebrate Black History Month, we honor Valerie Thomas, an African American scientist and inventor whose groundbreaking work at NASA changed the way we view and transmit images.

Born on February 8, 1943, in Maryland, Thomas overcame racial and gender barriers to become a leading figure in space science and technology.

Breaking Barriers in STEM

From an early age, Thomas was fascinated by electronics, mathematics, and physics—fields where women, particularly Black women, were often discouraged.

Despite these challenges, she excelled in school and later earned a bachelor's degree in physics from Morgan State University in 1964. She then joined NASA as a data analyst, working on satellite missions that helped scientists study Earth and space.

Inventing the Future of 3D Technology

In 1976, a simple optical illusion inspired Thomas to develop her most famous invention: the illusion transmitter. This revolutionary device, patented in 1980, transmits three-dimensional images that appear to float in space.

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Boy Who Protected Sister from Philly Plane Crash Shares 1st Words After Brain Surgery

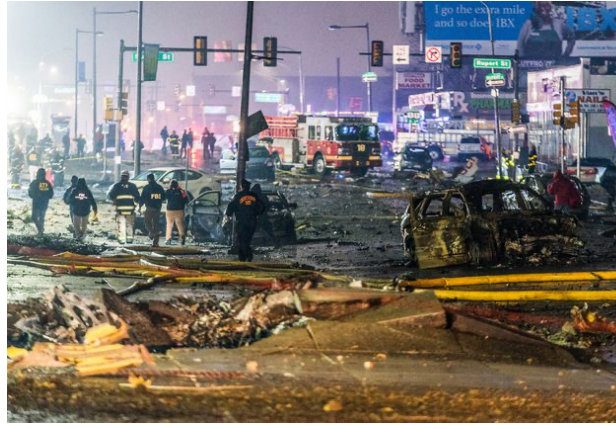


The father of the 10-year-old boy who was injured by flying debris in the deadly plane crash in Northeast Philadelphia revealed his son's first words after undergoing brain surgery.

Andre "Trey" Howard III was injured Friday, Jan. 31, when a medical transport jet crashed by the Roosevelt Mall,

injuring at least 24 people and killing seven, including all six passengers on board and one person on the ground.

Trey was struck in the head with metal and was taken to Jefferson Torresdale Hospital, where he underwent brain surgery. Trey's family was informed that there "was a strong chance he might not survive."



Andre Howard Jr., Trey's father, told ABC News the conversation took place once Trey awoke from a successful surgery.

"He asked me, 'Daddy, what's today?' I was like, 'Monday.' 'OK, wait. We didn't play yesterday, did we?' 'No, you didn't miss the Super Bowl,'"

Trey then asked: "Daddy, did I save my sister?"

"It had me crying," Andre said.

"You told us to get down. I was just trying to help my sister ... next thing I know, I thought I died," Trey said in the hospital, according to Andre.

Ahead of the Super Bowl, Philadelphia Eagles wide receiver A.J. Brown wished the young boy a

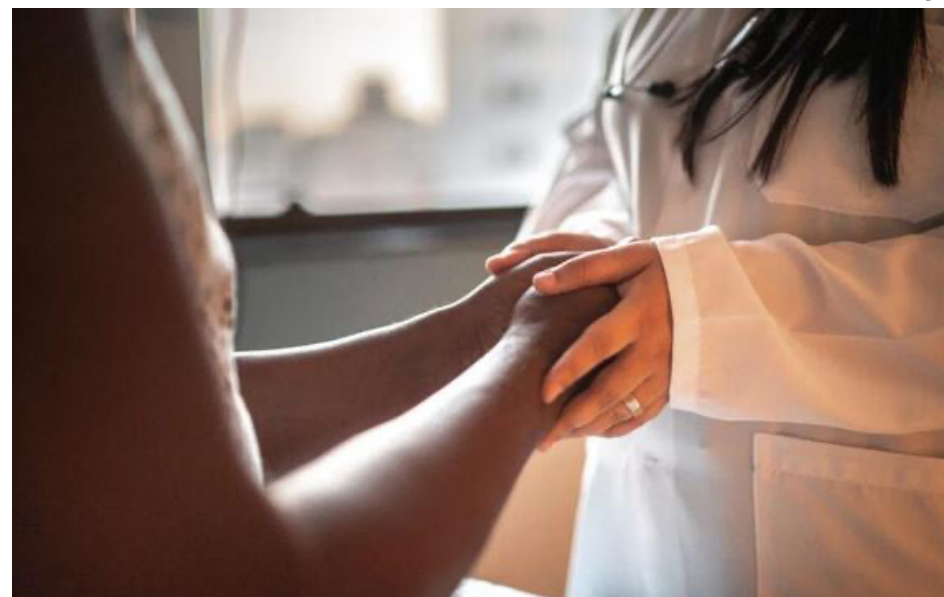
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NAACP Calls for Cancer to be Declared a Public Health Crisis in the Black Community

The NAACP is urging the declaration of cancer as a public health crisis in the Black community in response to research from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) showing that Black people have the highest rates of cancer diagnoses and fatalities across various types.

This organization is calling for "local, state, and federal authorities" to explore meaningful strategies to advance cancer health equity, reduce risks and exposures, and lower cancer incidence and prevalence rates among Black individuals.

The NAACP wants stronger efforts to promote health equity, prevent cancer, and encourage early detection



and treatment for those most vulnerable to cancer fatalities. They are also advocating for improved supportive care and survivorship programs, as well as the elimination of out-of-pocket screening costs—common barriers that often result in untreated

cancer.

The organization encourages the use of its established model, the Accountability for Cancer Through Undoing Racism (ACCURE), which employs multi-level approaches to address disparities in cancer treatment

and outcomes, ensuring the comprehensive needs of the community are met.

According to research from the CDC, Black people have the highest death rate for cancer overall despite being the third largest ethnic/racial group behind white and Hispanic

people. Black people have a lower overall 5-year cancer survival rate than white people and are more likely than white people to be diagnosed with female breast, lung, and colorectal cancers at a late stage.

The CDC emphasizes that many cancers can be prevented by avoiding the use of tobacco, maintaining a healthy weight, consuming a high-fiber, nutrient-rich diet, staying physically active, limiting alcohol intake, and receiving the HPV (Human Papillomavirus) vaccine on schedule. Public health research also highlights the importance of screening tests, which can either prevent certain cancers or detect them early when treatment is most effective.

However, despite these preventative measures,

the numbers still reflect clear disparities impacting the Black community. Among them include the American Cancer Society's findings that while Black women have a 4% lower incidence of breast cancer than white women, they face a 40% higher mortality rate. They are also nearly three times more likely to be diagnosed with triple-negative breast cancer.

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February is Black History Month



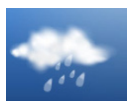
Around DAYTON

Miami Valley Weather

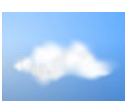
5 day Forecast

Saturday Sunday

Rain
High 38
Low 29

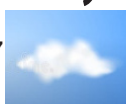


Cloudy
High 35
Low 24



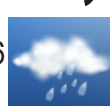
Monday

Cloudy
High 37
Low 29



Tuesday

Rain
High 36
Low 25



Wednesday

Rain
High 36
Low 33



Greater Dayton RTA Celebrates Black History Month



The Greater Dayton RTA is celebrating Black History Month by highlighting areas in Montgomery County that have cultural or historical significance within the African American community. The areas, selected in partnership with Parity Inc.'s Black Leadership Development Program, include the Paul Laurence Dunbar house, Wayman AME Church, Old Miller Under-

ground Railroad house, Wright-Dunbar neighborhood, Dayton VA Medical Center, the former Fifth Street YMCA and the Charity Adams Earley Girls Academy. Customers can read about each location as well as the nearest bus route inside interior cards in RTA's fixed-route bus fleet for customers. Each card has a QR codes for riders to scan, which will take them to the Greater Dayton's RTA's site about

Black History Month. Additionally, each fixed-route bus will have a seat will be reserved for Rosa Parks to acknowledge her acts to end segregation. The seat will be marked with a placard, and riders are encouraged to take photos or videos with it and state what Black History Month means to them. Riders can share it on social media using the #RTABlackHistoryMonth.

West Dayton Opens New Grocery Store



Ribbon cutting ceremony for Gettysburg Grocery.



Gettysburg Grocery now open.

Big news for West Dayton! – Gettysburg Grocery is officially open! Today, we celebrated a huge step forward in food access with the ribbon-cutting of Homefull's brand-new grocery store!

For years, Homefull has been a game-changer in our community, and this store takes its impact to the next level. With grocery store closures making fresh, healthy food harder to find, West Dayton residents finally have the access they deserve!

From a shelter to a powerhouse for housing, food access and workforce development, Homefull continues to uplift Montgomery County. This is more than a store—it's a lifeline.

Hotel Ardent – Tapestry Collection by Hilton, Opens in Dayton



A New Lifestyle Destination full of Character, History, and Culture located in the Heart of the Theater District. Designed with a vibrant personality that is full of character, Hotel Ardent – Tapestry Collection by Hilton opens its doors, located at 137 N. Main Street, in the heart of Dayton's vibrant Theater District. Hotel Ardent blends modern flair with a deep appreciation for this his-

toric building, celebrating the city's rich heritage and innovative spirit. The premier destination for visitors, offering contemporary accommodations with an authentic connection to Dayton's cultural and artistic roots. Developed and owned by First Investors and operated and managed by First Hospitality, Hotel Ardent – Tapestry Collection by Hilton, occupies the historic Barclay Building, constructed in 1925 and is on the National Register of Historic Places. The hotel's design is inspired by Dayton's rich legacy, while providing a sleek and modern experience for travelers. Guests will enjoy 118 thoughtfully curated rooms and suites, designed to provide comfort and style. The hotel also features an upscale fitness center with a dedicated yoga studio, along with intimate event spaces including a boardroom, perfect for small meetings and events.

excited to officially open our doors to Hotel Ardent," added Duncan. In April 2025, the hotel will welcome its highly anticipated restaurant, Bistecca – an upscale Italian steakhouse inspired by the flavors of Tuscany. Guests and locals can indulge in a menu that blends Italian culinary traditions with a modern flair, featuring handmade pastas, wood-fired grill selections, and signature cocktails. Hotel Ardent is located just steps away from Dayton's most famous attractions, with renowned destinations walking distance from its front door including the Dayton Art Institute (0.1 miles), the Victoria Theater (0.1 miles), and the Schuster Performing Arts Center (0.2 miles). The Dayton Convention Center is just a half mile away, and the University of Dayton and Miami Valley Hospital are within two miles. Guests can also enjoy access to bike rentals and miles of paved trails within walking distance. For sports fans, the Day Air Ballpark, home to the Dayton Dragons Minor League Baseball team, is just 0.5 miles away. For more information visit: Hotel Ardent Dayton Downtown, Tapestry Collection by Hilton

L2ED's Access to Counsel Pilot Program Receives Support from AES Ohio Foundation

Learn to Earn Dayton is pleased to announce \$25,000 in grant funding from The AES Ohio Foundation in support of the Access to Counsel pilot program. Access to Counsel provides legal representation and wrap-around services for up to 125 families facing eviction in Northwest Dayton over the period of one year - having launched in November 2024. The program was designed based on national best practices, for implementation by local legal aid organization, Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, Inc. (ABLE). Funds from The AES Ohio Foundation will cover the costs of direct legal services for the participating clients. Additional support for the program was provided by Blue Meridian Partners, the Dayton Legal Heritage Foundation of The Dayton Foundation, and the Wright-Patt Credit Union Sunshine Community Fund. Eviction rates are proven to significantly impact family economic mobility, neighborhood stability, and student success. It is especially detrimental to students, as housing instability is the great-

est predictor of students' chronic school absenteeism; in 2023, 63% of students experiencing homelessness were chronically absent from school. Even with these negative ramifications well recognized, tenants in Montgomery County have no right to legal counsel when facing eviction. Access to Counsel is designed to meet the varied needs of tenants, providing both legal representation and social work, education, and empowerment. While the underlying goal is eviction prevention, the outcome could look different depending on the tenant's needs. A key aspect of this pilot is the data tracking and comprehensive evaluation, as the team works to determine how to scale to program to a larger geography and track if eviction prevention now may lead to greater economic mobility. "Housing was a clear imperative that was lifted up by Northwest Dayton residents in the Power of Place Plan," said Learn to Earn Dayton CEO Stacy Schweikhart. "The data confirms that housing instability is a significant predictor of students' chronic absenteeism from

school. We are grateful for the support of the AES of Ohio Foundation as we collaborate with community partners in innovative ways to address this critical need." Who is eligible: Tenants facing eviction living in Northwest Dayton (zip codes 45405 and 45406) with a household income below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, and who are pregnant or have children living in the home are encouraged to apply for support through a referral agency; through the Legal Aid Line intake line at 1-888-534-1432 or www.legalaidline.org; or by visiting ABLE's Dayton office at 130 West Second Street, Ste. 700, Dayton, Ohio 45402. About Learn to Earn Dayton Learn to Earn Dayton is the regional cradle-to-career intermediary organization, leveraging data, policy, and partnerships to improve student outcomes along the educational continuum with the goal of increasing the number of students who earn a college degree or marketable credential.

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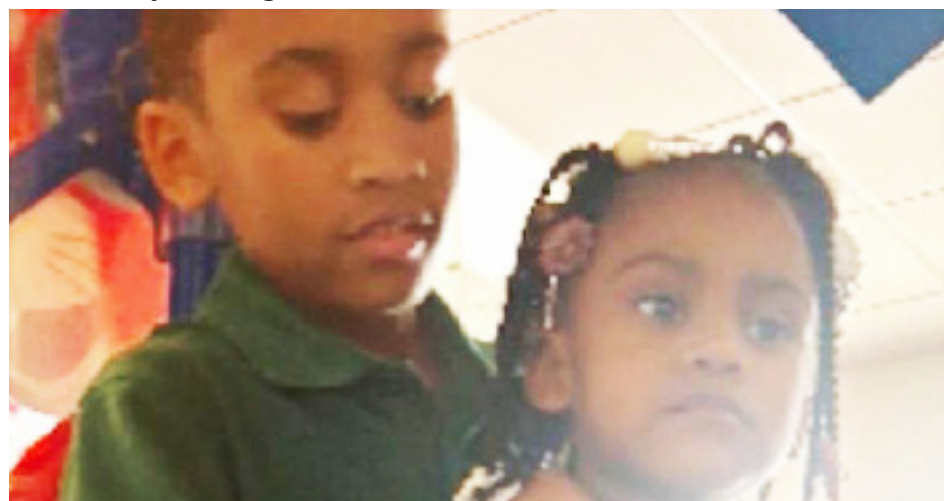
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National

Boy Who Protected Sister from Philly Plane Crash Shares 1st Words After Brain Surgery... Continued from Page 1



Andre and Ayura Howard

speedy recovery, telling him he plans of visiting him after the game.

“Speedy recovery! You are a Hero young man! I’m going to come see you when I get back,” Brown wrote

on X on Tuesday night. “Hopefully with some hardware. Playing for you on Sunday my man.”

Brown was the only Eagles player to show support after the deadly accident. On Jan 31, Eagles

offensive lineman Lane Johnson also sent prayers to the families and first responders who were impacted. “Praying for the families and first responders of the Philly plane crash,” he wrote on X.

Celebrating Black History Month Valerie Thomas: The NASA Scientist Who Invented 3D Technology... Continued from Page 1

NASA later incorporated her technology into satellite applications, and today, it serves as the foundation for advancements in holography, medical imaging, and even television screens.

Advancing Space Science and Inspiring Future Generations

Throughout her career, Thomas made significant contributions to satellite imaging and data

processing. She helped develop NASA’s Landsat program, which monitors Earth’s natural resources using infrared and satellite technology.

As a leader in space science, she managed projects like the Space Physics Analysis Network, which connected scientists worldwide.

Thomas retired from NASA in 1995 but remained a dedicated advocate for STEM education,

particularly for African American students and young girls. She actively participated in organizations like Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) and Shades of Blue, encouraging the next generation to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Her legacy continues to shine as a symbol of Black excellence in STEM.

Two Roads, One Choice—A Stronger Economy Starts with Main Street



Richard Trent, MSA Executive Director

America’s economy is at a fork in the road. One path keeps tilting the playing field toward corporate giants, squeezing out small businesses. The other invests in Main Streets—the real engines of job creation and community wealth.

At Main Street Alliance, we know which path leads to a stronger economy. That’s why we’re building 1,000 Main Streets, a nation-

wide network of small business owners pushing for fairer policies. It’s why our Small Business for Tax Fairness Coalition is fighting to make the tax code work for entrepreneurs—not just mega-corporations.

And we’re getting results. Last week, we helped shut down a federal funding freeze that would have hurt thousands of small businesses (NPR Story; WPR Story). But the work

doesn’t stop there. In states like New Mexico, Virginia, and Pennsylvania, we’re leading the charge for Paid Leave—because no business owner should have to choose between staying open and taking care of their family. Meanwhile, we’re pushing back against efforts to gut the agencies that support entrepreneurs.

The future of our economy isn’t written yet. But together, we can shape it.

If you’re a current donor, we need your help to grow this movement. Can you increase your support today? Give more

If you’ve given before but not recently, now is the time to come back. Small businesses are at a turning point, and your support can make the difference. Renew your gift

If you believe in this work and have the capacity to make a major impact, let’s talk about how your investment can fuel real change. Connect with us

This isn’t just about policy—it’s about the kind of country we want to build. Let’s choose the road that leads to stronger Main Streets, thriving small businesses, and an economy that works for all of us.

Retired Black Federal Cop Starts Financial Coaching Business



Kurt Alexander

Meet Kurt Alexander, a retired African American federal police officer, who is now the Founder and CEO of Financial Revelation, LLC, a Metro Washington, DC-based financial coaching startup that offers personalized guidance to individuals and families nationwide who want to take control of their finances. He runs the company with his wife, Shaunese, to provide their clients with tools and strategies to live as debt-free as possible, save for the future, and plan for a secure retirement.

Unlike financial advisors who focus on investments, financial coaches work with clients to improve daily money management. Financial Revelation, LLC offers tailored financial coaching to help guide clients to develop optimal money management habits, create sufficient savings, and pay off debt. Financial coaches guide clients into creating a customized financial

lifestyle based on a comprehensive assessment of the client’s financial picture.

About the Founders
Kurt and Shaunese Alexander bring both professional expertise and personal experience to their coaching business. After overcoming thousands of dollars in debt and the challenges of living paycheck to paycheck, they are committed to guiding others toward financial freedom.

Kurt, an Army veteran and retired federal law enforcement, developed financial discipline during his 26 years working for the government in various positions.

As parents of four children, they both managed their household finances during difficult times, demonstrating resilience and resourcefulness and they now apply that same resilience to their coaching business. Together, they transformed their struggles into success and

are dedicated to helping others do the same.

About the Company
Financial Revelation, LLC focuses on delivering practical, customized solutions to help clients meet their financial goals. Each plan is based on a detailed assessment of the client’s situation, ensuring strategies are relevant and achievable.

The Alexanders’ personal journey to financial independence adds a layer of authenticity and empathy to their coaching, providing clients with realistic guidance that works. Kurt encourages clients no matter where they are financially as he financially thrives in retirement.

Financial Revelation, LLC is now accepting clients. To schedule a consultation or learn more about the services offered, visit the official website at FinancialRevelation.com

Black Relationship Expert Launches New Podcast, Aims to Connect One Million People



Tamika Carlton

In today’s fast-paced world, where relationships often feel transactional, Tamika Carlton is on a mission to inspire deeper, more meaningful connections. She has launched The Real Connect Podcast—a platform designed to help people nurture authentic relationships and create a thriving global community of 1 million subscribers rooted in intentional connection—both romantic and platonic.

A Mission Rooted In Impact

Tamika believes relationships are at the core of a fulfilling life. “Strong relationships don’t just happen—they’re built. It’s about being present, creating shared experiences, and showing up for people in ways that matter. When we take the time to connect meaningfully, we create a ripple effect

that improves not just our lives but the lives of those around us,” she says.

Research supports her mission: according to a 2024 study by the American Psychological Association, individuals with strong social support networks are 50% more likely to experience better mental health outcomes.

Through The Real Connect Podcast, Tamika shares personal stories, expert insights, and practical tools to help listeners navigate challenges, strengthen connections, and build fulfilling relationships—both romantic and platonic.

Practical Tips for Stronger Connections

Listeners can expect actionable takeaways in every episode. Tamika offers these simple steps to start building better relationships:

1. Assess Your Connec-

tions: Reflect on whether your relationships add value to your life. Focus on those that bring mutual growth and joy.

2. Be Present: Turn off distractions during conversations to show that you value the other person’s time and perspective.

3. Focus on Shared Goals: Relationships thrive when you work together toward something meaningful—whether personal growth, a shared project, or a mutual cause.

A Call to Action: Join the Movement

The launch of The Real Connect Podcast marks the beginning of Tamika’s vision to create a global network of people connected through intentional relationships.

“This isn’t just about numbers,” Tamika explains. “It’s about building a community where people truly support each other, invest in their connections, and see the impact ripple through families, workplaces, and communities.”

The first three episodes of The Real Connect Podcast are already available. Join the conversation and take the first step toward stronger, more meaningful connections.



Arts & Entertainment

Tear Drops Steak House to Open in Downtown Dayton



Carl Johnson, the owner of Members Only 937, is opening a steak house in the former location of 1Eleven Flavor House with his nephew, Celebrity Platinum Chef Jay Jones (left to right). NATALIE JONES/STAFF

Restaurant's signature 'tear drop' is a mixed herb garlic butter, that the guest can watch melt down the steak.

Carl Johnson, the owner of Members Only 937, is opening a steak house in the former location of 1Eleven Flavor House with his nephew, Celebrity Platinum Chef Jay Jones.

Tear Drops Steak House is expected to open this spring — March or April — at 111 W. First St. in Dayton.

"We as Daytonians have to be proud of our community and we have to make it right to get people to come to Dayton," Johnson said in an interview on Jan. 30. "We have a lot to offer here and we want to be a part of that."

Being proud of where you came from

Johnson is a 1979 Trotwood-Madison High School graduate who has been running clubs throughout the Dayton and Cincinnati region for three decades.

He started his entrepreneur journey a few years after graduating high school with a CD and tape store — getting him into the music scene — before opening Club KIXX.

Johnson went on to own and operate several other clubs including The Fox in Dayton, Celebrities in Cincinnati and The Arena in Dayton before opening Members Only 937 five years ago.

Guests must be members to enjoy the club, but anyone is welcome to stop by and buy food.

He also owns Bozacks Cocktail Lounge on East Third Street, the diner on

East Fourth and North St. Clair streets and the building next door to Members Only 937 where he hopes to open a banquet hall.

"I'm proud of where I'm from," Johnson said. "I wear it on my shoulder all the time."

The start of Tear Drops Johnson is an avid traveler who first thought of opening a steak house in the Dayton region on a trip to Miami, Fla. He recalled sitting in a steak house and thinking how nice it would be to have something similar back home.

"That was one of the main vocal points where what I saw was what I wanted," Johnson said. "This opportunity came along no more than two weeks ago."

He said Demetrius Wright, the owner of 1Eleven Flavor House, had reached out to him to see if he was interested in the building.

Johnson and Jones had been looking at a few places across the region to build a restaurant together and they thought downtown would be a perfect spot.

"This is our time," Johnson said.

Jones is a 2002 Meadowdale High School graduate. He went on to Cincinnati State and graduated in 2005 with a degree in Culinary Arts Studies and Business Management Hospitality. Four years later, he started his catering business, Platinum Caterers LLC.

"The food that he provides and the service that we're going to give this city is going to be something no one else has ever seen," Johnson said. "We're really going to go

above and beyond. I want this to be one of the best steakhouses in Ohio."

What to expect The steak house will feature elevated fine dining with servers giving guests a show. For example, the server will top the steak with the restaurant's signature "tear drop," a mixed herb garlic butter, that the guest can watch melt down the steak.

"It's going to be a show that no other steak house is doing," Johnson said. "I think his touch, his presentation, his pride that he takes into his food is what's going to make a big difference."

The steak house will be open for lunch and dinner with a bar program available as well. They have plans to stay open later in the evening, so guests can get a meal at 10 or 11 p.m.

Johnson said they hope to add a patio to the restaurant, in addition to valet parking. Street parking is available.

The meaning behind the name

The name of the business comes from the idea that "the food tastes so good it makes you shed a tear," Johnson said.

"You can't get enough of that," Johnson said. "That's the idea. That's the tear drop."

He hopes this is just the start of Tear Drops Steak House — with multiple locations coming down the road.

At the end of the day, the steak house "is all about our community."

"This is a Dayton thing," Johnson said. "We are one. We are all together. Every single person in this community is invited to come here."

DML and The Human Race Theatre Partner for Free Ticket Performances

Dayton Metro Library and The Human Race Theatre are partnering to provide free tickets to various performances. Tickets are currently available for the following performance in February:

A Distinct Society By Kareem Fahmy Show dates and times: Wednesday, February 12; Friday, February 14; and Saturday, February 15, 7:30-8:30 pm

Location: Loft Theatre, 126 North Main Street, Dayton, 45402

About the program: Inspired by true events: Life is about to change

in the tranquil hush of a library that straddles the U.S.-Canada border. When an Iranian father and daughter, separated by the international border, start using the library as a meeting place, a French-Canadian librarian, an American customs agent, and a local teenager find their quiet lives suddenly full of excitement and consequence.

Additional Information: To register for up to two free tickets, please visit or call the Box Office at 937.288.3630. The Box Office is open Tuesday through Friday, 10 am-6 pm. Accessibility accommodations can be re-

quested at this time. Upon registering, tickets will be reserved, but patrons must show their Dayton Metro Library card upon receipt. A limited number of tickets are available for each performance and will be available first come, first serve. Tickets cannot be exchanged or refunded for cash value. Cancellations will need to be handled through the Box Office.

For more information about this performance, visit humanrace theatre.org/shows/a-distinct-society/ or call the Library's Ask Me Line at 937.463.2665.



Cinderella

Have a royal ball at this classic retelling of Cinderella, choreographed by Artistic Director Brandon Ragland to Prokofiev's sparkling score. Cinderella yearns to escape from

her life as a scullery maid to her mean and jealous stepsisters. Enter her Fairy Godmother, a handsome prince, a little help and a lot of magic, and Cinderella gets a glimpse

of living happily ever after!

Cinderella will perform at the Schuster Center, on February 14 - 16.

DML Announces Poetry Contest

(February 4, 2025) – Dayton Metro Library will begin accepting submissions for its annual Poetry Contest on Monday, February 10 through Wednesday, March 5. In conjunction with this year's NEA's Big Read of Yaa Gyasi's Homegoing and DML-related programming, this year's contest has a theme of "Where We Belong." Contestants are encouraged to explore this theme in their work by expressing what home, community, and identity mean to them.

Adults and students who live in Montgomery and surrounding counties (Miami, Greene, Warren, and Preble) may enter one poem per person in one of the following categories: Child, Grades 2-4; Child,

Grades 5-8; Teen, Grades 9-12; and Adult, ages 18 and up. DML Staff are also invited to submit their work but are ineligible for prizes.

Entries can only be submitted on the Library's website at DaytonMetroLibrary.org/Poetry.

Both written and spoken word entries will be accepted. Written poems should be no more than one typed page in length. Spoken Word entries must be accompanied by a direct link to its YouTube video (without tagging DML). Subject matter is open, but written and spoken word entries must not contain swearing or language that incites violence.

Poems will be judged on originality, creativity, impact, and adherence to the contest rules.

Authors will retain the copyright to their work. Prizes will be awarded for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place in each category.

Winners will be notified by Friday, March 28, and will be invited to a Poetry Showcase on Thursday, April 24, in the Opportunity Space @ St. Clair in the Main Library, which will be MC'd by special guest Mandy Shunnarah. Winning entries will also be posted to the DML website.

For more information about the Poetry Contest, visit DaytonMetroLibrary.org/Poetry or send questions to contest@DaytonMetroLibrary.org.

"A MAGICAL EXPERIENCE!"
Chicago Sun-Times

Peter Pan

THE HIT BROADWAY MUSICAL

FEB 26 – MAR 2
Schuster Center / DAYTON LIVE.ORG

BROADWAY in DAYTON

Ohio Arts Council MONTGOMERY

Education

FREE TECH TRAINING.
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TECH STARTS HERE.



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OPEN TO 18-26 YEAR OLDS &
MILITARY VETERANS AND SPOUSES (ANY AGE)

npower

npower.org

Former Black Educator Luxury Wellness Retreat for Women Entrepreneurs and Professionals



Toni Estell

Toni Estell is the Founder and CEO of Macaron High, a Black-owned wellness brand that empowers high-achieving women to reclaim their energy, align with their purpose, and redefine success on their terms.

After over two decades of dedication to education, Toni faced a life-altering decision. The pandemic brought stress and burnout to the forefront of her life, forcing her to prioritize her health and well-being. With courage and clarity, she stepped away from her 20-year career as an educator and school administrator to embark on a journey of transformation and healing.

"I created my company to sound the alarm and let women know it's okay to pause and prioritize themselves," Toni shares. "Self-care isn't selfish—it's a superpower."

Her company offers luxury wellness retreats exclusively designed for professionals, entrepreneurs, and leaders navigating the challenges of demanding careers, family responsibilities, and personal aspirations. Through expert-led workshops, personalized self-care practices, and a supportive community, participants gain the tools to reduce stress, foster resilience, and achieve sustainable success.

The first retreat will be held on March 1, 2025,

at The Westin Dallas Stonebriar Spa and Resort.

Participants will experience:

The Visioning Journey: A guided process to clarify personal and professional goals.

Stress Management Techniques: Strategies to reduce chronic stress and foster balance.

Luxury Relaxation: Rejuvenation in a serene, world-class setting.

The truth is that stress disproportionately affects women. In fact, according to the American Institute of Stress, 77% of people experience physical symptoms caused by stress, and 42% of women report burnout, compared to 35% of men.

As a solution to this problem, her company offers expert-led workshops tailored to individual personalized self-care needs, proven techniques to reduce stress and improve resilience, and immersive retreats in serene, inspiring settings.

"Our retreats aren't just an escape," Toni explains. "They're a catalyst for women to realign their goals with their well-being and thrive."

Learn more about her company at MacaronHigh.com

Unique Family Storytimes at DML

Families can spend time together this month at Dayton Metro Library by dropping by for a unique storytime. From Gruffalo to cocoa with cops to a snowball walk, there's storytime fun for all.

Preschool Storytime: The Gruffalo's Child, Friday, February 7, 10:30-11 am, Trotwood Branch: This storytime will feature the picturebook *The Gruffalo's Child* by Julia Donaldson, celebrating the upcoming Dayton Live Children's Theater Series show by the same title. Learn more about *The Gruffalo's Child's* traditional and sensory-inclusive performances at daytonlive.org/childrens

Preschool Explorers Storytime: Cocoa with Cops, Wednesday, Febru-

ary 12, 10-10:45 am, Main Library, Children's Creativity Space: Children will listen to stories and interact with first responders from our community, such as police officers, members of the K-9 unit, and firefighters. Cocoa and snacks will be provided.

Winter Story Walk – "Snowballs," Saturday, February 22, 10 am-5:30 pm, Northmont Branch: Patrons of all ages can immerse themselves in a wintertime story by walking through the picturebook *Snowballs* while enjoying winter activities.

For more information, visit DaytonMetroLibrary.org or call the Library's Ask Me Line at 937.463.2665.

Interactive Black History Course Opens Winter Enrollment Ahead of February Reflections



The 3E Program for Social Justice and Change is thrilled to announce that enrollment for its Winter 2025 semester is now open. This self-paced online U.S. History course uniquely integrates African American and BI-POC histories, offering parents a transformative educational opportunity that fosters Ethics, Empathy, and Empowerment. The semester begins on February 17, 2025, with early enrollment open from January 28 to February 16 and late enrollment available from February 17 to 28.

Parents seeking to enrich their children's education with meaningful at-home extracurriculars will find this program invaluable. Designed for

middle and high school students aged 13-18, the 3E Program explores pivotal yet often overlooked topics in traditional classrooms—including mass incarceration, police brutality, and systemic racism—through a comprehensive curriculum that blends interactive lessons, critical thinking activities, and virtual guest speaker engagements. This course equips students with a profound understanding of historical and contemporary injustices while fostering ethical decision-making and advocacy skills. Participants will need a computer and internet access to engage in the program from home.

"At a time when Black history is being removed from schools and silenced across America, access to

a course like the 3E Program is more important than ever," said Sherri Rankins, a parent who enrolled her child in the program.

Parents or guardians interested in enrolling their middle or high school students in the 3E Program for Social Justice and Change can sign up today at www.3EProgram.com. Early enrollment ends on February 16, 2025. To learn more about the program, please visit the website for additional details.

About The 3E Program for Social Justice and Change empowers middle and high school students of all backgrounds with an inclusive understanding of U.S. history. Featuring film segments from the award-winning documen-

tary *Betrayal of a Nation* by activist and educator Brandi Webb, the program sheds light on critical historical events and narratives often absent from traditional curricula. Assessments show that 99% of students significantly increased their historical knowledge, with 80% feeling empowered and equipped to create positive change and 75% reporting growth in empathy.

The program is designed for implementation in school classrooms, community-based organizations (CBOs), and at home for students without access through their schools or CBOs. Additionally, we offer in-person professional development and workshops on individual lesson topics to schools and CBOs.

The program has featured influential guest speakers, including Gwen Carr (mother of Eric Garner) and relatives of victims from the Tuskegee Syphilis Study and the Tulsa Race Massacre. Alumni can become program ambassadors, gaining access to paid opportunities, cultural field trips, and college admissions support.

Your contributions have been instrumental in shaping this important initiative. We are proud to be part of a community that champions the arts as a vital force in enriching lives, inspiring creativity, and fostering cultural vibrancy."

Leone's first official engagement as Dayton's Poet Laureate is at Mayor Mims' State of the City address on Feb. 12. She will be available for speaking engagements, workshops, and other opportunities as her schedule allows. To inquire about engaging Sierra Leone, email poetlaureatedayton@cultureworks.org.

Mayor Mims Announces City of Dayton's First Poet Laureate...

Continued from Page 1

look forward to the ways our Poet Laureate will amplify Dayton's voices and celebrate our shared stories. Congratulations to Sierra Leone, and may your words continue to uplift and unite us all."

Mayor Mims and Dayton City Commissioners passed a resolution to create the Poet Laureate position in June 2024. Applicants were required to live or work in the city and be committed to continuing their residency or employment throughout the two-year appointment term. Candidates submitted three original poems, a publication history, a


proven track record of recognition in the field, demonstrate literary excellence, and a strong commitment to promoting awareness of poetry. Six poets applied for the appointment.

The Poet Laureate Selection Committee consisted of Debi Chess, Director of External Relations and Development, Dayton Metro Library; Lisa Hanson, President and CEO, Culture Works; Furaha Henry-Jones, professor of English and African American Literature, Sinclair College; Mayor Jeffrey Mims; and, Nick Raines, Executive Director, Dayton Literary Peace Prize Foundation. Diane

Schoeffler-Warren of Culture Works coordinated the development and implementation of the City of Dayton's Poet Laureate application process with the help of Darius Beckham, Senior Policy Aide, for the Office of the Mayor. Culture Works will act as the administrative and fiscal agent for the City of Dayton.

"Culture Works is honored to have played a role in guiding the selection process for Dayton's first Poet Laureate," says Lisa Hanson, President and CEO of Culture Works. "We sincerely thank the esteemed panelists for their invaluable time, expertise, and dedication.

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Bible Study.....11:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

Saturday
Bible Study.....11:00 a.m.

Pastor Cory J. Pruitt
1501 W. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Dayton, OH, 45412

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3317 Hoover Avenue ~ Dayton, Ohio 45407
Rev. Gerald A. Cooper, Pastor

937-268-6729 ~ Office 937-267-9804 ~ Fax

SUNDAY
Church School 9:00 a.m.
Worship Services 10:00 a.m.


WEDNESDAY
Prayer Meeting/Bible Study Noon

THURSDAY
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Email: greater_allen_ame@att.net



Church Sunday School.....9:15 a.m.
Sunday Worship.....10:45 a.m.
Women's Bible Study - Monday.....6:30 p.m.
Noonday Bible Study - Wednesday.....12:00 p.m.
Prayer Meeting - Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.
Bible Study - Wednesday.....7:30 p.m.

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Rev. Dr. William E. Harris, Jr. Senior Pastor

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Church School - Sunday.....8:45 a.m.
& Wednesday.....1:00 p.m.
Bible Study/Prayer Meeting - Every
Wednesday starting at.....6:00 p.m.

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Sunday
Church School.....9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship.....11:00 a.m.
Tues. Bible Study.....6:00 p.m.
Wed. Prayer Meeting.....6:00 p.m.

Other Ministry
email: rockney.carter@gmail.com
1684 Earlam Drive • Dayton, OH 45406

Bethel Missionary Baptist Church
401 S. Paul Laurence Dunbar St. - Dayton, Ohio 45407
Rev. Xavier L. Johnson, Senior Pastor
937-222-4373 - Office - Email: offices@bmbcd Dayton.org




SUNDAYS
Church School 9:30 a.m.
Sunday Worship.....10:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY
Bible Study 12:00 noon
Word & Worship 6:30 p.m.

Bethel services are aired on DSTV Time Warner Wednesdays at 3:00 p.m. and Saturdays at 9:00 p.m. Time Warner Cable 992

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Morning Worship.....10:55 AM
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Office: 937-268-6711 Fax: 937-221-8040



Rev. Dr. Marcettes Cunningham, D.Min., Pastor
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship 10:45 a.m.
Wednesday
Prayer/Bible Study, 12:00 & 7:00 p.m.
Evening Prayer, 6:30 p.m.

Dixon United Methodist Church
1691 Infirmary Rd. - Dayton, OH 45417



Church Phone:
(937) 835-3366
Email:
Dixonumc1691@gmail.com
Website:
Dixonumcdayton.org

Sunday School.....10:00 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship.....11:00 a.m.
Midweek Bible Study- Wednesday.....
6:00-7:30 p.m. Via Zoom
Prayer Meeting - Saturday.....10:00 a.m.
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Dr. Bridget D. Weatherspoon, Pastor

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Religion

Local Black Artist Keeping Dayton's Art Scene Alive... Continued from Page 1


"The Dayton art scene is popping," said Taliaferro Sebastian, owner and operator of Art Has No Rules. Sebastian has been using pencils and paintbrushes his entire life. He's particularly known for his paintings and visual pieces that highlight his biggest inspiration. "Black culture," said Sebastian. "I love everything about Black culture and there's a lot that inspires me." Sebastian was born and raised in West Dayton, graduating from Meadowdale High School before going to Central State University. The art scene of his city is another point of passion for his work. "In Dayton, there's a lot that inspires me," said Sebastian. "This art scene is one that can grow." And Sebastian is doing his part to contribute to that growth. Weekend events around Dayton: Feb. 7 - 9 In addition to owning and operating Art Has No Rules Gallery, he's been featured in many exhibits in Dayton. Sebastian was the first-ever artist featured in James Pate's Black Palette Art Gallery, with

his work "Dead Roses" displayed at the grand opening of the gallery in 2023. James Pate and Bing Davis are both giants in the Dayton art scene — and they're Sebastian's mentors. He says he hopes to give that same inspiration to young minds in the city. "Kids come in here and look at my work and then just be like, 'Oh my God, this is so nice,'" said Sebastian. "And I just see the response from the kids. And I'm like, this is the reason why I'm doing what I'm doing." And Sebastian has done a lot. His entire gallery is full of art inspired by Blackness. "What we wear, our features, the importance of our leaders," said Sebastian. Sebastian is also an educator, with aspirations to build an art gallery in Dayton, as a message to Dayton youth to follow their dreams despite any obstacles. "Keep creating. Never stop creating. Never compare yourself to anybody else," said Sebastian. Art Has No Rules is located at 1001 East Second Street. To learn more about the gallery and Sebastian's work, click here.

YOUR SOUL MATTERS: THERE IS A BALM IN GILEAD 02042025



Pamelajune Banks-Anderson, D.Min.
The Radically Inclusive Veteran Chaplain
LCDR (RET) US Navy Chaplain Corps
drojanderson@spaceforgrace.org



BE STILL, AND YOUR SOUL WILL SPEAK

“Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is there no healing for the wound of my people? Jeremiah 8: 22 New International Version



These Black Vets Were Even Bigger Targets Of Racism After Their Service
by Jameelah Nasheed
"Returning home was a stark reminder that uniforms didn't protect them from the dangers and inequality they faced. In fact, wearing their uniforms often put them in more danger. Black veterans were seen as a threat to Jim Crow and racial subordination. As a result, they were threatened, assaulted, and lynched.

Isaac Woodard, a Black army sergeant, was beaten and blinded by a police chief on February 12, 1946, while on his way home from serving in WWII, after arguing with a bus driver. Days earlier, on February 8, 1946, honorably discharged Marine Timothy Hood was arrested after removing a Jim Crow sign in a trolley car in Bessemer, Alabama. Following his arrest, Hood was placed in the back of the police car, where he was shot and killed by the chief of police."

I understand the vulnerability that comes with being in uniform. I'm grateful for the support from fellow Veterans of color and the resilience of my ancestors, who created beautiful Negro Spirituals.

The phrase "There is a balm in Gilead" reminds us that healing and comfort are always near. It symbolizes the restorative power of faith in Jesus Christ, offering hope in tough times. Let's keep this spirit alive and inspire each other daily!

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Sports

Tiger Woods Announces That His Mom, Kultida, Has Sadly Passed Away



Tiger Woods with his mom

Tiger Woods announced on Tuesday that his mother, Kultida Woods, has passed away at the age of 81. In a heartfelt statement shared on social media, the legendary golfer expressed his deep sorrow, describing his mother as a “force of nature” with an undeniable spirit. “She was my biggest fan, greatest supporter, and without her, none of my personal achievements would have been possible,” Woods, 49, wrote on February 4th.

Reflecting on their bond, Woods shared fond memories of his mother’s personality, recalling her sharp wit and unwavering support. He emphasized how much she meant to his family, especially his two children, Sam and Charlie. “She was loved by so many, but especially by her two grandchildren,” he added. “Thank

you all for your support, prayers, and privacy at this difficult time.”

According to People, Kultida was last seen publicly supporting her son at his TGL match in South Florida just last week, according to NBC Sports. She was married to Woods’ father, Earl, for 37 years until his passing in 2006. While Earl was a military man, Tiger often credited Kultida as the strict disciplinarian in his life, once joking in a 2017 interview with USA Today, “My dad may have been in the Special Forces, but I was never afraid of him. My mom, on the other hand, I’m still deathly afraid of her.”

Throughout Tiger’s career, Kultida was a constant presence, cheering him on from the sidelines. She proudly joined her grandchildren at his induction into the World Golf Hall of Fame in 2022, often seen wearing her

signature oversized black glasses and visor. Her unwavering support and belief in her son’s talent played a significant role in his journey to becoming one of the greatest golfers in history.

One of Kultida’s most lasting influences on Tiger was her insistence that he wear red on Sundays—a superstition she believed brought him strength and success. Though skeptical at first, Tiger eventually embraced the tradition after experiencing losses while wearing blue during junior tournaments. “I switched to red and went on a hot streak,” he once quipped.

In a 2009 statement on his website, Tiger reflected on his mother’s guidance, writing simply, “You should always listen to your mom.” Her legacy as both a devoted mother and an essential part of Tiger’s journey will be remembered forever.

Never Ever Give Up

By Bryan Golden

Persistence is the foundation of success. Although there are many ways to describe success, there is only one definition of failure – giving up. Whatever your meaning of success, you will only achieve it through persistence.

“Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence.

Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent.

Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb.

Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts.

Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.”

Calvin Coolidge

Babe Ruth had more strike outs than anyone else in history. When asked about the key to his success he said, “I just keep swinging.”

In the mid 1960’s, Martin Cooper, an electrical engineer at Motorola, had a vision of a phone that could be carried around and powered by a battery. His concept was scoffed at by many of his fellow engineers. After 15 years in development, Motorola brought the cellular phone to market.

In 1864, he was born the son of slaves on a Missouri plantation. He grew up not knowing his parents. With persis-



Bryan Golden

tried again. And again, you fell down. But you never gave up. Hundreds of times you repeated this process until you learned to walk.

Persistence is getting up one more time than you fall down. Unfortunately, you are taught to give up and fail. How many times have you heard one or more of the following?

“Why bother, you’ll never be able to do that – it’ll never work”

“Don’t rock the boat, just do what you’re supposed to do”

“Why take chances?”

“You’ll never amount to anything”

“Stop dreaming -- come back to reality”

“Why don’t you give up already?”

“I tried that already, it doesn’t work”.

If you had believed any of the above when you were learning to walk you would still be crawling! You didn’t listen to bad advice then so why listen to it now?

When you feel like giving up, you must keep going. Only by continuing, when most others won’t, will you achieve your goals. Don’t join the ranks of those who have given up just around the corner from success. You never know where your corner is so you must never stop.

Bryan is the author of "Dare to Live Without Limits." Contact Bryan at Bryan@columnist.com or visit www.DareToLiveWithoutLimits.com Copyright 2025 Bryan Golden

Editorial & Comments

Something to Consider: The Blessing of Abundance

By: Brenda Cochran
Contributing Writer

One definition of this commentary is that “Plentifulness of the good things in life- God says that He will abundantly bless us.”

Another definition is: “The Blessing of Abundance is the state of receiving an abundance of good things in life from God.”



Brenda Cochran

Basically, always having all- sufficiently in all things. This phrase highlights that God provides us with everything we need to fulfill our calling, purpose in life, and that we will never lack for anything we need.

If we look at Second Corinthians 9:8 we find that if God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things, at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

Abundant blessing is also a broad phrase that is used to express gratitude for all the good things in our lives. For example: “I am so grateful for all the abundant blessings in my life.”

Most would agree that all of us want to live a rich, satisfying life filled with abundance though we know that we have

enough, more than enough money; great friends and family; wonderful health; lots of free time; and much more.

Yet we chase abundance, and in that process, we tend to create many scarcities in our lives. Instead, we forget to realize that abundance is not something that we acquire, but rather something we can tune into.

We’ve found several definitions for abundance, but I think that the one that is most fulfilling is Living in the present, not wanting for something big to happen in the future. We seem to forget to live our lives just for that big day and that big dream to happen. This is how we create scarcity. Here is an example- When people say,

“When I lose twenty pounds, I will be happy, or Once I get this promotion, I will be successful, or Once I pay off this mortgage- I can relax.

Have you use these words or heard someone else use these statements? We need to realize that in the process of getting there, we might be forgetting to see our blessings that make our lives joyful, content and abundant already.

In order to live a more abundant life, we can keep the following in mind:

Focus on cultivating a mindset of gratitude, actively seeking those enriching experiences, prioritizing those meaningful relationships, embracing those new challenges, and aligning your new actions with your core values. Basically – living life to the fullest and appreciating all that you already have – not just those material possessions.

Then you will have and keep a Blessing of Abundance.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

With Valentine’s Day around the corner, FirstEnergy Corp. is reminding customers that if helium-filled foil balloons come into contact with power lines, they can cause power outages as their metallic coating conducts electricity and can disrupt the electric system.

Foil balloons are not the only balloons that turn love into loss—even “biodegradable” latex balloons take months to decompose—and electrical outages represent a fraction of the damage.

On land or at sea, animals who ingest balloons or their fragments can choke or slowly starve to death. And their strings or ribbons can entangle squirrels, birds, turtles, fish, and other animals, break their limbs, or strangle them. Nobody wants that.

Love is in the air—keep balloons out of it and celebrate with bubbles instead.

Sincerely,
Melissa Rae Sanger
The PETA Foundation
501 Front St.
Norfolk, VA 23510
248-755-0328
MelissaRS@petaf.org

NAACP

Dayton Branch

Get Informed! Stay Educated! Be Empowered!

Black History Month Program

Then vs. Now...What Has Changed?

Thursday

February 13, 2025

9:00 a.m.

Hezekiah Watkins
Freedom Rider

Dayton

Metro Library

Downtown

In 1961, the ‘Freedom Riders’ banned together in Jackson, Mississippi to demonstrate against state segregation laws, and for doing so, 328 people were arrested with the charge “breach of peace.” Mr. Watkins was the youngest to be arrested on July 7, 1961 and placed on ‘Death Row’ at Parchman Prison. He was 13 years of age and an eighth grader attending Rowan Junior High School.

Jerry Knight, Museum Educator

The Two Mississippi Museums—the Museum of Mississippi History and the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum—are located in downtown Jackson, MS

Dr. Derrick L. Foward, President

Health

Website Reveals the Life and Times of the Black 20th Century Medical Pioneer



Vivien Thomas

Just in time for Black History Month, a new website appears (VivienThomasBook.com) with fresh findings about Mr. Vivien Thomas, the lab technician best known for his Blue Baby surgery. It is designed for students, teachers, and parents, and includes a timeline describing all of the key events in Thomas's life as well as displaying 30 different photos illustrating his life and medical accomplishments. This website also explains the harmful impact that segregation had on Mr. Thomas

and his family.

Readers will learn of Thomas's extensive contribution to solving the mystery of traumatic shock, which immediately resulted in saving lives during World War II and many millions more in the years since. The two different groundbreaking heart surgeries Thomas created are described, including the famous "Blue Baby Surgery" which was the subject of the movie *Something the Lord Made*.

The website also shows Thomas's involvement in the early efforts to develop CPR and the electric defibrillator, both of which are

now routinely used to save the lives of people having heart attacks.

If you are looking for a great way to quickly understand how medical progress is made or what life was like in the United States until race discrimination was outlawed, the website provides a fascinating way to do so. The website is based on material taken from the first biography written for adults about this twentieth-century medical pioneer, *Vivien Thomas: The Man Who Overcame Racism to Save Millions of Lives* by Jan Potlter.

NAACP Calls for Cancer to be Declared a Public Health Crisis in the Black Community... Continued from Page 1

cer (TNBC), a subtype associated with poorer outcomes due to limited treatment options.

Research shows that Black women are about 30% more likely to die from these tumors than white women, partly due to lower rates of surgery and chemotherapy. Although breast cancer in men is rare, a recent study revealed that Black men have a 52% higher incidence rate than white men and are twice as likely to develop TNBC.

Lung cancer, the leading cause of cancer-related deaths among Black men and the second-leading cause among Black women, disproportionately im-

pacts the Black community. Black men and women are less likely than their white counterparts to be diagnosed at an early stage when the cancer is more treatable, contributing to lower survival rates.

Colorectal cancer is one of the leading causes of cancer and cancer-related deaths among both men and women in the U.S., with the Black community facing a disproportionate burden. Black Americans have the highest rates of colorectal cancer compared to any racial or ethnic group, being about 20% more likely to develop the disease and 40% more likely to die from it than most other groups.

Public health research indicates that Black men

face a 1 in 6 chance of developing prostate cancer during their lifetime. They are 1.7 times more likely to be diagnosed with the disease and 2.1 times more likely to die from it compared to white men.

In light of the disproportionate impact of cancer on Black communities, the NAACP is urging immediate action and advocating for policies, practices, and procedures at national, state, and local levels to reduce cancer rates and health disparities. The organization aims to collaborate with health systems and community partners to promote cancer health equity and address local disparities effectively.

New Sickle Cell Treatment



Sickle-shaped cells under a scanning electron microscope. Photograph: Science History Images/Alamy

When I was pregnant for the first time in 2020, I remember saying to my husband: "This country does not give a toss about the health of black people." Why? As a pregnant woman and a sickle cell carrier, I was shocked to learn how little information is shared about this disease. Logging into pregnancy apps or reading NHS leaflets, you find an endless list of illnesses and conditions – genetic and non-genetic – that may affect your baby. Yet sickle cell was barely mentioned, despite it being the fastest-growing genetic disease in the UK.

During the pandemic, we were constantly told that those with underlying health conditions were more at risk. But sickle cell was rarely, if ever, acknowledged as one of those conditions. Sickle cell disease – which predominantly affects black people – causes red blood cells to become a sickle shape, making it difficult for them to pass through blood vessels. This leads to excruciating pain episodes, known as sickle cell crises, which can last hours, days or even weeks.

But now there are shoots of hope that maybe that tide is turning. The NHS has recently approved a groundbreaking gene therapy for sickle cell disease – a treatment that won't just help patients manage symptoms but could cure them of this crippling illness altogether. This new treatment is being hailed as a historic moment in medical history. And for good reason.

Sickle cell affects people's everyday lives in ways many of us never have to think about – something as simple as a change in temperature can trigger a crisis. Extreme weather conditions – being

too cold or too hot – can send a patient into agonising pain. Cold weather narrows blood vessels, increasing the chances of a crisis, while extreme heat can lead to dehydration, worsening sickle cell symptoms. Many of us take these seasonal shifts for granted, but for sickle cell sufferers, winter and summer can be dangerous. Even something as routine as booking a holiday requires careful planning. What happens if you have a crisis abroad, in a country where language barriers make it hard to explain your condition? Or where doctors aren't familiar with sickle cell and don't know how to treat it properly?

Then there's the workplace. Some people hide their condition from employers, fearing it will affect their chances of getting hired. And let's not forget how sickle cell can even restrict who you can date and build a family with, as carriers and those with the full-blown disease have to consider the risk of passing it on to their children. For me, as a carrier, there was a sense of relief in knowing that my husband doesn't have the sickle cell gene. This meant there was no chance of our children having the disease – the only possibility was that, like me, they would be carriers, which they both are. This gene therapy could eradicate these problems.

This medical breakthrough for sickle cell also represents something bigger for black people. Yes, black people have been living with sickle cell for decades, yet the medical system's response has been shockingly slow. Unlike other conditions that receive extensive research funding and high-profile campaigns, sickle cell has always felt like an afterthought. And let's not pretend that race doesn't play a role in that. Black people

have worse health outcomes across the board – from mental health to maternity care. Add in the fictitious and sometimes fatal belief among healthcare staff that black people have a higher pain threshold, and it becomes clearer why sickle cell has been so low on the list of medical priorities.

But does investment in this treatment signal a new dawn for the treatment of black patients? Perhaps. There is no doubt that the announcement of this new treatment for sickle cell has the potential to be a monumental step forward. But it also raises important questions and concerns. This treatment will only be truly effective if the healthcare system ensures that racial biases no longer prevent black people from accessing the medical care they deserve.

While we can't deny the potential of this gene therapy, it is vital the people who need it will be able to have access to it. We know there is a higher concentration of black people living in London. Most sickle cell treatment centres are in London and other big cities – so what happens to those outside these areas? Will they face longer waiting times? If so, while this treatment is curing some, others will be left falling further behind simply because of where they live.

Furthermore, medical innovations need consistent funding. My hope is that the NHS remains committed to funding this life-changing gene therapy – and that financial pressures don't lead to cuts before it reaches all who need it. For now, the approval of gene therapy brings hope. But the real test will be whether it delivers on its promise.

Schedule a Screening Mammography Near You in February

Premier Health is making it easier for busy women to get their annual mammogram screening with its mobile mammography coach that travels to businesses, public venues, and events throughout Southwest Ohio.

Equipped with advanced imaging equipment, the coach offers traditional 2D and Genius™ 3D Mammography™ technology to detect breast cancer.

The coach is owned and operated by Atrium Medical Center in Middletown.

The following dates and times are open for appointments in February:

- Thursday, Feb. 6, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Community Health Centers of Greater Dayton – East Dayton Health Center, 2132 E. Third St., Dayton, OH 45403;
- Saturday, Feb. 8, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Country-side YMCA, 1699 Deerfield Road, Lebanon, OH 45036;
- Monday, Feb. 17, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Miami County Internal Medicine, 2600 Mote Drive, Covington, OH 45318;
- Tuesday, Feb. 18, 8

a.m. to 4 p.m. at Community Health Centers of Greater Dayton – Charles Drew Health Center, 1323 W. Third St., Dayton, OH 45402;

• Thursday, Feb. 20, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at SureCare Medical Center, 360 W. Central Ave., Springboro, OH 45066;

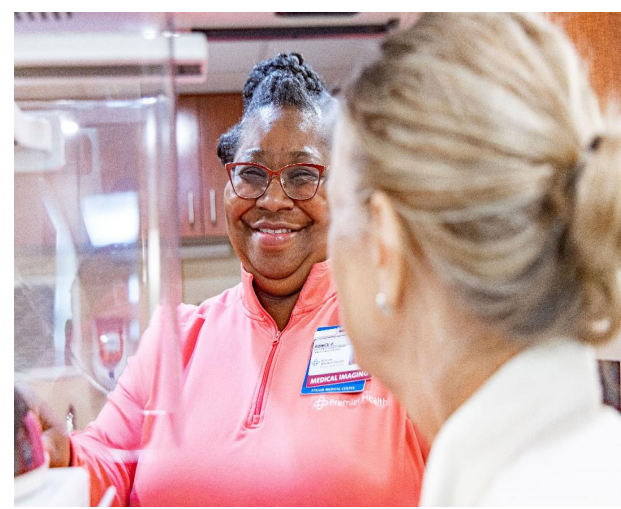
• Monday, Feb. 24, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Stillwater Family Care, 471 Marker Road, Versailles, OH 45380;

• Wednesday, Feb. 26, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Monroe Medical Center, 35 Overbrook Drive, Monroe, OH 45050; and

• Friday, Feb. 28, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Waynesville Pharmacy, 415 S. Main St., Waynesville, OH 45068

Mobile mammograms can be scheduled by calling (855) 887-7364. For more information about the process and locations, visit www.premierhealth.com/mobilemammo or email MobileMammo@premierhealth.com.

Premier Health welcomes partnerships with area businesses and event organizers to bring the mobile mammography coach to their locations in the community. For more



information about how to bring the coach to your event or site, email MobileMammo@premierhealth.com or call (844)

453-4199.

Genius 3D Mammography is a trademark of Hologic Inc.