

UMB's Promise Heights Initiative Receives \$30M Grant



Britney Pitts, Parent University I Coordinator, doing Arts & Crafts with a youngster at "Parent University," a Promise Heights program. The U.S. Department of Education has awarded Promise Heights a five-year, \$30 million grant to continue its effort to improve the lives of children and families in the West Baltimore neighborhood of Upton/Druid Heights. The grant enables Promise Heights to continue its comprehensive plan for combating poverty and increasing academic achievement in the local community. (See article on page 10)

Courtesy Photo

Shay Sharpe's Story:

Living with Metastatic Breast Cancer

By Ursula V. Battle

The is Part 1 of a two-part series about Metastatic Breast Cancer during Breast Cancer Awareness Month, an annual international health campaign observed every October to increase awareness of the disease and to raise funds for research into its cause, prevention, diagnosis, treatment and cure.

Baltimore native Shay Sharpe recalled the day in 2004 when she made the discovery that would change her life.

"I had worn a new dress, and I was just itching all day," said Sharpe. "In the midst of scratching, I felt a pea-sized spot on my chest. I had just had an exam done, and figured the doctor would have picked it up. I went to the doctor for a Benadryl shot and told him about the spot. He sent me for an ultrasound. My mother had told me about this aunt and that aunt who had cysts in their breasts. I thought the spot was just a cyst.

"The ultrasound was followed by a mammogram. That was the determining factor in my learning that I had Stage Three breast cancer. You just don't think at the age of 26 you should have to worry about breast cancer. Breast cancer was not on my radar."

Now 40, Sharpe is on a mission to ensure that breast cancer is on the radar of every woman— particularly younger women. She has joined Novartis as an Ambassador, as it launches the second phase of Kiss This 4 MBC™ to increase much-needed research funding and support for the Metastatic Breast Cancer (MBC) community.

Shay and the other Ambassadors are using their social media channels and active roles in the breast cancer community to encourage posts for #KissThis4MBC. For each public post using #KissThis4MBC, Novartis will donate \$15 to MBC research.

Global healthcare company, Novartis launched Kiss This 4 MBC™ in 2017 to increase much-needed research funding and support for the MBC community.

"I had the opportunity to go to New



Shay Sharpe is an Ambassador for Kiss This 4 MBC™, a campaign seeking to increase much-needed research funding and support for the Metastatic Breast Cancer community. Diagnosed with breast cancer at age 26, Sharpe is now 40 and on a mission to ensure that breast cancer is on the radar of every woman— particularly younger women.
Courtesy Photo

York as part of the campaign," said Sharpe. "It meant a lot to me because I have worked with so many women who are at Stage 4. Something as simple as reposting a hashtag helps to get the word out. It also helps to raise money to find a cure. I am honored to be a part of it.

"We have to educate, educate, educate. Many women share their stories while reposting, which is awesome. Once we are more educated, we can save more lives."

According to the National Cancer Institute (NIH), cancer can spread regionally, to nearby lymph nodes, tissues or organs. The NIH also pointed out that cancer can spread to distant parts of the body.

When this happens, it is called metastatic cancer. For many types of cancer, it is also called Stage IV (four) cancer. The

process by which cancer cells spread to other parts of the body is called metastasis. Some common signs of metastatic cancer include pain and fractures when cancer has spread to the bone. An estimated 155,000 people in the U.S. are living with metastatic breast cancer, for which there is no cure. Despite treatment advancements, MBC continues to take the lives of approximately 113 people in

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the U.S. every day, and is the leading cause of cancer death in women, ages 20-59 worldwide.

"Right now, I can say that things are going fair," said Sharpe. "In August 2014, ten years after my initial diagnoses, the cancer returned. Even without breast, you can get breast cancer again. I often deal with chronic nausea and dental issues. But despite it all, I have tried to make the best of the hand I was dealt."

In 2011, Sharpe started Shay Sharpe's Pink Wishes, a non-profit organization that educates, advocates, mentors, supports, and grants wishes to children and young women who have been affected by terminal breast cancer.

"I feel like I am a voice for these young women," said Sharpe. "One lady died on yesterday. We try to step in and help. After being diagnosed at Stage Three, there is only one stage left for me. Breast cancer is so often overlooked. People just don't think young women and breast cancer go hand in hand."

Sharpe speaks regularly to sororities, clubs and other groups.

"I tell my story to help women be more proactive about their breast health," said Sharpe. "I want to teach my family and community. I try to make it easier for someone after me. For mothers, daughters, and granddaughters the education needs to be out there. People think if mommy or grandma didn't have it, they won't have it. However, someone has to be the first one."

For more information about the Kiss This 4 MBC campaign visit <http://www.kissthis4mbc.com>. To learn more about Shay Sharpe's Pink Wishes, visit <https://shaysharpepinkwishes.org>.

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Guest Editorials/Letters

Don't Believe the Hype: Vote, Our Lives Depend on It

By Derrick Johnson

President and CEO of the NAACP

In the 2016 U.S. presidential election, we were wrong. Political forecasters, pollsters, elected officials and even the media told us that the 45th President of our nation would be a woman named Hillary Clinton, but they were wrong.

In many cases, the margin between who became president and who lost the race was a slim few thousand votes. For example, in the 2016 Presidential election, the winning margin was less than two percent in Michigan, Florida, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and two other states. Though the popular vote was won by Hillary Clinton (in excess of 3 million votes) and the margin between victory and loss was small in many states, the "near victory" serves as cold comfort to those communities whose civil rights are slowly being rolled back under the ominous weight and rise of racism and White nationalism.

Today, like in 2016, we hear the predictions of a powerful political shift in the House of Representatives and possibly the Senate. While these predictions are promising, they alone will not ensure the interests of the black community, will be affirmed by the winners of the midterm elections. The only way we will get the respect we deserve is to show up and show out at the polls in November.

When we take our well-deserved seat at the table, we know our impact is always powerful.

We've seen the collective power of black women impact key races for office in special elections and primaries. Black women, according to our recent poll which analyzed the 61 most competitive midterm races, are tired of feeling disrespected by the Trump Administration and have made it a much higher priority to voice their displeasure at the polls. Black men are not far behind them. They too, along with other communities of color, are tired of the relentless racism permeating our nation and fueled by politicians.

As we approach November, we hear the faint yet consistent refrain—elections have consequences—ringing in our ears.

For the black community, November is a watershed moment. If we fail to vote in numbers respective to our actual political power, future generations will suffer for our apathy. We don't have to tell our people how to vote, only that we must vote as if our lives and our children's lives depend on it—because it does.

The NAACP has decided to fight back and we ask you to join us by using your ballot as the weapon of choice.

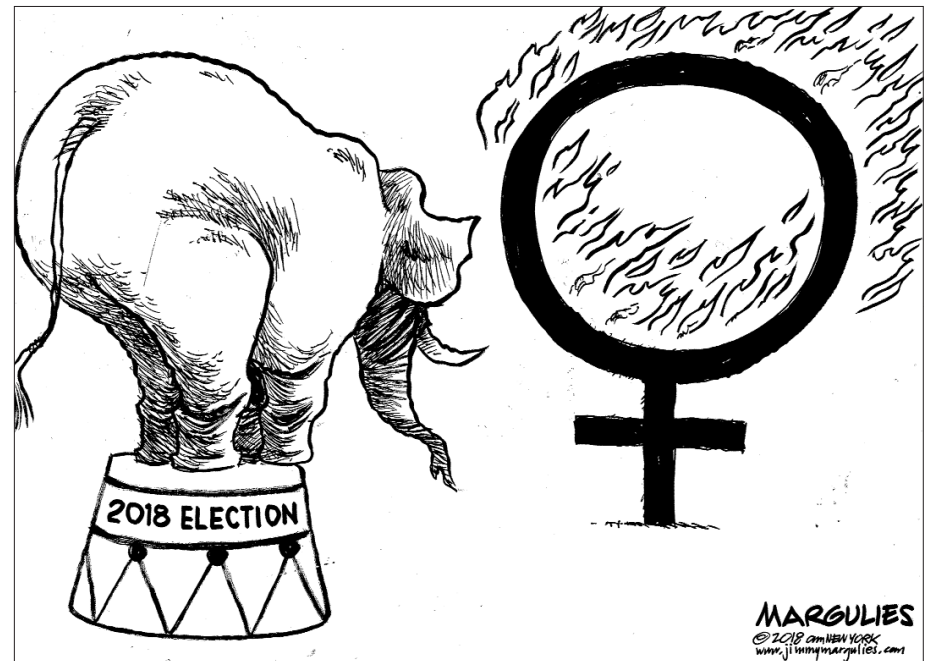
We ask you to visit NAACP.org to download and share resources to help those you know get registered and mobilized to vote. We are asking you to reach out to five people in your personal or social networks and bring them with you to the polls. If you understand the importance of this year's elections, we know that you will sound the alarm, connect with others, and express your power by casting your vote.

Voting is not just about politics, it's about fighting police brutality, preserving civil rights, providing public education, protecting the right of workers to organize, and giving those who need healthcare access to it. But most importantly, voting is about our ability to live as equals in a society that doesn't always view us as such.

For resources on getting out the vote in your neighborhood and community visit: <https://naacp.org/campaigns/fighting-for-democracy/>

Stand strong and vote—our lives depend on it! See you at the polls.

Derrick Johnson is the President and CEO of the NAACP. Follow him on Twitter at @DerrickNAACP or @NAACP. Pledge to vote by Texting NAACP to 40649.



Letters to the Editor:

Editor:

Re: Trump Afraid of Mueller Investigation

Why is President Trump afraid of the Mueller investigation? Is Trump guilty of obstruction of justice, or collusion with the Russians in the Presidential election, or guilty of some other crime that Mueller is investigating?

President Trump continues to bash Mueller's investigation via twitter and Trump continues to refer to the investigation as a "witch hunt" or "hoax."

Trump's attorney, Rudy Giuliani said of Mueller's investigation— "In this case, the investigation was much worse than the no crime." Giuliani keeps trying to discredit the investigation.

If Trump is not guilty of any crime then, why doesn't he and his legal team,

let Mueller's investigation proceed unhindered to a conclusion? After all, Mueller is highly regarded as an impartial and reputable counsel with impeccable credentials.

Typically, when people try to discredit or hinder or sidetrack an investigation it indicates they fear there is incriminating information coming out of the investigation.

Mueller and his team should bring the investigation to a conclusion and publish the results long before the mid-term elections.

Donald Moskowitz
Londonderry, NH

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Letters to the Editor

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What's happened to the big wage increases promised by Republicans?

By Lawrence Wittner

The recent announcement by the founder of Amazon, Jeff Bezos, that his company would give substantial raises to its lowest-paid employees should not blind us to the fact that most American workers are not receiving big wage increases. In fact, the real wages (that is, wages adjusted for inflation) of average American workers are declining.

When justifying the Republicans' December 2017 \$1.5 trillion tax cut for corporations and the wealthy, President Donald Trump and House Speaker Paul Ryan claimed that it would result, in 2018, in wage gains for American workers ranging from \$4,000 to \$9,000 each.

But in reality, nothing like that has materialized. Instead, as the U.S. Labor Department reported, between the second quarter of 2017 and the second quarter of 2018, the real wages of American workers actually declined. Indeed, the second quarter of 2018 was the third straight quarter— all during the Trump administration— when inflation out-paced wage growth. The last time wages

grew substantially above inflation was in 2016, during the Obama administration. Consequently, by August 2018, as the Pew Research Center reported, the purchasing power of American workers' wages was at the same level as in 1978.

Why did the Republican promises go unfulfilled? A key reason for stagnating wages lies in the fact that U.S. corpora-

tion power of America's labor unions. Once a force that created a more level playing field between workers and their bosses, unions have been badly weakened in recent years by Republican-sponsored anti-union measures, such as so-called "Right-to-Work" laws and the subversion of the National Labor Relations Board.

through legislation.

By contrast, Republican policies have done wonders for the wealthy and their corporations. By the fall of 2018, the stock market had reached new heights and the fortunes of the wealthiest Americans had grown remarkably. According to Forbes, the wealth of the 400 richest Americans averaged \$7.2 billion each—a hefty increase over the previous year, when they averaged \$6.7 billion. Moreover, the ten richest Americans possessed \$730 billion among them—an increase in their wealth of nearly 20 percent over the past year. And the very wealthiest American, Jeff Bezos, nearly doubled his wealth during this time—to \$160 billion. From the Republican standpoint, their programs had been a great success. Accordingly, the GOP-controlled House of Representatives voted in late September to make its steep tax cuts for corporations and the wealthy permanent.

So let's stop saying that Republican rule in the United States— from the White House, to the Congress, to the Supreme Court, and to the states— has been dysfunctional. It's been very functional— not for American workers, of course, but certainly for those people Bernie Sanders has referred to as "the billionaire class."

Dr. Lawrence Wittner, syndicated by PeaceVoice, is Professor of History emeritus at SUNY/Albany. His latest book is a satirical novel about university corporatization and rebellion, What's Going On at UAardvark?

“Although the federal minimum wage has remained at \$7.25 for more than nine years, Trump and Congressional Republicans have blocked legislative efforts to raise this pathetically low wage floor, contending that they saw no need for a federal minimum wage.”

tions used their windfall derived from the slashing of the corporate tax rate from 35 to 21 percent under the 2017 GOP tax legislation to engage in stock buybacks (thereby raising their stock prices) and to increase dividends to share-holders. This practice produced substantial gains for big corporate investors but did nothing for workers. Although it appears that some workers (a reported 4 percent) did receive pay raises thanks to the tax cuts, it's estimated that corporations spent 88 times more on stock buybacks than on pay increases for workers.

Another important long-term factor that has depressed workers' wages is the dwindling membership and declining

The Republican opposition to raising the minimum wage has also undermined wage levels. In the past, numerous Republican Presidents backed legislation that increased the minimum wage. But that position has radically changed as the Republican Party has turned sharply to the right. Although the federal minimum wage has remained at \$7.25 for more than nine years, Trump and Congressional Republicans have blocked legislative efforts to raise this pathetically low wage floor, contending that they saw no need for a federal minimum wage. Moreover, Republicans have used their control of state governments, as in Missouri and Iowa, to block cities and counties from raising local wage levels

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Local HBCU star gets a chance to fulfill career ambition

By Demetrius Dillard

A former Morgan State basketball standout is the most recent athlete from an HBCU to get an opportunity to achieve a lifelong dream in the world's premier professional basketball league.

The New York Knicks signed former Morgan State forward Phil Carr and waived former Morehouse star Tyrius Walker on Oct. 2, according to reports from *The Athletic* and HBCU Gameday.

"All I ever needed was a chance and I'm thankful for this one. Thank you to the @nyknicks and @wcknicks Organization for believing in me. It's up to me how far I go from here," said Carr in a Twitter post after signing his pact at the team's training facility.

Carr, a lanky 6-foot-9 forward, is expected to sign what is called an Exhibit 10 deal, which is the NBA's most recent Collective Bargaining Agreement that indicates that one-year contracts are worth the minimum NBA salary.

According to Steven Gaither of HBCU Gameday, Carr said he'll likely end up on the Westchester Knicks, the New York Knicks' G-League affiliate. Also, he made it known to the *New York Post* he expects to play with the G-League team this year.

The Exhibit 10 deal for Carr does not include any compensation protection. However, it can include an optional bonus ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000, assuming he decides to play in the G League for Westchester and remains with the club for at least 60 days.

The famed New York Knicks have a storied history of highlighting HBCU talent, including Indiana Pacers forward Kyle O'Quinn (Norfolk State), Morgan State alum Marvin Webster, Winston-Salem State legend Earl "The Pearl" Monroe and Virginia State's Charles Oakley.

Carr, a Brooklyn, New York, native, was a standout at Transit Tech High School, Mohawk Valley Community College and Williston State before transferring to Morgan State at the start of the 2015-16 season.

He was an integral piece in each of the three seasons he played at Morgan, all of which were under the tutelage of 13th-year head coach Todd Bozeman. In addition



Phil Carr makes a jump shot over a Florida A&M defender. The former Morgan State University forward signed a contract with the New York Knicks on October 2, 2018.
Photo Courtesy of Morgan State University Athletics

tion to being named the 2017-18 MEAC Preseason Player of The Year, Carr averaged 13.4 points and 9.3 rebounds for the Bears last season.

Carr went from being an unknown at a junior college to being a top two-way player at the Division I level, and is the latest of a string of HBCU athletes striving to get a well-established career in professional sports.

Although Carr went undrafted, and didn't have the opportunity to play in the NBA Summer League, he trained hard and posted impressive workouts, prompting the Knicks to make an offer.

Besides Carr and Webster, there is only one other basketball player to emerge from Morgan to play in the NBA—Tiwan Kendley, Carr's former teammate who had a breakout senior season with the Bears (averaged 26 points per game) and showed relentless scoring ability on the Washington Wizards summer league squad.

Kendley, who went undrafted in the 2018 NBA Draft, also agreed to an Exhibit 10 deal with the Wizards on September 10, and he is currently listed on the team's roster.

A 6-foot-5 guard from Harlem, N.Y., Kendley became the fastest to reach 1,000 career points in the MSU's Division I history, including a career-high 41 points against Bethune-Cookman on February 19.

Despite missing seven games due to injury his junior season and being suspended 10 games his senior season, Kendley earned numerous honors throughout his brief stint at MSU, clearly distinguishing himself as an elite Division I talent. Kendley also recorded more than 1,000 points in two seasons at Lamar Community College before coming to Baltimore to team up with Carr in the 2016-17 and 2017-18 seasons.

The 23-year-old averaged nine points, 2.5 rebounds and two assists in four summer league games with Washington.

It appears that HBCU basketball talent is slowly on the rise in the professional ranks, and it is worthy to note that the NBA's most recent black college talent has emerged from Baltimore.

Black History Express Apps added to 20-year portfolio of empowering software

Cherry Hill, NJ— Hugh Smith, president of Quikthinking Software, announced the launch of two new Android apps, Black History Express and Black History Quotes Express. Both apps gather together factual information and thought provoking anecdotes that offer a time slice into our culture.

"Getting history right is the most important thing an informed citizen can do," said Smith who added that the two apps are a way to "memorialize and acknowledge the past."

Black History Express presents engaging stories about African Americans

within 26 chapters ranging from art to theater and everything in between. Several hundred people are featured. A quiz game is included with the app for fun.

Black History Quotes Express offers several thousand inspiring, motivational, and reflective author quotes for readers to explore, share and enjoy.

For additional information, contact Hugh Smith: hughsmith@quikthinking.com or follow Black History Express or Black History Quotes Express for direct downloads to evaluate the apps.



*Hugh Smith
President
Quikthinking Software
Courtesy Photo*

Local author debuts novel about an African American millennial

Baltimore— Baltimore native Victoria Kent has fulfilled her dream of becoming an author by writing and releasing her debut novel, “Almost 30,” a fictionalized memoir about an African American millennial living in Baltimore.

Set in Baltimore, “Almost 30” is a contemporary story of Sawyer Jenkins, an African American millennial woman on the verge of turning 30 who is attempting to maneuver through societies’ pressures of adulthood, financial instability, still living at home with family, job stag-

nation, men or lack thereof, and the physical transformation of her body. As Sawyer attempts to “adult” she

dissects the world and her purpose while dispelling stereotypes placed upon black millennials, like her.

“I chose to write this type of book because I was feeling like maybe I failed at life,” said Kent. “People were inces-

santly bombarding me with questions like when was I going to settle down and get married, have children and purchase a home. When I spoke to other millennials, I realized I was not alone. Many of us were being asked these same types of questions and coping with many of the same issues.”

Kent attended St. Timothy’s High School and later graduated from Loyola University with a

bachelor’s degree in English. Her love for writing began at the age of five when she

began reading and writing poetry and short stories. When she’s not writing Victoria volunteers with the Baltimore Guardian Angels and is an “Investigative Discovery” addict.

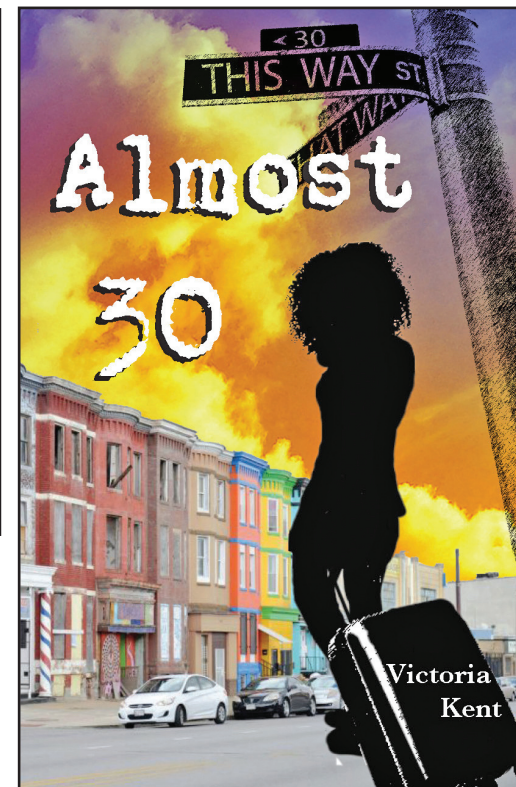
Almost 30, is her first novel. She names Terry McMillan, Issa Rae, Kevin Shird,



Victoria Kent
Courtesy Photo

and Omar Tyree as some of her favorite authors because of the honesty in their writing and that they write about life in an urban inner city.

The Almost 30 e-book is available for purchase on Amazon and the print book



is available for purchase at: www.authorvictoriakent.com



With career coaching provided by Johns Hopkins, longtime truck driver Clayton “Smitty” Smith became a clinical care technician in the Neurosciences Critical Care Unit at Johns Hopkins Hospital and is completing the courses required to apply to nursing school.

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Educator launches 'Dinner Table Math' to help prepare elementary school students for algebra and beyond

Philadelphia— Educator Angela McIver, Ph.D. is expanding her pioneering after-school program Trapezium Math Club with her launch of Dinner Table Math® a set of games and activities designed to empower parents to help their children become stronger and more confident math students at home.

According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, by the time U.S. children reach 4th grade, 60 percent are not proficient in math and the numbers get worse as children move through school. By eighth grade, nearly 70 percent of U.S. students are not proficient.

McIver wants to change that by teaching parents how to address the problem before it becomes a problem.

McIver is founder/CEO of Trapezium Math Club, an after-school program in Philadelphia that creates fun and engaging ways for students to learn hard math. After spending years researching older students with weak math backgrounds, McIver realized that her own children were not developing strong foundations as they moved through their elementary school math program.

"Trapezium Math Club started as a way for me to ensure that my own children would have the skills they needed to succeed in algebra and beyond," she said. "But now, with two children successfully navigating honors math courses in high school, I want to share what I have learned to empower parents to do the same."

Through her work studying how older students learn math, McIver discovered that if a child leaves elementary school with a weak math foundation, successful remediation is very difficult.

"It becomes triage at that point," McIver said. "We tackle the most egregious skill deficits and hope it's enough



Angela McIver, Ph.D. (left) is the founder/CEO of Trapezium Math Club, an after-school program in Philadelphia that creates fun and engaging ways for students to learn hard math. Dr. McIver recently launched Dinner Table Math® a set of games and activities designed to empower parents to help their children become stronger and more confident math students at home. For more information about Dinner Table Math, visit: <http://dinertablemath.com/>

Left Photo Credit: Bryan Lathrop



Right Photo Credit: Lindy Powers Photography

to get them through. But those children rarely feel confident in math and just like that, a career path is cut off."

McIver believes children spend a lot of time in elementary school having to learn multiple strategies for solving problems but they never master critical skills necessary to explore more difficult math concepts.

"If an elementary school graduated the majority of fifth graders without sight word recognition or fluency in reading, we would be appalled, because children wouldn't be prepared for the demands of the middle school reading curriculum," she said. "But, the math education your child needs for algebra and beyond is most likely not what their school is emphasizing. And once your child gets to middle school, it's very difficult to get back on track."

McIver says she often hears that schools discourage parents from working with their children at home in math.

"We understand the long-term benefits of reading to our child at an early age, but we don't help the same parents build their child's math proficiency," McIver said. "As the world's reliance on technology has grown, so too has the demand for people who can succeed in math and parents hold the key."

The competitive global economy is requiring students to master math skills so they can be ready for an increasing number of STEM-related jobs in the future. The Economic and Statistics Administration reports that jobs in fields related to science, technology, engineering and math are expected to grow to more than nine million by the year 2022. Additionally, STEM workers reportedly

earn more than 29 percent more than non-STEM workers. However if a child doesn't develop a strong foundation in elementary school, the odds of success in math or math-related fields decreases significantly.

With Dinner Table Math®, McIver created a line of math games and activities that empower parents to build strong, confident math learners at home. The goal is to ensure that children continue to be successful in middle school math and beyond.

"My belief is that we should not wait for elementary schools to fix the math problem. Parents can fill those gaps from home. Dinner Table Math is key to helping our children become better students ready to tackle algebra and beyond," McIver said.

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Ravens to face familiar friends on Titans team

By Tyler Hamilton

The game on Sunday, October 14, 2018 against the Tennessee Titans gives the Baltimore Ravens an opportunity to play against some familiar friends. Former Ravens defensive coordinator Dean Pees is now in charge of the Titans' defense. Linebacker Kamalei Correa was acquired by Tennessee in a trade with Baltimore just before the season started.

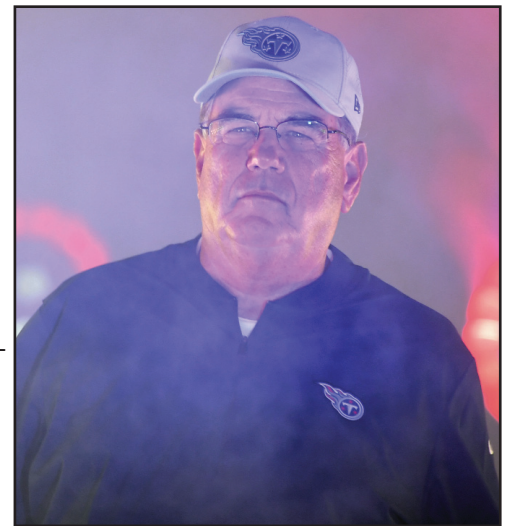
Then there is Kendrick Lewis, a former starting safety for the Ravens who signed with the Titans before the season started. Lewis wasn't in the NFL last season after the Ravens released him in March. Now he is one of Tennessee's starting safeties due to injuries to Jonathan Cyprien and Kenny Vaccaro.

Special teams ace Brynden Trawick moved on to Tennessee as well. Trawick was with the Ravens from 2013 - 2015 after signing as an undrafted free agent. He signed with the Oakland Raiders in 2016, then spent last year with the Titans and he was selected for the Pro Bowl for the first time as a special teams player.

Pees retired after a crushing 34 - 27 loss to the Cincinnati Bengals knocked the Ravens out of playoff contention last year. Cincinnati scored the game-winning touchdown with under a minute left in the game. Instead of attacking, the Ravens defense sat back in coverage as Bengals receiver Tyler Boyd found a seam in the coverage and hauled in a 49-yard pass from Andy Dalton for the touchdown. The fact that the play came on fourth-and-12 made it all the more frustrating.

Ravens fans were critical of Pees while he was in Baltimore even though the defenses that he oversaw were consistently solid units. Head coach John Harbaugh spoke about Pees on Monday.

"He did a good job here and put a lot of good defenses together here in Baltimore. I hope fans understand and be-



Titans defensive coordinator Dean Pees walks out of the locker room before a game at Nissan Stadium in Nashville, Tennessee in 2018. Courtesy Photo/NFL.com

lieve that. We have a lot of respect for Dean," Harbaugh said.

The Titans defense is allowing an average of 333.2 yards per game, which ranks seventh in the NFL. Pees, has effectively recreated the success that he found in Baltimore. Now he will get to face his former team on Sunday.

Pees, isn't the only former Raven in Tennessee that was considered a disappointment. Correa was a second-round pick (No. 42 overall) by Baltimore in 2016. Under Pees, Correa was moved from an outside linebacker to an inside linebacker.

Correa played in nine games making four tackles and one pass breakup before he was placed on injured reserve in December 2016. His second NFL season was less than stellar. He started three games and registered 15 tackles for the year.

Having moved on to the Titans, Pees didn't forget about Correa's ability to rush the passer. Deemed expendable by the Ravens, Tennessee capitalized by sending a sixth-round pick in 2019 to Baltimore in exchange for Correa, the 24-year-old linebacker.

After sitting out the final preseason game, Correa was inserted into a rotation at outside linebacker and posted his first sack in the season opener. Correa has two sacks so far in 2018. It will be a reunion in many ways when the Titans and Ravens square off in week 6.

UMB's Promise Heights Initiative Receives \$30M Grant

Will benefit children, families in Upton/Druid Heights

By Ursula V. Battle

The daughter of a longtime Baltimore educator, Bronwyn Mayden, MSW has a special connection to the Upton/Druid Heights community.

"I am a child of a Baltimore City Public School teacher, a product of Baltimore City Public Schools, and my family grew up in that neighborhood," said Mayden, who serves as executive director of Promise Heights, an initiative led by the University of Maryland Baltimore's (UMB) School of Social Work (SSW).

Through the efforts of Mayden and others, her old community is getting needed help in a major way. The U.S. Department of Education has awarded Promise Heights a five-year, \$30 million grant to continue its effort to improve the lives of children and families in the West Baltimore neighborhood of Upton/Druid Heights.

The grant award was announced by the Department of Education as part of the Promise Neighborhoods Implementation Grants Program. This is one of 24 Promise Neighborhood implementation awards announced since 2011, the only one in Maryland, and the only one hosted by a school of social work. Promise Neighborhoods support schools in high-poverty communities to become vibrant centers of opportunity and excellence.

UMB's schools of medicine, nursing, dentistry, and pharmacy also participate in the initiative in Upton/Druid Heights, a neighborhood near UMB that includes parts of historic Pennsylvania Avenue and extends as far south as Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Eutaw Place to the east.

"Yes, we do theory and practice with students, but felt UMB could do more in the city," said Mayden who is also an assistant dean at UMB. "We have been working for almost ten years in the Upton/Druid Heights area in Baltimore. When we first started, we decided we needed to do more in the community.



Bronwyn Mayden, MSW, serves as executive director of Promise Heights, an initiative led by the University of Maryland Baltimore's (UMB) School of Social Work (SSW). Money from the implementation grant will be used to bring additional supports to Eutaw-Marshburn Elementary School; Furman L. Templeton Preparatory Academy; The Historic Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Elementary; Booker T. Washington Middle School for the Arts; and Renaissance Academy High School. Courtesy Photos



L-r: Kyla Liggett-Creel, LCSW-C, PhD, and Henriette Taylor, MSW, LGSW, celebrate a successful graduation ceremony for "Parent University," a Promise Heights program.

When I looked at the demographics, I looked at the neighborhoods closest to the school, and the Upton/Druid Heights neighborhood stood out to me. As a university, we realized we needed to step up."

She added, "We really studied what was going on, and talked to a lot of people. We came to realize the problems in the neighborhood were so great, that no one organization could work on them. It had to be partners working together to achieve common goals. Those goals included ensuring that children in the

neighborhood were in school, that they be proficient in reading and math, be ready to graduate and go on to college, and ultimately a career. That was the theme of what we were doing."

Partners include neighborhood resident associations; Office of the Mayor; Maryland State Department of Education; Baltimore City Public Schools; Family League of Baltimore; and United Way of Central Maryland.

According to Mayden, the implementation grant enables Promise Heights to

continue its comprehensive plan for combating poverty and increasing academic achievement in the local community. The grant builds on the \$500,000 planning grant awarded to Promise Heights in 2013, which generated the capacity to deliver and evaluate a full array of evidence-based services.

"A team of us worked on this \$30 million grant," said Mayden. "It was a lot of hard work and the process was highly-competitive. We were over the moon when we found out we had won."

Money from the implementation grant will be used to bring additional supports to the five Baltimore City Public Schools in Upton/Druid Heights, such as: early childhood mental health consultation; social-emotional support; academic support and enrichment; and college and career coaching to ensure pathways out of poverty for youth and their families.

Targeted schools in the neighborhood include: Eutaw-Marshburn Elementary School; Furman L. Templeton Preparatory Academy; The Historic Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Elementary; Booker T. Washington Middle School for the Arts; and Renaissance Academy High School.

"We want to turn these five schools into stellar schools," said Mayden. "We want to see them turn around and show that with the right support, these children can achieve just as much as privileged children can achieve."

Mayden also praised the efforts of the Rev. Dr. Al Hathaway, who is intricately involved with Promise Heights. Like Mayden, Pastor Hathaway has ties to the Upton/Druid Heights community. He is pastor of Union Baptist Church located at 1201 Druid Hill Avenue and grew up in the 2000 block of Druid Hill Avenue.

"Nothing happens without struggle," said Pastor Hathaway. "We stayed the course and collectively used our resources. We are talking about an extra six million dollars a year for schools in the Upton/Druid Heights community. I think it will be an amazing opportunity."

For more information about Promise Heights, visit www.promiseheights.org

Reunion and Showbiz History Lesson: **Baltimore's Flo Woolston, 101, Tells her Story**

By Stacy M. Brown

Flo Woolston has quite the story to tell. At 101, she is as sharp as anyone. And, her memory is quite clear.

On July 11, 2018, Woolston, the oldest person living of the legendary former Minsky's Burlesque showgirls, took a trip to the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., where, after 80 years, she reunited with actor Alan Alda.

"He was two or three years-old when I first saw him," said Woolston, who danced for Alda's father, actor Robert Alda back in the 1930s at Minsky's Burlesque which famously nourished the careers of such later headliners as Phil Silvers, Abbott and Costello, Jackie Gleason and the elder Alda.

She also grew quite close to iconic pianist Liberace.

"I hadn't seen Alan for all of these years, and to see him again was wonderful," said Woolston, who grew up in New York but has lived in Baltimore for the past 54 years.

"It was emotional because I hadn't seen him for all of these years, but it was such a wonderful reunion and we laughed and talked and I told him that he's old now, too," Woolston said of the 82-year-old M*A*S*H star.

Woolston says she and Alda hugged and kissed and exchanged quips.

"I told him, look, we can get old and look terrible or we can get old and look good," she said. "He said to me that we're both old people now and we don't look the same. When I look in the mirror I say, 'that can't be me, that's someone else because I shrunk.'"

Woolston said she adored Robert Alda who treated her and other dancers with dignity and the utmost respect.

Robert Alda, who died in 1986 at the age of 72, was a premiere singer and dancer featured in a number of Broadway shows. He sang as Woolston and other women danced around him at Minsky's Burlesque.

"It was wonderful working with him. He was very unassuming, not conceited and tall, dark and handsome," Woolston said. "Just a lovely person to work with."

Woolston recalled New York's Mayor Fiorello H. La Guardia forced the closure of Minsky's in 1935 because he said it was too lewd.

"It wasn't," she said. "We wore stockings and a G-string. Today that would be considered so mild that probably no one would even come to see the show."

She says the world appeared to change drastically after World War II, including Hollywood, which started to trend away from black and white films. Even politics became more controversial, according to Woolston.

"My favorite president was a haberdasher, he had a men's clothing store. He was Harry S. Truman," she said.



On July 11, 2018, Flo Woolston, 100 yr old sees actor Alan Alda, 82 yrs old after 80 yrs. at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. to hear him speak. Woolston worked with Alan's father, Robert Alda in the 1930s at Minsky's Burlesque in New York. She knew him as a age two-year-old boy. She is one of the oldest living Minsky's Burlesque showgirls. Courtesy Photos

While she earned between \$50 and \$125 per week as an entertainer, Woolston says that was considered a handsome payday, today's headliners are wealthy beyond her wildest thoughts.

"I tell young people, by all means absolutely go into entertainment because the money is there even though you may not have such extraordinary talent," Woolston said.

Although she doesn't watch many films today, Woolston recalled her favorites: "Lost Weekend," the 1945 film noir that starred her favorite actor Ray Milland, and 1933's "Moonlight and Pretzels," a musical that featured Mary Brian and William Frawley.

"I don't watch much today and I don't watch television," she said. "But, I will tell you the best days were when I worked with Robert Alda, those were glorious days!"

Baltimore resident Kevin Grace has filmed a documentary about Woolston, where people can learn more about her illustrious career and the many big time stars she worked with. To view the documentary titled, "Conversations with Flo: 1930's Minsky's Burlesque," visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9wuQnOEXxU>



To view Kevin Grace's documentary titled, "Conversations with Flo: 1930's Minsky's Burlesque," visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9wuQnOEXxU>

Highly acclaimed production *Les Misérables* now playing at The Hippodrome

By Ursula V. Battle

Cameron Mackintosh's acclaimed production of Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schönberg's Tony Award-winning musical phenomenon, *Les Misérables*, is playing at the Hippodrome Theatre at the France-Merrick Performing Arts Center in Baltimore until Sunday, October 14, 2018.

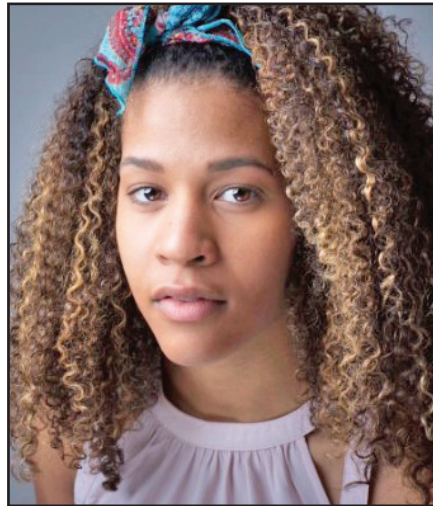
Set against the backdrop of 19th-century France, *Les Misérables* tells an enthralling story of broken dreams and unrequited love, passion, sacrifice and redemption—a timeless testament to the survival of the human spirit. Featuring one of the greatest scores of all time with thrilling and beloved songs, including: "I Dreamed A Dream," this epic and uplifting story has become one of the most celebrated musicals in theatrical history.

"Eponine is feisty and a firecracker of a person," said Paige Smallwood, who plays "Éponine" in the production. "I have a lot of fun playing her."

Along with the Oscar-winning movie version, *Les Misérables* has now been seen by more than 130 million people in 44 countries and in 22 languages around the globe. Now in its 32nd year, the show continues to break box office records.

Smallwood talked about how she landed a role in the production.

"I had auditioned for the U.K. tour, but they offered me the opportunity to be a part of the U.S. tour and play the part of Eponine," Smallwood recalled. "I have been acting since I was a little kid, but my background is in dancing. My mom put me in dance classes as soon as I could walk. One of my first memories is



(Left) Paige Smallwood plays "Éponine" in the production of *Les Misérables* at The Hippodrome until Sunday, October 14, 2018. (Right) Set against the backdrop of 19th-century France, *Les Misérables* tells an enthralling story of broken dreams and unrequited love.



Courtesy Photos

being on stage. Being in this production is an absolute dream come true.

"I am working with some of the nicest people I ever met, and some of the most talented. I thank every person who made it possible for me to be where I am today."

Smallwood's credits also include *Gypsy* and *Five Points*. The 23-year-old received her training at London's Royal Academy of Music, where she earned a MA in Musical Theatre Performance; and Temple University, where she earned a BA in Theatre.

Les Misérables originally opened in London at the Barbican Theatre on October 8, 1985, transferred to the Palace Theatre on December 4, 1985 and moved to its current home at the Queen's Theatre on April 3, 2004 where it continues to play to packed houses and is the only version of the original production left in the world.

The original Broadway production of *Les Misérables* opened at the Broadway Theatre on March 12, 1987 and transferred to the Imperial Theatre on October 17, 1990 running for 6,680 performances. The original U.S. National Tour began in November 1987 and visited over 150 cities before closing in St. Louis, Missouri in 2006. Broadway audiences welcomed the production back to New York on November 9, 2006 where the show played the Broadhurst Theatre until its final performance on January 6, 2008.

The new production is currently playing to sold out houses across North America and in Mexico City with a new U.K. Tour beginning November 2018.

"Performing in the show is almost like a rock concert," said Smallwood. "It's crazy. We have a Prologue and an Epilogue. Every night when we perform, we walk on the stage in darkness and the

audience erupts in a loud cheer. At the end of the Prologue, the music has a huge downbeat and *Les Misérables* is projected across the set. As soon as it comes up, it's like 'whoa!' It's so iconic and the audience just loses it. We are like 'yes!'"

Smallwood was looking forward to the Baltimore performance.

"I hope that the audience leaves the show with a sense of community, uplifted spirits and feeling that that if we stick together and stay true to ourselves, we can put positivity in the world," said Smallwood. "It's a joy to take this production to a different city each week. I am excited to share it with Baltimore. It's such an awesome community."

For performances times or to purchase tickets, visit www.Ticketmaster.com, www.BaltimoreHippodrome.com, or call 800-982-ARTS,

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WMAR ABC 2 News partners with House of Ruth to 'Fill The House'

Donations will be collected on October 17th at White Marsh Mall

Baltimore— WMAR ABC2 has partnered with House of Ruth Maryland for the "Fill The House" campaign. WMAR will be onsite at White Marsh Mall on Wednesday, October 17, 2018 collecting donations for House of Ruth Maryland and conducting live shots throughout the day to support the campaign.

"We are thrilled to support and shine a light on the work of House of Ruth Maryland," said Bill Hooper, vice president and general manager, WMAR.

"The entire WMAR staff stands behind the mission of House of Ruth Maryland and their goal to raise awareness for women and children in intimate partner violence situations."

"We are excited to continue our partnership with WMAR with the 'Fill The House' campaign, particularly during Domestic Violence Awareness Month so can continue to reach out to the community," said Sandi Timmins, executive director, House of Ruth Maryland. "As we celebrate the success of last year's campaign, we are committed to continuing our work providing services and resources to victims of intimate partner violence."

Trucks, donated by Von Paris Moving & Storage, will be at White Marsh Mall from 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, October 17, 2018 for donations. Members of the community are encouraged to bring donations of diapers, wipes and formula, comforters, pillows, blankets, and new underwear for women and children for the "Fill The House" campaign.

The event's radio partner, 105.7 The Fan will be helping to drive traffic to the event prior to and on the day of this year's "Fill The House" campaign. The Greene Turtle Sports Bar and Grille® in White Marsh will be donating a portion of sales from guests who bring in a flyer from the "Fill The House" campaign to House of Ruth Maryland.

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Ch4n's 3:04 AM creative and purposeful

By Imani Wj Wright

Art— well art can be tricky. We've all been in a situation at one time or other, where we are listening to the latest popular song or checking out the new trendy design that everyone is going crazy about and said to ourselves, "I don't know why people like this."

The line between what art is or isn't can be blurry and difficult to establish at times. Art is very subjective. Nonetheless, while I was listening to "Paradise Tape," a five song extended play (EP) by Baltimore artist Ch4n, I experienced both sides of the shaky fence. My range of opinions were mostly formed in regards to Paradise Tape's opening track, titled: 3:04 AM.

Before we proceed to analyze the trees, let's take a look at the forest. For the 23 minutes and some change, the duration of this project, Ch4n does a great job of keeping the feeling of "paradise" alive. Mykst Ansestree (pronounced mixed ancestry) produced this project with a conscious feel and sense of minimalism. This minimalist approach fits the tranquil and serene environment that Ch4n was able to create.

Before I was able to fully appreciate this body of work, I had to start from track one, "3:04 AM." The intro to this piece provides 30 seconds of soothing water waves, accompanied by what seems to be someone playing a Rhodes



(Left) Baltimore recording artist Ch4n. (Right) Ch4n's five song EP "Paradise Tape" can be found on all major platforms, including: Spotify, Apple Music and YouTube. Courtesy Photos/Ch4n



piano. I genuinely thought this track was going to be an instrumental interlude with a variety of subtle and ambient sounds. However, a few moments later, the track takes a significant pause, and a vocal sample boastfully follows. Then, there is the sound of a snap, as Ch4n undergoes his melodic quest shortly after.

My ears were not satisfied with Ch4n's vocal approach on the first go around. I found them to be uninspired, lagging and void of musicality but looking back

now, I realized that I completely misconstrued the story and the unique approach that Ch4n was conveying there. For goodness sakes, the song was taking place on an island, during the wee hours of the morning! What was wrong with me? Ch4n's style was more than creative— it was purposeful.

He was not just giving us a performance musically he was taking on the entire storyline and role of the song's landscape. Everything about Ch4n's artistic approach was calculated to the last decimal. His longest held notes were beautiful and stretched out just like a yawn after a relaxing nap. The "snap" we heard was sym-

bolic of Ch4n waking up and getting his bearings. Ch4n's lyrics were also straight to the point and relatable.

The first line, "No I can't pick up the phone, I'll call you later." I'm sure many of us know that feeling during vacation. I was very impressed by this opening track. It plays a distinct part in the sculpting of Paradise Tape. This is a great listen for anyone in need of something to kick back to.

Ch4n said to me, "I'm in love with music. One day, I plan on running away with her." Well, keep treating her with this kind of attention and detail, and she'll gladly run away with you.

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Three ways to release yourself from the past and live for today

News & Experts— Our memories help us relive life's most delightful moments, such as a trip to the Grand Canyon or a child's high school graduation.

But not every memory is a happy one, and often people become so tied to the past— dwelling on mistakes they made or offenses committed against them— that they fail to enjoy and take advantage of the present.

"If we permit our past to hold us hostage from the change we deeply desire, we are stuck," said Tom Corner, a motivational speaker and author of *Borrowed Eyes and Feet: Finding Enlightenment After Rage* (www.tom-corner.net). "It's important to be able to release your past and to see existence in the present moment. There is no future and there is no past, only the gift of now."

He knows from experience. For Corner, freeing himself from the past involved overcoming anger and rage that plagued him since his parents divorced when he was a young boy.

He was in his 40s, he says, before he learned to live in the moment— or perhaps, re-learn how to live in the moment.

Most people, as children, aren't so hung up on the past and the future, preferring to immerse themselves in the activity at hand, whether that involves a game of tag, a hike in the woods, a favorite TV show or a captivating book.

"Unfortunately, children eventually grow up to become adults who live in a state of constant worry about what they did yesterday and what they will do tomorrow," Corner said. "We nudge the present moment to the side, making it something of an anomaly, until we return full circle later in life to try to recapture the gift of those moments."

But how do you recapture the ability to take pleasure in the present moment and avoid letting the past and the future

dominate your thoughts and cause you heartache and anguish?

Here are a few of Corner's suggestions:

•**Practice forgiveness.** It's been said that the act of forgiveness isn't so much for the person we are forgiving, but for ourselves. Either way you look at it, it's not always an easy thing to do. "Are we courageous enough to see the world through the eyes of forgiveness, allowing us to release the many false expectations we unintentionally impose on ourselves and on others?" Corner asks.

•**Strive for self-acceptance.** If we are honest and brave enough to look deep within ourselves, Corner says, we will realize that, more often than we'd like to admit, we sabotage ourselves with negative self-talk. "The next time you feel doubt or a sense of failure, pay attention to how you feel about yourself," he says. "If you are not being nice to yourself, be aware of these feelings and try to replace this doubt with positive thoughts or affirmations."

•**Recapture childlike wonder.** "When we were children, all things were possible because we did not know much about resistance or fear," Corner said. "As children we did not allow our past to hold us hostage from the gift of joy in the present moment."

Think about your past, he says, release whatever is holding you back from your dreams, your desires, and your ability to accomplish anything.

"Too often, we wait for tomorrow to celebrate our yesterdays," Corner says. "Why not today? Why not celebrate what we have right now, right this minute?"

Tom Corner is an inspirational author and motivational speaker. He has two decades of experience in the financial-services industry, which helped him sharpen his skills as a communicator, uplifter and business professional. His latest book is "Borrowed Eyes and Feet: Finding Enlightenment After Rage." For more information, visit: www.tom-corner.net.

"Forgiveness says you are given another chance to make a new beginning." —Desmond Tutu

Black History Express Apps added to 20-year portfolio of empowering software

Cherry Hill, NJ— Hugh Smith, president of Quikthinking Software, announced the launch of two new Android apps, Black History Express and Black History Quotes Express. Both apps gather together factual information and thought provoking anecdotes that offer a time slice into our culture.

"Getting history right is the most important thing an informed citizen can do," said Smith who added that the two apps are a way to "memorialize and acknowledge the past."

Black History Express presents engaging stories about African Americans within 26 chapters ranging from art to theater and everything in between. Several hundred people are featured. A quiz game is included with the app for fun.

Black History Quotes Express offers several thousand inspiring, motivational, and reflective author quotes for readers to explore, share and enjoy.



Hugh Smith
President
Quikthinking Software
Courtesy Photo

For additional information, contact Hugh Smith hugh-smith@quikthinking.com or follow Black History Express or Black History Quotes Express for direct downloads to evaluate the apps.

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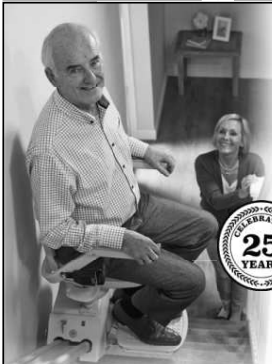
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