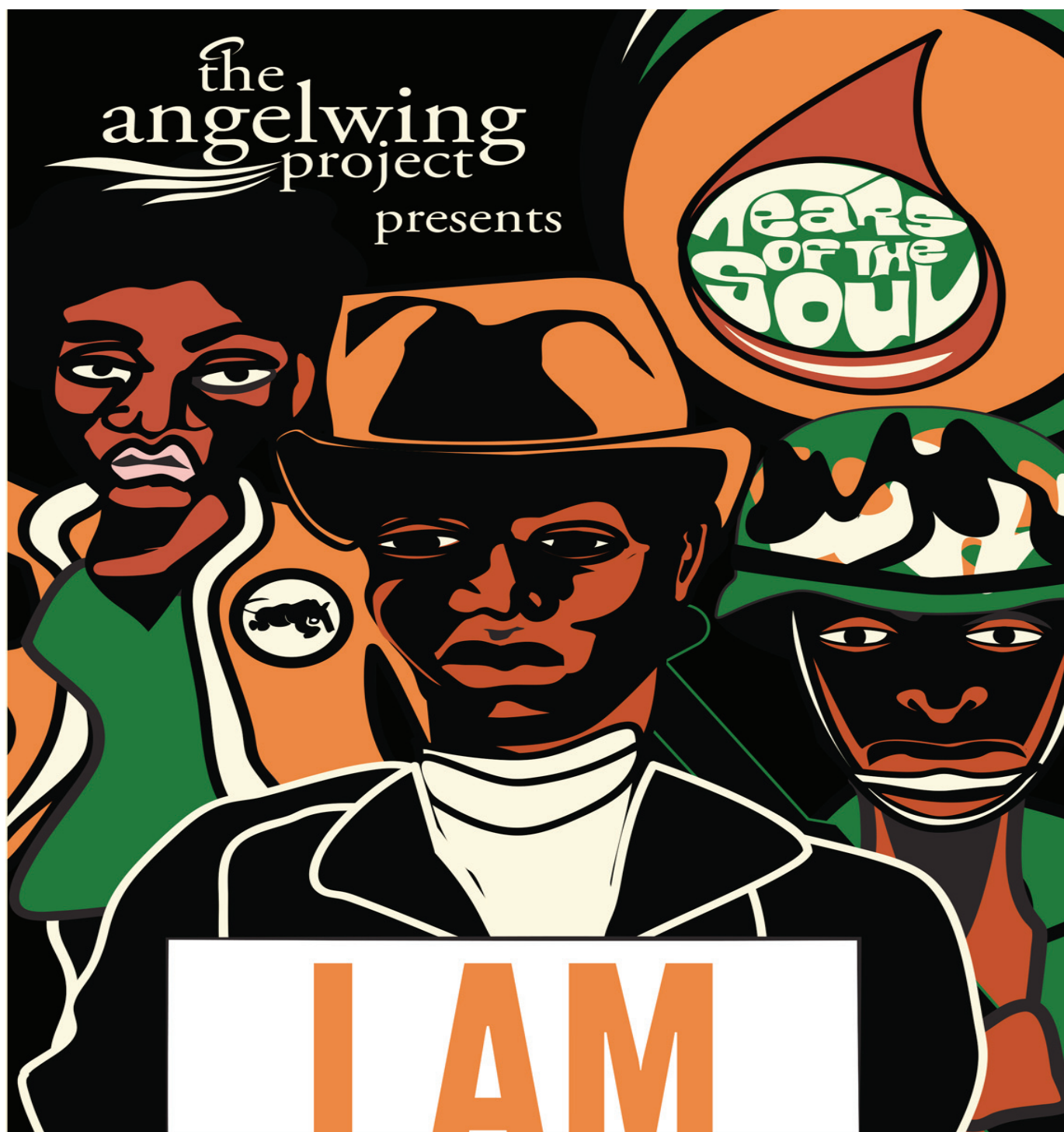


The Annapolis Times

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Artwork for "Tears Of The Soul," was created by Jonis Winger.

Angela Wilson's Tears Of The Soul Production Looks at Memphis Sanitation Strike

By Ursula V. Battle

On February 1, 1968, two Memphis garbage collectors, Echol Cole and Robert Walker, were crushed to death by a malfunctioning truck. Twelve days later, frustrated by the city's response to the latest event in a long pattern of neglect and abuse of its black employees, 1,300 black men from the Memphis Department of Public Works went on strike.

The Memphis sanitation workers' strike is remembered as an example of African-Americans standing up for themselves. During their strike, sanitation workers marched in the face of racial injustice donning signs which read "I Am A Man." The strike is also remembered as the prelude to the assassination of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. King was shot by a sniper who was identified as James Earl Ray, as the civil rights leader stood on the balcony of Memphis' Lorraine Hotel.

One local playwright has captured how this historic movement played out through the eyes of a Memphis family through her stage play drama "Tears Of The Soul."

"Tears Of The Soul is historical and educational," said writer Angela Wilson, who also produced and directed the gripping production. "I love Black History. As a playwright, you come across something you believe makes a good story. When I began researching James Earl Ray, I was struck by the sanitation workers' sacrifice."

Continued on page 10

Orioles Legend Robinson Dead at 83

By Stacy M. Brown

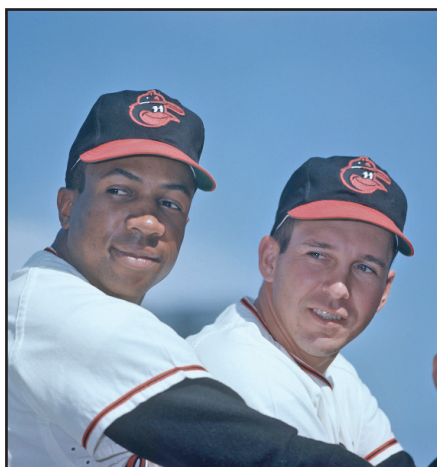
Frank Robinson, a trailblazing figure who was Major League Baseball's first African-American manager and one of its greatest players during a career that spanned 21 seasons, died Thursday after a prolonged illness, according to pro baseball's premiere website, MLB.com. Robinson was 83.

The Hall of Famer hit 586 home runs and appeared in 14 All-Star games over the course of his illustrious career, starting with the Baltimore Orioles and the Cincinnati Reds.

Robinson is the only player to win MVP honors in both the National and American league—in 1961 with the Reds and five years later with the Orioles.

When he earned those honors in 1966 with the Orioles, Robinson won the Triple Crown when he hit 49 home runs, drove in 122 runs and had a .316 batting average.

Despite the so-called steroid-era of the late 1990s and 2000s where statistics were greatly inflated, Robinson's 1966 campaign remains widely viewed as one



Baltimore Orioles legends Frank Robinson and Brooks Robinson
Photo Credit: Baltimore Orioles

of the greatest in the history of the sport.

Even as a star in a sport that was still struggling with integration years after Jackie Robinson (no relation) broke the color line, Robinson often spoke out for civil rights even publicly aligning himself with leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

In 1975, Robinson made history before nearly 57,000 fans at Cleveland's Municipal Stadium when he began managing the Indians, making him baseball's first-ever black manager.

MLB.com noted that, just as Jackie Robinson's breaking of baseball's color barrier in 1947 had opened doors for Frank Robinson, Hank Aaron and Willie Mays and many others to play in the Major Leagues, it was Frank Robinson who paved the way for every minority manager who has followed.

"He changed the game, no doubt about it," Orioles great Jim Palmer said in a statement about Robinson's death.

Former teammate Brooks Robinson (no relation) also released a statement through the Baltimore Orioles, noting his sadness.

"I lost not only my teammate, but also a very dear friend. I loved Frank, and got to know him so much better after we both retired," Brooks Robinson said.

He said he spoke to Frank Robinson a few days before his passing.

"He sounded good. He wanted to be home. I let him know that Connie and I were pulling for him, and that he, Barbara [Frank Robinson's wife of nearly

60 years], and Nichelle [Robinson's daughter] were in our prayers," Brooks Robinson said. "As a player, I put Frank in a class with Willie Mays, Hank Aaron, and Mickey Mantle. He was the best player I ever played with. When he came here in 1966, he put us over the top. He was a great man and he will be deeply missed."

In a Facebook post, U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen from Maryland remembers throwing out the first pitch at a 2017 Orioles game.

"When they asked me what number I wanted to wear, the answer was easy, number 20 in honor of Frank Robinson," Van Hollen said. "Frank Robinson was a legend and a trailblazer who inspired those he played with and all of us who share a love of baseball. As [Palmer] said, 'When he came over here, he was the leader. He was the guy. He made us all better.'"

"Not only did Robinson hit 586 home runs during his career, but he was also the first African American manager in the major leagues. Frank turned Jackie Robinson's dreams into a reality, and Maryland is honored to have him as part of our history," Van Hollen said.

MEMORY INDEX

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Editorials/Commentary

You get what you pay for in a police commissioner, Baltimore

The recent hoopla and sometimes disdain, heaped on Baltimore Mayor Catherine Pugh, the City Council and the Board of Estimates regarding the eyebrow-raising compensation package extended to the presumptive new commissioner of the Baltimore City Police Department, Michael Harrison, at first glance, elicits an understandable W-T-H reaction.

In a city of nearly 612,000 persons whose poverty rate is roughly 25 percent, which translates to 80,000 households subsisting on an income of less than \$21,000 per year, the new police commissioner's contract, which will pay him approximately \$1.5 million over five-years, and nearly \$300,000 if his offer of employment is rescinded before he assumes the office, it's not surprising that the visceral reaction of citizens at-large might be one of shock and outrage.

Is it possible City Hall could have brokered a better deal for the public's money? Perhaps. However, after an examination of the national talent pool for big city police commissioners demonstrates that Harrison's pay package is near but not at the top. Relative to Baltimore's size and the scope of crime here, the offer Mayor Pugh has extended to Harrison is competitive but this does not completely let the mayor off the hook for her decision.

Whether Catherine Pugh's choice of Michael Harrison and his lucrative pay will ultimately be seen as a folly or a strategically wise leadership decision, will become obvious based on Harrison's effectiveness.

Mayor Pugh's motivation is clear. She is genuinely alarmed at the depth and scope of Baltimore's crime and murder rates and has recruited a demonstrated law enforcement professional to address the situation on her constituents' behalf.

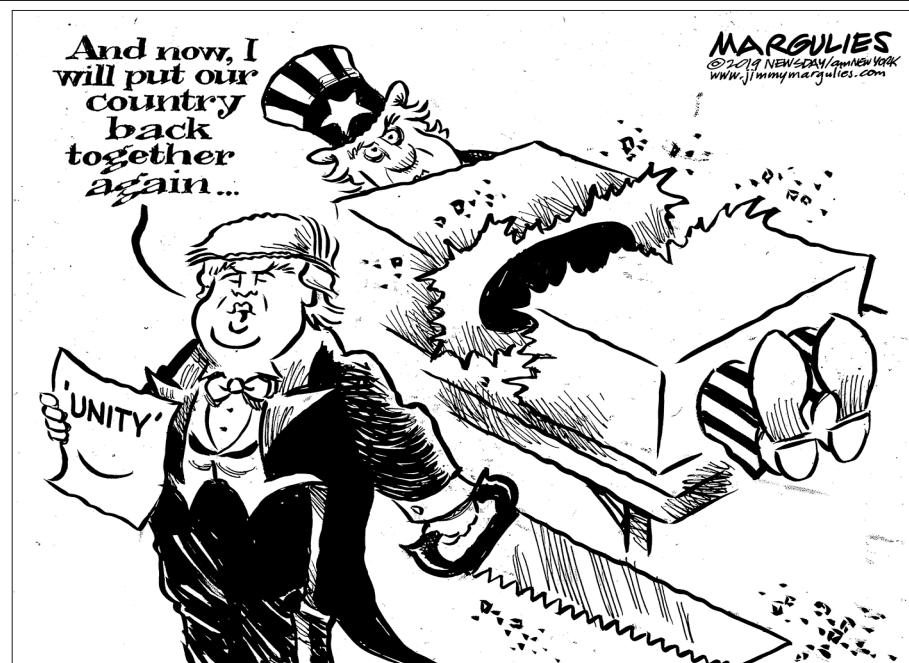
Her heart is clearly in the right place. However, as the fourth commissioner to serve under Mayor Pugh in her 26 months in office (including acting commissioner Gary Tuggle) it remains to be seen whether the mayor's leadership and management efficacy, in tandem with Harrison's policing acumen, will achieve the desired result—drastically reducing crime, violence and murder in Baltimore City.

At the end of the day, the responsibility to police Baltimore is not the purview of the mayor or police commissioner alone. In a democracy, we the people must ultimately shoulder that responsibility. Pugh and Harrison are on our, the public's payroll.

Baltimore's crime and violence condition is in direct correlation to a terribly economically depressed city, with a large population of drug-addicted citizens, and a host of chronic social conditions in the areas of education, illiteracy, health, housing and jobs—fertile ground for a protracted crime epidemic.

It is left to those of us who are socially aware and engaged to not only set the agenda for the city—insisting where the government needs to target and channel precious resources for overall revitalization—it our moral and civic responsibility to protect our very substantial investment in the person hired to secure our safety and well-being by supporting him in his task and stacking the deck in favor of his success.

Our government exercises its authority with the consent of the governed. Mayor Pugh and Commissioner Harrison's ultimate effectiveness to curb crime in Baltimore will be largely determined by the commitment of citizens to oversee and to vigilantly participate in municipal affairs. It's largely up to Baltimore's taxpayers and voters whether we get the bang for our buck from Michael Harrison as our new police commissioner.



Community Affairs

Baltimore County and Pratt Librarians to hold Entrepreneur Academy

Towson, Md.—Beginning March 9, 2019, Baltimore-area entrepreneurs looking to start, run or improve a small business need to look no further for information and guidance than their Baltimore-area library system.

Baltimore County Public Library and Enoch Pratt Free Library (Pratt) will host Entrepreneur Academy, a series of workshops designed to develop/launch or improve small businesses, in partnership with the Urban Library Council, the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, Northern and Corridor Region Small Business Development Centers (SBDC), CASH Campaign of Maryland, Small Business Administration, and Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulations.

The free workshops will take place at Baltimore County Public Library's Woodlawn Branch and Pratt's Edmondson Avenue Branch; those interested in taking the workshops can select the

most convenient location. Participants in the series of nine workshops will learn marketing research and business strategies, financing options, record keeping and taxes and developing business plans. They will also be able to work with legal, financial, insurance and accounting advisors, and take advantage of networking opportunities along with extensive library and business resources.

To fully benefit from the Academy, participants will be asked to commit to attend all of the workshops. In addition to the workshops, library branches will have dedicated, trained staff to assist entrepreneurs one-on-one by appointment.

"So many people are looking for the tools they need to thrive at starting and growing their own business," says Pratt Library President & CEO Heidi Daniel. "This partnership will help entrepreneurs create a roadmap to success as they navigate free resources available at libraries across the Baltimore region."

For more information about the Entrepreneur Academy, visit: www.prattlibrary.org/entrepreneuracademy.

Closer look at Westside Baltimore neighborhood cause for concern

By Regi Taylor

Good news. Baltimore's murder rate declined 10 percent in 2018, with 309 killings versus 342 for all off 2017. However, the scope of violence overall continues to plague the city's neighborhoods and our reputation.

Next month will mark one year since USA Today caused a local uproar and brought national scorn upon Baltimore by proclaiming our city the most violent in the country. Unfortunately, the empirical data cited from the FBI's annual national violent crime index report is irrefutable.

More frightening is that upon closer examination of the research presented to support USA Today's designation of Baltimore as the "Nation's Most Dangerous City" reveal grim statistics about a relatively small community located in the Southwest corner of the city, and about Baltimore's west side in general.

The roughly 2.5 square mile area of Carrollton Ridge located north of Carroll

Park, east of Edmonson Village, south of Sandtown-Winchester, and west of the central business district has the apparent dubious distinction of being Baltimore's most violent neighborhood.

The murder rate in Carrollton Ridge in 2017 was one killing for every 850 residents in a community of roughly 25,500 people, nearly double the city homicide rate. Citywide, Baltimore's rate of 55.8

city communities. Among the Baltimore Police Department's nine districts—Central, Eastern, Northern, Northeastern, Northwestern, Southern, Southeastern, Southwestern and Western - the three western districts collectively have consistently outpaced the other regions of the city for murders.

The swath of Baltimore City from north to south that includes the North-

total Baltimore murders, 235. Eastern districts: 81 vs Western: 99.

In the five-year period from 2013 through 2017, the three west side police districts accounted for 43 percent of total murders committed. In every one of those years except 2013, when the Carrollton Ridge neighborhood placed second with one in 1275 of its residents becoming murder victims, that community has been number one among Baltimore neighborhoods for murder, peaking in 2015 with one in 671 of its residents falling victim.

Another important statistic that may not be getting sufficient attention while the emphasis is placed on firearm murders is the proliferation of shootings overall in Baltimore. Most of the shootings were not fatal, but severely maimed victims. The spike in non-fatal gun violence is trending sharply upward.

From 2014 to 2015 non-fatal shootings in Baltimore increased 72 percent from 370 to 637. The number slowed but continued to increase in 2016, climbing to 670 attempted firearm killings, almost two per day. According to Maryland Shock Trauma Physician-In-Chief, Dr. Thomas Scalea, the average cost to treat a gunshot victim—most of whom are uninsured—is \$112,000. Extrapolate this amount by 2016's 944 shootings for a total cost of \$105 million.

Regi Taylor is a West Baltimore native. The married father of four is an artist, writer and media professional specializing in political history.

“The roughly 2.5 square mile area of Carrollton Ridge located north of Carroll Park, east of Edmonson Village, south of Sandtown-Winchester and west of the central business district has the apparent dubious distinction of being Baltimore's most violent neighborhood.”

per 100,000 equates to one murder for every 1,792 residents. The murder rate in the state of Maryland is eight per 100,000, and in the U.S. six victims for every 100,000.

By comparison, the Sandtown-Winchester community, number two among neighborhoods for killings in Baltimore, had a rate of one murder per 1100 residents, followed by the Park Heights area, with three murders for every 2000 residents. All three communities are on Baltimore's west side.

The unfortunate trend is that Baltimore's west side neighborhoods have been historically more violent than other

ern, Central and Southern districts, except for occasional outliers, have typically had much lower murder rates. The eastern and western districts have experienced a macabre competition for murderous behavior, with the west side usually ranking higher.

Consider these statistics from the last five years: 2017 total Baltimore murders, 342. Eastern districts: 116 v Western: 131; 2016 total Baltimore murders, 318. Eastern districts: 108 vs Western: 142; 2015 total Baltimore murders, 342. Eastern districts: 111 vs Western: 161; 2014 total Baltimore murders, 211. Eastern districts: 73 vs Western: 89; 2013

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**Mailing Address
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2513 N. Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21218**

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Get your heart in good health

By Dallas Post Tribune Staff

About 610,000 people die of heart disease in the United States every year but that doesn't have to be your fate. Some risk factors like your family history, sex or age you can't control but there are some lifestyle changes you can make to decrease your risk.

Keep reading for four heart disease prevention tips to get you started.

1. Start moving!

Just getting 30 minutes of exercise each day can reduce your risk of heart disease. Physical activity can help strengthen your heart, which is helpful in preventing high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes.

Don't let the idea of exercising scare you. It can really be as easy as walking. Try taking a 30-minute brisk walk most days of the week. Consider getting a pedometer and make a goal of 10,000 steps per day.

If these goals are tough for you, don't give up. Even breaking the workout into smaller chunks can offer heart benefits. Take 10-minute walks during your lunch break or do jumping jacks during commercial breaks while you're watching television.

2. Cut out smoking

Smoking is the number one cause of preventable disease and death. Heart disease is no exception. Smoking or using tobacco of any kind is one of the most significant risk factors for developing heart disease.

Smoking damages the lining of your arteries, leading to a buildup of fatty material (atheroma), which narrows the artery. This can cause a heart attack or a stroke.

Carbon monoxide in cigarette smoke

replaces some of the oxygen in your blood. This forces your heart to work even harder to supply enough oxygen. No amount of smoking is safe. But, the more you smoke, the greater your risk. So decreasing the amount that you smoke can help improve your heart health. Remember, even smokeless tobacco, low-nicotine cigarettes, and secondhand smoke can be risky. Eliminating smoking and tobacco products from your life is your safest bet. Your risk of heart disease significantly reduces one year after quitting smoking. Your risk of coronary heart disease drops almost to that of a nonsmoker in about 15 years.

3. Eat for your heart

Paying attention to what you put in your body plays a large role in preventing heart disease. Eating heart-healthy foods don't have to be too restrictive, small choices can amount to a healthier lifestyle.

Use smaller plates when preparing your meals. This is a small tip that will prevent you from overloading your plate and filling up on unhealthy items. Eat larger portions of low-calorie, nutrient-rich food like vegetables.

A diet rich in fruits, vegetables and whole grains can help protect your heart. These foods are usually low in calories and rich in nutrients. This all works to give you better cardiovascular health overall.

4. Know your Numbers

When it comes to your cardiovascular health, there are a few important numbers that you should know. Those numbers are your blood pressure, cholesterol and A1C (diabetes) levels.

Regular screening can tell you what your numbers are. This will help you know when you need to take action to



When it comes to your cardiovascular health, there are a few important numbers that people should know. Those numbers are your blood pressure, cholesterol and A1C (diabetes) levels.
Photo by Agung Pandit Wiguna | Pexels.com

decrease your risk. Here's why those numbers are important.

Blood pressure. Aim to have your blood pressure checked at least once every two years. High blood pressure is a risk factor for heart disease and stroke. If you're age 40 or older, or have a high risk of high blood pressure, get your blood pressure reading every year. Optimal blood pressure is less than 120/80 millimeters of mercury (mm Hg).

Cholesterol levels. Your body naturally builds up from your liver. But when there is too much cholesterol, it builds up in the walls of your arteries, causing a form of heart disease. You should have

your cholesterol measured at least once every five years starting at age 18.

Diabetes screening. Since diabetes is a risk factor for developing heart disease, you may want to consider being screened for diabetes. Visit your doctor to have a fasting blood sugar test or hemoglobin A1C test to check for diabetes. If you don't have any specific risk factors for type 2 diabetes, the American Diabetes Association recommends starting screening at age 45, and then retesting every three years.

This article originally appeared in the Dallas Post Tribune.



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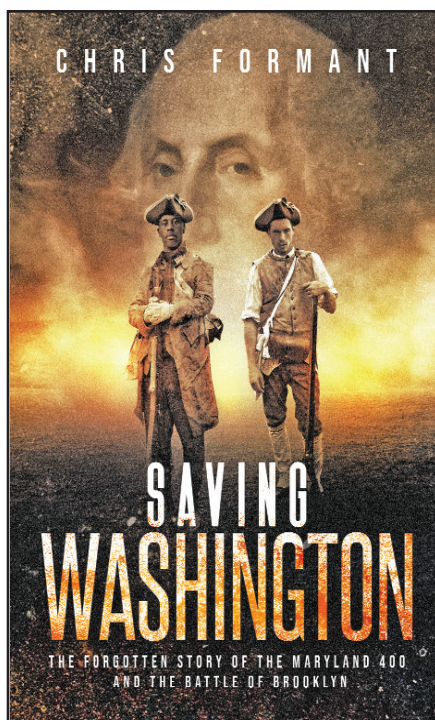
Author recalls brave ‘Maryland 400’ in new book

By Stacy M. Brown

A few years ago, Baltimore author Chris Formant happened upon an announcement in a local newspaper describing a ceremony that was taking place in Brooklyn, New York, to honor the Maryland 400, the Revolutionary War regiment that fought in the Battle of Brooklyn in 1776. Now, Formant has written “Saving Washington: The Forgotten Story of the Maryland 400 and the Battle of Brooklyn.”

The 320-page historical tome that weaves in literature and fiction reveals that the soldiers were untested in battle, many only teenagers. However, by the end of the vicious and bloody Battle of Brooklyn on August 27, 1776, the Maryland 400 would turn the tide of the Revolutionary War and ensure the birth of a new nation.

After reading the newspaper clipping,



Formant recalled that he went to Brooklyn so that he could find out more about the lives of those soldiers whom historians said were vastly outnumbered and who suffered heavy losses in the first and biggest battle of the war as they

tried to hold off the British while Gen. George Washington’s army regrouped.

“I had never heard of them before,” said Formant, who also authored “Bright Midnight,” a book that one reviewer said weaves Formant’s vast knowledge of rock history in with “a page turning thriller” to provide his version of the deaths of legendary rock stars like Jim Morrison and Janis Joplin.

“This book wasn’t something that I planned on doing but I immediately googled the Maryland 400 and there was very little information about them,” Formant said.

After he discovered more details, Formant said the little-known military engagement, and the citizen soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice, counted as the inspiration for his novel.

“Saving Washington” follows two young merchants-in-training, Joshua Bolton, who swears to avenge his father’s murder by British forces, and his best friend, Benjamin Wright, a free black man. Enlisted in the Maryland militia as part of the Maryland 400, they marched to New York with only minimal training.

“Their mission: to prevent the British from taking Brooklyn Heights, which will turn into a battle for the survival of the Continental Army and General George Washington,” Formant writes.

The book’s publisher notes that the novel seamlessly blends real-life historical figures and events with colorful, richly developed fictional characters and crisp dialogue in a time of unknown loyalties, intrigue, spies, romance and betrayal, friendship and comradeship, survival and sacrifice.

Transported back in time to the docks of Baltimore and the muddy carnage of the battlefield, the publisher says the book counts as an enthralling opportunity to be an eyewitness to the dawn of the United States of America.

“Four hundred citizen soldiers from Maryland— bravely stood up to a superior British Army in order to allow George Washington and the Continental Army time to escape,” Formant said. “It was a true suicide mission, only six weeks after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, that saved the young country and its revolution. They were America’s 300 Spartans.”

A TIME TO REFLECT ON THE PLACES WE’VE BEEN. AND WHERE WE’RE GOING.



During Black History month, we remember the past in order to create a prosperous future. We salute and acknowledge the innovations, accomplishments and culture of African-Americans. From scoreboards to boardrooms and from concerts to congress, you are making differences that can be felt every day. Toyota salutes those who are driven to succeed because determination can lead to elevation.



TOYOTA

Smithsonian Channel airs special presentation of ‘The Green Book’

By Stacy M. Brown

On Monday, February 25, 2019, the Smithsonian Channel is scheduled to air a special presentation of “The Green Book: Guide to Freedom,” a first-hand account of historians, business owners and others who experienced the phenomenon of “traveling while black” in pre-Civil Rights America.

The film, which will air at 8 p.m., tells the story of Victor H. Green’s eponymous travel guide that allowed African Americans to safely travel the country during a time of severe institutionalized racism.

Directed by acclaimed documentary filmmaker Yoruba Richen, also behind “The New Black, The Green Book: Guide to Freedom,” looks at the daily realities that African Americans faced on the road—the struggles, indignities and dangers, but also the opportunities and triumphs that were won along the way.

While the story isn’t new to the Smithsonian—it won three 2019 Golden Globe Awards—the network also chronicled “The Green Book” in an online article in 2016 where it noted that for black Americans traveling by car in the era of segregation, the open road presented serious dangers.

While driving on the interstates to unfamiliar locales, black motorists often ran into institutionalized racism in a number of pernicious forms from hotels and restaurants that refused to accommodate them, to hostile “sundown towns,” where posted signs warned people of color that they were banned after nightfall.

Paula Wynter, a Manhattan-based artist, recalled in the 2016 article a frightening road trip when she was a young girl during the 1950s. In North Carolina, her family hid in their Buick after a local sheriff passed them, made a U-turn and gave chase. Wynter’s father, Richard Irby switched off his headlights and parked under a tree.

“We sat until the sun came up,” she said. “We saw his lights pass back and forth. My sister was crying; my mother was hysterical.”

Also, “It didn’t matter if you were Lena Horne or Duke Ellington or Ralph Bunche traveling state-to-state, if the



Community members gathered at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture for a private screening of The Green Book: Guide to Freedom hosted by Comcast and Smithsonian Channel on Thursday, February 7, 2019. (Left to right) Jessica Gappa, director, Community Impact, Comcast’s Beltway Region; Kevin Broadhurst, vice president, Government & Regulatory Affairs, Comcast’s Beltway Region; Jackie Copeland, executive director, Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture; Linda Goldman, executive producer, Mission Critical, Smithsonian Channel; Baltimore Mayor Catherine Pugh; Shubha Goenka, manager, Distributor Marketing, Smithsonian Channel; Dr. Dexter Blackman, Assistant Professor of History, Morgan State University; and Vic Carter, anchor, WJZ-TV.

Courtesy Photo/Comcast

road was not friendly or obliging,” said New York City-based filmmaker and playwright Calvin Alexander Ramsey.

The Green-Book was indispensable to black-owned businesses.

For historians, the listings offer a record of the “rise of the black middle class, and in particular, of the entrepreneurship of black women,” said Smithsonian curator Joanne Hyppolite.

Earlier this month, Comcast, the Smithsonian Channel and the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture in Baltimore hosted a private premiere screening for Black History Month, inviting community stakeholders and others, including Mayor Catherine Pugh.

Panelists at the event included Linda Goldman, executive producer of Mission Critical for the Smithsonian Channel and Dr. Dexter Blackman, an assistant professor of History at Morgan State Uni-

versity. Vic Carter of WJZ moderated the event.

“We treasure our engagement in the Baltimore community throughout the year, and co-hosting the Smithsonian Channel’s The Green Book: Guide to Freedom during Black History Month at the [Museum] afforded us a great opportunity to bring authentic programming to our community members and to connect with one another,” said Jessica Gappa, director of Community Impact for Comcast’s Beltway Region.

“It was important for our standing room-only audience to see the Smithsonian Channel documentary which revealed our shared history about travel restrictions imposed on African Americans during the Jim Crow era,” said Jackie Copeland, the executive director of the Lewis Museum. “It is a painful history, and many watching the film learned about The Green Book for the

very first time. The Lewis Museum is dedicated to providing space for dialogue about our history and current events. ‘The Green Book’ film allowed us to do that.”

Since its inception, the Smithsonian Channel has been committed to African American history because officials there believe that it’s essential to a greater understanding of America’s national story, according to Linda Goldman, executive producer of Mission Critical for the Smithsonian Channel.

“We found the Green Book story compelling on several levels. It leads us to many fascinating stories, from fabulous vacation resorts like Idlewild, to women entrepreneurs and progressive corporations, to civil rights battlefields,” Goldman said. “If history were a map, the Green Book guides us off familiar highways onto important, but easily overlooked, scenic routes.”

You are a priority!

By Nikki Abraham, Nucleus Team Member, Positively Caviar, Inc.

Raise your hand if you are guilty of putting your wants and needs aside to fulfill other tasks at hand or to make sure your loved ones are taken care of first. So very often we forget about the importance of taking care of ourselves. Remember, you can't fully give 100 percent to others without making sure you're whole first. The most important and valuable relationship that you will ever have is with yourself. Way too often I see people putting their own care on the back burner because of other "priorities." This year, take time to set precedence for yourself by focusing on your mind, body, and soul.

Making sure that your mind is well and you're mentally okay should be top priority on your list. Investing in your own wellbeing will be one of the most rewarding investments you'll ever make in this lifetime.

Do you ever experience feelings of

happiness and excitement in your daily life? If the answer is no and you feel like you are just going through the motions, it may be time to re-evaluate your mental health. It's very important to find purpose in what you do—this can make life feel like it's worth living.

The job you have, the people in your circle, and hobbies you engage in should all be beneficial and meaningful to you. Lastly, when it comes to your mental health it's important to give your mind a workout. Try practicing meditation to help you relax and be present in the moment.

Every new year, we make fitness goals and promise to eat better in order to maintain a healthy lifestyle but by February, the promises we made to ourselves tend to fall by the wayside not because we're not committed to living a happier and healthier life but because we allow other things to take precedence. Exercise is one of the first things that get put off because of the time or energy it takes to get moving. The same way you put aside time to schedule a 30-minute



Nikki Abraham
Nucleus Team Member
Positively Caviar, Inc.

meeting or watch a 30-minute sitcom should be the same way you schedule physical activity into your schedule. It's important to note that taking care of your body is deeper than just exercising regularly, eating a healthy diet, drinking plenty of water and getting enough rest all play an important role in your physical health as well.

Spiritual health is a significant part of

what nourishes our souls and ultimately contributes to our wellbeing. When we conceptualize spirituality most people think about attending church or practicing religion but it's truly about what feeds our spirit and brings us peace.

Your faith, values, beliefs and principles are what define your spirituality. The path to spiritual wellness may involve meditation, prayer, affirmations or specific spiritual practices that support your connection to a higher power or belief system. Yoga and meditation can also help you develop spiritual wellness.

Life is meant to be joyous, so always remember to engage in activities that allow you to feel good in your body and feed your soul and spirit.

Positively Caviar, Inc. is a nonprofit organization focused on a message of positivity and optimism. Once a month, our Nucleus Team writes a column focused on mental and physical health tips, scientific studies, nutrition facts and stories that are positive in nature to support a purposeful and positive lifestyle. To learn more about our organization, visit: staybasedandpositive.com

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Angela Wilson's Tears Of The Soul Production Looks at Memphis Sanitation Strike

Continued from page 1

Sanitation workers, led by collector-turned-union-organizer, T. O. Jones, and supported by the president of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Jerry Wurf, demanded recognition of their union, better safety standards, and a decent wage.

"They didn't have anything, but were willing to stand up and say, 'this isn't right, and we deserve to be treated better'", said Wilson. "I was really inspired by them and began to see them as heroes. Everyone knows about Dr. King, but I wanted to share the story of the AFSCME union workers."

The story is centered around the Barnes Family, and how the strike and impending death of Dr. King impacted their household. "Fred Barnes" (Pierre Walters) and his wife "Vivian Barnes" (Joelle Denise) endured their share of pain, which included marital challenges, militancy in their children, and the shocking news of King's assassination. The family also included "Ida Mae" (Regina Gail Malloy), "Dexter" (Devin King), and "Gina" (Leah Mallory).

Despite the many challenges they encountered, the close-knit family weathered the storm, and grew closer together. Through "Eileen Bridgewater" (Sharon Goldner), the play also highlighted the sacrifices made by Caucasians who supported the movement.

The cast also included Robert Freemon, who portrayed Memphis sanitation worker "Turner Davis" and Michael Roxie Johnson who played his wife "Maxine Davis."

"Most of the cast were not even born, and had very little knowledge of this story," said Wilson. They did research on their own and really delved into some ugly stuff. You could see that they understood what they had learned, and it came through in their performance."

"Tears of the Soul" was performed in April and October of 2018 at the Chesapeake Arts Center located on Hammonds Ferry Road in Brooklyn, Park, Maryland. Plans are in the works for a return engagement of the production.

Cleophus Smith, who was among the Memphis union workers, attended the October performance.

"He is very humble and a wealth of information," said Wilson. "He was able to really help me to understand what it was like for them, which was something you could not read in a book."

"There are 28 remaining workers, and they travel a lot. I felt blessed and honored that he thought this was important enough to come and share this experience with us."

Wilson is the founder of the Angel-Wing Project, Inc (AWP), a 501(c) 3 non-profit performing arts organization that promotes the development of the performing arts in the local community.

"Where are we today 50 years later?" asked Wilson. "There are a lot of parallels. The message of this play can help us to deal with some of the things we are dealing with today, especially when it comes to listening to one another."

Decades later, in 2017, Memphis Mayor Jim Strickland announced a group of 14 city sanitation workers from 1968 would be getting \$50,000 grants from the city, totaling \$700,000.

"They did get an increase in wages, but it still took a long time," said Wilson. "In 2017, the remaining workers were awarded back pay. It was 50 years later, but the remaining ones received a nice contribution from the city."

AWP's next production is RISING UP: A Dramatic Presentation of Notable African American Firsts. The admission price is \$10, and will take place on February 24, 2019 at the Chesapeake Performing Arts Center.

For more information about AWP, visit www.theangelwingproject.org.



(Left-right): Evelyn C. Liggins, Memphis sanitation worker Cleophus Smith, and Playwright Angela Wilson. Courtesy Photos



Pierre Walters (Fred Barnes) and Robert Freemon (Turner Davis) portrayed Memphis sanitation workers in the production.

Smithsonian American Art Museum Extends Critically Acclaimed Exhibition “Between Worlds: The Art of Bill Traylor” for Three Weeks Through April 7

Washington, D.C.— The critically acclaimed exhibition “Between Worlds: The Art of Bill Traylor” will remain open to the public through Sunday, April 7, allowing visitors an additional three weeks to experience this major retrospective. The exhibition brings together 155 drawings and paintings from 51 public institutions and private collections to provide the most encompassing and in-depth study of the artist to date. In a tremendous show of support, all lenders agreed to the extension.

Organized by Leslie Umberger, curator of folk and self-taught art at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the exhibition presents a comprehensive picture of Traylor’s stylistic development and artistic themes, explored in the context of the profoundly different worlds Traylor’s life bridged: rural and urban, black and white, old and new. The museum is the sole venue for this exhibition, which was long awaited by enthusiasts, scholars and collectors. “Between Worlds” was called “a stunning retrospective” by The New Yorker, and was listed among the top 10 exhibitions of 2018 by critics at The New York Times and The Washington Post.

“Rarely do the stars align to allow us to extend an exhibition of this scale with so many lenders from around the country and the world,” said Stephanie Stebich, the Margaret and Terry Stent Director at the Smithsonian American Art Museum. “We are deeply grateful to the collectors, museums and foundations—each and everyone one of whom agreed to extend their loan—for their continued generosity in sharing these important works with the American public.”

“It is only with extraordinary effort and cooperation that an exhibition of this magnitude can be extended, and in this case we were fortunate to have many like minds share the belief that Bill Traylor’s most shining moment should not be cut short,” said Umberger.

More than 575,000 visitors have come through the museum’s doors since the exhibition opened Sept. 28, 2018. The museum estimates that 150,000 visitors were not able to see the exhibition when



Bill Traylor, Untitled (*Event with Man in Blue and Snake*), 1939, colored pencil and pencil on cardboard. Collection of Penny and Allan Katz © 1994, Bill Traylor Family Trust. Photography by Gavin Ashworth

the Smithsonian museums were closed from Jan. 2 through Jan. 28 due to the partial government shutdown. The exhibition galleries were dark during this period, an important detail that allowed the fragile works on paper to remain on view for an additional few weeks.

Bill Traylor (ca. 1853–1949) is among the most important American artists of the 20th century. Born in antebellum Alabama, Traylor was an eyewitness to history—the Civil War, Emancipation, Reconstruction, Jim Crow segregation, the Great Migration and the steady rise of African American urban culture in the South. In the late 1930s, a decade after leaving plantation life and moving to the city of Montgomery, Alabama, Traylor took up pencil and paintbrush and created a visual autobiography, images on discarded cardboard extracted from his memories and experiences. When he died in 1949, Traylor left behind more than 1,000 works of art, the only known person born enslaved, and entirely self-taught, to create an extensive body of graphic artworks.

Photos Courtesy Smithsonian American Art Museum



Bill Traylor, *Man in Black and Blue with Cigar and Suitcase*, ca. 1939–1942, pencil and poster paint on cardboard. Collection of Jerry and Susan Lauren © 1994, Bill Traylor Family Trust. Photo: Matt Flynn © Smithsonian Institution



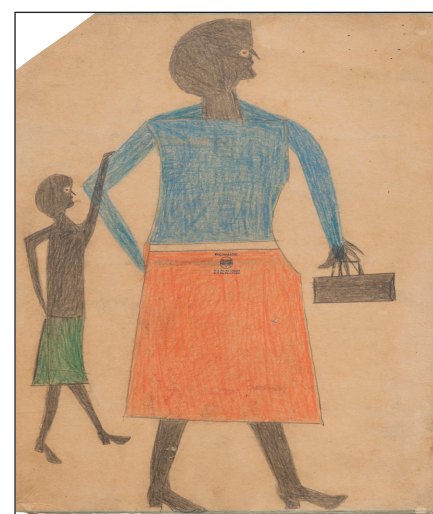
Bill Traylor, *Red Man*, ca. 1939–1942, pencil and poster paint on cardboard. Collection of Jerry and Susan Lauren © 1994, Bill Traylor Family Trust. Photo: Matt Flynn © Smithsonian Institution

Book

The exhibition is accompanied by a monograph written by Umberger with an introduction by acclaimed artist Kerry James Marshall, published by the Smith-



Bill Traylor, Untitled (*Man Carrying Dog on Object*), ca. 1939–1942, poster paint and graphite on cardboard. High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from Mrs. Lindsey Hopkins, Jr., Edith G. and Philip A. Rhodes, and the Members Guild © 1994, Bill Traylor Family Trust.



Bill Traylor, *Mother with Child*, ca. 1939–1942, colored pencil and pencil on cardboard. Collection of Judy A. Saslow © 1994, Bill Traylor Family Trust. Photo by James Prinz, Chicago

sonian American Art Museum in association with Princeton University Press. The book is available for purchase in the museum store and online (\$60, hardcover).

Lilly May Carroll Jackson Middle School gets brand new home

By Stacy M. Brown

Monica Mitchell remembers well the privilege she enjoyed while attending an all-girls private school as a child growing up in Baltimore.

Mitchell, who leads the Maryland Wells Fargo Foundation which is dedicated to improving the community through corporate philanthropy combined with volunteer service, has parlayed that privilege into a life of service throughout Baltimore where she serves on the boards of Junior Achievement of Central Maryland, the Eddie and Sylvia C. Brown Family Foundation, and recently named to the boards of Associated Black Charities and Baltimore Community Lending.

A founding member of the United Way Emerging Leaders United Program to promote the professional development and community involvement of our next generation of leaders, Mitchell spearheaded the opening of the Lilly May Carroll Jackson School for girls five years ago.

Today, Mitchell says she is proud to announce the purchase of a new building to house the charter school, which should help continue its mission of creating an experiential learning community for Baltimore City girls.

"We will move into the building [at 2200 Sinclair Lane] in August or September, in time for the new school year," Mitchell said.

Currently, the school is located at 900 Woodburne Avenue.

"Last week, we closed on the former [Laurence G.] Paquin School for Pregnant Teenagers on Sinclair Lane and we're now the owners and operator of a new building," said Mitchell, the founding president of the school board.

The history of the new site isn't lost on Mitchell. The former Paquin School was "so important and revolutionary because its existence acknowledged that investing in a girl's education can change the trajectory for future generations," she said. "We are excited to continue the rich history of ensuring that girls are loved, supported and educated within its walls."



Monica Mitchell spearheaded the opening of the Lilly May Carroll Jackson School for girls five years ago. The school is moving to a brand new location in late August or September just in time for the new academic school year. A committee of board members, community leaders and volunteers are in the midst of a capital campaign in an effort to secure the \$4.5 million necessary to renovate and sustain the long-term growth of the school. Courtesy Photos/Lilly Mae Carroll Jackson Middle School

Because the building sat vacant for several years, it has been subjected to vandalism and some environmental abatement needs to occur. The renovation will include updates that will provide a 21st century learning environment for girls, and a community resource to the surrounding neighborhood as a part of the East Baltimore Revitalization Project Master Plan.

Mitchell says that a committee of board members, community leaders and volunteers are in the midst of a capital campaign in an effort to secure the \$4.5 million necessary to renovate and sustain the long-term growth of the school.

"I am particularly invested in identifying strategies that will increase our African-American donor base," she said, adding that closer to the end of construction, the committee hopes to engage volunteers and others who are interested in opportunities for murals, landscaping and beautification.

"In addition to bringing an educational asset to the community, we are also an important part of the neighborhood re-

talization work that's happening," Mitchell said.

Five years ago, Wells Fargo afforded Mitchell four months of paid leave so that she could work on the organizational development of the school. She credits the banking industry giant, who has been a partner in many successful Baltimore initiatives, with the school's success.

"I think it's important because had they not given me that critical time off, we never really would have been able to get the school off the ground," Mitchell said, adding that the time also allowed for the hiring of staff members including a principal and the recruitment of students.

"Now, we are in a position with the building acquisition to do more and what Wells Fargo did was demonstrate that if more companies invest in their employees in this way, we can do some pretty incredible things in Baltimore," she said.

Wells Fargo also made a financial contribution in recognition of Mitchell's

role, work and commitment to the school, which also received contributions from other foundations and corporations including Legg Mason, Under Armour, Charles T. Bauer Foundation, Jane Egerton Foundation, France Merriker, The Middendorf Fund and a loan guarantee from the Abell Foundation.

The school also has received operating support from Royal Bank of Canada, Brown Capital Management, The Eddie and Sylvia Brown Foundation, and numerous individuals.

For Mitchell, it's all about giving back.

"I attended Roland Park Country School, a private school in Baltimore. I was privileged to attend," Mitchell said.

"But, not every girl in Baltimore has access to those resources and that level of education. I was born and raised in Baltimore and it's important for me that every girl does have those resources and opportunities to succeed," she said. "I felt this school was my responsibility, and a chance to pay forward my incredible education and experience."

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Blackface at the Lewis Museum

The Lewis Museum brings back the "Talks & Thoughts" series this Sunday at 2 pm for Talks & Thoughts: Blackface and Its Legacy.

Baltimore— The Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture (Lewis Museum) is the convener for the current debate surrounding issues of Blackface. Talks & Thoughts: Blackface and Its Legacy happens this Sunday, February 17, 2019 at 2 p.m. at the Lewis. From former Today Show host Megyn Kelly's defense of Blackface worn for Halloween costumes to the recent scandal of Virginia's Governor's use of Blackface in college, Blackface is once again rearing its ugly head. The Lewis wants to hear from you!

Talks & Thoughts: Blackface and Its Legacy will address the history of Blackface, the applications of it today and the things we can do as a community to reach a point of understanding around the topic. The conversation will be moderated by WEAA 88.9 FM For the Culture radio talk show host Farajii Muhammad. Prior to the discussion, the museum will screen the Emmy-winning documentary *Ethnic Notions* (57 min.) that takes viewers on a disturbing voyage through American history, tracing the deep-rooted stereotypes, which have fueled anti-black prejudice.



Photo Credit: Gucci/Spring

Lewis Museum Executive Director, Jackie Copeland sees the current debate around Blackface as "a way for all of us to gain a better understanding of how things that some take as fun can be a harsh reminder for others of negative points in our history. It is a hard conversation to have, but the Lewis Museum, as the authentic voice of the African American community, is the perfect setting for this type of cultural discourse."

"Talks & Thoughts: Blackface and Its Legacy" on Sunday February 17 at 2pm. Seats are filling fast for this event. Reserve your seat at lewismuseum.org. The event is free with museum admission.

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Baltimore comedian wins NBC stand-up competition

By Stacy M. Brown

If you don't know comedian Mike E. Winfield, he at least wants to make sure that you correctly say his name.

"Mike ... pause ... E... pause... Winfield," said the excitable Baltimore native, the winner of the 15th annual StandUp NBC comedy competition.

Winfield beat out 1,600 applicants during the peacock network's annual search for comedians of a diverse background.

"It was incredible," Winfield told the Baltimore Times. "I try to feel like a winner on a daily basis but when someone hands you a trophy, it just legitimizes you and I haven't stopped grinning since that day."

For his triumph, Winfield received a talent holding deal with NBC Universal and a headlining spot at the National Association for Campus Activities annual convention where he will perform for talent bookers from across the country. Also, Winfield will headline the regional semifinalist showcases for the 2019 StandUp NBC competition later this year.

"Since its inception, StandUp NBC has forged a path for some of today's most sought-after comedians," said Karen Horne, SVP, Programming Talent Development & Inclusion, NBC Entertainment and Universal Television. "Following the program, many of our finalists have appeared in substantial roles on notable TV series and feature films as well as hosted their own stand-up specials on major networks. Their continued success speaks to their undeniable talent as well as the effectiveness of our program to help launch emerging comedic talent."

A total of 1,600 stand-up comedians auditioned last year through online submissions and open calls in Charlotte, Chicago, Houston, Las Vegas and New York.

Winfield and fellow finalists join Michelle Buteau (Isn't It Romantic?), Deon Cole (Grown-ish), Lil Rel Howery



Baltimore Comedian Mike E. Winfield beat out 1,600 applicants to win StandUp NBC, the peacock network's annual search for comedians of a diverse background. Courtesy Photo/StandUp NBC

(Get Out), Hasan Minhaj (Patriot Act with Hasan Minhaj), Phoebe Robinson (2 Dope Queens), and Dulcé Sloan (The Daily Show) as alumni of StandUp NBC, one of the network's tent pole talent infusion programs.

A special celebratory event honoring the program's 15th anniversary and a finale showcase hosted by comedian and StandUp NBC alumnus Orlando Leyba (The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon) were held in December at The Improv in Hollywood.

The finalists performed their sets in front of an audience of NBCUniversal television executives, casting directors, agents, managers and industry tastemakers.

Winfield credits his success to his Charm City upbringing.

"Baltimore molded who I am," Winfield said. "I have thick skin and I believe in myself more than anyone else."

Winfield says he has always allowed everyone else to talk, but he prides himself on being a risk taker.

"I'm attracted to thrills and that's how I got here," Winfield said. "My Baltimore surroundings and the energy from hip-hop has been a driving factor—from rags to riches has fueled me to want more than what I was raised with. The sky is the limit."

Eric DeCosta kicks off first season as Ravens GM

By Tyler Hamilton

Few teams are as well represented as the Baltimore Ravens at the various colleges' all-star games, which take place leading up to the NFL Draft. It's a habit that was established by Ozzie Newsome, the only other general manager the Ravens have ever had.

Newsome was always one of the few GMs that attended the East-West Shrine Week practices in St. Petersburg, Florida. Current Ravens GM Eric DeCosta was always right by Newsome's side at Shrine week, as well as the Reese's Senior Bowl in Mobile, Alabama. It's only fitting that the torch is now passed on from Newsome to DeCosta.

As a long time assistant for Newsome, DeCosta was a perennial GM candidate for other NFL franchises. DeCosta declined each of the interview opportunities and kept his eyes on the future job of running the Ravens. The future is now for DeCosta.

Newsome's final first round pick, quarterback Lamar Jackson has the arrow pointing up for Baltimore, having led the Ravens on a mid-season turn around resulting in the AFC North division title. DeCosta is now tasked with the burden of unloading former starter Joe Flacco's big contract and adding more weapons for Jackson.

That's why DeCosta was hard at work in St. Petersburg and Mobile getting a first hand look at prospects. This year's draft will be the first one that DeCosta navigates without Newsome being the captain.

DeCosta got his start with the Ravens



**Erica DeCosta
Baltimore Ravens General Manager
Courtesy Photo: NFL.com**

in 1996. He was a member of a group the organization referred to as the "20-20 club." The reference is to a group of 20-year-old scouts hired for a modest salary of \$20,000. The opportunity wasn't as much for the money as it was for the learning experience. Many of the graduates of the group have moved on to roles within the Ravens' personnel department.

After graduating from the 20-20 club, DeCosta worked his way up the ranks and eventually became the heir apparent to Newsome.

What's the biggest lesson DeCosta learned from Newsome?

"Patience. Just don't panic," DeCosta explained when he was asked during a pre-draft press conference in 2017. "Take your time and consider everything—and don't rush the process. Don't create something, let it come to you."

Patience is something that DeCosta exhibited in spades while he waited for his turn to take over as the team's GM. Now, he has his chance to carry on the tradition of excellence his mentor established in Baltimore.

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Local activist receives new vehicle, recognition from mayor at special ceremony

By Demetrius Dillard

Erricka Bridgeford, a noted social activist in Baltimore City and co-founder of Baltimore Ceasefire 365, received a new vehicle by MileOne Autogroup after openly expressing the burden of being without reliable transportation. The 2013 Volkswagen Tiguan was presented to Bridgeford not only as a token of appreciation for her contributions to the community but was given in response to Bridgeford's need for a new vehicle.

The SUV was presented to Bridgeford during a special ceremony with Baltimore Mayor Catherine Pugh and MileOne Autogroup CEO Steven Fader at the Motor House in Baltimore City on Wednesday, February 6, 2019.

"A few weeks ago, I told God I didn't have anymore fight in me," Bridgeford said with emotion after Fader handed her her new car keys. "I just want to thank everybody who shared, who donated, who sent me inbox messages and who called me," Bridgeford expressed, also thanking Fader and MileOne, Mayor Pugh, local



Erricka Bridgeford of Baltimore CeaseFire received a 2013 Volkswagen Tiguan SUV from MileOne Autogroup in a special ceremony on February 6, 2019 at the Motor House on North Avenue in Baltimore City. Photo Credit: Grace Clark

media, her partners in CeaseFire and the organizers of the event.

A GoFundMe page was organized on January 22, 2019 on behalf of Bridgeford after she spoke out publicly about

the stress associated with a lack of dependable transportation to carry out work necessary for her organization. More than \$12,000 was raised from 240 people in only a week, and organizers of the page stopped taking donations after receiving a call from Heritage.

Cody Elizabeth Handy, a Baltimore schoolteacher and advocate of Baltimore Ceasefire; and Michelle Belfie, a social entrepreneur, organized the brief celebratory event.

"I am ECSTATIC to announce that your generosity in this GoFundMe campaign caught the attention of Heritage, part of the MileOne Autogroup, in a very big way!," Bridgeford wrote on her GoFundMe page. "They have decided to GIFT me a car, because so many people cared that I have reliable transportation. Heritage recognizes that transportation is transformational."

According to Bridgeford, all of the extra funds collected through the GoFundMe campaign will be used for the maintenance fees of her new vehicle and Baltimore Ceasefire 365.

"I read recently about the effort to raise funds for Erricka so that she can purchase a vehicle that will allow her to continue to expand the mission of Baltimore Ceasefire," Fader said in a news release. "In visiting the GoFundMe page, I quickly realized that this was something we could provide to Erricka and that would allow all of the generous support she received from others to help fuel the programs and activities of Baltimore Ceasefire."

Mayor Pugh took a few minutes out of her busy schedule to support Bridgeford. "It's so good to see great stories being told about the people and the hearts of the folks who are in our city," Pugh said as she acknowledged Bridgeford's diligent efforts to reduce gun violence in the city.

Moreover, Bridgeford received a certificate of recognition from Pugh.

"This car means a lot to me because it means that I'll be able to get around without being worried about breaking down anywhere," said Bridgeford who was named the 2017 Marylander of the Year by the Baltimore Sun.

"To just be able to get around to do outreach and peace trainings, and in the schools with the students and staff— it's just amazing," she continued, explaining that she frequently travels throughout Maryland to conduct mediation and conflict management training.

The West Baltimore native who has dealt with a number of issues with her most recent vehicle, including a hazardous gas leak said, "This means freedom for me."

Orioles holding tryouts for ballgirls and ballboys on Saturday, March 9th

Baltimore— The Orioles will conduct an open tryout to find ballgirls and ballboys for the 2019 season at Oriole Park at Camden Yards on Saturday, March 9, 2019. The judges will include members of the Orioles' front office.



Outgoing and athletic men and women ages 18 and older who are interested in serving as ballboys and ballgirls for the Orioles during the upcoming 2019 season are invited to try out for a position at Oriole Park beginning at noon on March 9.

Those interested should dress casually, bring their own gloves, and use the Home Plate Plaza entrance to Oriole Park on the southwest corner of the ballpark. Complimentary parking will be available in Lot A.

Candidates interested in participating in the tryouts are asked to send their cover letter and resume, including baseball or softball experience, to: resumes@orioles.com. Resumes will be accepted until March 1, or candidates may bring their letter and resume to the open tryout.

In addition to being able to handle a glove and field ground balls, interested candidates should be personable, customer-service oriented and available to work throughout the 2019 baseball season.

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Maryland receives top tier rank in public health preparedness

Baltimore— Maryland has been named one of 17 states most prepared for public health emergencies in a report issued by the non-profit public health organization Trust for America's Health. The Maryland Department of Health Office of Preparedness and Response strives for a prepared Maryland through coordinated statewide public health emergency plans, bio-surveillance, partnerships with local health departments and hospitals, medical countermeasure readiness and the Maryland Responds Medical Reserve Corps.

"A public health emergency can happen at any time," said Maryland Department of Health Deputy Secretary for Public Health Fran Phillips. "We are proud to be top-ranked in public health preparedness and we will continue to work hard to ensure all Marylanders are safe and ready, should an emergency occur."

The report, Ready or Not: Protecting the Public's Health from Diseases, Disasters, and Bioterrorism, used 10 indicators to determine each state's public health preparedness: incident management; cross-sector community collaboration; accreditation by the Public Health

Accreditation Board; accreditation by the Emergency Management Accreditation Program; size of the public health budget; water security; workforce resiliency and infection control; countermeasure utilization; patient safety; and health security surveillance.

The Office of Preparedness and Response coordinates the state's public health and medical response during an emergency, including infectious disease outbreaks and pandemics, natural disasters, and acts of terrorism. The Office develops, updates and exercises plans for a variety of emergencies, including medical countermeasures, seasonal flu, Ebola Virus Disease, extreme cold, extreme heat, mass fatalities, and public health and health care services recovery.

To ensure staff is properly trained and ready for any public health emergency, the Office regularly plans and participates in local, state and national exercises. Last year, the Office coordinated with agencies throughout Maryland, as well as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in a full-scale exercise designed to test public health readiness during a fictitious hurricane and illness outbreak. The exercise tested Mary-

land's ability to receive and distribute medical materials from the Strategic National Stockpile, the nation's largest supply of medications and medical supplies for use during an emergency. Office of Preparedness and Response staff and Maryland Responds pharmacists used the medical countermeasure plan to ensure secure and safe distribution of these supplies to the local jurisdictions.

Maryland's public health preparedness also includes using non-traditional data sources, such as deidentified school absenteeism data and pharmacy sales, to quickly identify disease outbreaks and other suspicious patterns of illness. This rapid, automated bio-surveillance process allows staff to gather and analyze data more quickly than a traditional method of reporting disease.

The Office of Preparedness and Response is also home to the Maryland Responds Medical Reserve Corps, a community-based volunteer program that helps support public health initiatives and response capabilities in Maryland. Maryland Responders volunteer their skills, expertise and time to assist the state and their communities in a crisis. To learn more about Maryland

Responds and sign up to volunteer, visit <https://mdr.health.maryland.gov>.

In addition to getting involved with Maryland Responds, Marylanders are encouraged to practice public health preparedness by:

- Creating an emergency kit for their home and vehicle
- Having enough food, water and medical supplies to last three to five days for each member of the family, including pets
- Keeping a current list of medications you are taking
- Making a communications plan with family and friends
- Becoming familiar with alerts, warnings and local emergency services and sign up for alerts at <http://bit.ly/MDpartners>
- Keeping important documents in a waterproof portable container

To learn more about how the Maryland Department of Health is working to ensure public health preparedness across the state, visit <https://preparedness.health.maryland.gov>.

Federal funds available to serve summer meals to children and teens

Baltimore— The Maryland State Department of Education is seeking public and private nonprofit organizations to serve free, nutritious meals to children and teens this summer through the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) program.

Over 392,000—more than 43 percent—of Maryland children are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals and may not have access to safe and nutritious food during the summer when schools are closed. The SFSP fills the hunger gap between the end of one school year and the beginning of the next by offering nutritious meals in community locations across the State.

"Maryland's free summer meals program is a valuable resource for children and families across the state. It allows households to stretch their food dollars

while providing a safe place for children and teens to enjoy meals," said Dr. Karen Salmon, State Superintendent of Schools. "Summer is a critical time in growth and development for children. Having access to nutritious food contributes to overall wellness and prepares children to return to school ready to learn."

The SFSP provides reimbursement to organizations for meals and snacks served to children in areas where at least 50 percent of children qualify for free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Program, or when 50 percent of the children enrolled in a summer program qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

Most organizations may be reimbursed for up to two meals or snacks per child per day. Camps and migrant programs may be reimbursed for up to three meals



per child each day. All meals and snacks must meet federal nutrition standards.

The program is open to children and teens age 18 and under and to individuals over 18 who are mentally or physically disabled.

Interested organizations should contact Leona Fitzgerald, Administrative Specialist, at 410-767-0219. The deadline for applications is May 31, 2019.

For more information about the SFSP, visit; www.eatsmartmaryland.org.

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