

Naturalization Ceremony held on 4th of July at William Paca House



Historic Annapolis (HA) hosted its annual Fourth of July event at the William Paca House on Thursday, July 4, 2019. Officials from the US Citizen and Immigration Services were present to give the Oath of Allegiance to the candidates. Visitors had the unique opportunity for to witness a Naturalization Ceremony, and to tour two of HA's historic properties— the William Paca House and Hogshead and celebrate the Fourth in the heart of Annapolis. (See article on page 3)

Photo Courtesy of Historic Annapolis

Memories Don't Die

Nikki Abraham
Nucleus Team Member,
Positively Caviar, Inc.

Last night, I sat at my mother's house with my siblings and my longest friend and reminisced. We laughed and talked through everything we experienced through our childhood from our favorite teachers in high school to the memories we created growing up in our household. I found that through the good and the bad having the ability to recall and reflect brought the most joy. Memories are so important because of the emotions and nostalgia they bring.

Today, on the train I closed my eyes while listening to "Just Fine" by Mary J. Blige and was overwhelmed with happiness. I closed my eyes and automatically thought about my dad because this was his jam. When I think about him I remember his love for music, his scent, his eccentric style. I love that although all memories of him weren't the greatest the good outweighs the bad.

When you lose someone the only thing you have left are the memories and not

having the ability to create new ones leaves you to hold on tight to the ones that you do have. After someone passes, most families come together sift through old photos and laugh and reflect on all of the good times spent with that individual and the mark they made on your life. Go through life thinking about how your actions will impact others. What will they say about you when you're no longer here? It's important not to create wasteful memories and leave a positive imprint on the lives of others.

Dwell on all of the good none of the bad but remember it all. Sometimes when you end a long-term relationship or friendship all you can think about is the hurt or the pain you experienced, but joy comes when you're able to look back on a situation and reflect on the good times, lessons learned, and enjoy all the great memories you had. While it's important to never forget the negative to avoid undergoing the same kind of hurt in the future, I'm always cognizant about the decision I make to dwell in the positive. Remember the memories that allowed you to experi-



Nikki Abraham
Nucleus Team Member
Positively Caviar, Inc.
Courtesy Photo

to pop out and show my kids and grandkids of the memories built with the love of my life. When I grow old and reflect on milestones I want to be able to say I shared those moments with the people that mean the most to me. Experience life and spend your time with those who are important and bring you the most joy.

Our past, present, and future are all linked through memories. This is how traditions are passed down and future decisions are made. We often hold on to the past because it means something to us. Always make the decision to create amazing memories for they never die.

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, the nucleus team or how you join our positive movement, visit: stay-basedandpositive.com

ence love and happiness as those memories are the most important.

Going through life I often think about how necessary it is to create great memories with the ones you love. I often think about the photo album I'll be able

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Naturalization Ceremony held on 4th of July at William Paca House

Historic Annapolis (HA) hosted its annual Fourth of July event at the William Paca House on Thursday, July 4, 2019. Each year, the event draws both locals and tourists to celebrate the birth of our

nation at the home of William Paca, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and a three-term Governor of Maryland. Visitors had the unique

opportunity for to witness a Naturalization Ceremony, and to tour two of HA's historic properties— the William Paca House and Hogshead and celebrate the Fourth in the heart of Annapolis.

“It really is a very moving ceremony,” said Robert Clark, President and CEO of Historic Annapolis. “Each year I am reminded of how proud I am to be an American when I watch people take the Oath of Allegiance and become citizens.

The fact that the ceremony takes place in William Paca’s Garden just adds to the emotion— it brings everything full circle.”

Officials from the US Citizen and Immigration Services were present to give the Oath of Allegiance to the candidates. Additionally, Annapolis High School’s NROTC unit provided a cadet

color guard and the National Anthem will be sung by the All Children’s Chorus of Annapolis.

Following the ceremony, the Paca House was open for visitors to tour. Along the way, a re-enactor portraying Mr. Paca himself greeted guests and explained the importance of our nation’s independence. Visitors interacted with him and also bumped into other notable Annapolitans from history. Fun, family-



William Paca House

friendly activities for kids were also offered throughout the day.

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Guest Editorials/Letters

Publisher of Houston Forward Times, elected as new NNPA national chair

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Correspondent
@StacyBrownMedia

Karen Carter Richards, publisher of the Houston Forward Times, has been elected to serve as the chair of the National Newspapers Publishers Association (NNPA), the trade organization that represents African American-owned newspapers and media companies throughout the country.

Richards, who in 2018 won the NNPA's Publisher of the Year Award, succeeds Dorothy Leavell, publisher of the Chicago and Gary Crusader Newspapers.

"We did it!" Richards exclaimed during an NNPA Legacy Awards presentation at the Cincinnati Westin Hotel on Friday, June 28, 2019.

The organization also selected a new first- and second- vice chair, secretary, treasurer and at-large board members.

The NNPA, which is celebrating its 79th year and 192 years of the Black Press in America, held its annual convention in the Queen City with Cincinnati Herald and Dayton Defender Publisher Jan Michele Kearney and Walter L. White, Vice President of Sesh Communications hosting the weeklong event.

"I just want to thank my family for all of their support," said Richards, a second-generation publisher who has enjoyed a long and distinguished career in journalism. Her father, Julius P. Carter, founded the Houston Forward Times in 1960 after recognizing a need for a newspaper that was committed to covering issues and personalities routinely ignored by mainstream media.

After Julius Carter's death, the legendary Lenora "Doll" Carter assumed responsibility for the Forward Times with Karen Carter Richards working alongside her. Richards said she understands that being the chair comes with a lot of responsibilities and work.

After a fierce campaign, Richards said she will work to move the storied association forward, help to continue to provide Black America with critical news and information, and bridge any divides that might exist between members.

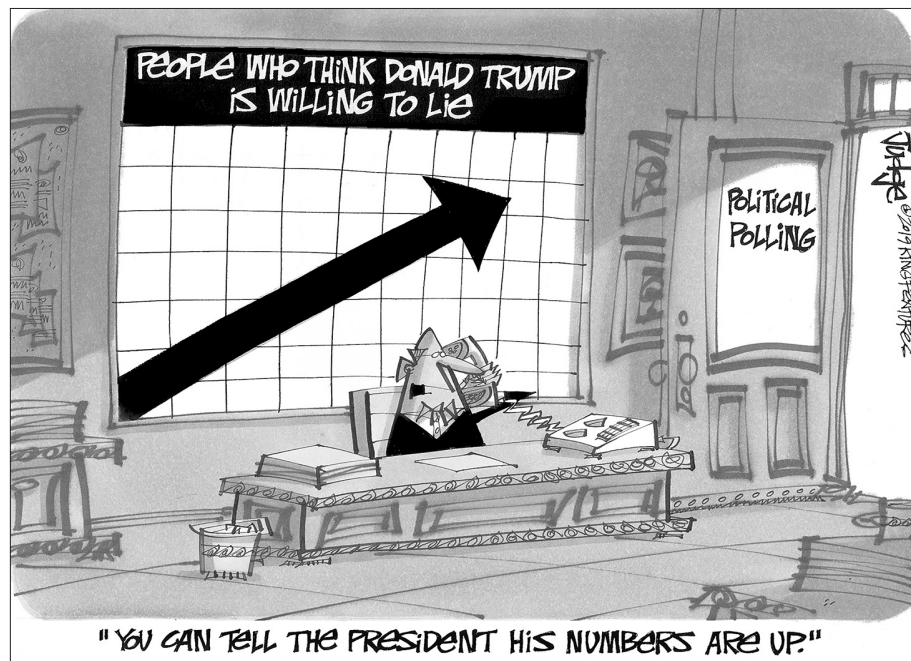
"I will win your trust," Richards said. "This is a new vision and I'm excited about serving. We are the Black Press, the Original Black Press and I'm so happy to serve and be the new chair of the NNPA."

The Houston native said the importance of the Black Press should never be lost on anyone.

"We are the voice, the true voice of our people. We have recorded our history for 192 years like no other media could ever do," she said. "We have recorded many stories...our celebrations, our injustices and those hidden, treasured stories that came from our communities that we have always found value in. Let's do this."



Newly-elected NNPA Chair Karen Carter Richards (right) with NNPA President and CEO Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.
Photo Credit: Mark Mahoney/Dream in Color Photography/NNPA



"YOU CAN TELL THE PRESIDENT HIS NUMBERS ARE UP."

Letters to the Editor:

Editor:

Re: Herd of presidential candidates

In 2015-2016, there was a herd of 17 Republican candidates for President who negated each other by sharing campaign funding, diluted votes in the primary, and elected and established the least qualified candidate for President. We now suffer with a President who does not understand the workings of our government, has fired or forced to resign around 25 key personnel; and attacks the press, judiciary, and our intelligence agencies.

We have a mirror image of the 2015-2016 Republican situation with the herd of Democrats running for President in the 2020 election. These candidates want to feed their egos and gain name

recognition for future local elections.

They include a screaming female senator, a flailing male congressman, and a male Socialist senator. Twenty-three of 24 Democratic candidates are unqualified to be President, and one of them could end up running against the current unqualified Republican contender for President in 2020.

As an Independent, I vote for the candidate who is most qualified for the position. If the Republican and Democratic candidates for President are not qualified, then I will vote for myself.

Donald Moskowitz
Londonderry, NH

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Supreme Court shoots down Trump's census citizenship question

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Correspondent
@StacyBrownMedia

The U.S. Supreme Court's sharp rebuke of the Trump Administration's rationale for wanting the citizenship question in the 2020 census means the question is an artifact of the past, according to Southern Methodist University Professor Lolita Buckner Inniss. "Though ultimately the Trump administration may prevail in having the citizenship question added, the Trump administration has to adequately explain how eliciting the citizenship question data will help them better enforce the Voting Rights Act," said Inniss, who joined many others in celebrating the decision by the high court to strike down Trump's request to add the question of citizenship on the 2020 Census.

In writing for the majority, Chief Justice John Roberts noted that the explanation for preferred federal policy must "not only be reasoned and genuine but also legible to both courts and interested public."

The ruling marks a historic win for

democracy, said Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA).

"In blocking Trump's ability to add a citizenship question, the court has ensured that voting rights for people of color are protected, and that all communities—regardless of race, ethnicity, geographic location, religious views, political affiliation, and country of origin—are fairly represented," Waters said.

House Majority Whip James Clyburn (D-SC), said the future of the nation's democ-

our democracy and fair representation for all communities, ensure the misguided citizenship question remains out of the census," he said.

"Today, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a ruling that prevents the government from asking U.S. residents on the 2020 census whether they are citizens," Melanie Campbell, the president and CEO of the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation (NCBCP) and Co-Chair of the Black Women's Roundtable

people from being counted," Chavis said. "We should have a Census campaign that practices the importance of including everybody rather than excluding certain people. The NNPA is also for equality, justice, and fairness so therefore the Supreme Court made the right decision."

The 2020 Decennial Census will be the most critical census count of our lifetime, she said.

Campbell noted that in 2010, African Americans and Black immigrants were undercounted by more than 800,000, leaving those communities with a shortage of government resources.

"We cannot let this happen again. We have to stay vigilant to ensure our people are counted and vote in. "It's about money and political power and our future depends on it," she said.

Trump has pledged to delay the 2020 Census and he said his administration still plans to include a question that inquiries about a person's citizenship status.

"I have asked the lawyers if they can delay the Census, no matter how long, until the United States Supreme Court is given additional information from which it can make a final and decisive decision on this very critical matter," Trump told Fox News.

However, NAACP President and CEO Derrick Johnson said justice must now be done and everyone must be counted. Johnson said the strength of America's democracy depends on it.

"The court today rejected the Trump administration's fraudulent justification for adding the citizenship question," Johnson said. "The highest court in the land—in an opinion authored by a Chief Justice appointed by a Republican President—has effectively ruled that the head of one federal government agency, the Department of Commerce, lied to the nation, aided and abetted by the head of another federal agency, the Department of Justice."

"In blocking Trump's ability to add a citizenship question, the court has ensured that voting rights for people of color are protected, and that all communities—regardless of race, ethnicity, geographic location, religious views, political affiliation and country of origin—are fairly represented."

— Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA).

racy was at the forefront of the ruling.

"The ruling in favor of partisan gerrymandering underscores the necessity of citizen participation in the electoral process. Stacking the deck for partisan gain is not ideal for democracy or the principle of one person, one vote," Clyburn said in a statement.

"Most Americans believe in fairness and due process, but not enough are able to participate in the electoral process. This must change going forward or we will soon experience some backward lurches," he said.

Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-NY) said the decision clearly is a rebuke of Trump. "When even the conservative court determines that the Trump administration's argument is odious and dishonest, you know the administration's motivation behind adding the citizenship question in the first place was an abhorrent one," Schumer said in an email.

"The lower court must, for the sake of

(BWR) said in a statement.

"For Civil Rights and Immigration Rights organizations, this is a major victory in an effort to ensure that all minorities in the nation are properly counted and represented in the 2020 Decennial Census," Campbell said.

National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) Chair Dorothy R. Leavell said she hadn't yet reviewed the ruling but a decision opposing the citizenship question is important for all, particularly people of color.

"The Census is so important, it means funding for needed services and other things that are so important to our communities," Leavell said.

NNPA President and CEO Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis echoed Leavell's comments.

"The NNPA supports and agrees with the Supreme Court decision against Trump's administration's attempts to add language in the 2020 Census which is discriminatory and keeps millions of

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ArtsCentric kicks off capital campaign for new home

By Stacy M. Brown

For nearly two decades, ArtsCentric has provided dynamic productions of some of Broadway's most celebrated and memorable musicals and plays.

Dreamgirls, Chicago, Smokey Joe's Café and Aida, count among the award-winning productions that have taken place in Baltimore because of the commitment of ArtsCentric, which was founded in 2013 by a group of Morgan State University students and alumni.

Since 2012, ArtsCentric has called the small Motor House Theater at 120 W. North Avenue in Baltimore its home. Now, as the productions continue to dazzle, ArtsCentric is looking for a new home.

The organization has announced the kickoff of its Capital Campaign, titled, "When I think of Home," seeking to raise \$250,000 to support their move into their own theater.

Plans include transitioning the 16-year-old color-conscious performance arts organization into a new location at 2600 N. Howard Street in the heart of the Remington community.

The move also will provide production, office, and other equipment and technology, and assist in increasing community visibility and outreach that will increase the sustainability of the organization, according to an ArtsCentric news release on Tuesday, July 2, 2019.

The move comes with the support of the Greater Remington Improvement Association, according to the news release, which also notes that in October, ArtsCentric will take residence in the space adjacent to Young Audiences of Maryland/Arts for Learning.

"We believe that with key improve-



Tonnia Boykis, Crystal Freeman, Sequina DuBose and Alana Linsey in ArtsCentric's production of the musical "Dreamgirls" in the summer of 2016 at the Motorhouse, which the theatre company has call home since 2012. ArtsCentric kicked off its Capital Campaign, "When I think of Home," seeking to raise \$250,000 to support their move into their own theater

Courtesy Photo/ArtsCentric

ments, this will be the perfect space for us to realize our vision, grow our community impact, and expand our performances and programming over the next many years," said Cedric D. Lyles, director of Operations for ArtsCentric.

In 2011, Seawall Development transformed the popular Tire Shop property at 2600 N. Howard Street (a designated local landmark on the National Register of Historic Places), into a performance venue and restaurant.

As part of a 2019 strategic reorganization plan, ArtsCentric sought out more permanent space to call home. In addition to mainstage productions, with the

opening of an adjacent restaurant, Lyles and others envisions a Cultural Arts Center that will become a gathering spot for events and conversations that support the arts, tackle persistent issues in local communities, and create opportunities to engage with live music and showcase local artists.

"A permanent home will give us the stability necessary to best serve the community, strive toward our mission, and expand opportunities for new programming", said Kevin McAllister, Artistic Director for ArtsCentric.

The Capital Campaign is structured so that the community can contribute with

recognition opportunities.

"The generosity of our community continues to amaze us," said McAllister, who noted that ArtsCentric relies on the kindness of individual donors, grants, corporate partners, and foundations.

The campaign will culminate at an annual fundraising Gala on October 20, 2019 and with a later staging of The Wiz – which influenced the Capital Campaign's title, to celebrate the popular musical's 40th anniversary.

For more information about the Capital Campaign, ArtsCentric performances or to make a donation, visit: www.artscentric.org.



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Ravens wide receiver Marquise Brown gives back to mother

By Tyler Hamilton

The path to the NFL was a long and hard road for Baltimore Ravens rookie wide receiver Marquise Brown. Through it all, he had his mother guiding him along the way. For that reason, it was easy for Brown to reward his mother, Sharon James with a new car and house recently.

"Since I was seven years old this [is] the moment I been waiting for, bigger than any moment I ever been a part of. Everything I do is for you momma. I love you. You wanted a house and a car and you got it. I got you forever ever," Brown said in a post on Twitter.

The post included a video in which Brown walks his mother through the first floor of a gorgeous house. She pointed to different things and says she likes the house. Brown asked her again if she likes it. She told him again that she liked it to which Brown replied by giving her the keys to the house.

That wasn't the end of the story. Next, he walked her to a door that led to a

sparkling new Range Rover that was parked outside. She was speechless!

Brown was only five pounds, six ounces when he was born two weeks premature. The delivery took a toll on his mother, which caused her to in and out of the hospital after giving birth.

Her high-risk pregnancy was exacerbated by high blood pressure and failing kidneys, which led to her being placed on dialysis.

At 5'9" and 168 pounds, Brown was considered small by NFL standards as he went through the draft evaluation process. His game-changing speed forced evaluators to overlook his lack of size. That has always been the case for Brown.

"He was really tiny, always smaller than everyone else. But he moved like lightning once he got that ball," James told ESPN.

That speed was a trademark for Brown while at Chaminade-Madonna College Prep in Hollywood, Florida. His play-making ability later earned him the nickname Hollywood.



Ravens rookie wide receiver Marquise "Hollywood" Brown with his mother Sharon James (right) and sister (left). Brown was selected by the Ravens in the first round of the 2019 NFL draft. Courtesy Photo/NFL.com

The small high school standout ended up at College of the Canyons in California. His mother didn't want him to go so far away from home at first but she gave him her blessing. She sent Brown money each month to help pay for his rent. He also had a job at Six Flags Magic Mountain in Valencia, California.

Brown went on to have a standout

career at Oklahoma, setting himself up to be the first wideout taken in the 2019 NFL Draft. His mother and sisters were with him as his dreams came true by becoming an NFL player.

The days of worrying about money for rent are long gone. Now, Brown can turn the tables and make sure his mother is well off.



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Giant's National Barbecue Festival Kicks Off Summer

By Somali Crump

Barbecue Battles, Summer Sun and Family Fun

Giant's annual National Capital Barbecue Battle came to a close last weekend. Tens of thousands of people came out to the nation's capital for the competition and to enjoy two days of warm weather, delicious barbecue, live shows and a variety of vendors. There was plenty of grilled food, drinks and free samples to go around, as well as free activities and exhibitions for the community to enjoy.

Festival-goers flocked to meet Washington Redskins cheerleaders, compete in the Nathan's hotdog eating contest, and to take pictures in front of the Planters Nutmobile, among an array of other unique attractions.

Rows of vendor tents with cold drinks, small bites and other products to sample outlined the perimeter of the festival grounds. Healthcare screenings, charging stations and "chill zones" were available for the public to enjoy. Famous Daves, RXBar, Popsicle and Sabra among others presented us with tasty samples to refuel in the midst of summer heat under the marquee of The Giant Sampling tent. Although there was fun available for the whole family, adults were able to expand their palates at the Corks to Caps Wine and Microbrew Tasting Tent.

The smell of brisket, ribs and smoked turkey legs wafted through the air as dozens of diverse live bands and cooking exhibitions highlighted the lively and convivial energy of the festival throughout the weekend. Stars, including Tuffy Stone and Myron Mixon from Destination America's TV show "BBQ Pit Masters" also made an appearance. Barbecue Master Mixon met with fans wanting to know the secret to a perfect brisket, and presented signed versions of his new cookbook.

The celebrity chefs competed side by side with pitmasters from all over the country, for several titles such as America's Best Barbecue, Perdue Sizzlin' Chicken Contest and the Jim Campbell



The Giant Sampling Tent featuring brands such as Nature's Promise and Peapod, giving away free food for everyone to try.

Photos: Jourdan Taylor

Spirit of BBQ award. Dozens of pitmasters spent the weekend grilling as crowds of hungry people eagerly lined up to judge. Uncle Pig's Barbecue Pit and Champion Wolf's Revenge BBQ took home the grand prize as Grand Champion and Reserve Champion respectively. Members of the armed forces also competed head to head in the Military Chef Cookoff for attendees to sample and decide which branch of military grills the tastiest barbecue.

In addition to featuring superb food and live entertainment, The Giant Barbecue Battle annually raises funds for local charity causes, this year benefiting the Capital Area Food Bank and USO-Metro. If you were unable to take part in this year's event, no need to worry. Next year's festival is set to take place on June 27th 2020.



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National Society of Black Engineers honor African Americans in STEM arena

By Stacy M. Brown

It has been several years since then-President Barack Obama made improving Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), an education priority. In the ensuing period since Obama's stated agenda, experts have said America would need to add one million more STEM professionals by 2022 to meet the nation's evolving workforce needs.

There has also been an extensive call of action for African Americans to enter STEM fields and, arguably, no organization has done more than the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE), a nonprofit organization based whose mission is to increase the number of culturally responsible black engineers who excel academically, succeed professionally and positively impact the community.

"The NSBE has helped introduce many youth to STEM through its NSBE Jr. program, Summer Engineering Experience for Kids (SEEK) camp and it has helped many college student through their collegiate experiences by providing avenues for study groups, mentoring, personal and professional development, and leadership opportunities," said NSBE Baltimore Metropolitan Area Chapter President William Redmond. "For professionals, it has provided an avenue to give back to help positively impact the community through volunteering, mentoring, and serving as role models for both pre-college and collegiate students."

The Baltimore Chapter of NSBE was started in March 1989 as one of the first 10 NSBE Alumni chapters in the country. In June, the Metropolitan Area Chapter (NSBE-BMAC) announced its Legacy Achievement Award Honorees at a ceremony in the Reginald F. Lewis Museum in Baltimore. The honorees are: Dr. James West, who has authored numerous journal and conference proceedings papers and holds over 250 patents; Earnestine Baker, executive director-Emerita of the Meyerhoff Scholarship Program at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County; and Dr. Eugene M. DeLoatch, who served as the



Legacy Achievement Award Honorees: Earnestine Baker; Dr. Eugene M. DeLoatch; and Dr. James E. West pictured with Steffanie B. Easter and William S. Redmond, III. Courtesy Photos

inaugural dean of the Clarence M. Mitchell, Jr., School of Engineering at Morgan State University.

"The purpose of the event was to celebrate the chapter's 30th Anniversary by providing special recognition through Pre-Collegiate and Collegiate Chapter Excellence Awards, the William Thomas Batten Jr. Leadership Award, and Legacy Achievement Awards," Redmond said.

The president noted that the one bit of information that could easily be missed about the NSBE is that it provides a bevy of great resources.

"One of the best ways to get the most of the NSBE experience is being actively involved either as a leader in the organization whether its local, regional or national," Redmond said. "The earlier that people get involved the better. I have been actively involved because it is my responsibility to give back and pay it forward to help bring along the next



Baltimore (Md.) LINKS-NSBE Jr. Chapter at Bluford-Drew-Jemison STEM Academy pictured with Robert Haynes and Deidra Walls.

generation of engineers.

"In the process of doing so, some of my best personal experiences and career advancements can be directly attributed to my various leadership roles in NSBE."

To learn more about the NSBE or for details on becoming a leader at NSBE, visit: www.nsbe.org.

Soulful Symphony Kicks Off Inaugural Season at Merriweather Post Pavilion

Columbia, MD—Soulful Symphony, a visionary orchestra that celebrates, elevates, and reimagines American music and culture, played its first note at the iconic Merriweather Post Pavilion on Saturday, June 29, at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday's #SoulfulSetList explored the rich diversity of American Roots Music while capturing the magic and wonder of one of the most iconic stages in the country. During the show, Soulful played a mash-up of American anthems that covered every conceivable style and genre.

Soulful Symphony has been performing for audiences for nearly 20 years. The ensemble is made up of nearly 75 predominantly African American and Hispanic musicians. It takes a disruptive approach to how many Americans view a traditional symphony as offering an experience reserved for a select audience.

"#SoulfulSetList reimagines what's possible with a modern orchestra. Our partnership with Merriweather allows us to break the mold of the traditional experience with an orchestra and offer an interactive, bi-directional experience between the musicians and the audience that is a hallmark of our culture and experiences around music. In this setting, Soulful can continue to innovate and break new ground," said Darin Atwater, the artistic director and founder of Soulful Symphony and artistic director for the Downtown Columbia Arts and Culture Commission.

"We are incredibly excited to introduce Darin and Soulful to the Merriweather audience for its inaugural concert at Merriweather. This is another step in our work toward fulfilling the cultural promise of this storied venue. Soulful and Merriweather celebrate the best of our community, our country, and our culture, and now thousands of people have an opportunity to hear and see our forward-looking and dynamic vision for the future," said Ian Kennedy, executive director of the Downtown Columbia Arts and Culture Commission.

Atwater's latest original composition, South Side, Symphonic Dances, was commissioned by the Mann Center, where it premiered to great acclaim last



Soulful Symphony Orchestra
Courtesy Photo

summer with the Philadelphia orchestra. As a part of Soulful's Merriweather residency, new pieces by Atwater will be commissioned and premiered, in addition to the focus on the canon of American music.

Three concerts are scheduled during Soulful Symphony's first season at Merriweather Post Pavilion. The next two events will be "Slang" on July 28, 2019, and "Under an Open Heaven" on September 14, 2019.

"Slang" will feature a mosaic of American composers in large form orchestral works from people's musical soil takes center stage in this show. The show is an exploration of modern interpretations of classical music by groundbreaking and visionary composers. The program will include the world premiere of Slang, a new work by Atwater, excerpts from his South Side, Symphonic Dances, along with iconic works by George Gershwin, Andre Previn, ending the evening with a soulful interpretation of The American Songbook.

In the final show of the season, Soulful gives new life to Columbia's founder



Darin Atwater is the artistic director and founder of Soulful Symphony and artistic director for the Downtown Columbia Arts and Culture Commission.

File Photo

James Rouse's vision to bring together faith congregations from around the community for an evening of inspiration and hope. Spirituality and Culture are explored – from Vedic mantras to the Is-

lamic Call to Prayer. Hebrew Psalms to Gregorian chant, devotional Bhajans to Bach Chorales, traditional hymns to Gospel music.

Website offers insights into the history of African American perspectives on the Fourth of July

Written by Leslie King

July 3, 2019 -- The slight sulfuric scent of lit matches, the flaring-up of sparklers, and the sudden loud bang of firecrackers are as familiar to the Fourth of July as are the admonishments to use caution when handling fireworks.

Yet the freedoms Americans celebrate in this idealistic scene are not always the same. A public history project at Virginia Tech finds that, historically, African Americans' sentiments about the holiday have been diverse.

A website, African American Fourth of July, summarizes the findings and analysis of Virginia Tech students who researched seven historical African American newspapers to trace the meanings behind Independence Day.

"These are newspapers for and by African Americans," said Brett Shadle, the professor in whose introductory history course the students did their work. "These are the conversations African Americans had among themselves about what their politics should be, what their patriotism should be, and what their role is in the United States."

His students transcribed more than 400 articles written between 1865 and 1988, including those from the Arkansas State Press (1941–1959), the Baltimore Afro-American (1893–1988), the Chicago Defender (1921–1968), the San Francisco Elevator (1865–1874), the Savannah Tribune (1876–1922), the Washington Bee (1883–1922), and the Wichita Negro Star (1920–1952).

Shadle selected the newspapers for their timelines — to ensure representation of viewpoints from the Civil War through the civil rights era — and their diverse locations.

"We can actually see the same arguments, the fight for rights, threading through the different periods," said Shadle, who is also chair of Virginia Tech's Department of History. "The Fourth of July during Reconstruction was generally positive because the people are now free, and they seem to have opportunities — they can vote, and many of them hold office in the South. It's a time of hope



Virginia Tech history majors Nick Anthony and Jillian Doerr presented their research findings at the website launch in December 2018. Courtesy Photo

and possibility, and the newspapers reflected that hope."

But then, Shadle's class discovered, the newspapers reflected an opposite response during the Jim Crow years, between the end of Reconstruction in 1877 and the beginnings of the civil rights movement in the 1950s.

"The holiday seemed like a mockery," Shadle said. "The day's ideals were great, but not a reality for African Americans. People wanted to talk about life and liberty, but at the same time lynchings were taking place. So, they could celebrate the ideals, yet mourn their ongoing political exclusion."

To create a cohesive project, the students organized into eight groups to uncover themes and to document the changes of attitudes over time. Each group centered their research on one newspaper, except for the longest running paper, the Chicago Defender, which two groups explored.

Each student focused on a five- to 10-year period, finding articles that related to Independence Day. They then transcribed the articles and added keyword tags. After summarizing each article, they shared their conclusions with the group to spot overall trends and themes.

With the help of Corinne Guimont, a digital publishing specialist with Virginia Tech Publishing, based in the University Libraries, the students had a platform on which to publish their research.

Shadle conceived of the project a year ago when a speech by Frederick Douglass began circulating on social media.

"The sunlight that brought life and healing to you, has brought stripes and death to me," Douglass had said in his 1852 talk to a group of New York abolitionists. "This Fourth [of] July is yours, not mine. You may rejoice, I must mourn."

At the same time Shadle was reading this, his colleagues in the history department were launching Mapping the

Fourth of July, a crowdsourced history website aimed at understanding how Americans celebrated July 4 during the Civil War. This caused Shadle to wonder what African American newspapers might reveal about what the day meant to African Americans throughout history.

He thought it would be a perfect project for his first-year student experience course, a class designed to introduce students to their major. It would provide the students with experiential learning opportunities as they navigated primary-source materials and processed information through group discussions. And Shadle discovered, at the launch of the website, that his students not only excelled in their research, but took great pride in it.

"The students hope this project doesn't fade away," Shadle said. "They want others to look at it and use it. They want people to have discussions about what patriotism means, what the Fourth of July means."

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Ernest Gaines Book Award Raises Cash Prize to \$15,000

Baton Rouge, La. – The underwriter of the Ernest J. Gaines Award for Literary Excellence has raised the cash prize to \$15,000 from \$10,000 and the deadline for submitting books remains August 15, 2019. The Baton Rouge Area Foundation increased its support for its award that recognizes emerging African-American fiction writers, helping to sustain and encourage these writers.

“We want the Ernest J. Gaines Award for Literary Excellence to be known as the pre-eminent award in the field of African American literary fiction. We hope that the added funding will help each year’s winner to gain further freedom to pursue his or her art,” explained John Davies, President and CEO of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation.

The forthcoming Gaines Award, to be presented in January 2020, accepts submissions of outstanding fiction—novels or short-story collections—published in 2019. Galleys for publications are also accepted. Details about the award and submission criteria can be found at ernestjgainesaward.org.

The Gaines Award was created to honor outstanding literary work from African-American authors as well as recognize Louisiana native Ernest Gaines’ extraordinary contribution to the literary world.

The Gaines Award winner is chosen annually by a national panel of literary leaders. The award celebration will be held Thursday January 30, 2020 at the Manship Theatre in downtown Baton Rouge.

The book prize has uncovered promising writers early in their careers, including two previous winners who have won the Whiting Award and another who was subsequently chosen as a MacArthur Fellow.

Ernest Gaines is a native of Pointe Coupee Parish near Baton Rouge. His critically acclaimed novel, “The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman,” was adapted into a 1974 made-for-TV movie that received nine Emmy awards.

How to Combine Learning and Fun

5 tips to keep kids' brains active and avoid the summer slide

(Family Features) Summer break provides a chance for kids to cut loose and enjoy the freedom of a less structured schedule. However, as parents and teachers know well, months away from academic pursuits can make for a rocky start to a new school year come fall.

During the time when students lose some of the achievement gains they made during the school year, known as the "summer slide," parents can help kids avoid this learning recession and stay engaged with these tips and ideas from the experts at KinderCare.

Read and learn as a family. Research from Harvard's Graduate School of Education shows that spending time reading and writing as a family and encouraging kids to read on their own has a bigger impact on preventing summer slide than any other activity. Find books, poems or even museum display cards that correlate to places you see or visit during the summer. Take turns reading a chapter book with an older child or start a new series to read together.

Don't forget math. Over the summer, math skills often fall by the wayside, according to Harvard University's Graduate School of Education. Experts recommend getting creative to prevent math learning loss. For instance, ask children to help add prices in the grocery store or assist in measuring and counting while cooking together in the kitchen. Math can also be part of outdoor play. Children of all ages can count objects they find outside, like the number of trees in the neighborhood or the number of rocks collected on a nature walk. If it's too hot to go outside, count and sort items like blocks or toys by shape, size and color indoors.

Get up, get out and get moving. One of the healthiest uses of summer time is free and available to all: nature. According to research by North Carolina State University's Natural Learning Initiative, kids who spend more time playing outside are better creative problem solvers and have improved focus and cognitive skills. Outdoor play can be adventurous,



like hiking, or it can be simple, like a backyard scavenger hunt for certain leaves, flowers or bugs.

Resist the urge to let screens do the work. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that parents balance the need for media literacy with reasonable limits on screen time. For children over the age of 2, one hour of screen time is enough. For children under 18 months, screen time should be discour-

aged. Between 18-24 months, high-quality educational media is appropriate when supervised by parents.

Encourage social and emotional development. Researchers from the University of Chicago and Northwestern University have found that students lose around 7% of their progress in social interpersonal skills for each month they are out of school, likely caused by children spending less time around their

peers. Scheduling play dates or enrolling children in summer programs can help offset the backslide by helping children build friendships, increase self-confidence and model independence.

Learn more about how you can prevent summer slide through fun, educational summer activities and programs in your area at KinderCare.com.



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Ready To Retire?

Five steps for getting a good night's sleep after the paychecks stop

News & Experts— Those early days of retirement can be exciting as you are finally rewarded with a little rest and relaxation after all those years of toil. However, it can be a bit unsettling as well when the regular paychecks you counted on stop appearing in your bank account.

That's why anyone who's still a few years away from retirement should ask themselves: Am I ready for that moment both financially and emotionally?

The answer could come down to whether you have a solid retirement plan— or a plan at all.

“Regardless of how much you accumulate for your retirement, poor planning or lack of planning can put you at risk of exhausting your resources,” says Tad Hill, a retirement planner and author of *Retire with Freedom: The Five Steps to Getting a Good Night's Sleep After the Paychecks Stop* (www.askfreedomfinancial.com).

Hill says people nearing the end of their working years should follow this five-step process for a more secure retirement:

•**Create your ideal picture of retirement.** What is it you want out of retirement? Do you want to travel? Volunteer with a charity? Spend time with the grandkids? The first step isn't about your financial portfolio, Hill says, it's about forming a clear image of the big “why” of your ideal retirement. “Otherwise, even though your money may last the rest of your lives,” Hill says, “you

may never achieve your dreams because you're unclear on your dreams.”

•**Put your situation to the “stress test.”** With the help of a financial professional, give your retirement plan a “stress test.” That can include reviewing how to best maximize your Social Security benefits and examining how your portfolio might perform under a variety of market scenarios. “Analyze all the factors that could affect your retirement plan over the next few decades and create a strategy for dealing with those risk factors with as much certainty as possible,” Hill says.

•**Design your plan.** Designing a retirement plan, Hill says, is much like creating the blueprint for a house. “These blueprints identify the strategies available to help minimize risk, increase certainty, avoid excess taxes and ensure an adequate retirement income,” he says. Some of the concerns that need to be addressed include income planning, investment planning, health care planning, tax planning and legacy planning.

•**Build the plan.** Once the design is agreed upon, it's time to implement it. “That can mean making changes to your current structure, adding some things and getting rid of others,” Hill says. “Maybe risk-prone aspects of your current approach that we need to eliminate were discovered in the design step. We also often identify new strategies that you aren't using that can really make a difference.”



•**Seek continued guidance.** Even a great retirement plan may need tweaks and adjustments over the years. “Times change, people change and situations change,” Hill says. With his clients, he holds a regular yearly consultation to help ensure they are on the right pathway to retirement success at all times. “You need to look at whether there are things that have changed in your life that need attention,” he says. “Are there decisions you need to make about a pension or Social Security? Is your spending tracking at the amount you thought it would?”

“There are no guarantees of anything in life, including how your retirement will

work out,” Hill says. “But taking action to create a solid and well-thought-out plan for this important part of your life is a critical first step.”

Tad Hill, author of “Retire with Freedom: The Five Steps to Getting a Good Night's Sleep After the Paychecks Stop,” is the founder and president of Freedom Financial Group. He is registered as an Independent Advisor Representative and is a radio and TV host, industry trainer, and speaker, who helps retirees work toward their financial and retirement goals. For more information, visit: www.askfreedomfinancial.com

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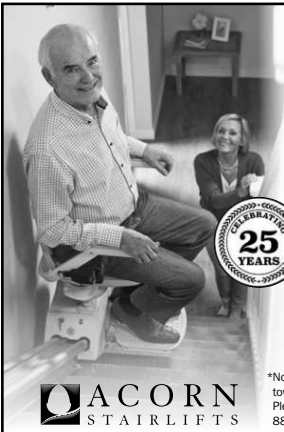
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Offer ends 8/4/19. Restrictions apply. Not available in all areas. New residential customers only. Limited to the Standard Triple Play with Performance Pro 150 Mbps Internet and Voice Unlimited services. Early termination fee applies if all Xfinity services are cancelled during the agreement term. Equipment, installation, taxes and fees, including regulatory recovery fees, Broadcast TV Fee (up to \$10.00/mo.), Regional Sports Fee (up to \$8.25/mo.), and other applicable charges extra, and subject to change during and after agreement term. After term agreement, or if any service is cancelled or downgraded, regular rates apply. Service limited to a single outlet. May not be combined with other offers. **TV:** Limited Basic service subscription required to receive other levels of service. **Internet:** Actual speeds vary and are not guaranteed. Xfinity xFi is available to Xfinity Internet service customers with a compatible Xfinity Gateway. Ability to pause limited to home WiFi network. Does not apply to Xfinity WiFi hotspots. **Voice:** If there is a power outage or network issue, calling, including calls to 911 may be unavailable. Call for restrictions and complete details. NPA224999-0001 NED AA Q2 WPP V1