

## Dr. E. Lee Lassiter: The Man Behind the Byline



*Dr. E. Lee Lassiter holds a copy of his column featured in the September 23, 1985 edition of The News American. In 1965, Dr. Lassiter became the second African American to be hired by the paper in the Editorial department. The retired journalist and former Coppin State University college professor graduated from Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University) in 1959 with a B.S. degree in Secondary Education. He received an M.S. in Journalism from Boston University in 1963. He would later earn a doctorate from Morgan State University in 1994. (See article on page 7) Photo by Ursula V. Battle*



# Terra Café Owner: Government ignores black-owned small businesses

By Stacy M. Brown

Like many minority-owned small businesses that have been shut out of the COVID-19 driven Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), Terence Dickson, the owner of Terra Café, expressed frustration.

“What does a business in a community that doesn’t qualify for loans or credit do to survive? How do you make the difficult decision to close or stay open and fight?” said Dickson, whose popular café has routinely earned praise as perhaps the best of its kind in Baltimore.

At the beginning of April, Dickson and many other small businesses received a glimmer of hope when Congress established the PPP to help keep the doors open and workers on the payroll.

Dickson immediately applied for relief through the \$350 billion program, which offered small business loans for as much as \$10 million to help keep them up and running during the pandemic.

The second round of more than \$400 billion recently was signed into law by President Donald Trump after Congress passed new legislation when the first set of funds ran dry, in large part because big businesses like Shake Shack, Ruth Chris Steakhouse, and even the Los Angeles Lakers basketball team swooped in a scooped up the cash.



*Terence Dickson, owner of the Terra Cafe in Baltimore City, as well as many other black-owned small businesses were shut out in the first round of funding under the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). He and others are finding little success with the new funding.*

Courtesy Photo/Terence Dickson

The law, which was intended for businesses with fewer than 500 employees and those not publicly traded, turns the

loans into grants if companies maintain the same amount of employees it had just before the pandemic.

Dickson and many other black-owned small businesses were shut out in the first round, and he and others are finding little success with the new funding.

“The bank walked me through the requirements, but they told me that I had to have a credit card or a line of credit with the bank,” Dickson said. “Black-owned small businesses usually don’t

have a line of credit. We usually don’t have business credit cards. This doesn’t work for us, and if you think it was a mistake that the big businesses that weren’t supposed to be eligible but got the money, then you’re wrong.”

Now, after mostly shutting down Terra Café and forced to reduce his staff drastically, Dickson is awaiting word on a second application through the PPP. He’s not optimistic.

“The banks make their own customers priorities, and those customers are mostly larger businesses,” Dickson said.

Meanwhile, Rep. Ayanna Pressley of Massachusetts and some other members of the Congressional Black Caucus are calling for the Treasury Department to compile racial data in regards to which businesses and corporations are receiving PPP funds.

“I’m pushing for that racial data collection when it comes to who the lenders are lending to,” Pressley said in a recently published interview. “That which gets measured gets done. And so having that data and that transparency in real-time will allow us to course correct. It will likely offer sobering confirmation of a lack of (parity) of loans and grants to minority small businesses.”

Dickson and others welcome that kind of intervention.

He says it’s frustrating that the government has again left black-owned businesses to fend for themselves mostly.

“I’m not expecting that we will get anything before the money runs out again,” Dickson said. “They promised black people our 40 acres and a mule, and we never got it, so why should any of us expect them to do anything they’re supposed to do?”

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# Thirteen-year-old Paris Brown recalls her coronavirus awakening

By Paris Brown

Special to the NNPA Newswire

My name is Paris Brown. My parents are NNPA Newswire Senior National Correspondent, Stacy Brown, and the awesome Shenay Brown.

I am 13-years-old and I am privileged to be a member of the National Junior Honor Society. But more importantly, I am privileged to have such a beautiful family.

My oldest sister, Rikki, lives in Las Vegas with her husband Marc, and my niece, Nina. I have a brother, Jordan, who lives in Maryland, and my two sisters who live at home with me, Talia and Olivia.

The glue that holds everything together is my parents.

But the coronavirus nearly ruptured us in a way that would have been indescribably devastating.

Four months ago, I barely knew what the coronavirus was, and I had no clue it would change everything so drastically.

At the end of December and the beginning of January, all I heard about the virus was memes and people joking around about washing your hands. I didn't realize just how serious it was. And even when more and more reports of deaths from the virus came piling up, I still didn't take it seriously enough.

Then one day, mom said she wasn't feeling good, and that was the start of it all. In my head, I thought



*Thirteen-year-old Paris Brown (left), with her mother, Shenay Brown. Paris is the daughter of NNPA Newswire Senior National Correspondent, Stacy Brown. Paris is a member of the National Junior Honor Society. Courtesy Photo/NNPA*

that's just mom being mom. She sometimes doesn't feel well. Then when dad got sick, mom stayed in her room,

and dad stayed in the basement. I, of course, thought this was unnecessary.

But then they had to rush mom to the hospital because she couldn't breathe.

Then a switch flipped in my head: "This is real, and I need to be taking it seriously."

At first, I didn't know what to do, so I tried to stay away, but that just made me feel guilty.

So, I did the best I could to help them get better. I was okay and getting used to our "system," but I knew deep down, I was terrified.

I didn't have time to be scared because I had a ton of schoolwork to do (and I still do now), and I had to help take care of them.

You never realize how hard it is to live without the people you love until they're gone. So, when people ask me if I'm bored, I tell them I'm not. All of the schoolwork and cleaning and cooking have kept me distracted in a good way, so I don't freak out and get overwhelmed.

This was definitely an experience I'll never forget because I haven't been able to hug my parents or speak more than a couple of words to them face-to-face.

But it's almost over— they get to come out of quarantine next week and hopefully, with all of mine and my sisters' excitement, they'll feel better than ever.



## If I could do one thing, I'd have a daycare closer to work.

If you could do one thing for your community, what would it be? More daycare centers? More funding for Head Start? Completing the 2020 Census is a safe and easy way to inform how billions of dollars in funding flow into your community for hundreds of services.

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# Guest Editorials/Letters

## Civil rights leaders urge African Americans to remain at home

By Lauren Victoria Burke, NNPA Newswire Contributor

With the coronavirus death toll passing 50,000 during the last week in April, black leaders in the U.S. have taken to warning their communities of the danger of opening the country back up too soon. The coronavirus has devastated the black community in Detroit and all of the fatalities in Richmond, Va. are African Americans. Though the numbers are showing signs of slowing down black leaders are taking no chances.

On Friday, April 24, 2020, a group of civil rights leaders encouraged African Americans to “stay-at-home” shortly after the Governor of Georgia decided to lift the state’s stay-at-home order. The CDC guidelines outline that if COVID-19 stats remain down for 14 days straight the state can re-open. Many Governors are following those guidelines.

Melanie Campbell, president of the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation, joined a group of black faith and civil rights leaders and the heads of the largest historically black religious denominations to encourage African Americans to “stay at home” until there is evidence that it’s safe to go out.

A letter authored by Rev. Al Sharpton (NAN), Rev. Dr. W. Franklyn Richardson (CNBC), Sherrilyn Ifill (NAACP, LDF), Marc Morial (NUL), Derrick Johnson (NAACP), Melanie Campbell (BWR), Kristen Clarke (Lawyers’ Committee) encouraged people to stay at home.

“We, the undersigned, have joined together to state our unequivocal and firm opposition to the premature effort of governors to willfully re-open their states. The actions of these governors, which demonstrate reckless disregard for the health and life of black residents, compel us to speak out and take action to protect ourselves,” the letter began. “We encourage all black churches and businesses to remain closed during this critical period. The denominations and independent churches represented in this statement, which comprise a combined membership of more than 25 million people and more than 30,000 congregations, intend to remain closed and to continue to worship virtually, with the same dedication and love that we brought to the church. The civil rights organizations represented are working tirelessly to protect our communities from injustice and inequality as this country responds to the pandemic.”

Several Republican governors appear to be taking their marching orders from President Donald Trump who is anxious to re-open the country economically while not referencing the over 50,000 dead Americans from COVID-19.

Issues around environmental racism, disparities in health care coverage and treatment and economic considerations are issues African Americans have to confront more than other communities. The group, Black Millennials for Flint, are mobilizing to confront the problem of the continuous lack of clean water in the city after it was revealed that former Michigan Governor Rick Snyder made serious errors during the Flint water crisis.

“On April 25, 2014, a completely dehumanizing decision was made by former Governor Rick Snyder to switch from the Detroit Water System to the Flint River creating one of the most lethal man-made crises in American History. Fast forward to 2020, six years later, not a single individual involved in this act of genocide has been held accountable for the poisoning of an entire city,” the group wrote. “To put this in perspective, or to ‘make it plain’ as our elders say, the kindergartners in Flint that started this 2019-20 academic school year have not lived a single year of life without the threat of unclean drinking water. Their first year of their educational journey has now also been brought to a halt due to COVID-19.”

The Flint water crisis continues along with the COVID-19 pandemic.

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## Letters to the Editor:

### Editor:

Today, more than ever, information is power. Johns Hopkins has long had a commitment to creating and bringing knowledge to the world. Last week, we celebrated Medical Laboratory Professional Week, recognizing those working in the labs and completing testing of all types, including those testing for COVID-19.

I want to highlight and honor the work of my colleagues at the Johns Hopkins Health System who have been at the forefront of COVID-19 testing since the beginning of the pandemic. A few weeks ago they passed a major milestone of completing over 10,000 tests in less than a month. This represents 25 percent of all tests in Maryland done during the same period. These tests are being completed both across the state and in our home community of East Baltimore.

Johns Hopkins’ innovators and leaders developed a new test in the early weeks of the outbreak and are continuing to increase the number of tests we can perform daily. The daily totals of those tested climbed from 30 to 1200 as we opened testing tents, trained more hospital staff, obtained more testing kits, and obtained two robotic lab instruments to speed the process.

All of this hard work has paid off. While some labs are taking 5-7 days to return test results, we are able to return tests within one

day, enabling patients to benefit from the most important information they can have—knowledge of their infection status.

Everyone is concerned about the possibility of infection with the new coronavirus. Symptoms may include cough, fever, shortness of breath, muscle aches, sore throat or unexplained loss of taste or smell. **Please** encourage anyone who thinks they might be infected to use our symptom checker <https://www.hopkins-medicene.org/coronavirus/covid-19-self-checker.html> or to call their doctor (or call 211 if they do not have a primary care doctor). We can usually get someone tested within one or two days.

Johns Hopkins Medicine is committed to helping Baltimore, the state of Maryland, and the world have a successful response through this pandemic. Speak with your doctor about getting tested, or use our symptom checker to connect with us at Hopkins. Calling 211 will also connect you with someone who can get you set up for testing. And don’t forget to thank the medical lab professionals who make this all possible.

**Dr. Stephen Sisson**

Vice President, Clinical Operations,  
Office of Johns Hopkins Physicians  
Professor of Medicine, Johns Hopkins  
University School of Medicine



## *African American policy makers urged to take more actions to protect African Americans from the Coronavirus or multiple deaths will continue to occur*

*By Dr. Asefa Jejaw Mekonnen*

As a pulmonary and critical care medicine consultant and physician, I am urging African American policy makers to take more actions to protect African Americans from the coronavirus. If not, multiple deaths will continue to occur.

As of April 28, 2020, it was estimated that 3,042,444 people had been infected with coronavirus worldwide, with 211,216 fatalities. In the United States alone, 1,010,313 had contracted the virus, with 56,649 deaths reported. The cities of Chicago, New Orleans, Las Vegas and South Carolina have reported numerous deaths of African Americans due to COVID-19.

In Maryland, Governor Larry Hogan called the disparity among African Americans “disturbing.” Black Marylanders make up 52 percent of the deaths from coronavirus, despite only being 31 percent of the state’s population. In Chicago, 68 percent of the deaths were recorded as African Americans, although that group is only 30 percent of the population.

In Louisiana, where African Americans make up 33 percent of the population, data shows they represent more than 70 percent of COVID-19 deaths. In Albany, GA, which has the highest number of deaths from COVID-19 in the state, more than 90 percent of the fatalities are African-American.

It is no secret that a high number of African Americans are at risk for exposure to, and infection from the virus because of multiple socio-demographic factors. They will do worse once they get the disease due to pre-existing chronic medical conditions like hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, asthma, and sleep apnea.

In addition, many African Americans and other people of color work in the service sector as custodians, grocery store workers, bus drivers, postal employees and agriculture workers. They are considered essential to their companies.

As an outspoken advocate of health disparities affecting the African American community, I recently told members of three policy organizations that, despite African Americans being disproportionately impacted, very little is being discussed as a solution to protect this vulnerable population.

In a conference call on April 24, 2020, I addressed members of the Historic Black Towns and Settlements Alliance, Inc. (HB TSA); National Policy Alliance; and World Conference of Mayors.

I urged these influential African American policy makers to take more actions to protect the most vulnerable in our communities. I recommended several solutions that I believe could keep us from losing a generation.

I noted that more strategies should be put in place for this group that exceeds social distancing and staying at home.

Staying at home is a luxury for many low-income and poor families where people have to go to work to make ends meet. An African American COVID-19 patient may have a difficult time having a separate bed and bedroom to convalesce at home without infecting his or her family member. “Domestic spread” is a major threat to many African American families.

I pointed out how misinformation that African Americans cannot get the virus has been detrimental to the population. Fueled by the absence of coronavirus cases in Africa, initially, and the belief that the virus was associated only with foreign travel, many African American on-line sites made light of the deadliness of COVID-19.

As a result, a strategy needs to be put into place immediately with solutions that will prevent and mitigate further loss of life, with the focus on immediate and long-term goals. Urgent action plans should include a targeted educational campaign to correct misinformation about the effect of COVID-19 on persons of color.

African American media outlets, religious groups, and celebrities should intensify any present efforts on their part. Physicians and health care providers of color should step up and join the information campaign. It is well documented that the African American community has a lack of trust in the overall health care system due to unethical and cruel experiments of the past.

To reduce the risk of domestic exposure, infection and multiple deaths of African American family members who reside in crowded and multigenerational homes, patients with COVID-19 should be given special treatment. These individuals should be offered a separate

makeshift recovery facility with provision of appropriate medical and social care. Targeted testing of contacts needs to include mobile testing units that can navigate the neighborhoods taking the test to where it is needed.

Additionally, the distribution of free face masks, disinfectants and food should follow a similar route. Long-term strategies must include access to Internet connectivity in low-income families for virtual medical care. There must be environmental justice to improve air quality in low-income neighborhoods to improve respiratory health. There must also be more emphasis on proper nutrition.

Lastly, we must also address economic fairness to include differential compensation for high-risk front line jobs. Health is a basic human rights issue.

This needs a coordinated, well thought out national program that will ultimately lead to health and economic equality.

The status quo has been a disgrace to the wealthiest nation of the world. After multiple casualties, actions should be proactive and reactive.

In the past, segregation, racial inequalities and blatant discrimination trapped people of color in abject poverty where affordable healthcare and affordable housing were out of reach. The results of which is rearing its head today. African American stakeholders can make a difference by wielding their influence today to protect the most vulnerable in society.

*A former pulmonary section head at Suburban Hospital - Johns Hopkins Medicine and a consultant intensivist in Critical Care Medicine at Shady Grove Adventist Hospital in Gaithersburg, Dr. Asefa Jejaw Mekonnen is a partner at Rockville Internal Medicine Group.*

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# Thirteen year-old prodigy offers sound Wall Street investment advice

By Stacy M. Brown

Christon Jones stands all of five-feet-tall and weighs about 100 pounds. At 13-years-old, he is already a talented football player; Amazon best-seller; certified Les Brown Speaker; a top Achievement Engineer; a Return on Investment Coach; and an accomplished investor and day trader.

The prodigy, whose nickname is "Truth," has already accomplished more in his young life than many seasoned Wall Street veterans.

"It all began a couple of years ago when I was eight years old. I wrote my first book about faith, family and football and how to overcome bullying," Christon said.

Published in 2016, "The Win Within," describes how Christon's world begins to change when his dream of playing football turned into a nightmare because of bullying. However, he explains that he is driven to win by his faith in God and the powerful bond he shares with his mother. He says he holds firmly to the belief that he is never alone, even in his darkest hour. He realizes that to win, he has to look within himself.

"Instead of thinking about the best way you can get revenge on someone, focus on becoming a successful person," Christon says, given advice that he posted on his website. "The best way to get your revenge is to help yourself. Not only are you helping yourself, you're also letting others know they can't hurt you. So remember to focus on becoming successful, and that's plenty."

Perhaps among Christon's many impressive talents is his Wall Street success.



Christon "Truth" Jones  
Photo Courtesy of Christon Jones

Christon, who has excelled on the gridiron, earning All-Star and MVP trophies, says he plans not only to play in the NFL when he is older, but later open a sports agency and management business to assist players with investments.

During the current novel coronavirus pandemic, Christon is on a mission to help 1,000 people become successful through his company, Return on Investment, LLC, where he primarily focuses

on teaching the principles of trading while achieving upwards of a six-figure return.

Christon says he has counseled and coached many of his students, who range in age from 30 to 50 years old, into earning \$15K or more a week by trading in the current market. He is determined to educate his students about the market and on proper investment strategies to survive during these troubling times.

During this downtime, I'm actually investing in the stock market and showing people how to day trade," he said, noting that "day trading is one of the most simple and efficient ways for somebody to make money from anywhere in the world.

"As day traders, we make money whether the market goes up or down. So, if it crashes, we're making money, or if it's doing great, we're making money."

Christon strongly advises investors not to get greedy. "Greed can cause you to lose a whole bunch of money," he said. "Investors must have patience, which is a skill because sometimes you've got to be able to wait instead of being scared and jumping out."

Finally, with the government sending \$1,200 stimulus payments to many Americans, Christon says investing some of that cash might reap dividends.

"For people receiving a stimulus, investing depends on your current financials before getting the check," Christon said. "If you can afford to, take at least part of your check and put it into learning.

"There are ways to make money in the market, like basic stocks and cover calls, which are very conservative and almost a guaranteed way to make money regularly in market.

"There are swing trading and options as well. So, my biggest advice is that if you can afford to take money out of stimulus checks, invest it."

To learn more about Christon and his advice on day trading and the stock market, visit [www.thetruthjones.com](http://www.thetruthjones.com).

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# Dr. E. Lee Lassiter: The Man Behind the Byline

By Ursula V. Battle

This is Part I of a two-part series on retired columnist Dr. E. Lee Lassiter. In 1965, Dr. Lassiter became the second African American to be hired by *The News American* in the editorial department. During his career with the now-defunct paper, Dr. Lassiter used his position to bring awareness to issues impacting the black community. His career also included serving as an editor for the Afro-American Newspaper's National Edition.

The son of a sharecropper, Dr. E. Lee Lassiter's own story could have just as easily filled the pages of the newspapers he once worked for over the course of his 30-year journalism career. The story of how it all started can be traced back to his days when he and his late brother Willis were students at Berry O'Kelly High School in Raleigh, North Carolina.

"Berry O'Kelly High School had a strong curriculum," recalled Dr. Lassiter, who will be 84 in July. "Berry O'Kelly was a private school taken over by the state. To get there, my older brother Willis and I had to walk four miles to catch a "cheese bus," ride 20 miles, change buses at the elementary/junior high school, and ride the second bus 16 more miles. We made that trip in the morning, and in the afternoon.

"Willis and I had to get up at 4 a.m. to catch the first bus. It was fun, but it was hard. Although there was a school that was closer, we thought the walking and bus rides were worth it. Berry O'Kelly was a good school and highly accredited."

Dr. Lassiter reflected on an experience that sparked his interest in journalism:

"I was in my senior year at Berry O'Kelly" he said. "At the time, some of the schools had a practice of bringing in seniors from colleges to do their internships in teaching. One of those schools was my high school. One day, one of the colleges sent one student too many. They didn't send her back, but instead stationed her in the library.

"They wanted her to start a newspaper at my high school. She started a paper called *The Busy Bee*. As a student



The late entrepreneur Harlow Fullwood and Dr. E. Lee Lassiter in an undated photo. Courtesy Photo.

## The Disabled, Junk Heap Generation

It is hard to draw a bead on the "young generation" today compared, say, to the 1950s and '60s. Back then a whole generation could be put in its place with a label no bigger than a Band-aid.

The Beat Generation, for example, referred to a great wave of bearded unwashed who came in the mid-'50s, read poetry, reinvented espresso, sold a few billion folk albums and grew up.

The period produced many such groupings. They have been dutifully chronicled, and you probably can remember well what they were about just by reading their labels: the Lost Generation, the Hip Generation, the Cool Generation.

Former Vice President Spiro Agnew had his own description for the children of those years. "The Spock-marked Generation," he called them, in hateful reference to the permissive child-rearing tenets of Dr. Benjamin Spock. Author Michele Wallace, who was enamored of the civil rights activists of the period, called them the "Uppity Generation." Up as in "Up Yours" and "Up Against the Wall."

By the '70s, the process had broken down. Generations of do-your-own-things defied easy lumping. Parents and teachers, preachers, the press and sociological seers were forced to deal with the Now Generations — to generalize — in terms of their many parts: hippies, yuppies, Vietnicks,



Columnist  
E. Lee Lassiter

the decade of bumper stickers, in other words, it's going to be yesterday once more, it seems.

Three recent developments appear to be hard evidence that the trend is surfacing. If the signs are right, get ready for the "Disabled Generation," the "Junk Heap Generation" and the "Anything Goes Generation."

Dr. Mitchell Rosenthal, a psychiatrist and president of a New York Drug treatment center, predicts there is a "Disabled Generation" in America's future. He was a panelist last week when about 800 Anne Arundel County parents met to find ways to protect their children from drug abuse.

As did his fellow panelists, Dr. Rosenthal emphasized that the physical dangers of drug abuse were not as serious as the psychological ones. The heavy use of drugs in the 1970s will result in a whole generation of "significantly disabled adults," he warned. They will "not be able to live with-

alysts believe that unemployment among young urban blacks may be as high as 60 percent. The rate for Baltimore is among the highest in the nation.

"Unemployment among young blacks threatens to create a permanent underclass," Morial said. He pictured thousands of energetic but useless young fit only for that employment "Junk Heap" foretold by Samuel Yette in *The Choice*.

And how about a world where anything goes? It is not far off, if Dr. Huel D. Perkins fears come to pass. Perkins is professor of Humanities at Louisiana State University. "This idea of anything goes is a grand error . . ." Dr. Perkins warns, but there is a generation growing up that doesn't think so. He gave the view during a humanities symposium at Dunbar High School in East Baltimore.

"Now we have come face to face with a generation . . . who tell us that values are 'old hat.' One of my students . . . told me that words like 'right' and 'wrong' were obsolete; that they are used by elderly people to keep young people in their places," Dr. Perkins said.

Looking ahead at least to what these three observers say is forthcoming, one thing seems apparent. It is possible to go home again sometimes: A generation of permanently jobless is pretty beat from the outset; a generation without values is, sadly, a very lost one. And forever high is per-

*The Disabled, Junk Heap Generation, one of the many editorial pieces Dr. Lassiter wrote as a columnist for The News American. Photo: Ursula V. Battle*

leader, I became the editor of the paper. At the time, I didn't even know what journalism was. She taught us about newspapers, the roles they played in society, and how they worked."

Dr. Lassiter graduated from Berry O'Kelly High School in 1954 as salutatorian of his class. Later that year, he departed the train station in his native North Carolina for the trip to Alabama..

He was headed to Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University). He arrived at Tuskegee with no money, the editorial knowledge he received at Berry O'Kelly High School, and a desire to learn.

"My editorial experience with *The Busy Bee* helped determine my career. When I went to college, I had three possible career tracks. Electrical engineering, commercial illustration, and

journalism. Electrical engineering was where the money was. That was my first major when I went to Tuskegee. But I didn't do well in electrical engineering. I had drawing skills in high school and junior high school. But they didn't have commercial illustration at Tuskegee. So, I was down to my third choice — journalism." He recalled how he "earned" his education. "Tuskegee had a program called the Five-Year Work Study Plan. The plan allowed you to contract to work for the school for five years to earn your four-year degree. But I had to pay \$150 dollars out-of-pocket. The rest you paid with the money you earned. I knew that if I got that \$150, I could work my way through.

"My father gave Willis and I a plot of land. He said whatever we made off the plot of land belonged to us. We rushed to get tobacco to sell. My brother told me to take his half and go to school. That's how I got the \$150. Once I got to Tuskegee, I didn't have money to eat. Fortunately, a student from my high school let me use his meal ticket. That's how I ate. I worked seven-days-a-week, eight-hours-a-day for the school. They paid us in pink vouchers. Those vouchers got us room, board and tuition."

Noting Tuskegee founder Booker T. Washington, Dr. Lassiter said, "Booker T. Washington's philosophy was that there was dignity in work, no matter the job. They put that in our head. The work-study students were well respected. The students looked up to us, but we did not have one cent. I was from the country and had a farming background. Tuskegee was the perfect setting. God was in it."

He graduated from Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University) in 1959 with a B.S. degree in Secondary Education. He received an M.S. in Journalism from Boston University in 1963. He would later earn a doctorate from Morgan State University in 1994.

"When I graduated from Boston University, I tried to get a job like everyone else," said Dr. Lassiter. "But not one white paper would hire a black journalist."

*Coming next week: Part II.*



# Ambitious college student supplements lost income by making facemasks

By Andrea Blackstone

Ebonie Smith, 21, is a college student armed with the determination to meet her educational goals, despite unexpected events that unfolded because of the coronavirus pandemic. The junior who attends Mount St. Mary's University located in Emmitsburg, Maryland, was suddenly required to return home to Anne Arundel County, when the university shut its doors over six weeks ago following Governor Larry Hogan's executive order.

"It's a huge transition. Granted my school is very small. It's just that I'm used to living in an apartment on campus. I have four other roommates. I'm used to seeing my friends. I usually do homework in the library. I'm always around a group of people. It's different because now I'm isolated," Ebonie said adding that she utilizes distance learning through Zoom and other online tools. "I still have homework to do and exams to do online. It's just like school, I'm just at home."

Smith's on-campus job was also interrupted. The college student told her mother, Veronica Smith, that she needed a job, since her campus job no longer existed. Ebonie gathered her thoughts and found a way to turn a challenge into an opportunity. She learned to sew from her grandmother when she was in middle school. Now, she remains busy implementing plan B to find work—making facemasks.

"I told my mom I could make masks and sell them for a really cheap price. I was just thinking \$5 bucks. It's really cheap and good quality material," Ebonie said. "And I felt like if I make it that cheap, I could get sales and get the money that I need. My main motivation—I needed a



*Ebonie Smith's facemask making enterprise began after she returned home to Anne Arundel County from college because of the pandemic. She has been extremely busy making reasonable priced, quality masks while balancing taking college classes online. The ambitious student created her own job when her on campus job ended after Governor Hogan's executive order closed all schools and colleges in Maryland.*

Photo Credit: Elias Gonzalez

job. I'm saving money for books for my summer classes, because I'm double majoring at school. I need three more classes, in addition to the ten that I have to take for my senior year."

Veronica Smith is a single parent of two who has been laid off from her job until May, because of the pandemic. She supports her youngest child's effort to give entrepreneurship a try for the first time, in between taking classes online. Cutting the patterns out before her daughter pins and sews fabric for the masks is one way that she has been helping Ebonie as she does something posi-

tive and constructive while she is at home.

"Sometimes, I iron the pleats for her and help her out with different things, because she needs an assistant," Veronica said. "She just wants to be independent, and I'm very proud of her."

Ebonie explained that her masks are a good quality, despite the cheap price. Cotton provides a protective barrier and the masks are machine washable. The college student added that the simple, two-layer masks don't come with filters but she makes them while complying with the Center for Disease Control and

Prevention's (CDC's) standard. Instructions to take care of the reusable masks with patterns and designs are included to maintain quality and color.

When facemasks were primarily worn by essential workers and individuals with an immune deficiency or other health challenges, Ebonie made facemasks for herself and her mother and her brother who is an essential worker. However, after Governor Hogan mandated that facemasks were to be worn by everyone in Maryland going to any retail outlets, drugstores and public transportation, her business venture took off. People wanted facemasks made by Ebonie. Orders are still coming her way from word-of-mouth. Friends, family, former teachers from Glen Burnie High School where Ebonie graduated, business card referrals, advertising on social media through her personal Snapchat, Facebook and Instagram accounts are all reasons Ebonie quickly evolved into a busy entrepreneur.

"I think what really encouraged me is I make kids sizes as well, and everyone was like, 'We're having so much trouble finding kids' sizes. I sell to any and everyone. Kids, adults and essential workers—everyone wants masks,'" Ebonie said. "This is the first time that I actually took a stab at [entrepreneurship]. I took the leap, and it worked very well for me."

Ebonie is currently creating specialty print facemasks for \$7. Stock is limited but she will continue to make standard designs. You may find Ebonie Smith on Facebook or Instagram. Ebonie offers free delivery to customers near Severn, Annapolis, Glen Burnie and many neighboring towns in Anne Arundel County. Facemasks can be mailed out of the area.

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# Rambling Rose

*You can still eat well!*



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Hello everyone, terrible situation! The news on television and radio every day is not getting any better. I am so glad that Maryland Governor Hogan has made it mandatory for folks to wear a facemask in public places. While going to Giant and other supermarkets, I have seen so many people without mass and gloves, including the cashiers. It is crazy! So from me to you, please protect yourself and others. **This COVID-19 IS NO JOKE!**

A few of our favorite eateries have found a way for you to still enjoy meals and deserts during this Coronavirus pandemic by opening up a window pick-up or a drive by pick-up. One of my favorite places that has adopted this idea is the Avenue Bakery. That is right! You can still get your Poppay's rolls and sweet potato ies from the Avenue Bakery on Friday's from 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.; Saturday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.; and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. For your safety they will serve you at their walk-up window—the lobby is closed.

So, folks, go get your hot rolls and tell the owner, James Hamlin, I said "hello" and to hold a dozen of those rolls for me. Please don't forget to wear your mask and gloves.

Dante Daniels, owner of Colin's Seafood and Grill in Randallstown also is doing carryout seven days a week from 11 a.m. until 9:30 p.m. You can pick your favorite meals from their menu. It is probably best to call ahead first, especially if you have a large order.

Then there is my buddy, "Downtown Kevin Brown," who also owns a popular restaurant with his partner William Maughlin called "Nancy by SNAC." located 131 W. North Avenue are serving delicious breakfast and lunch all day every day starting at 8 a.m. by curb side pick-up.

If you know any other eateries in Baltimore that have found away to continue to serve customers food in a safe way, email me at rosapryor@aol.com or call me at

410-833-9474.

There are a few ways you can practice social distancing and still try to have fun such as: take a walk; go for a hike; do yard work; play in your yard; clean out a closet; read a good book; listen to music; cook a meal; have a family game night—this does not mean for you to invite family and friends over who do not live in the household— go for a drive; do group video chats; stream a favorite show; check on a friend; check on elderly neighbors by phones only.

Here is something to smile about! My journalist sister, Valerie Fraling made a statement that is so true. She says, "I would have never thought that I would walk into a bank and up to a teller with a mask on and ask for money!" Valerie also said she has washed her hands so much she uncovered a night club stamp from 25 years ago. I thought that was so funny! Valerie keep the jokes coming, we need that right now.

In this time of uncertainty, many people are hurting. We are grateful for front-line healthcare workers, first responders and human service workers who are meeting basic human needs like food and shelter. Although some thought this crisis would bring out our worst, I find people have an overwhelming desire to help and be of service. If you are feeling this way, be assured that it is possible to make a difference even from home. Just stay safe and follow the rules. Please wear a mask and gloves when you go out.

Well my dear friends, I am sorry I couldn't tell you where or when the next jazz show will be, or Day-Time Party or what night club is doing what, but don't worry, have faith, this too shall pass; hopefully soon.

Remember if you need me, call me at 410-833-9474 or email me at rosapryor@aol.com. UNTIL THE NEXT TIME, I'M MUSICALLY YOURS



*Kelly Carter the owner of Grind & Wine located in the Randallstown Shopping Center at 3627 Offutt Road has joined the bandwagon by continuing to serve customers and the community with carryout of hot-to-go breakfast.*



*Anthony Lenard, owner of Southern Blues Restaurant, 3613 Offutt Road in Randallstown and 8406 Harford Road in Pikesville, recently provided lunch for 300 staff members of Mercy Medical Center. This was Lenard's way of showing his appreciation to his Aunt Cheryl Addison and all the heroes who work at Mercy— going out every day, risking their lives so that we can all live.*



*James Hamlin owner of Avenue Bakery on Pennsylvania Avenue & Baker Street has opened a window pick-up where you can still get his hot homemade Poppay's Rolls, cakes and sweet potato pies.*



*Dante Daniels, chef and owner of Colin's Seafood & Grill and his staff located 3653 Offutt Road in the Shopping Center in Randallstown, Maryland is now doing carry-out 7 days a week from 11 a.m. until 9:30 p.m.*



# Ravens Devin Duvernay draws comparison to Steve Smith Sr.

By Tyler Hamilton

The Baltimore Ravens have made a concerted effort to add weapons to surround quarterback Lamar Jackson. After adding Marquise Brown last season, the Ravens added another dynamic receiver in former Texas wideout Devin Duvernay.

Ravens General Manager Eric DeCosta is fired up about adding Duvernay to the team. He says Duvernay is a player that somewhat reminds him of Steve Smith Sr.

“He’s a tough guy. He reminds me of a few guys that we’ve had here in Baltimore, and I’ll reference guys like Anquan [Boldin], Derrick Mason and of course Steve Smith [Sr.] Those guys all had a competitive spirit about them that made them really stand out,” DeCosta said after selecting Duvernay on Friday. “I don’t think Devin is the biggest guy by any stretch, but he’s very tough, very physical, catches the ball really well, and he’s really tough with the football. So, I like those competitive guys who don’t go down, and he kind of has that style to him. He’s almost like a running back with the football.”

Duvernay consistently made catches across the middle of the field. Duvernay’s stocky 5-foot-10 and 200 pounds frame caused would be, tacklers to bounce off him, as he runs for yards after the catch. He has a violent style of play that definitely elicits comparison to Smith.

The comparison is music to Duvernay’s ears. Smith is a player that Duvernay looked up to before getting to the NFL.

“It means a lot. Those were some great players. I grew up watching Steve Smith Sr. I loved his game. He’s somebody I loved to watch and wanted to play like



*Former Texas wideout Devin Duvernay was drafted by the Baltimore Ravens in the fifth round of the 2020 NFL Draft. Ravens General Manager Eric DeCosta says Duvernay’s style of play somewhat reminds him of Steve Smith Sr. (Above) Duvernay at the 2020 NFL Scouting Combine. Courtesy Photo/NFL.com.*

with that chip on his shoulder. It means a lot to get a comparison like that. I just have to keep working and get better. Maybe I can be like him one day,” Duvernay said.

The chip on Duvernay’s shoulder is now enhanced after falling to the fifth round of the 2020 draft. He felt he was one of the best receivers in the draft.

Duvernay’s number proves it. He led the country with 106 receptions for 1,341 yards and nine touchdowns over 13 games.

Ravens head coach Jon Harbaugh was caught celebrating the Duvernay selection on ESPN’s broadcast of the draft.

It’s already clear that Duvernay fits the Ravens from an on the field perspective. After hearing Harbaugh comment about Duvernay after the draft, it looks like he’ll fit their blue-collar approach to football as well.

“I got him on the call and he was all business,” Harbaugh said Saturday during ESPN’s draft broadcast. “He was like ‘c’mon, man let’s go to work. When

can I get my playbook?’ I think he feels like he’s got a lot to prove so we like those kinds of guys here and they’re going to compliment us very well.”

## We want to hear from you.

**What are you doing to stay motivated and positive during these times?**

The Baltimore Times will be sharing #OnAPositiveNote entries to highlight how our neighbors are overcoming a very challenging time with positivity. Join us.

# ON A POSITIVE NOTE

Send us an email at [btimes@btimes.com](mailto:btimes@btimes.com) with the subject line #OnAPositiveNote. Tell us in 200 words or less (or send a 2 minute video) sharing how you have been creative in overcoming the challenges the COVID-19 pandemic has caused.



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