

'The Mother of The Building'
Meet J. Van Story Branch Apartments' Brenda Cousar



L-r: Stephanie Washington, Kim Ball, Brenda Cousar, Michael Gladden, Catherine Hartfield, and Jean Taylor during a Pre-Memorial Day Cookout organized by Cousar who serves as Tenant Council Board president for the J. Van Story Branch Apartments. The festive event included food, fun, music, and plenty of fellowship. (See article on page 7). Photo By Ursula V. Battle

M&T Bank and Aspen Institute introduce Weaver Awards in Baltimore

By Stacy M. Brown

M&T Bank and the Aspen Institute's "Weave: The Social Fabric Project" wants to award \$70,000 to ten people or groups in Baltimore who have undertaken projects that foster connections and relationships in communities throughout the city.

The Weaver Awards, a program that celebrates and supports Charm City leaders, is designed for those who may not have an organization or any experience getting grants.

Recipients must have a working budget of less than \$250,000.

"There is a shared commitment to deep community investment and partnership," said Krystle Starvis, the associate director of Weave: The Social Fabric Project at The Aspen Institute. "We were clear that we wanted to be in partnership with someone who is deeply committed to the community and was aware of the investment M&T Bank has already put into the Baltimore community."

Applications are now open through July 2, 2021.

Potential grant recipients must answer some questions about themselves, their communities, and their project. They must also produce three recommendations from community members.

A committee featuring 10 Baltimore residents is charged with choosing ten winners, each of whom will receive \$7,000.

M&T Bank, which has about 20 locations in the Baltimore area, provides the funds for the program.



The Weaver Awards, a program that celebrates and supports Charm City leaders, is designed for those who may not have an organization or any experience getting grants. Applications are now open through July 2, 2021. To apply, visit: www.WeAreWeavers.org. (Left) Augie Chiasera, M&T Bank's Regional President for Greater Baltimore. (Right) Krystle Starvis, Associate Director of Weave: The Social Fabric Project at The Aspen Institute

Courtesy Photos

"We partnered with the Aspen Institute because we thought it was an opportunity to take what they are doing and work it into our premier communities in Baltimore," said Augie Chiasera, M&T Bank's regional president for Greater Baltimore. "This just reinforces our mission to be a community leader in Baltimore."

M&T has been a steady and sizeable corporate philanthropist for decades in Baltimore, providing between \$3 million and \$3.5 million each year to nonprofits, according to Chiasera.

"We noticed, particularly throughout COVID, there was a whole eco-system

doing great things that we weren't aware of," he noted. "[The Aspen Institute's] work was amazing, and we wanted to find a way to leverage our brand and approach with a group that we thought could benefit from the exposure and a little bit of money."

In choosing grant recipients, officials will look at those performing deeds like feeding the hungry, organizing neighborhood beautification projects,

and those emphasizing a "deep connection" in the neighborhood, Starvis said.

"We have received positive feedback," Starvis said. "Something that I've heard so much is the opportunity to build relationships between communities in the city."

To learn more about the Weaver Awards, or to apply, visit: www.WeAreWeavers.org.

*Stay up-to-date on positive news in the community!
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<https://bit.ly/2E5NuM5>*

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Guest Editorials/Letters

Biopharmaceutical industry exceeded our wildest expectations

By *Kenneth E. Thorpe*

Less than a year after the pandemic began, Americans had access to three highly effective vaccines that are paving the way forward and away from COVID-19, and that number could soon rise, as the FDA considers promising candidates from AstraZeneca and Novavax.

The groundbreaking pace of Covid-19 vaccine development exceeds most health experts' wildest dreams. Last July, Dr. Anthony Fauci predicted that the first Americans would have access to a vaccine in summer 2021. Just four months later, he received his first dose on live television.

I couldn't be happier to have been proven wrong, and one group in particular deserves a significant portion of the credit—the biopharmaceutical industry. The industry—and the research scientists it employs—defied all expectations thanks to a robust ecosystem that incentivizes innovation.

For any new vaccine, it used to take years—sometimes decades—to go from initial research to FDA approval. Researchers began investigating both influenza and polio in the 1930s, but it wasn't until 1945 and 1953, respectively, that the first vaccine for each was approved. In fact, the fastest vaccine development, prior to Covid-19, was for the mumps, which took four years and reached patients in 1967.

In this century, though, companies have significantly shortened the time from initial genetic sequencing to clinical trial commencement. In 2003, it took 20 months to go from a viral sequence for the SARS Coronavirus to a vaccine clinical trial. For the H1N1 flu in 2009, it was just four months.

The industry clearly keeps building off past success. Researchers already knew a lot about coronaviruses from dealing with SARS and MERS, and they have spent over three decades studying messenger RNA technology—the mechanism underpinning the Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines.

Still, though, accumulated knowledge only begot rapid vaccine development because of another key support: Intellectually property protections.

IP protections fuel risky—and expensive—biopharmaceutical development projects. Roughly 88 percent of all experimental drug candidates do not survive clinical trials. Accounting for this significant failure rate, it takes over \$2 billion on average to bring just one new drug to market.

Patents and other IP protections make those risks and upfront expenses worthwhile. Investors—whether involved with small biotech startups like Moderna or bluechips like Pfizer—know companies have a fair chance to recoup the steep costs of research and development without rival firms stealing their proprietary data and selling copycats. Companies, in turn, know their successful products will help fund the next big breakthroughs.

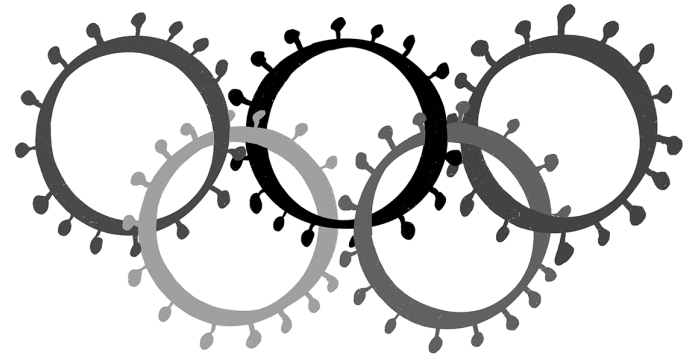
This innovative ecosystem allows drug makers to chase big ideas. In recent years, biopharmaceutical firms have dedicated upwards of \$100 billion to research and development in the United States alone. Last year, Pfizer itself spent \$2 billion of its own resources to develop its vaccine. Johnson & Johnson contributed \$1 billion, and Gilead poured in another billion dollars to help repurpose remdesivir as a life-saving Covid-19 treatment.

The fact that companies had those resources on hand during a crisis of COVID-19's scale is a testament to the strength of America's IP infrastructure. Countless lives have been and will continue to be saved—so long as we preserve the backbone of American innovation.

As a lifelong advocate for people living with chronic disease, who have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, I'm particularly grateful for these breakthroughs.

Kenneth E. Thorpe is a professor of health policy at Emory University and chairman of the Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease.

TOKYO 2021



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Letters to the Editor:

Editor:

Re: *Global Poverty*

Poverty levels around the globe are on the rise due to COVID-19. Here's why the United States should care.

Beyond obvious humanitarian reasons, increased poverty levels around the world are a cause for concern for Americans.

On the surface, it may be difficult to understand how poverty can affect anyone other than those living in it. Upon closer inspection, it has been shown by research that poverty levels are closely tied to the American economy and job market. Given this information, increased poverty levels due to COVID-19 pose a threat that, if not addressed, will negatively impact the U.S. economy.

Addressing global poverty levels supports the American economy because when we provide economic aid to developing countries, American

businesses will have access to markets and trade partners that weren't previously economically able to engage in trade. This will in turn improve the American job market because as new international markets continue to open, there will be an increased demand for jobs here in the U.S which will lead to higher employment rates.

With COVID-19 sinking developing countries—many of which were U.S. trade partners before the pandemic—into deeper poverty, the American economy has already felt the effects of those countries' rising poverty rates.

This is why we thank Senators Benjamin Cardin, Chris Van Hollen Jr., as well as Representative Anthony Brown for their continued support of the International Affairs Budget while urging other leaders to do the same.

Sherly Charles
Silver Spring, MD

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Page Opposite/Commentaries

During your next ZOOM meeting, take a look at your screen

**By Cheryl Smith, Publisher,
I Messenger Media, Texas Metro News**

What does director, producer, writer and professor Spike Lee, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot and Dallas County Commissioner John Wiley Price have in common? There are many similarities but let's focus on one specific issue.

Recently, Mayor Lightfoot called the media out on the diversity issue.

In the early 1990s, Commissioner Price told Texas media outlets that he was only speaking to Black journalists. Talk about a mad scramble. Talk about some mad people! However, there were also some very happy people, who looked or thought like me!

Yes, it was an interesting time because previously, Mr. Price picketed news organizations, calling attention not only to the paltry number of Black people in their newsrooms but also to the lack of minority procurement, community involvement/engagement/support and the low incidences of retention, hires and promotions of Blacks.

News execs looked around their newsrooms and they had to listen to the commissioner because he was being elected by close to 70 percent of the electorate.

In 1992, when the blockbuster film, Malcolm X, was released, Mr. Lee, in asking for Black journalists to interview him, said he, "...has never said he only wants Black journalists to interview him. What I'm doing is using whatever clout I have to get qualified African Americans assignments. The real crime is White publications don't have any Black writers. That's the crime."

What was admirable was the commentary from White journalists, like the then-editor of Premiere Magazine, Susan Lyne, who admitted there was a problem.

Sadly, almost 30 years later, we are still dealing with this issue. Can you say Kerner Commission?

So, now folks are dogging Mayor Lightfoot out because she said what others overlook, disregard or are just too darned stupid to face. If there's another reason, please tell me because for the life of me I can't understand why more people don't realize the issue is just, the cause righteous, and they should be speaking out.

Believe me, those arrogant unenlightened folks have no problem questioning the relevance or need for organizations like the NAACP, National Black Police Association (NBPA) and the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ), or HBCUs, Black businesses and the Black Church.

Look around the room, wherever you are. Survey the landscape. Even further, go back and read (*I mean really read*)

about the history of this country. My prayer is that you will experience a revolution of the mind.

Stating that Mr. Lee's declaration was not a publicity stunt, Sidmel Estes-Sumptner, president of the NABJ said, "NABJ has been fighting for opportunities for Black journalists for the past 17 years. Spike Lee is not a 'Johnny-come-lately' to this cause. The request is not new. It's new now because Spike Lee has visibility and power."

Many of the journalists who were working in Dallas newsrooms during Mr. Price's declaration, have since moved on. But back then, and in private conversations, they were cheering and singing his praises. NABJ actually presented him with the Community Service Award.

Unfortunately, folks are majoring in the minors with the recent declaration by Mayor Lightfoot. What they should be addressing is disparity. Newsroom execs are on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) bandwagon but here's an opportunity to practice what they are preaching.

Instead, some are acting like petulant children, talking about reverse racism. Really? So that means you're finally acknowledging racist practices of the past? Get a grip! I applaud Mayor Lightfoot and praise her efforts.

NABJ released a statement calling the mayor's comments a "bold move" that serves to "underscore her desire to draw attention to the racial disparities in local newsrooms and political coverage."

The statement pointed to the diverse population of Chicago and the lack of fair representation of communities of color in its local press corps.

If we're going to move forward with any attempts to be on the right side of history, you absolutely have to acknowledge and correct, not continue the madness.

I like what the mayor's deputy communications director, Ryan Johnson, tweeted: "Chicago's Mayor picked one day out of 365 to exclusively provide one-on-one interviews with journalists of color ahead of her two-year anniversary. That shouldn't be controversial. The lack of diversity in the media is."

And as usual with any situation, you are going to find those you're trying to help being the most vocal with their outrage. A more diverse newsroom is good for everyone. So, while there are those protesting, you will be a beneficiary.

If you just understood maybe you would stop trying to gain favor by attacking your advocates. Sometimes silence can be golden. At least your descendants won't be reading about you in the future and seeing how you were totally on the wrong side of history with the likes of Carolyn Bryant, Alabama Governor George Wallace, and J. Edgar Hoover.

If you didn't have a problem with anything being all-White instead I am saying dig deep and you might learn something about yourself. Next time you're in a ZOOM meeting, look at the screen.

Enough said!

This is a time of growth and there will be growing pains for many. Resistance will only make the process more painful.

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Jubilee Arts, No Boundaries Coalition co-hosts first-ever 'Celebration of Life' public memorial



Photos and flags memorializing those who have lost their lives over the past year are displayed on trees outside of the Jubilee Arts office on Pennsylvania

Photo Credit: Nora Howell

By Demetrius Dillard

Throughout the past week, Jubilee Arts and the No Boundaries Coalition hosted a unique public memorial honoring lives lost over the past year.

Since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, the Upton and Sandtown-Winchester communities (where the two nonprofits are based) have been struck disproportionately worse than many other neighborhoods in the city, so the memorial aims to heal and unite local residents.

The initial thought was to remember those who died from coronavirus-related causes, but community members were encouraged to celebrate the memory of loved ones who lost their lives to causes beside COVID-19, whether it was gun violence, an illness, natural causes, etc.

"We really wanted to be inclusive," said Nora Howell, program director of Jubilee Arts and curator of the memorial. "We left it open. We just said 'lives lost' and anyone who wants to participate, can."

Jubilee Arts, part of a larger nonprofit called Intersection of Change, uses arts

as a tool for empowerment, community-building, learning history, and engendering change for the future.

The community program provides dance, visual arts, business programs and more specifically to residents of West Baltimore.

The No Boundaries Coalition, a resident-led advocacy organization working to unify and empower Central-West Baltimore across the boundaries of race, class, and neighborhood, has held block parties, organized peace rallies and launched a produce market, among many other community-building initiatives and projects.

On an annual basis, Jubilee Arts and No Boundaries Coalition typically throw a "blowout block party" that attracts more than 1,000 people every spring. Due to local regulations regarding outdoor gatherings, the two organizations couldn't hold a block party with the same capacity as they have in the past, but nonetheless, included a neighborhood advocacy-block party component in the first-ever memorial this year.

The public memorial, was held at

1947 Pennsylvania Avenue and featured photos of lost loved ones with messages of love and decorated flags honoring the memory of lives lost.

Participants were encouraged to embellish flags to celebrate a specific person, their personal experiences during the pandemic and hopes for the future. Flags were displayed with sent-in photos on trees near the Jubilee Arts office. According to Howell, the memorial is designed as more of a come-and-go event as opposed to a mass public gathering. Despite downward trending COVID-19 numbers, the event planners still wanted to be mindful of everyone's safety in accordance with local guidelines.

Moreover, the public memorial also featured food trucks, a DJ and a live jazz band, but did not include the typical live performances, art activities and other related tasks that usually comprise the yearly block parties. On the bright side, this year's event was the first step to Jubilee Arts' reopening its programming.

Though the co-hosted memorial will run from May 22 to May 28, the actual

programming occurred on May 22 from noon to 3 p.m. For the remainder of the week, community members could walk through and look at the artwork and photos. Grief support resources were also available on site.

The past 14 months have been incredibly challenging for most Baltimoreans, especially the residents of Sandtown-Winchester, Upton and Druid Heights. The memorial event seeks to help move those communities forward as its residents continue to recover from the hardships produced by the pandemic.

"We all grieve differently, and we all certainly have had to drive in isolation, so we want to create a space for those who want to grieve collectively," said Howell, who earned a master's degree in community arts from Maryland Institute College of Art.

"It has been so hard, and it's been hard in different ways for different people. So I think that the ritual of coming together, or being outside and having music, and seeing something that is beautiful and meaningful can be just one part of folks' grieving process."

'The Mother of The Building' Meet J. Van Story Branch Apartments' Brenda Cousar

By Ursula V. Battle

Just a few minutes around Brenda Cousar, and it will not take long to realize she is a woman on a mission. Her mission: Doing all she can to help ensure the residents of the J. Van Story Branch Apartments located on 11 W. 20th Street are living their best lives.

"This is a beautiful place," said the 75-year-old Cousar glancing around the ground floor of the apartment building. "Anything I can do to make it nicer, I will. I am here for everybody who wants the help."

Cousar serves as Tenant Council Board president of the J. Van Story Branch Apartments. Located in the Charles North neighborhood, J. Van Story Branch Apartments offers affordable rental apartments for senior and non-elderly disabled residents.

"I have lived here for 23 years," said Cousar. "We needed a change. The only way to get a change was to step up to the plate and run. I have been Tenant Council Board president for five years. I am here for the residents. I helped bring about the changes to the building. Years ago, the building was nice, but the residents tore it down. Now, the building has been straightened out, and it's nice again. I tell the residents, 'This is our home. We have to do what we need to do to keep it up.'"

Recent renovations to the 50-unit J. Van Story Branch Apartment building included upgrades to every unit including new doors, flooring, baths, and kitchens. Renovated common spaces included new laundry rooms, community rooms, lobby, hallways, entrances, and outdoor areas.

"We have 350 units in this building," said Cousar. "And every last one of them are rented out."

On May 26, 2021, a Pre-Memorial Day lunch organized by Cousar was held on the outdoor grounds.

"This is what I do for the residents," said Cousar, looking around at the gathering, which included music and food. With the COVID pandemic last



"Onward and Forward." Brenda Cousar dancing during the Pre-Memorial Day Cookout. Photos: Ursula V. Battle



L-r: Avonte' McCullough, Assistant Property Manager; Kim James, Senior Property Manager; Brenda Cousar, Tenant Council Board President; and Lee Charles, Assistant Maintenance Supervisor for the J. Van Story Branch Apartments

year, we were not able to do anything. I decided it was time to do something for them. I do what I do because that's who I am. I love dealing with people. When the good Lord wakes me up, I can do things for the residents. When you feel good about yourself you can feel good about doing things for people."

Catherine Hartfield said she has lived

in the building for 21 years.

"I have seen the ends and outs here, but I am glad I stayed," said Hartfield. "I love it. I plan to stay here until it's time for the Lord to take me to my Heavenly Home."

She added, "When it comes to Brenda Cousar, I can write a book about her. She has done so many things. She paid

for things out of her pocket when there were no funds. Some don't want to give her credit for all she's done, but God knows what she did and is still doing for the people of this building."

Jean Taylor also resides in the building.

"This is my first year here," said Taylor. "Brenda Cousar has done so many things since I moved here. The building is really nice."

Michael Gladden also praised the efforts of Cousar.

"Miss Brenda is always here for the people in this building," he said. "She's always having events for people and works hard to get things done."

Stephanie Washington called Cousar, "The Mother of The Building."

"I just want to salute Miss Brenda," said Washington. "She is someone I can always talk to and lean on."

Cousar also had t-shirts with the building's name printed on them for the residents to wear for the cook-out.

"Ms. Cousar works with the residents and management and is hands-on," said Kim James, Senior Property Manager. "She is a spokesperson between us and the residents. She is a great president, and even had shirts printed so that we all looked unified. She wants everyone to be one together."

L. Simpson heads the building's security.

"What you see under Ms. Brenda's leadership is a real effort to create a family environment," he said. "She and her team have created a positive synergy around the residents. That positivity flows throughout the residents."

Lee Charles is the Assistant Maintenance Supervisor.

"Ms. Cousar makes sure things happen," he said. "Anything that needs to be done, she's on top of it."

Avonte' McCullough is Assistant Property Manager.

"Ms. Cousar is a pleasure to work with," said McCulloh. "She is willing to help and assist anyone. We are glad to have her and hope she is President for years to come."

Rambling Rose

Live EntertainmentLive Entertainment is making Baltimore come alive again!”



Rosa Pryor Trusty

Hello everyone, I truly hope the sound of my words find you well. I send condolences to the families who have lost a loved one. After the long shut-in, I believe it's time for us to peek our heads out the door. At least for some outdoor events— still wearing our masks! A few outdoor events are coming up this week and I'm really excited about that. My boo-boo and I are planning on going to check them out.

The first one we plan to go to is the Art Festival in Westminster, Maryland at the Westminster City Hall grounds. Their festivals have always been a lot of fun with the food vendors; live entertainment; and the arts and crafts are always fantastic. So if you get a chance check it out, it starts at 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. The Westminster City Hall grounds are located at 1838 Emerald Hill Dr. in Westminster. Remember it's FREE!

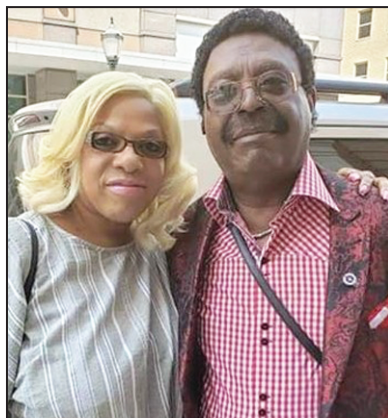
Coming up very soon is the Annapolis Juneteenth Celebration featuring live entertainment with the Chuck Brown Band; Chelsey Green and the Green Project; Kindred and the Family Soul; Young Dylan; and Count The Cost Band and Art Sherrod. The event will also include a parade, Education Project, African Art, and lots of arts and crafts. This event takes place over two days— Friday, June 18 and Saturday, June 19, 2021 with a VIP Reception on Friday, June 18 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. and the parade and music festival kicks off Saturday, June 19 at noon until dusk. See you there! For more information, visit: annapolisjuneteenth.org.

Another event coming up is celebrating “Prince” featuring Junie Henderson

at The Birchmere located at 3701 Mount Vernon Avenue in Alexandria, Virginia on Saturday, June 5, 2021 starting at 7:30 p.m. Baltimore's own Craig Alston will be performing in the show. For more information call 703-549-7500.

My husband, “Shorty” and I want to say congratulations to our dear friends, Carlton and Darlene Douglass on their 25th anniversary. I hope they have 25 more.

Well, we don't have much more to say at this time, but hopefully we will see you somewhere. Enjoy this wonderful weather. If you or someone you know may be having an event in Baltimore, please get in touch with me. 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.**



Congratulations! Carlton and Darlene are celebrating their 25th Wedding Anniversary this week. Carlton, a well-known and popular funeral director works out of Howell Funeral Home located on Liberty Heights Avenue along with his wife.



Annapolis Juneteenth Celebration June 18 with a VIP reception featuring the Count The Cost Band and Art Sherrod at the MC 3 Maryland Cultural & Conference Center, 3 Park Place in Annapolis, Maryland also on June 19 the parade starts at the City Dock from 12-2 p.m. with Chuck Brown Band at 935 Spa Road in Annapolis 2 p.m. until dusk.



Art in the Park will be held at Westminster City Hall, 1838 Emerald Hill Drive in Westminster on Saturday, June 5, 2021 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The festival includes Fine Arts and Crafts, live entertainment of local talent and food courts.

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Ravens Marquise Brown has new look during OTAs

By Tyler Hamilton

Some of the media at the Baltimore Ravens organized team activities (OTAs) may need to check their copies of the team roster a little more often than normal this season. NFL rule changes now allow select position players who aren't quarterbacks and punters or kickers to wear single-digit jersey numbers.

It didn't take long for Ravens wide receiver Marquise "Hollywood" Brown to come with a new number. Brown's new #5 jersey number takes him back to his days as a standout receiver at Oklahoma where he wore same number.

"I was excited when I heard I had the opportunity to get No. 5. So, I was like—you don't know what could happen next year, so let's just get it done now," Brown said.

Of course, most Ravens fans think of 2012 Super Bowl MVP Joe Flacco when they see the #5 jersey. Brown is taking steps to make a name for himself in the jersey after wearing #15 in each of his previous two seasons.

Last year, Brown finished with 58 receptions for 769 yards and eight touchdowns. Those numbers were improvements across the board from his rookie season when he had 584 yards and seven touchdowns on 46 receptions.

Brown put in a lot of work in in weight



Baltimore Ravens wide receiver Marquise "Hollywood" Brown's new #5 jersey number takes him back to his days as a standout receiver at Oklahoma where he wore same number. He is taking steps to make a name for himself in the jersey after wearing #15 in each of his previous two seasons.

Photo Credit: BaltimoreRavens.com

room before last season. He is continuing that effort this off season. Brown says he works out with quarterback Lamar Jackson as much as possible.

"Timing— where he doesn't have to know if I'm going to beat the guy. He'll throw it to a spot—I get to the spot," Brown said.

The two players constantly talk about winning the Super Bowl to each other. The ultimate team prize of winning a championship holds more value than individual goals. Brown is only focused on helping bring another Lombardi trophy to Russell Street.

"The No. 1 goal is the Super Bowl, and there's no other goal you could really

think of, so that's really what we're chasing," Brown said. "When we're outside, that's all we talk about all the time. Just chilling, we're talking about Super Bowl, Super Bowl, and that's what we really want. Everything that comes with it can come with it, and everything that doesn't come with it, we don't want it."

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A realtor with a new 'lease' on life

By Ursula V. Battle

Part II of a two-part series about Darnell Davis

At 56-years-of age, Darnell Davis looks like a picture of health. But a little over a year ago, he was in the fight of his life. Nearly succumbing to COVID-19 during his hospitalization last year, Davis spent 31 days in Shock Trauma at the University of Maryland Medical Center.

A real estate agent, Davis now has a new "lease" on life.

"Other people who were in my situation are dead," said Davis.

"According to my doctors, I had one of their worst cases of COVID. But I made it through and have no COVID-19 complications or after-effects. Going through COVID really changed my life. Everyone is telling me what happened. I was in a coma. I just knew I was going home.

"Having COVID taught me about will and self-confidence. According to my family, my Prayer Circle was huge. Prayer is important. My personal journey has been transformative. The world looks different to me now. My perspective is different. My empathy is off the charts. I'm a grown man, but I cry when I'm happy and I cry when I'm sad. I am different and I like the new me."

Davis was originally admitted to Greater Baltimore Medical Center (GBMC) after being diagnosed with COVID-19. On April 30, 2020, he was transferred to Shock Trauma at the University of Maryland Medical Center where he was placed on advanced life support - ECMO, or extracorporeal membrane oxygenation, for 17 days, with a heart-lung machine doing the work of his lungs to provide oxygen to

his body. Davis also went into acute renal failure and was assisted by another lifesaving machine to help filter his blood and temporarily replacing his kidneys.

"Everything I did while I was in the hospital, I did to make it home," said Davis. "I remember laying in the ICU and doing what I had to do to get home. It was a sense of surviving. I really did not understand how sick I was. Being rolled from the hospital lobby to my wife's car was affirmation of my determination."

Davis was recognized at the 31st annual R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Celebration of Heroes. More than 65 first responders and top trauma medicine professionals who saved the lives of Davis and Trooper Graham King of the Maryland State Police barrack in Princess Anne were honored. Trooper King sustained a traumatic brain injury and multiple fractures when his police SUV, was struck head on by a car that crossed the centerline in early May 2020.

Trooper King was transported to Shock Trauma by Maryland State Police medevac helicopter on May 15, 2020, after the crash on Route 513 in Fruitland, which injured him and another state trooper.

Davis' story and Trooper King's story were shared during the "Celebration of Heroes" gala held in April. Davis has four daughters and five grandchildren. He and his wife, Daven Spencer Davis, are graduates of Morgan State University where they met.

"My wife made tough decisions regarding my life—as difficult as those decisions might have been," said Davis who has received the COVID-19 vaccine and is on a crusade encouraging others to do the same. "She did a good job managing a family crisis. She's also a hero."



Last year, Baltimore real estate agent Darnell Davis, 56, was hospitalized for 31 days at Shock Trauma at the University of Maryland Medical Center where he nearly succumbed to COVID-19. (Above) Darnell Davis enjoying the outdoors.

Photo Credit: Ursula V. Battle

Laura S. Buchanan, MD, an Assistant Professor, Trauma/Surgical Critical Care, and a faculty member of the R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center of the University of Maryland, was among the doctors who treated Davis.

"I got to take care of Mr. Davis during his first week," said Dr. Buchanan. "It was so important to have a win like Mr. Davis.' When he was in the hospital ill, it was early into the pandemic. We knew COVID was dangerous, and people voluntarily put themselves in unknown risks taking care of our COVID patients. It was important to have patients like Mr. Davis who were getting better.

They were giving so much back to us emotionally."

Jessica Bradford was among Mr. Davis' nurses.

"Mr. Davis represents resilience," said Bradford. "He represents so much for trauma, the State of Maryland and the fight against COVID-19. The world has been in a fight against COVID for over a year. Mr. Davis represents what it is to fight. We as a team could not be happier that he survived and is doing so well. He also represents the hard work of nurses, doctors, therapists and others. He is a symbol of why we do what we do."

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