

THE BALTIMORE TIMES

Vol. 36 No. 21

March 25 - 31, 2022

A Baltimore Times/Times of Baltimore Publication

“Women of Passion, Women of Purpose”



Janet Currie, President, Bank of America



Dr. Joanne Martin, Co-founder/President,
National Great Blacks in Wax



Alicia Wilson, Vice President of
Economic Delopment, JHU



Harriet Tubman, abolitionist, political activist



Navasha Daya, Co-founder,
Youth Resiliency Institute



Detra Miller, Minority and Women-Owned
Business Banking Team Head, M&T Bank



Dr. Kerri Mosely-Hobbs, Historian



Baltimore motorcyclists plan 'Poker Run' betting on a royal flush for Baltimore's homeless veterans

Fundraising ride organized by members of the nation's oldest collegiate Black greek lettered fraternity

Baltimore— Members of the O-Six Ryderz Motorcycle Club, Baltimore Chapter, who are also members of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., are hosting a "Poker Run" fundraising ride on Saturday, April 2, 2022 benefitting The Baltimore Station, a local organization supporting homeless veterans.

The ride registration fee starts at \$20 and is open to all motorcycle clubs and independent riders. Check-in and registration begin at 1 p.m. at The Baltimore Station's South Baltimore location at 140 W. West Street. 'Kickstands up' at 2 p.m. when the ride begins!

The O-Six Ryderz Poker Run will travel through the streets of Baltimore, stopping at four locations—The Baltimore Station's West Baltimore facility on Baker Street, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. National Headquarters on St. Paul Street, Morgan State University, and The Baltimore Station's South Baltimore facility on W. West Street—where each motorcyclist will draw a playing card that they will mark on a "bingo like" sheet to track their hand(s). At the end of the ride, the

player with the best hand wins. All proceeds from the ride will benefit The Baltimore Station, an innovative therapeutic residential and community-based treatment program supporting veterans overcoming obstacles such as homelessness and substance use disorder to regain self-sufficiency.

Last year, The Baltimore Station helped hundreds of veterans get back on their feet after falling on hard times. To register to ride or to make a donation to The Baltimore Station, visit <https://ryderz.givesmart.com>.

"While our club is made of men in the same fraternity, some of our members are also veterans and active military, so the work of The Baltimore Station means a lot to us personally," said Craig "LO6IC" Clinkscale, the President of the Baltimore Chapter of the O-Six Ryderz MC. "This ride will help raise money to ensure a more stable future for our brothers who need hope and a reminder they are not alone and can transcend anything—even homelessness and addiction."

"We are so grateful for the support of the O-Six Ryderz and the motorcyclists from across the region who are participating in the Poker Run," said Kim Callari, deputy director of The Baltimore Station. "This ride is a great



The Baltimore Station provides therapeutic residential and community-based outpatient treatment programs to individuals— primarily veterans— dealing with homelessness and substance use disorder. Its innovative programming helps break the cycle of poverty and supports individuals, as they become self-sufficient members of society.

Courtesy Photo/The Baltimore Station

example of how groups can come together to create something unique and fun for their members while making a difference in the lives of the homeless veterans we serve. We can't wait to watch the motorcyclists roll through town!"

The O-Six Ryderz Poker Run will end at The Baltimore Station's South

Baltimore location at 4 p.m. Prizes will be given to a few lucky riders at 5 p.m. While registering ahead of time is preferred, onsite registration will be available starting at 1p.m. The event is open to all motorcycle riders and full details can be found at <https://ryderz.givesmart.com>.

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The Baltimore Times
(USPS 5840) is published every Friday by *The Baltimore Times*, 2530 N. Charles Street, Suite 201, Baltimore, MD 21218. Subscriptions by mail \$60 per year. Standard bulk postage paid at Baltimore, MD 21233. Postmaster send address changes to:
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Guest Editorials/Letters

CROWN Act passed ending discrimination against natural Black hairstyles

By Stacy M Brown, NNPA Newswire Senior National Correspondent
@StacyBrownMedia

Connecticut Democratic Rep. Jahana Hayes sounded off to critics of legislation that would allow individuals freedom to express themselves by how they wear their hair. “Natural hair should be worn without fear of discrimination,” Rep. Hayes asserted moments after the U.S. House of Representatives passed the CROWN Act, banning hair-related discrimination.

The measure passed in a vote of 235-189 along party lines.

Introduced by Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-New Jersey), the acronym CROWN stands for Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair.

The measure outlaws discrimination based on an individual’s texture or style of hair. The bill will, which now heads to the Senate, states that “routinely, people of African descent are deprived of educational and employment opportunities” for wearing their hair in natural or protective hairstyles such as locs; cornrows; twists; braids; Bantu knots; or Afros.

Republicans strongly opposed the measure, and some used race-baiting words in expressing their opposition.

“No to the nappy hair act,” Georgia Republican Marjorie Taylor Green railed.

Civil rights groups applauded the passage of the measure.

“Passage of the CROWN Act by the House of Representatives moves our nation one step closer to federal protection for Black women, men, and children from discrimination across the country simply because of their natural hair or hairstyle,” said Damon Hewitt, president and executive director of the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. “We urge the Senate to quickly take up this important legislation, which would ensure that Black students are not prohibited from attending or participating in school events because of their natural hair, that Black employees are not subject to pretextual firing or negative employment actions because of their hair texture or style, and that Black people are accorded dignity and respect in choosing to embrace a natural hairstyle.”

Hewitt said restrictions on Black hairstyles and textures in workplaces and school campuses are relics of white supremacy.

“This explicit protection against racial discrimination based on hairstyles is long overdue,” he remarked.

In a statement, Congressional Black Caucus Chair Joyce Beatty (D-Ohio) said Black women and girls face discrimination because of their natural hair each day at their workplaces and schools.

“So today, I proudly voted yes on the CROWN Act to finally end race-based hair discrimination once and for all,” Beatty insisted. “It’s simple— discrimination against Black hair is discrimination based on race. I look forward to swift passage of this critical legislation in the Senate and standing with President Biden as he signs it into law.”

Rep. Beatty then delivered a message to Black youth.

“To every young Black girl and boy, I say to you, your hair— from your kinks to your curls, from your fros to your fades, from your locs to your braids— is a crown,” she asserted. “Be proud of your hair and know the Congressional Black Caucus is fighting for you.”

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**RUSSIAN
NEWS**

Letters to the Editor:

Editor:

Re: *The Russian Pariah*

Putin is Hitler reincarnated. Hitler tried to create a German empire throughout Europe during WWII. Putin wants to recreate a Russian empire in Europe starting with the invasion of Ukraine.

Unfortunately, the democracies are currently showing similar military wariness tendencies as the Allies showed against Hitler’s initial invasions.

Putin thought he would overrun Ukraine, but he is meeting fierce resistance from the Ukrainians. Increased military preparedness by NATO, especially in Poland, and severe economic sanctions might deter Putin from his expansionist policy, but it will not save Ukraine.

NATO and the U.S. should have sent military forces into western Ukraine.

Out of fear of Russia the Biden

administration balked at transferring Polish aircraft to Ukraine. We let down Ukraine, and this will embolden Putin.

The free world must continue to support Ukraine with military and economic assistance, and sanctions must be maintained against Russia until it leaves Ukraine. Subsequently, Russia should be subjected to TRILLIONS of dollars in war reparations starting with their seized assets; and Putin and his henchmen must be charged with war crimes.

The U.S. has to reevaluate its national security posture versus Russia.

Russia’s standing among countries has been irreparably damaged, and Putin and Russia are considered pariahs of the world and the enemies of mankind.

Donald Moskowitz

Londonderry, NH

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Page Opposite/Commentaries

The Black Press of America celebrates 195 years of pleading the cause of African descendants everywhere

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior National
Correspondent @StacyBrownMedia

On March 16, 1827, Samuel E. Cornish and John B. Russwurm founded the first Black-owned newspaper in the United States. They did so because there were no Black voices in the debate over the abolition of slavery.

In their first editorial, Cornish and Russwurm wrote: “in short, whatever concerns us as a people, will ever find a ready admission into the Freedom’s Journal.”

“One hundred and ninety-five years later, the mission of the Black Press has not changed,” Washington Informer Publisher Denise Rolark Barnes wrote in an editorial. “No matter whether Black Press journalists are invited to a seat at ‘their’ table, the voices of those the Black Press represents will always have a seat at ours.”

From Freedom’s Journal to the North Star to John Abbott’s Chicago Defender, African American-owned newspapers

have sparked fires for truth and equality that have burned with the passion of fighting for freedom throughout history.

Wednesday, March 16, 2022, marked the 195th anniversary of the Black Press of America, whose global impact remains undeniable. It all began with Freedom’s Journal.

On March 16, 1827, they announced its presence with a front page that contained these words: “We wish to plead our own cause. Too long have others spoken for us.”

The four-page edition included stories about the struggle to end the horrors of slavery, lynching, and social injustice.

It also informed the African American community of international news of particular interest like Haiti and Sierra Leone events.

Freedom’s Journal featured African American men and women biographies, schools, jobs, and housing opportunities.

For nearly two centuries, the 230 African American-owned newspapers and media companies, represented by the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), have proudly carried that legacy.

The bond between Black America and the Black Press remains strong.

“Relationships, which have been the cornerstone of the Black community and the Black Press for 195 years, have always been its messenger in cementing that bond,” remarked Westside Gazette Publisher Bobby Henry.

Dr. Toni Draper, the publisher of the 130-year-old AFRO in Baltimore and Washington, also noted the enduring value of the Black Press.

“The contribution of the Black Press is invaluable. If not for the Black Press, there would be a lot of things we would not have documented in terms of the African American experience,” Dr. Draper said. “The Black Press was

founded in 1827, and African Americans were not in any of the pages of the white-owned press unless there was an advertisement of our sale, of our resale, or us having run away from slave owners or plantations.

“The Black Press is one of the only places where you can find news and information and commentary about, by, and for African Americans across the spectrum. You don’t have to do anything wrong to make the pages of the Black Press; you don’t have to do anything famous. The Black Press covers the totality of the Black experience in the United States and beyond.”

The anniversary of the Black Press is a reminder of the contributions that remain indelibly associated with the fearlessness, determination, and success of the Black Press.

Those contributions include the works of Frederick Douglass, WEB DuBois, Ida B. Wells, Patrice Lumumba, Kwame Nkrumah, and former NNPA Chairman Dr. Carlton Goodlett.

Douglass, who helped enslaved people escape to the North while working with the Underground Railroad, established the abolitionist paper, The North Star, in Rochester, New York. He developed it into the most influential black antislavery newspaper published during the antebellum era.

The North Star denounced slavery and fought for the emancipation of women and other oppressed groups with a motto of “Right is of no Sex – Truth is of no Color; God is the Father of us all, and we are all brethren.”

Today, the Black Press continues to reach across the ocean where possible to forge coalitions with the growing number of websites and special publications that cover Africa daily from on the continent.

“The spirit of Black journalism, which Russwurm and Cornish inspired, found its

way to Houston 128 years later through a vision given to a local Black businessman to birth a newspaper that positively reflected the Black community, while also reporting the hard truths happening in our communities on the local, state, and national level,” Houston Forward Times Associate Editor Jeffrey Boney declared.

The evolution of the Black Press, the oldest Black business in America, had proprietors take on issues of chattel slavery in the 19th century, Jim Crow segregation and lynching, the great northern migration, the Civil Rights Movement, the transformation from the printing press to the digital age and computerized communication.

With the Plessy vs. Ferguson Supreme Court ruling that said no black man has any rights that a white man must honor, there came a flood of Black publications to advocate for Black rights and protest the wrongs done to Blacks.

Today, the Black Press continues to tackle domestic and global issues, including the coronavirus pandemic and its effects on all citizens— particularly African Americans.

“This is an important story about the history of the Black Press of America that has consistently been the freedom fighting voice of African people in America and throughout the world for 195 years without waiver or distortion of the truth,” said NNPA President and CEO Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. “Today, in 2022, the Black Press remains the vital source of news and information for 50 million African Americans.

“On this momentous anniversary, the NNPA salutes all the African American-owned newspapers and media companies that are affiliated with the NNPA’s expanding network of over 230 media properties and channels.”

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Six women appointed to key leadership positions at Morgan State University

Growing the Future



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Morgan State University President David K. Wilson announced the appointment of six women to key leadership positions at the university in an effort to fortify integral roles in several operational areas to sustain and propel the institution's growth in the future. (Pictured from left to right) Chevonie Oyegoke; Heidi Bruce; Dr. Oluwa-Tosin Adegbola; Dr. Laura Dorsey-Elson; Erin Oliver-James; and Dr. Sonya Clyburn.

Courtesy Photo/Morgan State University

Baltimore— Following an historic and successful fall semester, Morgan State University President David K. Wilson announces new leadership appointments, as the University aims to fortify integral roles in several operational areas and continue its momentum through the New Year. The appointments, among the most for the University in a given quarter, will see key hires managing a variety of units, including Human Resources, Alumni Relations, Procurement and Property Control, the University Counseling Center, the Honors College and the new Center for Innovative Instruction & Scholarship. In addition, several interim leadership roles have been filled until permanent appointees are named.

“Simply put, Morgan is growing, and for us to sustain and propel that growth, we need the top people in their chosen field to lead the charge. With this group of new hires, we’re confident in our ability to make significant strides towards bringing our enhanced 10-year strategic plan to fruition,” said President Wilson. “Whether through internal or national searches, we’ve identified quality candidates who are both well-suited to lead and possess the unique

capabilities to be integral partners in Morgan’s ascendancy.”

Morgan has more than 1,600 employees identified as non-faculty staff. Retirements and the strategic repositioning of units within the University have created several leadership opportunities. Tapping into a wide network of candidates nationwide and evaluating select current employees, the University was able to address several immediate needs. Included among the new hires are the following:

Chevonie (Logan) Oyegoke has assumed the role of assistant vice president and chief human resources officer. In this post, Oyegoke serves as a strategic partner providing leadership, management, policy direction and oversight for all University human resource management functions.

Heidi Bruce has been hired as the new assistant vice president for Alumni Relations and Strategic Engagement. A Morgan alumna with more than 20 years of combined development and alumni relations experience, including key appointments at the University of Maryland, College Park, George Mason University and Ohio State University, Bruce serves as the primary strategist for

alumni engagement, hosting and launching alumni programs and events, and is responsible for leading a comprehensive engagement strategy for some 30,000 Morgan alumni around the world.

OluwaTosin Adegbola, Ph.D., has been promoted to serve as executive director of the Clara I. Adams Honors College while continuing in her role as special advisor to Morgan’s president and student mentor for the President’s Leadership Circle.

Laura Dorsey-Elson, Ph.D., who previously served as director of instruction in the School of Global Journalism and Strategic Communication, has been tapped to serve as director for the newly launched Center for Innovative Instruction & Scholarship (CIIS).

Erin Oliver-James has assumed the role of the new director for the Office of Procurement and Property Control. As the head of the Office, Oliver-James is responsible for oversight and management of the department and its internal units.

Sonya Clyburn, Psy.D., has been hired as the new director for the University Counseling Center. Dr. Clyburn

provides leadership, supervision and management for the Counseling Center, which has taken on an increased importance during the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to overseeing policy and program development and implementation and providing crisis management interventions to the campus community.

“This is a unique period within the University’s history. As at many institutions nationwide, the prolongment of the pandemic has prompted some longtime Morgan staffers to pursue retirement and others to reevaluate employment options. However, at Morgan, we’ve embraced this as a great opportunity to bring in new energy and new ideas,” said Sidney Evans Jr., executive vice president for Finance and Administration at Morgan. “We will continue to work diligently and effectively to recruit and fill as many positions as possible from within or outside of the University. If there are candidates available and looking for a great place to excel and make a difference... then Morgan is the place they want to be.”

“Women of Passion, Women of Purpose”

Harriet Tubman: Risk Taker, Freedom Fighter, American Hero

By Andrea Blackstone

Harriet Tubman’s indelible impact is still being recognized 200 years after she graced the world with her presence. Araminta Ross—which is Tubman’s birthname— was born enslaved in Dorchester County, Maryland in 1822. The National Park Service’s (NPS) background information about her beginning is a prime place to start drawing attention to Tubman’s ascent to becoming a historical figure.

“Her parents, Harriet “Rit” (mother) and Ben Ross (father), had nine children. As a child, Tubman did not have the opportunity to spend time with her family. She was separated from her father when her slaveholder, Edward Brodess, moved only Tubman, her mother and siblings to his farm in Bucktown,” according to information provided on NPS’s website. “Also, three of her older sisters were sold into slavery in the Deep South. By age six, she was separated from her mother when she was rented out and forced to work for other masters to care for their children, and catch and trap muskrats in the Little Blackwater River. Tubman remembered the emotional pain being separated from her family, which she never wanted to experience again.”

Despite her difficult beginning, Tubman’s courageous spirit became evident through her evolution as an abolitionist, contributions as a Civil War nurse, Union spy, civil rights activist, and humanitarian who deeply cared about the welfare of others. A notable accomplishment was her escape from a plantation to the Eastern Shore to reach freedom in Pennsylvania in 1849.

Abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison referred to Tubman as “The Moses of her People,” because she liberated friends and family, with assistance from the Underground Railroad members. The Harriet Tubman Historical Society’s publicized account of Tubman’s journey reminds that the Underground Railroad consisted of “a network of safe houses and transportation provided by abolitionists.”



(c. 1820 – March 10, 1913), far left, with family and neighbors, circa 1887, at her home in Auburn, NY. Left to right: Harriet Tubman; Gertie Davis {Watson} (adopted daughter born 1874, died ?) behind Tubman; Nelson Davis (husband and 8th USCT veteran); Lee Chaney (neighbor's child); "Pop" John Alexander (elderly boarder in Tubman's home); Walter Green (neighbor's child); Blind "Auntie" Sarah Parker (elderly boarder). Source: Kate Clifford Lawson

The public may not always hear how Tubman became savvy enough to reach these secret havens during her brave trips. NPS’s research also provides insight about how Tubman’s experience working in the marshlands and swamps in childhood later worked to her advantage, upon seeking freedom for herself and others. She was reportedly accustomed to navigating in those surroundings. African American sailors who worked in timber fields, and also transported shipped goods to destinations such as Baltimore, Pennsylvania, and Delaware “provided a network of communication on the Underground Railroad for Tubman and other freedom seekers,” according to NPS’s detailed account of Tubman’s background.

With these details in mind, frequently unexplained details of Tubman’s success becomes more lucid.

“I never ran my train off the track and I never lost a passenger,” Tubman once said. Even with these additional details in place, Tubman’s story remains

interwoven with more complex strategies which make her a remarkable woman of passion and purpose.

On the U.S. Army’s website, explanations are given about why Tubman favored winter months to escape, in addition to leading liberation journeys on Saturdays. During winter, the nights were longer and individuals were out and about less. Moreover, striving to reach freedom on Saturdays decreased the chance of being captured because notices about runaway enslaved people were not printed in newspapers until Mondays.

Although it is widely circulated that Harriet Tubman made 19 trips which resulted in the liberation of 300 people, according to facts compiled by Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway’s website, 70 of Tubman’s family and friends were rescued during an estimated 13 Maryland trips. Additionally, Tubman provided instruction to approximately 70 other enslaved individuals from the Eastern Shore “who found their way to freedom on their own.”

Another lesser-known fact about Tubman is that she was the first woman to lead a U.S. military raid. It all happened during the Civil War, when the Union Army received assistance to help slaves take the journey North upon arriving behind enemy lines, per information provided by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. Tubman offered to assist the Union Army through spy missions. She even dressed as a field hand to get the job done.

“Tubman delivered the information to Union Colonel James Montgomery, commander of the 2nd South Carolina Volunteer Infantry, to support military operational planning. In June 1863, Harriet Tubman and Col. Montgomery led the raid at Combahee Ferry using her intelligence information to navigate around the Confederate mines placed in the Combahee River. The mission successfully rescued more than 700 slaves from the plantations along the river,” according to the website.

Devoted Tubman fans remain unaware that The Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway which is a self-guided driving tour. It comprises over “45 historically significant sites related to the Underground Railroad.” More than two hundred miles in Maryland and Delaware can be explored through this valuable resource, according to information provided by The Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway. Travelers can download an audio guide and map to listen to stories about places to visit which are relevant to Tubman and the pursuit of freedom.

Tubman is a dynamic person who deserves more credit for her comprehensive accomplishments. There are simply too many to discuss at once. If you are interested in learning more about upcoming bicentennial events in honor of Tubman, please visit <https://harriettubmanbyway.org/bicentennial-events/> and <https://harriettubmanbyway.org/tubman200/> to obtain more information.

“Women of Passion, Women of Purpose”

Watchen Harris Bruce: Re-Imagining Baltimore

By Jannette J. Witmyer

Since taking the helm as President and CEO of Baltimore Community Lending (BCL) in January 2020, Watchen Harris Bruce has focused on “Re-Imagining Baltimore,” BCL’s strategic plan to transform the organization and increase opportunities to support development in Baltimore’s underserved communities.

“We need to rethink who we are as an organization but also as a city,” Harris Bruce explains. “We are here because we are a community development financial institution. And what that means is, we are the lender of last resort. Meaning, if the bank can’t help you, we will have to. We will do whatever we can to help you. And if you are not ready, we have to make you ready. That’s what we do.”

As a certified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), BCL provides affordable lending products to help low-income and disadvantaged communities, and small real estate developers and small business owners committed to developing underserved neighborhoods. To better serve those developers and business owners, BCL established Baltimore Business Lending (BBL) as a subsidiary in 2018. Under Harris Bruce’s leadership, BCL has merged with BBL, thereby creating a more straightforward process for local real estate developers and small business owners seeking help.

According to Harris Bruce, in addition to launching a fundraising campaign, BCL’s strategic goals for the next three years include creating partnerships and engaging in an aggressive marketing campaign. Currently, BCL is hosting a 26-week, half-hour show, Fridays at 6:30 p.m., on Morgan State University’s WEAA, 88.9 FM that presents information about the organization’s products, services, and events.

“On the small business side,” she says, “BCL is providing comprehensive business development services to businesses that need accounting, legal, business incubation, co-working spaces... Anything a business



Watchen Harris Bruce, President and CEO of Baltimore Community Lending
Courtesy Photo

needs to a start or expand the businesses.”

“We’ve been doing this work, but it was just internal. Now, we’re going to start doing it externally, in the whole region. We are expanding outside of the city, namely the surrounding counties, but focusing on neighborhoods who need it and people who are black and brown,” she adds.

“Another initiative we have works with Black and Latina women, to help them become real estate developers. The program is in partnership with JPMorgan Chase and is part of its Advancing Cities initiative. That’s all part of our transformation, to Re-imagine BCL and Re-imagine Baltimore.”

Born and raised on a farm in Liberia, West Africa, Harris Bruce credits her

the term) as having laid the foundation for her passion to help people help themselves build viable communities. Watching them assist members of the community cultivate ideas and start businesses, planted a seed in her that blossomed into a more than 42-year career, working internationally in finance and community development.

According to BCL’s 2020 Annual Report, in her first year as CEO, BCL “...closed more loans, provided more hours of technical assistance, and added more loan capital to our fund than ever before.” That’s quite a feat to have accomplished in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown.

Harris Bruce says that she doesn’t think of her work as a job. It is her passion and more like a calling.

“On a more personal note, my passion, purpose, and calling are to serve God’s people globally by providing entrepreneurial services to people who want to start or expand their businesses to help close the generational wealth gap through growth businesses and homeownership with equity.”

For additional information about Baltimore City Lending and its services, visit <https://bclending.org/>.

parents’ work as missionaries, farmers, entrepreneurs, and community developers (long before she ever knew

Ladies of Vision Charities, Inc. “2022 Scholarship Program”

Ladies of Vision (LOV) Charities, Inc.® 2022 Scholarship Program is available to Baltimore County residents enrolled in a public or private school have the opportunity to compete for 14 scholarship awards. Out of the 14 scholarships offered, there are two scholarships (Foster/Jones (Taylor) Award and Verdina Y. Showell Award for Excellence Award), in which Baltimore County and City residents may apply. Applications must be postmarked by **April 15, 2022**. Applications are available at the website: www.lovcharities.org and through guidance counselors in Baltimore County high schools. Winners will be notified in June 2022.

Detra Miller: Head of M&T Bank’s Minority and Women-Owned Business Banking Team

By *Demetrius Dillard*

Detra Miller, a local banking executive, has emerged into one of the most influential female corporate leaders in the region.

Driven by a passion to help small businesses fulfill their dreams and a desire to see minorities and female entrepreneurs overcome barriers to success, Miller has contributed largely to the philanthropic efforts of M&T Bank. She serves as the Administrative Vice President of M&T Bank’s business banking division while leading M&T’s Minority & Women-owned Business Banking segment.

Miller, a native Marylander, is a graduate of Towson University, where she majored in business administration with a concentration in finance. And regardless of the career path she took, she envisioned herself helping others.

“I always wanted to help people,” Miller said. “That was kind of my guiding light; I just wanted to help support people and for me, I saw money and finance as a means to do that.”

M&T’s Minority & Women Owned Business Banking segment was created “in an effort to be intentional and proactive, and reaching, engaging, empowering and providing access to resources for small minority and women-owned businesses,” said Miller, who has been with M&T Bank for almost 14 years.

“Our goal and our job is to reach out to small minority and women-owned businesses, and work with them to help them start, grow and sustain their businesses.”

She leads a small team here in Baltimore who works to build various strategies for the bank and work with small business owners to help meet their banking, lending and cash management needs.

In just the past three years, Miller has garnered multiple awards and recognition, including being honored by the American Bankers Association for Distinguished Community Service.



Detra Miller, Head of Minority and Women-Owned Business Banking Team, M&T Bank Courtesy Photo

Additionally, she has received the following honors: Baltimore Business Journal 40 Under 40; Greater Baltimore Committee Bridging the Gap Achievement Award for Mentorship; Maryland Minority Contractors Association Honoree; American Banker Most Powerful Women in Banking: Next; The Daily Record: Leading Women; Maryland-Washington Minority Companies Association Black History Hero Honoree; Maryland Minority Contractors Association Honoree; Co-Recipient of the American Banker Foundation’s George Bailey Distinguished Service Award.

For Miller, impacting those who are often overlooked and underrepresented is more rewarding than the extensive list of awards and achievements. “Revenue doesn’t exceed the feeling that you get

when you’re sitting across from somebody that’s literally in tears because they feel like they haven’t ever been given the opportunity to be successful,” she said. “It can be a very lonely place – life in general, but especially as a small business owner, especially as a person that’s underrepresented, especially as someone that is often overlooked. That feeling that I get and I know my team definitely gets in sitting with somebody and just seeing the weight of the world lift off of their shoulders, I mean I can’t even measure that.

“I can’t put it into words, I can’t measure it. I just know that what we do everyday, regardless of if we make a dollar for the bank or not, that we truly are impacting generations by helping that person. Because through helping that person, they’re going to go and pay that forward.”

Through ongoing outreach efforts, Miller’s team has “created an ecosystem” for minority-owned businesses to support and guide them through ups and downs, says an M&T Bank release.

According to a company statement, Miller’s team facilitated \$4.6 million in Paycheck Protection Program lending for 51 business banking customers in the Baltimore region following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recently, Miller has partnered with other organizations and politicians throughout the state to launch an accelerator program for 25 business owners.

Miller and her colleagues are acutely aware that communities are built on the back of small businesses, and they work tirelessly to put their clients - whether it be a small business owner or a local nonprofit - on a path to success and sustainability.

“Throughout the #COVID19 pandemic, Detra has helped minority- and women-owned businesses gain access to the resources and capital needed to stay afloat and position for growth,” says a post on M&T Bank’s Facebook page. “We’re proud of her and the work she does for the small businesses that make our communities.”

Inspiring the next young influential Black female entrepreneur or small business owner is what drives Miller to do what she does on a daily basis.

“It’s been really eye-opening to me... Many times there are a lot of barriers. There are not a lot of people who look like you. You look up, you look beside you, you look around and you’re trying to figure out like ‘How could I aspire to be more?,” Miller said. “For me it’s very inspirational. I’m very humbled by it all and just trying my best to be a good person.”

Janet Currie: Has a deep-seated passion for helping others

By *Demetrius Dillard*

As Janet Currie eclipses her one-year mark in her new leadership role with Bank of America, she couldn't be more motivated to reach her professional goals and inspire others around her.

As of March 15, 2022, Currie has been President of Bank of America Greater Maryland for one year following the retirement of then-president Sabina Kelly. Aside from that accomplishment, Currie has made history in the company.

The HBCU graduate from Washington, D.C. is the first Black female president of Bank of America Greater Maryland.

“It's not about me, but it's about the real acknowledgment that we recognize that diversity and inclusion is a business imperative as well and Bank of America does a great job of that,” Currie said. “The opportunity is important beyond me.”

In her role, Currie is responsible for connecting the banking and investment resources offered through the bank's eight lines of business to companies, families and individuals across Greater Maryland.

Currie's job consists largely of driving economic mobility for individuals, families and communities as she leads efforts to deploy Bank of America's resources to address social concerns, strengthen economic opportunity and build strong communities. Supporting the health, safety and engagement of local teammates is another integral part of her duties as president.

Over the course of her professional career and beyond, Currie has had a deep-seated passion for helping others. As president and market executive of Bank of America Greater Maryland, one of her priorities is leveraging the capabilities of the company to help partners, people, and communities more effectively address a wide range of issues.

She and her colleagues are committed to providing local community members with resources that will propel their lives in a positive direction— whether it's



Janet Currie, President of Bank of America Greater Maryland
Courtesy Photo

being there when one of her clients open their first checking account, purchase their first car and home, or start and build a business.

“I think for me one of the biggest life lessons is staying true to your priorities,” said Currie, a board member of the Maryland Bankers Association. “If you're not true to your priorities, I think you'll have a hard time doing what's genuine.”

Coming from a tight-knit family, Currie learned the importance of togetherness and hard work at an early age. She learned valuable lessons from her mother—a woman Currie said was a “wizard with money”—so it comes as no surprise that she was seemingly destined to go into banking.

“I learned so much from her about really just being responsible and just making sure that you become an independent, contributing member of

society,” Currie said about her mother, who lives in the same house she and her sibling grew up in in Northeast D.C.

Currie didn't reach the level of success she achieved with President of Bank of America Greater Maryland, but she's facing a good deal of challenges and obstacles along the way.

“I think the overcoming of adversity is two things: continue to make sure your work shines... and secondarily, remember that you have to control your career,” said Currie, a Howard County resident. “Nobody is more interested in your career than you are, so you have to be a proactive participant in it. You can't just wait for folks to come and tap you on the shoulder, you have to seek out opportunities, you have to put in the time with the networking. All of that is really important and makes a huge difference in how things continue to move.”

Currie has earned several honors, being recognized as a Daily Record Influential Marylander, a Daily Record Power 30 Banking & Finance professional and a Baltimore Sun 25 Women to Watch, and received the Whitney M. Young Jr Service Award.

Since 1993, Currie has been with Bank of America, giving her nearly three decades of experience as a financial industry leader. During her time with the company, she has served in various leadership capacities within wealth management, consumer banking, operations and business control functions.

Prior to embarking on her professional journey, Currie earned a bachelor's degree in economics from Spelman before acquiring a master's degree in accounting from the New York University Stern School of Business.

According to her job title, the territory Currie is responsible for includes Baltimore City and the town's five surrounding counties: Baltimore, Harford, Howard, Carroll and Anne Arundel along with parts of the Eastern Shore. She is also a graduate of both the Leadership Howard County and the Greater Baltimore Committee's LEADERSHIP programs, and serves as Treasurer of the board of The Horizon Foundation.

Driven by the company's mission of “making financial lives better through the power of every connection,” Currie said she gets a sense of fulfillment through her philanthropic efforts in the local community.

“It gives me a sense of purpose,” she said, adding that she takes pleasure in undertaking meaningful partnerships and outreach.

Navasha Daya: A passion for cultivating community through the Arts

By Jannette J. Witmyer

Like many others who come to Baltimore to attend college, Navasha Daya did not come to stay. And yet, the internationally acclaimed songstress has made Baltimore her home, co-founded (with husband Fanon Hill) the Youth Resiliency Institute, a Cherry Hill Community-based nonprofit, and is co-director of the annual Cherry Hill Arts & Music Waterfront Festival.

By all rights, enrollment at Morgan State University was not originally in her plans, either. She'd been awarded a full scholarship to Berklee College of Music, but, influenced by her high school choir director, she chose to attend Morgan, instead.

She explains, “My choir director at Cleveland School of the Arts told me that I needed to go to Morgan State University because they had the best HBCU choir at the time. So, in choosing Morgan, it was based upon the choir.”

The self-described “flexi” (second alto to first soprano) found her place on Dr. Nathan M. Carter’s world-renowned choir and became one of the Morgan Singers, the choir’s core group; travelled overseas; sang solos; and served a term as choir president. Choir activities kept the Music-Education Major busy, but she still found time to enjoy HBCU campus life. She was crowned Miss Morgan, 1997-1998. All the while, she was also developing an affection for Baltimore and says, “I loved the environment and energy of Baltimore at the time.”

A longtime independent musician, Daya says that her career’s travel requirements prevented her from working a conventional job as a music teacher, but that didn’t keep her from teaching and working in the community. Even while traveling internationally as lead singer for the extremely popular, now-defunct “neo-soul” band Fertile Ground, she taught. Having been raised in what she describes as “an environment that was extremely vibrant, spiritually, and aware of culture,” that was work that she knew needed to be done.

“I was able to travel around all of the city of Baltimore, to different schools and



Navasha Daya, Co-founder, the Youth Resiliency Institute/Songstress

Photo courtesy of Daya World, LLC photographed by Jazzystudios

recreation centers, teaching music. And, I would always do movement with my students, holistic development, and multi-cultural music. So, I’ve had a chance to give back the whole time I’ve been an artist, I’ve never stopped working with young people,” she says.

When Daya and Hill, along with two former mentees, co-founded the Youth Resiliency Institute in 2010, they established the mission “to utilize the Arts to mobilize and bring change and equity in the community.” She says, “Because we are multifaceted as an organization, the leadership is able to share and teach a wide variety of things, and then, we have a wonderful resource of peers and partners, as well”

In describing their work, she says, “We have different tracks in our organization. We do cultural arts; family engagement; school, community, and home support; and health and wellness. For over 10

years, we’ve been developing, researching, implementing, and evaluating culturally responsive community arts in Baltimore, Maryland and in Cleveland, Ohio,” and explains further, “We partner with organizations that are very similar to ours, in other states but also out of the country, who utilize cultural arts, culture, and rights-of-passage in their programming.”

Annually, the organization holds the Cherry Hill Arts & Music Waterfront Festival on July 4, to celebrate victories experienced through the year. Additionally, it serves as a fundraiser for the Cherry Hill Arts & Music Waterfront Festival Arts Relief Fund and provides financial support for educational arts and crafts supplies and other materials for families in the Cherry Hill community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Due to COVID-related restrictions, the past two years have been virtual. This

year, Daya, who serves as the festival’s co-director, is excited that the sixth annual festival will return as an in-person gathering at its Middle Branch Park location. The festivities will begin at 1 p.m.

Daya’s work with the festival makes her one of only a few female festival directors and adds to her diverse arsenal of skills and expertise. Many are unaware that in addition to being a professional singer/songwriter, business owner, community activist, arts programmer, and more, she is also a Reiki practitioner and spiritual counselor.

“I’ve been a Reiki practitioner since 2000, and I’ve been teaching for about 12 years. Then, I also provide spiritual counseling as an ordained interfaith minister. I also mentor emerging and established artists, providing spiritual counseling and mentorship.”

Navasha Daya believes, “There is a divine purpose to every relationship.” As she teaches, mentors, counsels, and shares her art, her divine purpose is clearly to uplift the Cherry Hill community, its members, and all with whom she works.

She explains, “I’m always going to see and encourage the light. I’m always going to do that. No matter what storm I’m in, I’m going to be looking for the light. As an artist, I really value the power of art as a healing tool. So that’s what I’ve always done. And I’ll never stopped doing that.”

For additional information and to support the Youth Resiliency Institute, visit <https://www.youthresiliencyinstitute.org/> or <https://www.wkkf.org/what-we-do/featured-work/youth-resiliency-institute-the-power-of-cultural-organizing-and-building-g-strong-parent-leaders>

For additional information and to support the Cherry Hill Arts & Music Waterfront Festival and Cherry Hill Arts & Music Waterfront Festival Arts Relief Fund, visit <https://cherryhillfest.com/>

Stream The Liberation Song (Red, Black and Green) feat. Gary Bartz, by Navasha Daya, at <https://navashadaya.bandcamp.com/track/the-liberation-song-red-black-and-green-feat-gary-bartz>

“Women of Passion, Women of Purpose”

The National Great Blacks in Wax Museum’s Dr. Joanne Martin:

A Woman of Passion Who Continues to ‘Break the Mold’

By Ursula V. Battle

Dr. Joanne Martin recalled visiting a wax museum in the 1980s with her late husband, Dr. Elmer Martin and his mother—a visit that would help to “carve out” her life’s work.

“We took Elmer’s grandmother to a wax museum in St. Augustine, Florida,” said Dr. Martin. “I had never been, and for me and Elmer, just the experience of the wax museum was so compelling to us. It would become a life-changing moment. When we came back, Elmer spent a day in the Library of Congress researching whether there was a Black History wax museum.

“He came back and said there was none. We wanted to put a face on our history that had been faceless, and all of this would lead to us embarking on what would become The National Great Blacks in Wax Museum.”

The Martins established The National Great Blacks in Wax Museum in 1983. Located at 1601-1603 E. North Avenue, the Museum is committed solely to the study and preservation of African American history, and its presentation of life-size, life-like wax figures highlight historical and contemporary personalities of African ancestry. The museum is the first wax museum of African American history in the nation.

“The museum started as a traveling exhibit with four figures,” said Dr. Martin. “It eventually evolved into the museum. Early on, we had someone who wanted to take our idea and offered to build a museum and let us run it. But we told him that even though he had all the resources, he didn’t have the passion we had for telling our story. He agreed and essentially put us on what would be considered a layaway plan. We bought four wax figures, Mary McLeod Bethune, Frederick Douglass, Nat Turner, and John Brown. Shortly thereafter, we bought Harriet Tubman and Booker T. Washington. And so that was our humble beginnings.”

The museum’s many exhibits include



Dr. Joanne Martin (pictured) and her husband Elmer Martin established The National Great Blacks in Wax Museum located at 1601-1603 North Avenue in Baltimore City in 1983. The museum’s presentation of life-size, life-like wax figures highlight historical and contemporary personalities of African ancestry.

Courtesy Photo/National Great Blacks in Wax Museum

“A Journey to Freedom” whose wax figures include Henry “Box” Brown, and W.E.B. DuBois, “The Underground Railroad” featuring wax figures of Thomas Garrett and Harriet Tubman, and “The Slavery Era” with its immersive “Middle Passage” and “The Horror of Captivity.”

“For me, this has been so rewarding,” said Dr. Martin. “One of the driving forces in my life is the impact I want to have on future generations. That is my passion. I really enjoy getting children excited about learning about their history. The wax figures help them to understand their history and ignites a spark in them.”

The history maker talked about Women’s History Month.

“I appreciate the fact that we have a Black History Month, and I appreciate the fact that we have a Women’s History Month,” said Dr. Martin. “But when you look at women, and particularly Black women and their contributions to history and the ways in which Black women are

burdened with sometimes solving the world’s problems, they are not being recognized when you look at the power structure and the ways in which Black women often occupy the low rung of that power hierarchy.

“But for me, it’s just as important to acknowledge my mother as it is to recognize a Kamala Harris. Both are important because the grunt work that my mother did, the sacrifices that she made, and that our grandmothers made to make us who we are in this society is what leads to our being able to recognize a Kamala Harris or an Ursula Battle or any of those who have been able to make valuable contributions to society. So many women have helped this country to survive, thrive, and grow.”

Dr. Martin has received several honors, including the Lambda Kappa Mu Sorority’s Community Service Award; Who’s Who Among African Americans; Distinguished Black Women Award (presented by Blacks In

Sisterhood for Action); National Association of Negro Women Business and Professional Club Award (“Women of Vision Excelling in a Non-traditional Profession”); and the Delta Sigma Theta Community Service Award.

A noted historian, educator, and researcher, Dr. Martin performs most of the museum’s curatorial duties and has laid the groundwork for both architectural and exhibition design for their expanded museum.

Her husband, Dr. Elmer Martin passed away in 2001, while the couple was in Egypt. However, Dr. Martin has continued to carry on his legacy.

“I’m always going to give honor to Elmer because he was our visionary, and so much of what we do can be credited to him,” said Dr. Martin. “I marvel at his genius and just pray to God that I can come close to it in carrying on his memory.”

For more information about the National Great Blacks in Wax Museum visit www.greatblacksinwax.org.

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Maryland Department of Health donates critically needed ventilators to Ukraine

Annapolis— Governor Larry Hogan announced that the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) donated 50 Astral portable ventilators to treat patients at front line hospitals in Ukraine. Donated to the Paul Chester Children's Hope Foundation (PCCHF), a Dickerson-based grassroots medical organization that provides surgical care to people in developing countries—the ventilators will support the treatment of children and adults who have been wounded during the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

“The State of Maryland continues to stand in solidarity with President Zelensky and the people of Ukraine,” said Governor Hogan. “We are proud to make this donation to help save lives and aid the Ukrainians in the fight against Russian aggression.”

“Contributing medical equipment to help treat wounded Ukrainians in this great time of need is the least we can do,” said MDH Secretary Dennis R. Schrader. “I commend Dr. Chester and his team for all their efforts to help Ukrainian doctors and nurses provide critical medical services to the citizens of Kyiv, Lviv, and other worn-torn areas.”

The Maryland Department of General Services (DGS) provided logistical and other support. The portable ventilators are scheduled to depart the United States on Monday, March 21, 2022, and should arrive at front line hospitals throughout Ukraine later in the week.

“I am beyond grateful for Governor Hogan, Secretary Schrader, Delegate Kipke, and the Maryland Department of General Services for their generosity and kindness,” said Dr. William Chester, PCCHF co-founder. “Without the help of truly dedicated individuals in the state and the assistance of the Maryland Society of Anesthesiologists, this would not have been possible. These ventilators will save lives during and after this terrible, senseless crisis.”

The ventilators will help provide the additional support needed for the citizens of Ukraine, according to DGS Secretary Ellington E. Churchill, Jr.

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A Woman of Passion: Alicia Wilson, VP of Economic Development for JHU

By Ursula V. Battle

Alicia Wilson, Vice President of Economic Development for Johns Hopkins University and Johns Hopkins Health System in Baltimore, Maryland is passionate about making a difference in the community and ultimately helping people to live better lives.

In her post, Wilson leads a core team focused on developing and implementing Hopkins’ institution-wide strategies and initiatives as an anchor institution in and around Baltimore. She also oversees economic and neighborhood development, healthcare, and other efforts that focus on the elevation and expansion of Hopkins’ commitment to the city.

“I have really derived a lot of joy and fulfillment from being able to wake up every morning and think about how to harness the amazing and transformational impact of Johns Hopkins,” said Wilson. “Excellence in both healthcare and in education, along with harnessing the platform of Johns Hopkins for the betterment of people. For me, that’s really an exciting opportunity.”

As the nation celebrates Women’s History Month in March, a time commemorating and encouraging the study, observance, and celebration of the vital role of women in American history, Wilson took time to reflect on this special time of the year.

“I think that each and every moment of significance in our history, a woman was there, causing it to happen, making it happen, or playing a part in fulfilling the implementation of whatever happens,” said Wilson. “If it’s a good significant moment, a woman was there.”

“But often, we do not get to hear her story within history. And so, it’s good that we get to pause and reflect on women, but we should pause more than one moment of the year. But it’s great



Alicia Wilson is the Vice President of Economic Development for Johns Hopkins University and Johns Hopkins Health System in Baltimore. Courtesy Photo

that we get to pause for at least a month of the year to really focus on the role and significant impact that women have and have had on a day-to-day basis not only in our lives, but also on neighborhoods, communities, cities, states, the country, and the world in a targeted way.”

The 39-year-old trailblazer is also making her mark in women’s history. Wilson was recently selected as Chair of the CollegeBound Foundation, becoming the first CollegeBound Foundation alum, first woman, first African American and youngest Board Chair in the 30-year history of the organization. For more than 30 years, the CollegeBound Foundation has helped Baltimore City students realize their dreams of a college education.

“I would say that being the Chair of the CollegeBound Foundation is probably one of the most rewarding things I have been able to do in my life,” said Wilson. “The CollegeBound Foundation really was a program that not only ensured that I got to college, but also allowed for so many of my peers to attend college. Being able to serve an organization that served me so well is very fulfilling. It shows that people from our community when given the tools and resources, have the ability to achieve great heights and to be leaders in our communities.”

“Things like college tours and fellowships are investments that pays exponential dividends. I’m so honored that I’ve been able to have a measure of success, and I’m even more grateful that I

didn’t do it on my own, and that I can point to organizations within Baltimore that were difference-makers for me. And now able to serve those organizations and hopefully make a difference for another generation of leaders is tremendous.”

Prior to joining Hopkins, Wilson served as Senior Vice President of Impact Investments and Senior Legal Counsel to the Port Covington Development Team and as a partner at the downtown Baltimore law firm of Gordon Feinblatt. She is a graduate of the University of Maryland Baltimore County and the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law.

Wilson is the recipient of numerous awards and honors, and in 2019, she was profiled in *Forbes* magazine as the “The Black Millennial Lawyer Making Michelle Obama More Accessible to Baltimore’s Youth.” In 2018, the *National Business Journal* featured Wilson as one of the nation’s Top 50 Influencers under 40 and *Black Enterprise* produced a feature on Wilson for her work in securing the \$660 million tax increment financing for the Port Covington Project.

“We now get to see women that represent themselves in The White House and Fortune 500 corporations,” said Wilson. “The groundwork was laid for them by women whose names sometimes don’t get called at all...mothers, and leaders in their churches, neighborhoods, and communities.”

“I’m grateful for the tremendous accomplishments of women of all segments of our society that are wrapped up in the reflection that we’re able to see at the highest levels of our government, corporations and in nonprofits. This groundwork was laid by another woman that came before me that allows me to now occupy this space and to be able to take up the mantle and to help prepare the next generation.”

**“I want history to remember me... not as the first black woman to have made a bid for the presidency of the United States, but as a black woman who lived in the 20th century and who dared to be herself. I want to be remembered as a catalyst for change in America.”
—Shirley Chisholm**

Baltimore historian discovers ancestral links to Virginia Tech

By Andrea Blackstone

When many Americans were introduced to the culture and history of Africans, African Americans, and Indigenous people in elementary school, the information did not always offer opportunities to take a deeper look into the source of those interpreted stories.

When ShaRhonda Knott-Dawson penned an article for Education Post, she provided insight that illustrates the importance of historical presentation: “Africans are portrayed in schools as savage, barbaric people. Those who came to the Americas were ‘lucky’ because they were saved from savage, unstable, poverty-stricken Africa,” Knott-Dawson said in the article. “The new wave of pan-African scholars, are using genetics, archeology and other scientific advances, to present a more accurate picture of Africa. With these tools, I am proud to say I can trace the totality of my family’s Black history story and timeline in both Africa and the Americas.”

One woman from Baltimore, Dr. Kerri Moseley-Hobbs is also filling in some gaps to connect the past and present, while humanizing ancestors. Moseley-Hobbs became motivated to explore other angles of research and education on history of Africans, African Americans, and Indigenous people before the Civil War and ten years following it. As she embarked upon a path filled with education about her own ancestral history which runs deeper than the violence of slavery, Moseley-Hobbs found herself digging for details in Blacksburg, Virginia.

The undertaking led to a greater impact beyond her own roots as a sixth generation descendant of John Fraction. She now connects with more individuals who are descendants of the enslaved in Virginia through the More Than a Fraction Foundation (MTAFF). Moseley-Hobbs’ journey to founding the organization, connects with her drive to unpack history through another lens.



Dr. Kerri Moseley-Hobbs founded the “More Than a Fraction Foundation” to broaden research and education of the history, culture and experiences of Africans in America and African-Americans, while connecting them to our society today. While researching her own ancestry, she began collaborating with Virginia Tech and Historic Smithfield. Dr. Moseley-Hobbs will participate in programming to recognize 150 years of Virginia Tech’s history, which is located on the former site of a plantation where Black people were enslaved, March 24-26, 2022.

Courtesy Photo/The More Than a Fraction Foundation

“One of the first organizations I started working with is Historic Smithfield, which is the plantation where some of my ancestors were enslaved. It’s currently a house museum, so you can go visit and everything,” Moseley-Hobbs said.

The trip led to the curious Baltimorean to receive an invitation to join the Smithfield-Preston Foundation Board of Trustees. It oversees the Smithfield Museum, according to the EUR/Electronic Urban Report.

Moseley-Hobbs added that Fraction’s father is believed to be one of the first enslaved Africans who headed to the plantation that is now Virginia Tech University on a Maryland slave ship called the True Blue. The museum’s

leadership wanted her to assist with improving the interpretation of the enslaved community. Incorporating other descendants would also afford opportunities to “find a reference point.” This aspect entailed exploring their personalities, lives, and cultures.

“So, you know, [the] first time I went down to Historic Smithfield, it’s really on the campus of Virginia Tech University, and you learn that before Virginia Tech University was what it was, that entire campus was the original plantation where the house museum was, and so going down there to work with the house Museum, Virginia Tech kind of found out about the work I was still with them, and then welcomed me

to collaborate with Virginia Tech with helping Virginia Tech understand their history as a plantation site, but going a little beyond understanding because they are part of a movement called Universities Studying Slavery,” Moseley-Hobbs said.

Since Virginia Tech was willing to do more than place a plaque or sign on the site to acknowledge that a plantation once existed there, the research scholar’s journey took another turn. Moseley-Hobbs and Virginia Tech began walking the path of discovery together for the last five years. This major component influenced Moseley-Hobbs to found the MTAFF. Sharing whatever is learned with Virginia Tech now can be shared with other organizations through MTAFF, in addition to expanding the work’s reach.

“So with the Foundation, we’re able to do projects with other people; we’re able to help other people; other people are able to find us and ask us questions about what we’ve learned so far; and... what we would suggest for them,” Moseley-Hobbs said. “And so the Foundation was developed to show that we had a very, very specific niche that we’re focusing on in that we are willing to help other people in other organizations, should they need the assistance.”

Moseley-Hobbs’ impact is growing. A \$10,000 grant was awarded to MTAFF by The Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation to assist with the presentation of the “1872 Forward: Celebrating Virginia Tech” series of events from March 24-26, 2022 at Virginia Tech, in partnership with the Council for Virginia Tech History. Additionally, MTAFF received an \$8,000 grant from Virginia Humanities. Tours of Historic Smithfield, performances, and presentations will be held. Descendants of the enslaved people of Smithfield Plantation will travel from Baltimore to participate.

To learn more about Moseley-Hobbs and MTAFF, visit: www.MoreThanAFraction.org.



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BWI Marshall Hosts 2nd Annual AMAC Economic Opportunity and Policy Forum

By Beverly Richards

Nearly 200 Black, Latino and Asian aviation professionals from across the United States touched down in Washington, DC, for the 2nd Annual Airport Minority Advisory Council (AMAC) Economic Opportunity and Policy Forum, hosted by BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport, March 20 - 22, 2022. Forum attendees gathered at the Washington Marriott Metro Center in downtown, Washington, DC, to hear industry leaders, government officials and business representatives exchange ideas, share entrepreneurship best practices, and highlight economic prospects.

“AMAC is thrilled to welcome our members to our first in-person event since 2019,” said Eboni Wimbush, AMAC President and CEO as she introduced DC Mayor Muriel Bowser, who brought greetings to the group while acknowledging the important role that airports play in the regional economy by supporting business and tourism travel.

The forum was two-fold in purpose. First, it brought business owners and people in the industry together to share available opportunities. We had decision-makers from several airports at the table, including: BWI; Philadelphia International; Richmond International; Raleigh–Durham International; Long Beach Airport; Jackson–Medgar Wiley Evers International; and Seattle-Tacoma. They detailed immediate and long-range plans for concession, professional services, marketing, supplies, and construction contracts. In addition, they provided updates on Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) and Airport Concessions Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (ACDBE) program.

Secondly, the forum offered insights on airports local and regional economic impacts, AMAC’s federal legislative agenda, and featured panel discussions with key Congressional and Administration leaders that included the Chair of the Subcommittee on Aviation, Congressman Rick Larson, and Congressman Hank Johnson of Georgia.



The 2nd Annual Airport Minority Advisory Council Economic Opportunity and Policy Forum hosted by BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport was held in Washington D.C. March 20 - 22, 2022. (Left to right) Ricky D. Smith, AMAC Chair and CEO of BWI Marshall Airport; DC Mayor Muriel Bowser; and Eboni Wimbush, AMAC President and CEO.

Photo Credit: Khalid Naji-Allah

District of Columbia’s Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), an avid supporter for economic equity for women and minorities and Chair of the House Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure addressed the group in person. Maryland’s 7th District Congressman Kwesi Mfume, a Vice Chair of the Subcommittee on Small Business and Chair of a Subcommittee on Contracting and Infrastructure, offered compelling comments via Zoom from his office in the US Capitol.

Day one of the forum focused on economic opportunities with national and international airports within the aviation industry. Day two focused on AMAC’s legislative agenda, where attendees were able to engage with lawmakers and regulators to discuss the importance of the DBE/ACDBE programs.

Keynote speaker Shannetta R. Griffin, P.E., Associate Administrator of Airports, Federal Aviation Administration set the tone for the forum by discussing the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). Talking about

how airports must implement them, the Biden/Harris goals for equity under BIL, and what that means, for AMAC members.

“We were excited to have Shannetta Griffin as she leads a team of over 600 employees, with a budget of over \$3.5 billion annually, but more importantly, she’s oversees the \$25 billion being administered through BIL,” said Wimbush

Workshops for the two-day forum included: Reform, Strengthen and Modernize—A New Approach to Business: The COVID-19 pandemic forced almost every business, including federal agencies, to change its operation. The “new normal” demands thinking beyond numbers, focusing on economic development, and business growth so more people can achieve success and build wealth, workforce and business diversity.

Networking Lunch—The Power of Speaking Out—Leveraging the Legislative Process for Business Success: Attendees learned why legislative advocacy is important to the

people and businesses aligned with AMAC’s mission, how engagement in public policy assists in driving supplier and workforce diversity and inclusion efforts, and about AMAC’s legislative agenda and how to leverage our unified strength and influence to impact positive change for minorities and women in the aviation industry.

The Way Forward—Current and Future Trends: What’s happening on Capitol Hill and updates on the Administration’s initiatives.

National, Regional and Local Business and Employment Opportunities— Construction, Concessions, Professional Services and Contracting: Airport representatives from small, medium, and large airports shared business and employment opportunities for minorities, women, small contractors, and suppliers beyond the ACDBE/DBE program (e.g., PFC-funded projects, daily goods/services procurements), plus upcoming AEC, concession, and other non-federally funded contracts.

“Attendees also heard from the FAA on regulatory issues that affect concessionaires. AMAC principles discussed legislative priorities directly related to “moving the needle to impact [AMAC’s] mission around both the employment advancements of minorities and women in the [aerospace],” said Wimbush.

“The forum provided a dialogue to help encourage full opportunities for minorities across airports and aviation,” said Ricky Smith, Executive Director/CEO, BWI Marshall Airport and Chair, AMAC Board of Directors. “AMAC is providing important leadership to help foster and grow these principles. We look forward to continuing to share information and insights with stakeholders from around the country at our Annual AMAC Airport Business Diversity Conference in Chicago this June 20-22, 2022.”

For more about AMAC, visit www.amac-org.com.

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