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Goldie Wilson: Doll Maker, Author Crafts a Rare Legacy

*Goldie Wilson's
interpretation of Queen
Charlotte of Britain
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*Cloth Doll,
Christmas Time*



*French Bru
reproduction
porcelain doll*



*One of a kind
porcelain doll named
Her Highness*



M&T, Operation Hope, Big Brothers Big Sisters Join Forces to Host 'Teach Children to Save Day' Event

By Demetrius Dillard

Over the past several years, there has been a nationwide push to implement and promote financial literacy in school systems so that young people are prepared to make well-informed decisions regarding money management and spending habits.

To culminate financial literacy month, M&T Bank partnered with Operation Hope and Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) for Teach Children to Save Day, which is a national event observed annually on April 27. The local get-together featured 20 third and fourth grade students from South Baltimore's Westport Academy, 20 M&T volunteers and representatives from Operation Hope and BBBS.

According to data cited by M&T, 25 percent of Americans do not have anyone they can ask for trustworthy financial guidance. Organizations such as Operation Hope and M&T are attempting to reverse this trend.

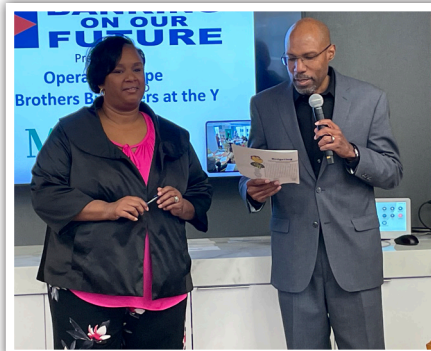
"It's important for us to pour into these young people the financial lessons that will allow them to grow up into financially savvy adults," said Jim Peterson, who serves as vice president/small business ambassador of M&T Bank.

"We're just happy to be able to provide a place and a setting to be able to experience this kind of activity."

In addition to elementary school-aged children, Peterson also works with local high schoolers to instill financial discipline. He was recently at Patterson High School conducting a money management forum, emphasizing the significance of credit, budgeting and saving, he said.

"We teach financial literacy in these schools because we want these young people to get these lessons. They may not be ready for it yet, but if they hear it enough, eventually it will become a habit and then they'll be financially literate adults," Peterson said.

The event, which lasted about an hour and a half, was held at M&T's regional headquarters at 1 Light Street



Cassandra Ferguson, Program Manager, Eastern Region, Operation HOPE and Jim Peterson, VP commercial banking, small business ambassador, M&T Bank facilitate financial bingo where students learn important terms about finance and saving



M&T volunteer and Corey Kennedy of Big Brothers Big Sisters help students complete a financial activity during Teach Children to Save Day at M&T headquarters



Students learn the value of savings and money with the support of volunteers from M&T, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and Operation HOPE

"We teach financial literacy in these schools because we want these young people to get these lessons."

in downtown Baltimore, where students were taught age-appropriate lessons on finances, the importance of saving, 'needs' as opposed to 'wants' and more.

Some of the day's hands-on activities included financial word search puzzles, financial literacy bingo and decorating M&T-branded piggy banks, among others.

For nearly a decade, M&T Bank has partnered with Operation Hope and BBBS for numerous events that empower the next generation of local youth and allows M&T employees to volunteer their time and expertise to introduce students to banking tools that will help carve a path to financial security and independence.

The three organizations acknowledge the profound importance of financial literacy education at an early age. Youngsters learning money management skills and knowledge will likely lead to more positive outcomes in adulthood.

"The event turned out phenomenally," said Corey Kennedy, a program site specialist for Big Brothers Big Sisters, an organization facilitated locally through the YMCA of Central Maryland.

"The kids loved it; they learned a lot. The mentors enjoyed working with the kids," Kennedy said.

"The kids walked away with physical takeaways and knowledgeable things that they can take home and to their schools."

Seeing children grasp banking terms and concepts, along with going home with Baltimore Ravens hats and M&T piggy banks, were the two highlights of the day in Kennedy's estimation.

"There's so many young people who

don't know the power of financial intelligence and financial knowledge and literacy," he said. "We think that it's imperative that at a young age they learn the importance of money."

Teach Children to Save Day is one of the many financial education-oriented functions that M&T hosts on a regular basis, Peterson added.

Correspondingly, Cassandra Ferguson of Operation Hope said the much-needed partnership aims to bridge the gap for things that aren't taught in schools about finances. Prior to BBBS joining the partnership, Operation Hope collaborated with M&T for financial literacy initiatives and projects.

A nonprofit founded in 1992, the Atlanta-based Operation Hope provides financial literacy empowerment and economic education to youth and adults. Hence, events such as Teach Children to Save Day are highly anticipated.

"Better financial decisions are made — we feel like — when we start them at a young age and teach them at a young age," said Ferguson, the organization's program manager who trained M&T volunteers to deliver Operation Hope's financial education curriculum to students during the event.

"The potential I see — as long as [the children] keep that momentum, keep an open mind about learning about finances, I believe that they will be great adults, young adults and even leaders of their families, and they will make great decisions on their finances... some of the mistakes their parents, grandparents or guardians may have made about finances, they won't make those mistakes."

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Mental Health Awareness Month 2023 – A Battle of the Brain for nearly 75 Years

By Regi Taylor

The intense impact of negative mental health on America resulting from the COVID 19 virus would have one believe that the depression, anxiety, and suicidal inclinations caused by the overwhelming stress, anxiousness, loneliness, and widespread death and deadly symptoms of the pandemic are a contemporary phenomenon.

However, in its seventy-fourth year as a national observance, Mental Health Awareness Month was established by proclamation in 1949 by the United States Congress responding to increasing numbers of military veterans suffering mental illnesses upon returning from World War II, what today would be described as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, PTSD.

According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, 90% of U.S. adults believe our country is currently facing a collective mental health crisis. Indeed, the 24/7, unrelenting stressors Americans endure, personal and societal, disease, political turmoil, wars, terrorism, gun violence, domestic violence, crime victimization, housing instability, food instability, economic turbulence, global warming, environmental catastrophes, health challenges, and interpersonal relationship issues, clearly diminish the average person's quality of life and optimism.

These same categories of stress and life challenges are even more devastating to children and youth in their formative years. Referred to as Acute Childhood Experiences, ACEs, the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, the CDC, has determined that this condition will have a debilitating impact on children's future violence victimization and perpetration, have lifelong negative health consequences, and reduce opportunities for personal advancement.

The effects of the COVID 19 pandemic on already overly stressed Americans' mental health cannot be exaggerated. Since the onset of the pandemic until now, many adults have presented prominent symptoms of anxiety and depression, with 40% of adults newly reporting these

symptoms in 2021.

A by-product of increased mental illness in recent years has also precipitated drastic drug overdose deaths – mainly resulting from fentanyl. Besides accidental drug abuse deaths, suicide deaths have also risen, affecting communities of color and youth disproportionately.

Statistics reveal that approximately one-in-four African Americans seek mental health treatment, compared to two-in-four Caucasians. Disparities in health care access is a major contributor to this finding. One-in-ten Black people in the U.S. have no health insurance, compared to one-in-twenty non-Hispanic white people.

Mental Health America reports that one-in-five adults currently experience mental illness, nearly 50 million Americans. Their research finds that roughly one-in-twenty Americans experience severe mental illness.

Among African American young people between 2015 and 2018, major depressive episodes increased from 9%-10.3 % in the 12-17 age range; from 6.1 % to 9.4 % in young adults 18-25; and 5.7% to 6.3% among the 26–49-year-old age range.

Between genders, women are almost twice as likely to be diagnosed with major depression than are men, based on findings reported by Johns Hopkins, with major depression usually developing at an average age in the mid-20s. The World Health Organization has found that depression is 50% more prevalent among women than men.

With the rise of youth suicide and reported increases in mental health crises, Maryland's newly elected governor, Wes Moore, has made access to care and treatment of psychological health a priority. The governor promised to prioritize the mental health of Maryland students to ensure their academic success at a media event hosted by Behavioral Health System in Baltimore in January. The discussion included U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra and was attended by local and national youth mental health experts.

The following statistics are a contemporary snapshot of mental health



“Mental Health America reports that one-in-five adults currently experience mental illness, nearly 50 million Americans. Their research finds that roughly one-in-twenty Americans experience severe mental illness.”

in Baltimore City provided by the Public Behavioral Health System for Baltimore, fiscal year 2018, servicing substance abuse and mental health for low-income individuals and families and people who are uninsured. PBHS serves over 75,000 people annually on a budget of over \$585 million.

- In Baltimore, 42% of adults have experienced three or more ACEs, compared to 24% statewide.
- Extreme poverty and racism are drivers of ACEs. In Baltimore 24% of people live below the poverty line compared to 9.9% of people statewide
- ACEs increase the risk of suicide attempts by two- to five-fold
- Each ACE increases the likelihood of early initiation into illicit drug use by two- to four-fold
- Since 2013 overdoses in Baltimore

more than doubled, driven by opioids.

- In Baltimore City in 2017 there were 888 overdose deaths; 758 involved fentanyl.
- According to the CDC, suicide rates have increased 30% since 1999.
- Rates of youth suicide are significantly higher in Baltimore than the rest of the state.
- 31.9% of Baltimore high school students feel sad or hopeless
- 19.2% of city students have seriously considered suicide
- 16% have made a plan about how they would attempt suicide

If the circumstances that contribute to mental health crises among children were not already too much, consider the terror young Americans face with the constant specter of mass shootings.

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EDITORIAL

It Takes A Village Elder: Older Americans Month Turns 60

By Regi Taylor

Older Americans Month, formerly 'Senior Citizens Month,' turned 60 years old this year. It was America's thirty-fifth president, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, who signed a proclamation on April 18, 1963, that established what has come to be known as Older Americans Month.

The idea was proposed to President Kennedy by members of the National Council of Senior Citizens. Despite celebrating the achievements of past and current older Americans, particularly those who served militarily, the proposed holiday was also an occasion to honor forgone generations who sacrificed personally that this country might achieve its otherwise unprecedented wealth and power.

This is particularly true of African American elders. Whether ignorance regarding the African American legacy, an American legacy, it is either historically lost or ignored that Americans of African ancestry officially arrived in North America in 1619, twelve years after Jamestown, Virginia was settled by Europeans, in 1607. They brought with them the multi-millennia African tradition of reverence for elders.

Not only did transplanted African village elders resume their status at the top of the social and cultural pecking order among slaves in the antebellum South. The history also establishes Black people in America, along with the Pilgrims, as this country's oldest residents other than indigenous peoples, revealing the absurdity of the racist 'go-back-where-you-came-from' taunts by bigots.

The impetus for the original Senior Citizens Month in 1963, unfortunately, was not born so much from American society's veneration of elders, as much as a looming economic and public relations crisis pertaining to the dire economic circumstances of millions of seniors, among them many World War I and

World War II veterans.

Even in 2023, there are more than 100,000 living World War II vets. Older Americans Month is certainly a well-deserved honor bestowed to America's seniors and aging soldiers, but the elevated dignity conferred to the country's elders as a class hardly exists.

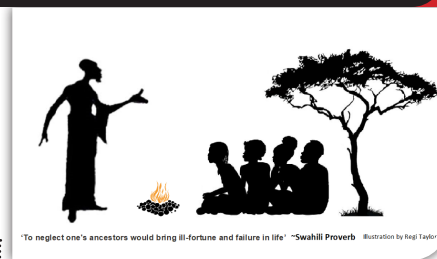
A May 12, 2018, question to the online community message board, Quora, asked: "Why does our society shun the elderly, where other cultures revere older people? Two generations after JFK established Senior Citizens Month, American popular culture still acknowledges that elderly Americans are still not regarded in the highest esteem by virtue of their elder status exclusively, as they are in African and Asian cultures, for instance.

As a national resource during a period in America when wisdom, experience, and patience, virtues most abundant among older populations, are needed more than ever to address a host of circumstances threatening the country's viability and sustainability, namely the well-being of our children and their preparation to inherit and manage this world, relying upon older Americans is more vital than ever.

It can be argued that the American cultural practice of relegating millions of mentally astute, able-bodied seniors to institutions where they sometimes spend decades watching grass grow has cost the country in untold, immeasurable ways.

When President Kennedy proclaimed Senior Citizens Month in 1963, there were 17 million Americans over age 55, 9% of the country's total population of 189 million. Today the over 55-year-old segment of Americans represent nearly 30% of roughly 325 million of the total population, nearly 100 million persons.

These senior demographics represent both a new challenge to America and a unique opportunity. Illness associated with aging correlates with a critical redistribution of resources to provide additional medical services, caretaker assistance, nutritional requirements, and institutional and residential rehabilitation



*To neglect one's ancestors would bring ill-fortune and failure in life - Swahili Proverb Illustration by Regi Taylor

of living spaces to accommodate elder lifestyles.

On the other hand, there are millions of retired professionals, craftsmen, artists, scientists, academicians, politicians, clergy, medical professionals, among others, who are able to ply their trades and exercise their expertise, who haven't been called upon to answer America's urgent contemporaneous needs.

Among our country's most pressing emergencies, gun violence and the plight of our youth and young adults, older Americans, a critically underutilized resource, represent the best solution to mentor, advise, train, and nurture this nation's future parents, voters, and leaders. One of America's greatest shortcomings may be the social and cultural disconnect between our youngest and eldest citizens. Imagine the vibrant two-way learning and enlightenment that could take place.

An ancient Central-African proverb of the Ntomba people says that "a youth that does not cultivate friendship with the elderly is like a tree without roots." Perhaps older Americans' companionship, empathy, and life experience could substitute for much of the electronic babysitting currently enculturating our children.

Perhaps many of the wayward expressions - exhibited by our youth might be curtailed by the compassionate involvement of seniors, many of whom are languishing themselves due to inactivity. Perhaps many young people are acting out because they lack the affection and approval that only wise elders can provide.

'The Child Who Is Not Embraced by the Village Will Burn It Down to Feel Its Warmth' - African proverb.



By Jayne Hopson

Swimsuit season is almost here, but there's still time to shed a few pounds before hitting the beach. Looking svelte in a brand-new bathing suit is a worthy health and fitness goal. However, there is a far more compelling reason for counting calories. According to research from the American Cancer Society (ACS), "being overweight or obese is clearly linked to an overall increased risk of cancer."

The National Institute of Health (NIH) and their agency the National Cancer Institute describe obesity as "a disease in which a person has an unhealthy amount and/or distribution of body fat. Compared with people of healthy weight, those with overweight or obesity are at greater risk for many diseases, including diabetes, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, stroke, and at least 13 types of cancer."

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports the prevalence of obesity in the United States varies widely among racial and ethnic groups. In 2020, the non-Hispanic Black population had the highest percentage of obesity, weighing in (excuse the pun) at 49.69%, followed by non-white Hispanics, 45.6. and whites 41.1%. Asians had the lowest rate 16.01%.

The ACS says, "excess body weight is thought to be responsible for about 11% of cancers in women and about 5% of cancers in men in the United States, as well as about 7% of all cancer deaths." The cancers studied include, breast (in women past menopause) colon and rectal cancer, endometrial, esophagus, gallbladder, kidney, liver, ovarian, pancreas, stomach, thyroid prostate and multiple myeloma.

Their research indicates "the links between body weight and cancer are complex and are not yet fully understood. For example, while studies have found that excess weight is linked with an increased risk of breast cancer in women after menopause, it does not seem to increase the risk of breast cancer before menopause."



Photo credit: Shutterstock

Another noteworthy finding from the ACS's research is "the timing of weight gain might also affect cancer risk. Being overweight during childhood and young adulthood might be more of a risk factor than gaining weight later in life for some cancers. For example, some research suggests that women who are

overweight as teenagers (but not those who gain weight as adults) may be at higher risk for developing ovarian cancer before menopause."

To better understand "the relationship between weight loss among people with obesity and cancer risk, some researchers are examining cancer risk in people with

obesity who have undergone bariatric surgery (surgery performed on the stomach or intestines to provide maximum and sustained weight loss). Studies have found that bariatric surgery among people with obesity, particularly women, is associated with reduced risks of cancer overall, says The National Cancer Institute.

The connections between obesity and cancer beg the question, does losing weight reduce the risk of cancer? While the ACS's response reflects the absence of empirical proof that dieting decreases the cancer risk, it nevertheless offers indirect, but viable connections between obesity and cancer.

"Some body changes that occur as a result of weight loss suggest it may, indeed, reduce cancer risk. For example, overweight or obese people who intentionally lose weight have reduced levels of certain hormones that are related to cancer risk, such as insulin, estrogens, and androgens," says ACS.

The NIH says "for most Americans who do not use tobacco, the most important cancer risk factors that can be changed are body weight, diet, and physical activity. At least 18% of all cancers diagnosed in the US are related to excess body weight, physical inactivity, excess alcohol consumption, and/or poor nutrition, and thus could be prevented."

The following NIH recommendations offer practical but effective ways to help break the links between cancer and obesity. "Along with avoiding tobacco products, staying at a healthy weight, staying active throughout life, and eating a healthy diet may greatly reduce a person's lifetime risk of developing or dying from cancer. These same behaviors are also linked with a lower risk of developing heart disease and diabetes."

"Although these healthy choices can be made by each of us, they can be helped or slowed by the social, physical, economic, and regulatory environment in which we live. Community efforts are needed to create an environment that makes it easier for us to make healthy choices when it comes to diet and physical activity."



Making Vitamins and Dietary Supplements Your Friend, Not Foe

By Jayne Hopson

Fans of “I Love Lucy” will remember the episode when Lucy unwittingly becomes intoxicated after drinking a vitamin supplement with alcohol as its main ingredient. After passing herself off as an experienced television spokeswoman, Lucy struggles to get her lines straight during the filming of the commercial. The problem is, before each take, she is asked to sip a foul-tasting, seven syllable dietary supplement called Vitameatavegamin.

“One spoonful after dinner each night” is advertised to cure everything from unpopularity to listlessness, making people who buy the product feel like the life of the party.

No surprise the vitamin drink lives up to its claim to put pep back in your step. The supplement is 23% alcohol. The audience bursts into laughter watching Lucy make funny faces and slur her words as the alcohol in Vitameatavegamin begins to keep its promise to lift the spirits—pun intended.

In real life, the consumption of vitamins and dietary supplements to help us feel better is not played for laughs. It is a big business. According to a report published in the New York Times, “52 percent of the American population use at least one dietary supplement and spend more than \$60 billion a year on vitamins, minerals, and herbal products.”

That’s extraordinary money up for grabs, from the sale of wellness products “that can be brought to market without submitting any evidence to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that they are safe and effective in people, writes Jane Brady, in her NYT article titled “Studies Show Little Benefit in Supplements.”

Brady’s view is mirrored by a NYT editorial entitled “The Supplement Paradox: Negligible Benefits, Robust Consumption” written by Dr. Pieter A. Cohen, of Cambridge Health Alliance and Somerville Hospital Primary Care in Massachusetts.

While Dr. Cohen acknowledges,



Photo credit: Shutterstock

“supplements are essential to treat vitamin and mineral deficiencies” and that “certain combinations of nutrients can help some medical conditions, like age-related macular degeneration. He believes “for the majority of adults, supplements likely provide little, if any, benefit.”

There are federal agencies to safeguard our use of vitamins, minerals and organic dietary products. The Office of Dietary Supplements (ODS), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), is the lead agency. The ODS requires “manufacturers follow good manufacturing practices (GMPs) to ensure the

identity, purity, strength, and composition of their products.”

The FDA “monitors the marketplace for potential illegal products that may be unsafe or make false or misleading claims. If the FDA finds a dietary supplement to be unsafe, it may remove the product from the marketplace or ask the manufacturer to voluntarily recall the product.”

The Federal Trade Commission, which monitors product advertising, also requires information about a supplement product to be truthful and not misleading.

NIH advises: “some dietary sup-

plements can help you get adequate amounts of essential nutrients if you don’t eat a nutritious variety of foods. However, supplements can’t take the place of the variety of foods that are important to a healthy eating routine.”

For example:

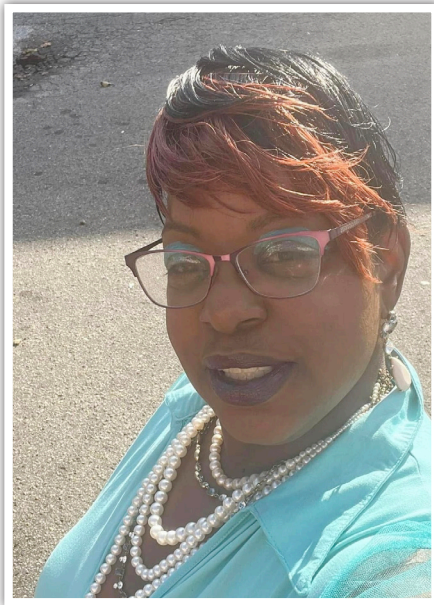
- Calcium and vitamin D help keep bones strong and reduce bone loss.
- Folic acid decreases the risk of certain birth defects.
- Omega-3 fatty acids from fish oils might help some people with heart disease.
- A combination of vitamins C and E, zinc, copper, lutein, and zeaxanthin (known as an AREDS formula) may slow down further vision loss in people with age-related macular degeneration (AMD).

The OSD notes: “you are most likely to have side effects from dietary supplements if you take them at high doses or instead of prescribed medicines, or if you take many different supplements. Some supplements can increase the risk of bleeding or, if taken before surgery, can change your response to anesthesia. Supplements can also interact with some medicines in ways that might cause problems.”

Here are a few examples from the OSD:

- Vitamin K can reduce the ability of the blood thinner warfarin to prevent blood from clotting.
- St. John’s wort can speed the breakdown of many medicines and reduce their effectiveness (including some antidepressants, birth control pills, heart medications, anti-HIV medications and transplant drugs).
- Manufacturers may add vitamins, minerals, and other supplement ingredients to foods you eat, especially breakfast cereals and beverages. As a result, you may get more of these ingredients than you think, and more might not be better
- Taking more than you need costs more and might also raise your risk of side effects. For example, too much vitamin A can cause headaches and liver damage, reduce bone strength and cause birth defects. Excess iron causes nausea and vomiting and may damage the liver and other organs.

Caring Mother Shares Love and Home



Vanessa Cain, a caring mother who is raising a biological child and another young girl who became fond of her.

By Andrea Blackstone

Vanessa Cain knows firsthand that unexpected surprises can accompany motherhood. Cain grew up in the old Newtowne 20 community in Annapolis, Maryland with her mother, Ethel Bass (“Sissy”) and siblings. Bass reportedly passed away in 2012.

“She was just known for having a big heart,” Cain said, reflecting on memories of her mother. “When she cooked, people in the community loved her famous spaghetti. She called it goulash. If she knew you were thirsty, she’d give you water. People called her the community mom.”

Cain is following in Bass’ footsteps by serving as a community mom and guardian. She now resides in Glen Burnie while raising De’Aubrie Sheppard, her 10-year-old biological daughter, and Princess Bradford, an 11-year-old who developed a fondness for Cain. The young girl has known “Aunt Vanessa” for approximately four years. Princess and Cain met when Princess attended one of De’Aubrie’s birthday parties.

“After that, I started spending the night over her house and I started liking it



Princess Bradford, Vanessa Cain and De’Aubrie Sheppard share time during a Christmas outing at a church /Courtesy Photos

there,” Princess said.

When the young girl asked Cain if she could move in because she did not like where she lived, Cain listened. Princess has experienced living in different homes and attending different schools from the time she was a baby. Cain’s cousin once cared for Princess, but she was moving.

Today, Princess resides in Cain’s household. Cain said that Princess has lived with them for a little over three years.

“She’s nice, funny and pretty,” Princess said, referring to Cain. “She’s always taking care of her family and people that she loves.”

Princess has grown to regard Cain

as a second mother. She remarked that mothers are important for kids to have because they take care of their children and are there for them.

“So, if you have any problem, you can talk to them and they will understand the problem,” Princess said.

De’Aubrie is also fond of her loving mother, who she said displays kindness. De’Aubrie’s father is deceased. Cain’s daughter enjoys watching movies at home and participating in game night with Cain and Princess.

“I like to have fun with her and go out to restaurants,” De’Aubrie said, speaking about Cain. “She has a positive heart.”

Cain is a hands-on mother who recalled

Bass’ experience of being a strong, single parent.

“She always said to us [her children], just keep your faith in God and everything will be okay. When we were kids, we didn’t understand it, but now I understand what she meant,” Cain said.

Cain added that protecting kids is important, in addition to making them feel unafraid to bring topics of concern to their parents or guardians, even if the adult may not like the subject matter.

“I feel like that is very important because now I see a lot of kids that are not shown that love. They take it somewhere else,” Cain said.

Cain comprehends what it is like to experience homelessness and need help. She was working three jobs when her mother died. Unexpected circumstances led Cain to experience credit problems. Since Bass did not have much life insurance, the funeral home needed money, according to Cain. She was faced with the choice of paying rent or helping to lay her mother to rest. But the financial struggle placed Cain on an uncertain path. Strangers later helped Cain and her biological daughter by letting them live in their home. Princess later joined them.

Cain reflected on a time when she was barely making ends meet while taking care of De’Aubrie. She still listened to God’s guidance when Princess expressed her desire to live with them.

“Things just started moving into place. I ended up finding a two-bedroom apartment with one and a half bathrooms. I surprised the kids. I told them as long as we’re together, I’ll make sure we’ll never be homeless again,” Cain said. “I let them know that no matter how hard the struggle may be, no matter how much you think you don’t have the strength, you’ve got to keep your faith in God.”

Cain is a faith-filled woman who said that additional breakthroughs for her family unit are coming.

Myra Harris knows Cain from church. She agrees with Princess and De’Aubrie that Cain possesses a caring, sacrificial spirit.

“I see Vanessa as phenomenal. Vanessa goes above and beyond the call of duty,” Harris said. “She does things for her daughter and Princess. She treats Princess as her own.”

Unstoppable Mother Transforms Her Life: Hardship Evolves into Success



Sandra Cooper, mother and successful entrepreneur.



*Brittney Leighton as a young child
/Courtesy Photos*



Sandra Cooper (center) with her two children

By Andrea Blackstone

Sandra Cooper knows firsthand that a person's starting point in life is not as important as where hard work and determination takes them. She traveled from Indiana to Baltimore at the age of 15 years old, driven to reshape her life on her own terms.

Brittney Leighton, Cooper's daughter who resides in the Baltimore area, reflected on her mother's riveting journey.

"She wanted to get away from Muncie [Indiana] at the time and start a new life somewhere else," Leighton said. "It's always just been her with no family here at all."

Cooper's daughter added that challenges with her mother's father led Cooper to set her sights on other horizons in another place. Living with a male friend in Baltimore was Cooper's next stop before meeting Leighton's father.

"She had me at the age of 20 and she had my brother [Van Carroll Jr.] three years after me," Leighton explained. "She married in her late 40's. She's been

a single mother."

Cooper once lived in Section Eight housing while needing additional government assistance, including food stamps, while rearing two children in Howard County. But Leighton said that her mother has always been a self-employed individual, with the exception of working for CarMax, selling cars. Cooper earned a GED from the Howard Community College in Maryland, located in Howard County while working at McDonald's.

"Growing up, my mom always made sure that we had clothes and food to eat. She always made sure that we were well taken care of," Leighton said, also explaining that her mother was consistently involved in her children's education.

Cooper armed herself with the desire to strive to achieve bigger goals. She began furthering her career in the real estate field as a real estate agent while working in car sales.

Hard work paid off for Cooper. She now manages and owns properties. Additionally, Cooper is the CEO and

founder of Bright Horizons Behavioral Health, located in Baltimore County. The business opened in 2016. Byron Cooper, Sandra Cooper's husband, is the COO. Leighton works as the office manager. She has been employed in the woman-owned business for approximately seven years.

"We service adults and adolescents for substance abuse, mental health and behavioral services," Leighton said, explaining the purpose of Bright Horizons Behavioral Health. "We also have a federal contract that we've had for about six years now, and we service their clients that are on probation or awaiting trial for substance abuse, mental health and any psychiatric needs."

She also mentioned that the business offers intensive outpatient treatment, general outpatient treatment and various therapies. Approximately 300 clients are currently served through the business.

Leighton also shared that the Coopers are based in Myrtle Beach. Byron and Sandra wed approximately six years ago.

"Now, my mom's trying to open a restaurant in Myrtle Beach," Leighton

said. "She never stops. She has always been a go-getter who makes a way."

Sandra's sense of ambition led her daughter to understand the importance of taking care of herself. But Leighton also explained that her brother became entangled in legal trouble that led to his incarceration.

"So that kind of made our mom want to open this behavioral health clinic as well to help people with substance abuse and mental health needs," Leighton said.

She added that her stepfather has been clean from substances for over 30 years. Leighton said that the Coopers both created the substance abuse and mental health business idea.

"My mom's amazing and her husband is the perfect balance for her. He's probably the best partner that she's had since I've been able to remember," Leighton added.

Expanding the business is on the Cooper's horizon. Leighton said that her mother's entrepreneurial spirit inspires her.

"It just shows me that I can do anything that I put my mind to as well," Leighton said. "First and foremost, my mother's just shown me to never give up on anything."

Through a growing women's group called Trustworthy Tuesdays, Sandra leads a Zoom call meeting each Tuesday at 7 p.m. for others, too. Women from all over the world discuss anything that they would like to chat about while sisterhood and networking is promoted.

"My mother usually starts it out each week with a scripture that she wants to talk about. They kind of piggyback off that and a title that she creates every week," Leighton said.

Cooper is now a grandmother who enjoys the fruits of investing in a generational legacy.

"My mother inspires me to be a better person and do better things in my life," Leighton said. "She's always there, so I would be lost if I didn't have her."

Goldie Wilson: Doll Maker, Author Crafts a Rare Legacy

By Andrea Blackstone

The name Goldie Wilson is well known in the doll world. Dolls by Goldie has become her brand. The talented dollmaker was born in 1938 and raised in Alabama.

“I’ve made hundreds and hundreds of dolls,” Wilson said. “My ideas come late at night when I’m in bed thinking.”

Wilson is a porcelain doll artist who started bringing her creative endeavor to life in 1990 through reproduction doll making. At the time, the dolls were made from someone else’s molds. But most dolls Wilson creates today are made of porcelain slip. The entrepreneur has made dollmaking a part of her legacy. Wilson does not take orders or reproduce her one-of-a-kind creations. Wilson stated that she believes that she is the only African American porcelain doll artist in the United States that creates complete porcelain dolls.

“Right now, I do what I call commission work. I make a certain amount of dolls, then I send an email message out [to my email list of subscribers] with pictures of the dolls and prices. They’re sold on a first come, first served basis. At this time, I cut back my productivity to creating only six to 10 dolls to sell,” Wilson said. “Those dolls start from \$500 up to \$1,000.”

The resident of South Carolina explained that interested customers contact her after reading an informational email about her dolls that are available to be sold. Thereafter, Wilson does not make another doll like it.

Looking at people, and visually noting their features, inspires Wilson’s doll creations. The dollmaker pays homage to another time in the world when young people were taught practical skills. As a child, Wilson was taught to sew.

“I started when I was five years old because my grandmother was a seamstress,” Wilson said.

From start to finish, it often takes Wilson two months to create a doll. Wilson’s ability to add the most minute details to her dolls comes in handy. Making original creations requires her to make molds, sculpt them and even make



Alice in Wonderland Special Boxed Set created in an ultra-limited edition of 12 for the Maryland Society of Doll Collectors 2020 Luncheon includes The White Rabbit, Queen of Hearts, and upgraded Alice in Wonderland.

“I’ve made hundreds and hundreds of dolls,” Goldie Wilson said.



Goldie Wilson, a porcelain doll artist created a Queen Charlotte of Bridgerton porcelain doll, including the hairstyle, shoes, dress and elaborate clothing. Chris Van Dusen created Bridgerton, a fictional historical romance that streamed on Netflix. /Courtesy photo

doll wigs and clothing.

Wilson’s dollmaking began after she attended a Black doll show when she purchased her first doll that she collected. Wilson was also the proprietor of a ceramic store in Prince George’s County Maryland back in 1980. She brought the reproduction dolls into her ceramic store and began teaching reproduction doll making.

But Wilson noted that the presence of Black dolls is rooted in the days of slavery. Enslaved people would make dolls from corn husks and whatever could be used to make rag dolls, so their children would have something to play with, too.

“A lot of people think about dolls as a plaything, but dolls are a part of your history. Black dolls clubs were formed to keep our history alive through dolls,” Wilson said.

Wilson added that the Black doll shows

that she had participated in were attended by people who collected all sorts of dolls as a hobby, from Barbies to other types of them. She is currently a member of Black doll clubs that include Maryland Society of Doll Collectors, located in Prince George’s County, Maryland. It started in 2006 and is still up and running. Additionally, Wilson is a member of the Charm City Dolling Club. The club has existed in Baltimore for 25 years. “We provide information on the collection of these Black dolls,” Wilson said.

The Black doll clubs also host Black History Month presentations, doll luncheons and little girl teas where girls bring their dolls. The club also conducts presentations at schools and libraries. Although the clubs are composed of all sorts of people who collect Black dolls, Wilson noted that a declining number of

young people do not participate because of growing interest in devices and other hobbies.

“We would like to see the younger generation carry on the Black doll traditions,” Wilson added.

Wilson is the author of two books about dolls. The first pictorial book of her dolls sold out. Wilson’s second book, “This Is Me” Original Black Dolls By Goldie Wilson, is an autobiography that recounts how she started in the doll industry up to the present.

“I believe in being different. Step out of that box,” Wilson said, referring to her journey to create dolls.

Email Goldiewil@msn.com to order her second book, request being added to Wilson’s email list to find out what dolls she is working on next for sale, or to obtain more information if you are interested in joining a Black doll club in the Baltimore area or Prince George’s County.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Resources for Older Americans

Older Americans Month (OAM) is observed each May.

“The 2023 theme is Aging Unbound, which offers an opportunity to explore diverse aging experiences and discuss how communities can combat stereotypes. Join us in promoting flexible thinking about aging – and how we all benefit when older adults remain engaged, independent, and included,” according to information provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living.

Information and resources are provided below.

Eldercare Locator connects individuals to services for older adults and their families, from housing to elder rights. Call 1-800-677-1116 to speak with an information specialist Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. – 9 p.m. or visit <https://eldercare.acl.gov/Public/Index.aspx>. Find local

assistance in your community by entering information online.

NIH National Institute on Aging provides information on health topics via <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/topics>.

The Senate Special Committee on Aging provides information about issues, oversight of programs and important causes that are of concern to older Americans are advanced through it. Visit <https://www.aging.senate.gov/>.

Locate **local AARP events** by connecting with the nation’s largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering people to choose how they live as they age. See <https://local.aarp.org/>

Learn about **GPS tracking** to keep elderly people safer. Read “Elderly Safety – 12 Best Trackers for the Elderly In 2023” via <https://family1st.io/best-trackers-for-the-elderly>.

Discover **VA benefits**, including VA healthcare for elderly veterans



by visiting <https://benefits.va.gov/PERSONA/veteran-elderly.asp>.

Baltimore City Health Department provides information about the **National Family Caregiver Support Program** via <https://health.baltimorecity.gov/family-caregivers-program>. Services include assistance in gaining access to counseling services, support groups, caregiver training, respite care, legal assistance,

grant information and more.

Victims of elder fraud can report crimes that were committed against them. They can call the **National Elder Fraud Hotline** at 1-833-372-8311 from Monday–Friday, 10:00 a.m.– 6:00 p.m. The free resource for people who are ages 60 or older was created by the U.S. Department of Justice.



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SPEND MOTHER'S DAY WITH BRIDGE MARYLAND AT THE MEYERHOFF



Hello, my dear friends,

I hope that all of you who are reading my column right now are happy and doing the best that each of you can do with what you have. SMILE! You are on Rambling Rose's camera! If you still have a living mother with you, let me tell you, you are truly blessed. I am included in the group of people who have lost a mother. We must remember that our mothers are always with us in spirit and we can still celebrate memories of them. For the special day known as Mother's Day, Rev. Gayle Boyd Briscoe has invited us all to a special event that will be held at the Meyerhoff on Sunday, May 14, 2023. A cocktail reception, silent auction and an Uptown Nights Concert will start at 1 p.m. The event will feature music inspired by Harlem's famed musical hot spots like The Cotton Club and The Savoy. This swingin' night of musical sensations focuses on Harlem's heyday when Duke Ellington's orchestra was the house band, and Cab Calloway, Ella Fitzgerald and Ethel Waters showcased the classics of the great American songbook. This production will feature the brilliant trumpeter, vocalist, conductor, Byron Stripling; vocalist, Carmen Bradford; and tap dancer Leo. Get all dressed up and I will see you there. Call 443-345-7559 and get your ticket.

THE WASHINGTON FAMILY PRESENTS THEIR FIRST ANNUAL MAY DAY GOSPEL CONCERT

The Washington family, along with the grandson, Kori Washington will celebrate their mother and grandmother, the legendary Rev. DR. Willie Mae Washington, with their First Annual Mae Day Gospel Concert. The event will be held on Friday, May 26, 2023 at 5 p.m. at Mt. Zion Apostolic Faith Church, located at 5501 Liberty Heights Avenue. The event will include live entertainment by the Anointed Boyd Sisters, Mighty Clouds of Joy, Pauline Wells Legacy Choir, The Christianers, Kenny Davis and the Melodyaires, Ariel Wallace and Redemption Music Group. The mistress of ceremony will be the one and only Doresa Harvey. Dinner will be sold at this event. Well, my dear friends, I will see you there. Call 443-542-8000 to get your ticket. Tell them that Rambling Rose told you about it!

Okay, my dear followers, if for some reason you can't make the Meyerhoff event, then I have something else for you. How about attending a spectacular Mother's Day Extravaganza with Baltimore's own nationally known recording artists The Softones as entertainment on Sunday, May 14, 2023? Come enjoy the extravaganza from 4-9 p.m. at the Sizzler Restaurant, located at 15544 Pulaski Highway in White Marsh, Maryland. Drinks and dinners will be sold. For more information, call 443-802-4633.

Look folks, I really need you to contact me at least four weeks in advance if you want me to come and cover your event. Please send your flier, photos and invitation directly to my email address via rosapryor@aol.com or you can send these items to me by mailing them to 214 Conewood Avenue, Reisterstown, Maryland 21136. Make sure that you include your phone number and email address. I will under no circumstances use flyers from Facebook as an invitation.

Well, my dear friends, **HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!** I have run out of space. 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.**



1 . Maybelle & Co. (Miss Maybelle) and TSB Production, (Tee-Shirt Brian) are giving back to the community again by hosting a free Soup and Sandwiches hot meal on Saturday, May 27, 2023 from 12-3 p.m. at the Baltimore Phoenix Shot Tower, located at 801 E. Fayette Street in Baltimore. Volunteers are needed. Call 443-226-8895.

2 . The Washington Family presents their First Annual Mae Day Gospel Concert at Mt. Zion Apostolic Faith Church, located at 5501 Liberty Heights Avenue in Baltimore. It will honor the legendary gospel hostess, a Rev. Dr. Willie Mae Washington on Friday, May 26, 2023, starting at 5 p.m. For more information, call 443-542-8000.

3 . A Spectacular Mother's Day Event with Baltimore's own nationally known recording artist the Softones, along with Baltimore's own Ten Karat Gold singing group and comedian and host, Jay Brooks will be held on Sunday, May 14, 2023 from 4-9 p.m. at the Sizzler Restaurant, located at 15544 Pulaski Highway, in White Marsh, Maryland. For more

4 . Spend Mother's Day with Rev. Gayle Boyd Briscoe and organizer Bridge Maryland Inc. at The Meyerhoff on Sunday, May 14, 2023, starting at 1 p.m. For more information, call 443-345-7559.



Trenton Simpson / Photo: Kirby Lee/USA Today Sports

SPORTS

Ravens Trenton Simpson Makes Early First Impression

By Tyler Hamilton

Baltimore Ravens 2023 third round pick Trenton Simpson got to put on an NFL jersey for the first time after three standout seasons at Clemson University. Simpson, along with other Ravens first-year players, checked into Owings Mills earlier this week for rookie minicamp.

From the NFL Scouting Combine, to Clemson's pro day, to finally making it to the NFL Draft, Simpson couldn't wait to join his new team.

"I would say I came in eager," Simpson said. "I was ready to get to work. I couldn't wait to wake up Thursday morning to fly here and just get started with ball again.

"All the nerves are down now, and I just feel like I'm playing football and getting into the locker room, meeting new teammates and getting to building the relationship with all my coaches, special teams [coordinator Chris Horton], defensive coordinator [Mike Macdonald], and all my teammates. It's a blessing to be here, for sure."

Adding a versatile player like Simpson that can play both inside and outside linebacker will get the rookie on the field frequently. That can be rotating into the heart of the defense with linebackers Patrick Queen and Roquan Smith or adding to the pass rush off the edge.

Simpson looks up to Smith, who was recently made the highest paid linebacker in NFL history. Joining him as a teammate will be the ultimate opportunity to

learn from. However, Simpson's impact extends beyond the defense.

Simpson's 4.43 second time in the 40-yard dash at the Combine showcased a major skill that will make him an early contributor on special teams as well. At 6-foot-2, 235 pounds Simpson's size and speed is ideal for punt or kickoff team coverage. He already has the mindset to be able hit the ground running.

"I would say the key is being relentless, giving it all you've got and taking that special teams rep like you would take the first team defensive rep," Simpson said. "That's what I pride myself on, just doing all the small things right and giving it all I have. [I'm] trying to empty the tank each practice so when game day comes, it will be super easy for me."

Simpson finished last season with

72 tackles and 2.5 sacks. That's down from the 6.5 sacks he had in 2021. Nevertheless, the Ravens staff likes what they see in Simpson after his first days on the field.

"[Trenton] Simpson, [He] looks fast, is picking things up, [he is a] very good communicator. Obviously, there's a lot for these guys on their plate; there's a lot to learn, but he's off to a good start," Ravens coach John Harbaugh said.

The Ravens defense could use a boost from this year's rookie class. Simpson is the team's highest draft pick on that side of the ball. The future is bright for Simpson as he looks to contribute to Baltimore's traditionally strong defensive unit.

Legal Notice

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING & ACCEPTANCE OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Notice is hereby given that on Friday, May 5, 2023, the Annapolis City Council Rules & City Government Committee will hold a public hearing on a proposed Art in Public Places Commission (AiPPC) yearly grants funding calendar policy that would establish a set calendar for AiPPC acceptance, review, and hearing of presentations three times a year.

AiPPC is striving to remain transparent and allow the public plenty of time to review applications, spending, and allowing time for commenting, as well as applying for upcoming performing art/works of visual grants that will be submitted for vote, and to ensure that the City has all signed contracts and paperwork on file before the events occur to ensure payment of invoices upon submission.

The City will also be accepting public comments on this proposed new regulation/rule/policy for 30 days ending on June 3rd, 2023, which comments may be submitted on the City's website at: <https://www.annapolis.gov/678/Art-in-Public-Places-Commission>, or by contacting (telephone) 410-263-7997 or (e-mail) boards@annapolis.gov.

The proposed new regulation/rule/policy may be viewed on the City's website at: <https://www.annapolis.gov/678/Art-in-Public-Places-Commission>, or you may request a copy by contacting (telephone) 410-263-7997 or (e-mail) boards@annapolis.gov.

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