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College Dream Completion Comes True for Mother, Son Simultaneously



Coppin State University President Anthony L. Jenkins, Ph.D. (left) congratulates Garyn Mercer, son of La-Tricia Taylor (far right) during the commencement ceremony on May 19, 2023. Mercer and Taylor graduated from Coppin on the same day. Taylor majored in Criminal Justice. Mercer majored in Information Technology Systems.

(See article on page 9)

Photo credit: Theresa Laster



Maryland Lawmakers Pass Updates to Criminal Record Expungement

Expungement is the process of removing a criminal court record from public view – while breaking down barriers to employment and housing that might otherwise keep people with a record from maintaining stability in life.

In Maryland, advocates for criminal justice reform have fought long and hard to expand access to expungement with several legislative sessions resulting in major changes to expungement law. This year, Maryland lawmakers passed bills that likely will make expungement a reality for many people who were not previously eligible.

The most impactful expungement legislation this year was the REDEEM Act, which cut waiting periods required to expunge certain convictions in half. Maryland's expungement law makes a distinction between cases resulting in a conviction and those that do not. Cases where the court did not enter a guilty verdict are typically much easier to expunge, while cases with one or more convictions face longer waiting periods and the requirement to stay free from additional convictions. It's important to note that only certain convictions are deemed eligible for expungement – mostly nonviolent misdemeanors, plus a few nonviolent felonies. The REDEEM Act does not significantly alter the list of eligible convictions.

The REDEEM Act, which goes into effect October 1, 2023, will reduce the waiting periods for expungement of most eligible misdemeanor convictions from 10 to five years. The one exception will be second-degree assault and battery being reduced from 15 to seven years. Felonies that already were eligible under current law will see a waiting period reduction as well. First- and second-degree burglary, along with felony theft, will be lowered from a 15-year wait down to 10 years. Other eligible felonies will be lowered to a seven-year wait. Of great importance is the waiting period calculation. The clock doesn't start until a person completes their sentence, whether it's incarceration, parole or probation. A person convicted of a new offense during the expungement waiting period will potentially be blocked from filing an expungement.

The REDEEM Act also adds malicious destruction of property to the list of eligible misdemeanor offenses, placing



it in the five-year category. Additionally, unpaid court costs will not be a barrier to expunging a case.

One more piece of legislation, recently signed by Governor Wes Moore, will have an impact on expungement. This bill adds certain hunting and fishing violations to the list of eligible convictions. Offenses such as hunting without a license, failure to wear proper reflective gear and failure to obtain certain permits, among others, are added to the five-year category discussed above. These changes will go into effect on October 1 of this year as well.

When Maryland voters passed the cannabis legalization referendum last November, they also triggered new changes to expungement. Adult use and possession of cannabis becomes legal on July 1, 2023, along with new

expungement laws.

A criminal case where a person was convicted solely of cannabis possession will become eligible for expungement if the amount of cannabis was less than 1.5 ounces.

Expunging possession of any amount of cannabis will be possible if the person successfully completes their sentence. A conviction for possession with intent to distribute cannabis will be eligible after three years from the completion of the sentence. Perhaps most interesting will be the ability to expunge cannabis-related charges even if the same case contains otherwise ineligible convictions. This subverts the longstanding "unit rule" that prevents many cases from being expunged. Finally, the courts have been directed to automatically expunge certain cannabis-related charges by July 1, 2024.

Many people living with a criminal record soon will see new opportunities and have peace of mind because of these new laws, which criminal justice advocates say will bring Maryland in step with the rest of the nation in terms of expungement eligibility.

Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service can help determine if you are eligible for expungement under the new laws and provide legal representation if you qualify for our services. Visit us at mvlslaw.org or call 443-547-6537 between 9 a.m.-12 p.m. Monday through Thursday.

Chris Sweeney is an attorney and workforce development manager at Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service. He can be reached at csweeney@mvlslaw.org.



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The Reality Behind the Numbers: Poverty, Trauma, Crime and Violence in Baltimore

By Regi Taylor, Editorial Page Editor

A few years ago, I visited a West Baltimore home where my family had lived for a time in the 1970s, a bustling block of detached two-story homes with neat lawns and hedges in a working-class neighborhood of families, most with children.

There used to be vibrant storefront retail businesses on the busy local thoroughfare that provided grocery staples and other basic household amenities any family might need. They've since been overrun by an abandoned, decrepit, foreboding landscape of decaying buildings overgrown by weeds, vines and trees.

On my old block of approximately 30 homes on either side of our street, perhaps only every third house was still occupied, the others deserted. Among the homes where people were still residing, many seemed uninhabitable by their appearance. In the home where my family had lived, a tree had sprouted through the basement floor and out the roof, with branches extending through doors and windows. A family was living in a home 40 feet away.

Walking through the alley behind my old home, there were rat carcasses in varying stages of decay, mounds of garbage strewn everywhere and broken glass crunched loudly under my feet. Many of the houses, like my old home, were dilapidated, overtaken by mangled brush and grass. The once flourishing local merchants were long gone. In their place were rundown bars, multiple liquor stores, bail bondsmen and Asian take-outs, all fortified for security and with worn-down, dirty facades.

Unfortunately, as I have traversed Baltimore City through other West Baltimore neighborhoods where I either lived or frequented, I was confronted with similar conditions. Edmonson Village, Poplar Grove Street,

Walbrook Junction, Park Heights, Reservoir Hill, Sandtown-Winchester and Carrollton Ridge, are all down-trodden to the point of utter despair with rampant, pervasive squalor.

Over the last two generations these horrible conditions have manifested in the West Baltimore of my youth. The residents who continue to reside in these circumstances are mostly hard scrabble working poor along with a large minority of citizens living in abject poverty, usually on public assistance.

Employment opportunities and access to government services within these neighborhoods are virtually non-existent. Most of the public schools in these communities share the same level of degradation and disrepair as the housing stock, with the same malfunctioning heating systems— forget about air conditioning— and pest infestations.

Due to communitywide low educational achievement and abysmal unemployment, the illicit drug trade has become the default local economic driver in many of these neighborhoods, enforced by heavily armed drug gangs. Most of the crime and violence is fueled by dealers competing for supremacy in the drug trade, and drug users scavenging to finance their habits at the expense of their destitute neighbors, employing robbery, burglary, larceny and carjacking among other strong-arm and nefarious means to satisfy their chronic addictions.

And then there's widespread trauma. Baltimore, for the past decade, calendar years 2013 through 2022, has averaged 311 murders per year. Behind these grim statistics, real people are left to mourn, suffering severe anxiety, depression and grief, especially children and the unfortunate who have born witness to the carnage firsthand. Factor in 688 non-fatal shootings in 2022, down from 726 unsuccessful attempted murders



*Poor Black squeegee boys or poor Black prison boys – two wrong answers!
Illustration by Regi Taylor*

in 2021 (during a pandemic) and the normalized psychological burden shouldered by residents on the frontlines of Baltimore's gun violence scourge becomes more severe.

Couple the mental anguish associated with a rate of killing comparable to a war zone, added to the degree of victimization resulting from nearly 27,000 annual criminal acts, chronic housing, food and utility insecurity, systemic, often harsh police confrontations and the community's surreal, dystopian physical landscape and one can begin to understand the conditions that foment the degree of chaos inflicted on Baltimore City, where nearly 1 in 4 of 620,000 residents subsist below the poverty threshold. This data represents the routine daily lifestyles of roughly 125,000 citizens. Of Baltimore's roughly 180,000 children, 1 in 3, 35%, live below the poverty level.

The preceding narrative reveals a treacherous reality behind the awful

statistics defining the lives of too many African American Baltimoreans, statistics often discussed and debated casually without visceral consideration or empathy for the grossly vulnerable and underserved people behind the numbers. Please keep in mind these statistics are describing real people, real contemporary living conditions of your neighbors, or perhaps yourself.

The conditions that confront Baltimore are a communitywide problem requiring a communitywide solution. Baltimore City cannot legislate or police its way out of our current predicament. The only authority our elected and appointed officials have is to follow voters' dictates. Their mandate resides with Baltimore citizens. In a government by, of, and for the people, *We The People* must step forward and lead. Vote!

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EDITORIAL

"When You Learn, You Don't Return:" Could Mandatory Prisoner Literacy Proficiency Help Arrest

By Regi Taylor, Editorial Page Editor

Nearly ten thousand ex-offenders are returning to Baltimore City from prison every year, with not all but too many bringing a cunning, ruthless prison culture home with them. To be sure City Hall, law enforcement advocates of community policing and various foundations and neighborhood-based nonprofits are valiantly tackling this problem.

An already violent element of urban culture is being infiltrated by a more malignant strain of viciousness associated with prison conduct onto Baltimore streets. Symbiotic prison and street gang subcultures are evolving as two edges of the same deadly blade holding Baltimore citizens captive to steadily increasing murder and mayhem.

As one who was born and reared on Baltimore City's westside, frequenting neighborhoods like Park Heights, Sandtown-Winchester, Reservoir Hill and the former Lexington Terrace projects, I have not only witnessed the utility of education to reform young people who were on a solid trajectory towards the penitentiary, I am personally one of those young people.

If not for the compassionate intervention of mentors who believed in my ability to succeed and changed the trajectory of my prison-headed life, I could have joined the legions of Baltimore's young Black men with felony records. However, as I heard a very wise person say, "You've got to own your life."

The Baltimore Times has written on the topic of mass incarceration over the last six years as a powerful destructive element of the individual and of the community, reviewing thousands of documents, articles and analyses on the topic.

The major takeaway are the same two lessons I learned from my own personal rehabilitation. Avoiding and rebounding

from incarceration can be achieved through holistic education, as one of my mentor teachers advised me.

Ms. Harris told me when I was 17 years old: "Personal happiness and positioning yourself for a successful life require striking and maintaining a balance in five crucial areas: intellectual, spiritual, emotional, social and physical." The second aspect is becoming a critical thinker. Being proficient in reading, writing and math makes anything possible.

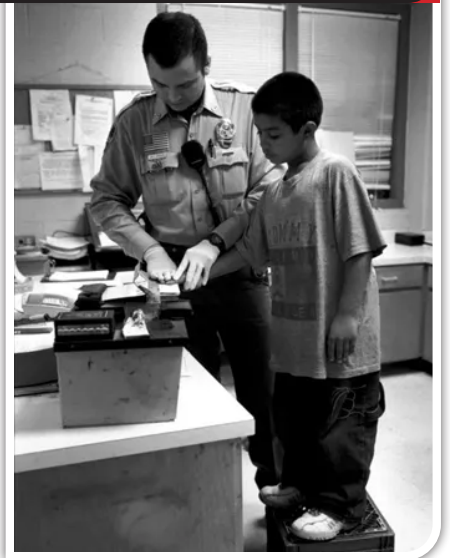
We, as a city must prioritize our at-risk-for-prison young people and also our reentering ex-offenders, most of who were illiterate when arrested and return home illiterate, but with prison records. "Eighty-five percent of all juveniles who come into the juvenile court system are functionally illiterate. So are 60 percent of all prison inmates," according to invisiblechild.org.

However, there are models of success in the prisoner rehabilitation space. "["When You Learn, You Don't Return": How Education in Prison Reduces Recidivism."](#)" by Christopher Blackwell, an inmate halfway through a 45-year prison sentence who is obtaining a bachelor's degree through the University Beyond Bars program.

"It was in the ninth grade when I decided to call it quits. I felt dumb in class, never seem[ing] to be able to follow what the teacher was saying," Chris confesses. "As an adult, my math skills were comparable to that of a fifth grader. By the end of my final math class, I received an A."

According to a 2005 Justice Policy Institute study, roughly 20% of Baltimore City African American men 20 to 30 years old were incarcerated, as were nearly 10% statewide. On track to surpass 300 murders again in 2023, Baltimore City experienced 2,667 murders between 2015 and 2022, an average of 333 murders per year; one murder every 26 hours and 18 minutes for the last eight years straight.

Overall, according to 2019 FBI statistics for Baltimore City, besides 348



Eighty-five percent of juveniles before the criminal justice system are functionally illiterate / Photo courtesy LA Progressive

murders, there were over 11,000 other violent crimes and rapes, also robberies, property crimes, burglaries, larcenies, vehicle thefts, carjackings and arsons equating to nearly 27,000 crimes, one crime every 20 minutes, 24/7, for the entire year.

How much is enough? A friend once told me, "Change happens when the pain of remaining the same becomes more painful than change." Are we there yet, Baltimore? The Baltimore Times is calling upon our elected leaders to take a bolder approach.

Governor Wes Moore, please consider legislation requiring illiterate state inmates to become reading, writing and math proficient as a condition of release. Baltimore City state legislative delegation, please pass a bill requiring inmates to become literate as a requirement of reentry to communities.

This initiative is no cure all, but as a native Baltimore west-sider who ran with an unruly crowd in his youth; whose enlightenment through education steered him clear of incarceration; whose been happily married over thirty years; and raised four loving, compassionate children, we encourage this course of action as one of the strongest possible strategies Baltimore can collectively pursue as a community, immediately, to make a difference.

Baltimore Times readers, please weigh-in with feedback to our editors on this recommendation, and to your elected representatives. Thank you.

PLANT-BASED TREAT

Plant-Based Ice Cream Offers Handcrafted Deliciousness, Unique Flavors

By Andrea Blackstone

Summertime fun often includes pool or beach trips and scooping up cold, flavorful ice cream on a scorching day. Nicole Foster and Dwight Campbell, owners of Cajou Creamery, have you covered with a plant-based twist.

“We’re handcrafted cashew milk ice cream with no dairy, no soy, no gluten and no artificial ingredients of any kind in culturally curious flavors,” Foster said.

When it comes to reimagining how to create one of America’s most popular desserts a healthier way, dates are used to sweeten Cajou’s guilt-free ice cream. It’s lower on the glycemic chart.

“We’re both West Indian and we both have members of our family that are diabetic. So, knowledge of what sugar does to the body is a part of our branding,” Campbell said.

Cajou Creamery, a Black-owned business, is touted as the first and only plant-based creamery in D.C., Maryland and Virginia. The plant-based creamery and café is located at 411 N. Howard St. in Baltimore, Maryland.

In a time when nutrient-rich food is getting more challenging to find, the husband-and-wife duo combined Campbell’s chef culinary expertise with Foster’s legal background as a public health attorney who worked in the field.

“It’s a healthy ice cream because I wouldn’t serve the public anything less than that,” Foster said.

Foster and Campbell are travelers who came up with recipes from ingredients that they had in their pantry. Communities of color get to see themselves represented through scoops of delicious, plant-based ice cream. Foster added that inspiration comes from around the globe. Foster and Campbell tried their hand at recreating flavors from their favorite international treats such as the Middle Eastern dessert, baklava; Horchata, a Latin American drink; Sweet Potato Pie; Cortadito, a Cuban coffee drink and other standard flavors.

“We started making ice cream based on these flavors that we experienced from



Dwight Campbell (left) and Nicole Foster, owners of Cajou Creamery, hold some of their plant-based ice cream flavors.



Courtesy photos

around the world,” Foster added.

But Cajou Creamery’s customers who come to the café can also find flavors from around the globe that are made specially by the business’ chef, Campbell.

“We love ice cream. Our children love ice cream, but we wanted something healthy,” Foster said.

She reflected on the genesis of making scoopfuls of healthy treats. The magical spark began after the couple had a baby who was born four months early in 2007.

“He was in the NICU [neonatal intensive care unit] for four months during which time he was being fed a dairy-based formula, and we realized that

the dairy-based formula was making him sick, so we had no choice but to switch to a non-dairy formula. Within a couple of days, we saw a turnaround and we watched him thrive,” Foster said.

Living a dairy free life evolved. When their child became a toddler, Foster and Campbell began looking for non-dairy, delicious healthy versions of ice cream. They were shocked by their findings.

“All of the ice cream was laden with synthetic ingredients. Laden with ingredients that for me [as someone] with public health expertise, I knew was not good for our bodies that lead to a lot of things that our community suffers with. So, for example, diabetes, obesity, hypertension, etcetera. And so, we thought, ‘Wow, these purportedly healthy ice creams are not healthy at all,’” Foster said.

Upon making the discovery, Campbell had been a chef for approximately 10 years. Foster wanted to create more recipes using raw food.

“The two of us just kind of put our heads together to make our own ice cream that would fit the bill,” Foster said.

The couple also wanted to add flavors that represented various cultures. Foster and Campbell succeeded. In the beginning, they sold their vegan ice cream at farmers markets. Campbell said that in addition to those who are loyal customers, other customers find out about Cajou Creamery from Instagram. Some individuals who visit the area Google vegan ice cream and locate them.

One of Cajou Creamery’s missions is to employ formerly incarcerated individuals.

“And the reason for that is because I was also a criminal defense attorney and I have worked with that population and found them to be brilliant and have some of the most talented minds in the country, but they don’t get an opportunity to thrive. We wanted to help change that,” Foster said.

Campbell stated that they are trying to become a worker-owned co-op.

“That’s what we’re moving towards so that we cannot just affect our family but affect other families and the families of our employees/owners,” Campbell said.

Cajou Creamery ships across the United States. Visit www.cajoucreamery.com.

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THE TASSEL WAS WORTH THE HASSLE

Brother and Sister Face Major Adversity, Push to Meet Graduation Goals



Graduates Olivia Britt (left) and Roosevelt Britt IV / Photo credit: Naudra Rowel-Britt

By Andrea Blackstone

High school and college graduation season is a celebratory time when students experience the joy of crossing the academic finish line. Some young people, such as 22-year-old Olivia Britt and her brother, 17-year-old Roosevelt Britt IV, know that finishing scholastic goals can be extra rewarding when achievement requires facing an extreme obstacle, such as the death of a loved one.

“Stay close with family because you never know when you could lose them,” Roosevelt Britt IV said, reflecting on a recent, life-altering experience.

Roosevelt’s big graduation day is drawing near on June 6, 2023 at Broadneck High School. Olivia already graduated from Stevenson University in Owings Mills, Maryland on May 15, 2023. She studied International Business Administration.

Roosevelt Britt III, their 51-year-old father, passed away unexpectedly on February 22, 2023. The brother and sister now cherish memories of an Annapolitan who made a big impact in their lives and the lives of others. The special education teacher worked in an alternative school.



(L-R) Olivia Britt, Rachel Britt (back), Roosevelt Britt III (front, middle), Sarge (dog), Naudra Rowel-Britt, Emilia Rowel (back, niece), Roosevelt Britt IV (right) in 2020. /Courtesy photo



Roosevelt Britt IV (left) stands by an image of his late father, Roosevelt Britt III /Photo credit: Naudra Rowel-Britt

Additionally, the Britts have three biological children and three nieces who are a part of their family. Rowel-Britt said that they came to live with them after their mother died from cancer.

Olivia explained that she was working in her babysitting position, plugging away at her academic and full-time employment responsibilities when the unthinkable happened.

Her mother, Naudra Rowel-Britt, added that Olivia had been visiting her family home in Annapolis, then headed back to Owings Mills. In the wee hours of the morning, Rowel-Britt called her daughter to inform her that she had called the ambulance for Olivia’s father. That is when she returned to Annapolis. “Everything happened so quickly and they were doing CPR on him. So, I

actually had to make another phone call to tell her to meet us at the hospital,” Rowel-Britt said.

Another daughter, Rachel Britt, in addition to Roosevelt Britt IV, was also home when their father experienced a medical emergency that ended in his demise.

Rowel-Britt, a small business owner and special education teacher, had been married to her husband for 23 years. Despite the emotional experience that left her missing her other half, Rowel-Britt stated that she has been blessed with tremendous children. She feels so excited to see what they will do in the world as contributing adults.

“One of the things that I think I’ve definitely held on to, in order to get through literally, each and every day, is my

faith and my spirituality and knowing that I have a close relationship with the Most High God and knowing that my husband did as well. I think that’s probably one of the few things that gives me comfort,” Rowel-Britt said.

The Britt family’s journey has included managing emotions and regrouping. Roosevelt Britt IV had a hard time focusing in school after the death of his father. A favorite memory that he recalls about his father is watching sports together on Sundays. Before his father’s passing, the father and son often discussed what he wanted to do after completing high school.

“He gave me advice saying, ‘Just don’t let other people influence what you want to do or your interests,’” Roosevelt Britt IV stated that his father advised him to do what he wanted.

He added that he may be interested in learning a trade. The new graduate will be taking HVAC courses at Anne Arundel Community College this summer.

Olivia shared more memories about Roosevelt Britt III. She liked life lessons, words of comfort and good advice that her father periodically shared. Physically losing him impacted her.

“For me, I struggled the most with motivation,” Olivia said. “For over a week, I went without touching any of my schoolwork, and as an online student, all of the courses are accelerated courses, so I was very nervous and scared that I wasn’t going to graduate.”

Olivia managed to muster thoughts about her father and what he would want. He would not support the temptation of giving up.

“I kind of just used him as my motivation, along with my family support, friends and a significant other,” Olivia said, explaining how she crossed the finish line to earn her college degree.

Over the summer, she would like to begin taking real estate courses to pursue earning a real estate license. She also would like to pursue a Scrum certification.

She noted several takeaways, including loving those who love you, because life is short.

“Also, just always stay motivated throughout any of your struggles,” Olivia said. “Just always have motivation to finish, and always look at the end like there will be a good outcome and that’s what I’m working towards. Try not to give up and just do your best.”

A DOUBLE BLESSING

College Dream Completion Comes True for Mother, Son Simultaneously

By Andrea Blackstone

Imagine a parent and child graduating from the same college, in the same year.

The unusual blessing happened to La-Tricia Taylor and Garyn Mercer.

“It’s a huge accomplishment, just being able to graduate,” Mercer said. “I never even thought I’d be going to school.”

The Baltimoreans happen to be mother and son. Taylor and Mercer graduated from Coppin State University on May 19, 2023. Taylor majored in Criminal Justice. Mercer majored in Information Technology Systems.

“I walked across the stage first because of my field. I was in the College of Behavioral Health and Social Sciences, so Garyn followed,” Taylor said, mentioning that she knew her son would walk across the stage to graduate after she did. “It felt awesome— very, very good. I was so excited.”

Taylor said that she and her son had gained the reputation of being a mother and son who were attending Coppin at the same time.

“I always brag about my son,” she said, laughing.

Mercer also reflected on how he felt achieving the huge accomplishment of graduating from college. At a point in his life, he did not like school. He returned to the area from the military after serving five years in the U.S. Army. Mercer now aspires to work in the IT field.

A new adventure in his life began after he had been stationed in Fort Campbell, Kentucky and also in Korea. His military contract ended. Mercer regained entry into civilian life and found his way back to his mother.

“The reason why I moved back home was to be close to her,” Mercer said.

His mother became ill with multiple sclerosis in October of 2018.

“I had just graduated from Baltimore City Community College, and then I started going to Coppin, and at that time I was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. My son got an apartment close to where I was living, and he started going to school at Coppin,” Taylor said.

Mercer said that he started Coppin in



La-Tricia Taylor (left) and her son, Garyn Mercer /Photo credit: Theresa Laster

2020. His mother was already enrolled at Coppin.

“I always wanted to be a probation officer,” Taylor said.

She further explained that she became ill while working for the state of Maryland as a correctional hearing officer. Taylor reflected on her experience with an illness that interrupted her memory and manner in which her brain functioned. Learning something new took her more time to catch on. As a result, she had to leave her previous place of employment on disability.

“I had to retire from the state of Maryland after my health diagnosis and complications from it. I can only do contractual work for the state of Maryland and work part-time now because of my disability,” Taylor said.

She added that it would be “great” to return to employment there on a part-

time, contractual basis. Her desire is to work in Denton, Maryland.

While Taylor struggled to achieve her goal of completing college due to juggling health challenges, she also faced financial hurdles. She said that she could not get money from any sources, so she had to pay her college tuition out-of-pocket. Driving for Uber was Taylor’s solution.

At one point, she felt like quitting college and shared her feelings with her son.

“My son said, ‘No, Mom, you can’t stop,’” she added.

Taylor’s drive to achieve her secondary education goal arose because she wanted to be just as good as her colleagues at work. She had the required experience working with adult offenders, but Taylor did not have a college degree at the time. Taylor, whose late mother and also a daughter graduated from Coppin, were

other motivating components for earning one.

Mercer’s personal challenges to earn a college degree were a little different.

“Just being a veteran, you’re used to a whole set of ways, and then I was also dealing with mental health issues,” Mercer said.

But the military helped him to have the attitude of finishing what he starts. Mercer stuck to his goal.

Taylor and Mercer renewed their family’s legacy of attending Coppin. It may continue to keep going. Now, another one of Taylor’s children wants to study at Coppin State University after finishing Baltimore City Community College.

“Education is the key,” Taylor said emphatically. “I was glad to graduate with my son. I was really glad.”

ON CAMPUS SHOPPING

Coppin State University Celebrates Launch of Coppin Corner Food Resource Center

On-Campus Resource Hub to Help Address Food Insecurity for Students Year-Round

BALTIMORE – Coppin State University today launched Coppin Corner, a new on-campus resource committed to serving Coppin State students by providing basic needs to foster continued academic progress and increase the retention of students in need. Coppin Corner provides non-perishable food items, frozen foods, personal hygiene products, and cleaning supplies for registered Coppin State University students.

Coppin State University President Anthony L. Jenkins, Stephan Moore, Ed.D., vice president for enrollment and student affairs, and other members of the Coppin community participated in the ribbon cutting.

More than 34 million people and one in three Marylanders experience food insecurity, which can be caused by poverty, unemployment, or low income, lack of affordable housing, chronic health conditions and lack of health care access, as well as systemic racism and racial discrimination. Data from 2021 shows roughly 20 percent of the nearly 570,000 people living in Baltimore City are living in poverty, and nearly 83,000 people are considered food insecure. Additionally, nearly a quarter of Baltimore residents live in areas with limited access to healthy and affordable food, also known as food deserts.

“Coppin State is an anchor institution serving students from communities spanning from Baltimore to Australia. We educate students who are often supporting themselves, as well as their loved ones,” said President Jenkins. “Our faculty and staff work to equip our students not only with the education they need to achieve upward economic mobility, but also nutritious foods to build better, healthier lives. Coppin Corner will not solve every problem our students face; however, we are hopeful it will allow them to focus more on their studies, and less on where their next meal is coming from.”

“Coppin State is an anchor institution serving students from communities spanning from Baltimore to Australia.”

According to most recent data, 66% of undergraduates at Coppin State received Pell grants, which help promote access to higher education for lower-income students. Efforts to launch the Coppin Corner on-campus food resource center began in 2022. During the 2022-2023 academic year, Coppin Corner held six grab and go food giveaways, which served an average of 164 students during each event.

“We understand it is difficult for students to learn when their very basic needs aren’t met,” said Dr. Moore. “We are excited about this opportunity to enhance our holistic support for our students and appreciate the commitment of our community partners to nurturing potential and transforming lives of students at Coppin State.”



Students shopping at Coppin Corner on May 24, 2023 / Courtesy photos



The ribbon cutting for Coppin Corner on May 24, 2023.

Left to right: Christopher Thomas, assistant director for the Center for Counseling and Student Development; Consuella Simms, academic program specialist; Florine “Peaches” Camphor (’58); President Anthony L. Jenkins; Dean of Students and Assistant Vice President, Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, Dorothy Parrish-Harris, J.D.; Kevin Carr (’04, ’06), program and enrollment specialist; Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, Stephan Moore, Ed.D.

After the ribbon-cutting ceremony, students were invited to shop for food and other products ahead of the start of summer break and summer classes. Coppin Corner will operate year-round, and will be open during the summer months, Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. until 3 p.m.

Coppin Corner is supported by donations and grants from private and community partners. Coppin Corner is

dedicated to the late James “Winky” Camphor (’51) and his wife Florine “Peaches” Camphor (’58), who have supported six endowed scholarships at Coppin, and championed assistance for students experiencing homelessness and food insecurity.

Current Coppin students can sign up to shop at Coppin Corner by registering here: app.pantrysoft.com/login/coppin.

QUEEN'S TEMPLE HANDMADE

M&T Bank Brings Small Business 'Spotlight Shop' Back to Baltimore

Minority- and women-owned businesses to occupy space inside bank's Federal Hill branch

BALTIMORE, May 31, 2023 — M&T Bank launched today a new small business initiative inside its Federal Hill branch in downtown Baltimore, where a pop-up shop will feature a rotating lineup of minority- and women-owned retailers through mid-August. Through Aug. 18, seven different Baltimore-area small business customers of M&T Bank will occupy the free space inside the Federal Hill branch to showcase their brands, reach different audiences and expand their customer base.

The first business to occupy the space is Queen's Temple Handmade, a body care business specializing in eco-conscious handmade bar soaps, raw shea body butters, sugar scrubs, hair growth elixir, and aromatherapy products. Queen's Temple Handmade will be in the Federal Hill Spotlight Shop through June 9, 2023.

Other Federal Hill Spotlight Shop occupants will include:

Sweet Fortune's Unlimited (June 12-16 and Aug. 14-18)

Hon's Honey (June 19-23)

Kiki Thunda Cosmetics (June 26-30 and July 5-7)

AppleCore Bake Shoppe (July 10-14 and July 17-21)

Sunday Morning Roasting Company (July 24-28 and July 31-Aug. 4)

Althea's Almost Famous (Aug. 7-11)

This is not the first time M&T Bank offered its Spotlight Shop concept to its small business customers in Greater Baltimore. M&T initially launched its Spotlight Shop in 2019 in a mobile retail kiosk located along Pratt Street in the Inner Harbor. Twelve different businesses rotated through that shop over six months.

In addition to the Federal Hill Spotlight Shop, M&T's mobile kiosk also will be in Baltimore on June 3 for the Charles Street Promenade Pedestrian Takeover.

The launch of M&T's in-branch Spotlight Shop comes during National

Small Business Month, a time to celebrate and support small businesses locally and across the U.S. As the top small-business lender in Baltimore and one of the top 10 nationwide, M&T created this new initiative as part of its efforts to amplify the economic impact of small businesses. Over the past 25 years, small businesses have generated about two-thirds of all jobs added to the national economy.

Several Baltimore-area businesses also are part of M&T's online Spotlight Shop. The Spotlight Shop online platform promotes more than 170 small businesses across M&T's footprint, drives traffic to their website, and celebrates them on social media and through blog content. The expansion of the Spotlight Shop program reinforces M&T's longstanding commitment to small businesses.

Small businesses interested in being featured in the M&T Spotlight Shop can learn more and apply at www.mtb.com/spotlight.



Detra Miller, Regional Affinity Manager, M&T Bank kick off a new small business initiative



(l-r) Charlyn Nater-Severino, Director, Baltimore Main Streets, Mayor's Office of Small, Minority and Women Business, City of Baltimore and Richelle Johnson, Owner, Queen's Temple Hand, and M&T Spotlight Business /Photos: Paris Brown



Photo credit: ArizonaCardinals.com

SPORTS

Should Ravens Sign DeAndre Hopkins?

By Tyler Hamilton

The Baltimore Ravens seem to always place a high amount of players on the Pro Bowl. In fact, the 2019 Ravens tied (Dallas in 2007) for the NFL's most-ever selections (13) on a Pro Bowl roster, but they've never had a player go on the postseason All-Star game as a true wide receiver. Yes, Devin Duvernay made it to the Pro Bowl in 2022. However, that was as a return specialist not a receiver.

Baltimore's lack of Pro Bowl receivers does not come as a surprise given how much success they've had with veteran pass catching options like Derrick Mason, Anquan Boldin and Steve Smith Sr. The trend of adding veteran receivers continued this year with the Ravens signing free agents Nelson Agholor and Odell Beckham Jr.

With former Pro Bowler DeAndre Hopkins being released by the Arizona Cardinals, another option became available. Should the Ravens sign him? Absolutely.

Hopkins appeared on the "I am Athlete" podcast with former NFL receiver Brandon Marshall and Ashley Nicole Moss. He named Baltimore as one of the places he'd be interested in playing.

"What I want is stable management upstairs," he said. "I think that's something I haven't really had the past couple years of my career coming from Houston and then to Arizona. I've been through three or four GMs in my career, so a stable management. A QB who loves the game, a QB who brings everybody on board with him and pushes not just himself but everybody around him ... and a great defense. A great defense wins championships."

There's little doubt about how stable the Ravens management is with Eric DeCosta serving as the general manager and Ozzie Newsome close by for any advice. Baltimore is one of the better run organizations in the NFL.

Then there's the fact that Lamar Jackson is locked in as quarterback for years to come after signing a five-year, \$260 million contract recently. That's another advantage the Ravens have.

Hopkins mentioned which quarterbacks he'd like to play with and it gave another hint that Baltimore is in the running. He named Jackson, along with Josh Allen, Jalen Hurts, Patrick Mahomes and Justin Herbert as quarterbacks he'd like to team up with.

Jackson stands to gain from new offensive coordinator Todd Monken's scheme which will allow him to showcase his passing talent. The new scheme appeals to Jackson because he has more freedom to make checks at the line of scrimmage.

Although he's been a historically dynamic quarterback running the football, Jackson admitted he will run less this season.

"Running can only take you so far. I feel like with this new era of teams and offenses in the league, I feel like we need that," Jackson said.

Monken has seen firsthand how explosive Jackson is as a runner, but he's not looking to rely on that as much on the new offense. It's time to let someone else do the heavy lifting.

"I think the more talented you are around your quarterback, the less he has to take on that burden and shoulder the load, because you're excited about getting others the football where they can utilize their skill set," Monken said. "So I think that kind of answers itself.

That's where adding a player like

Hopkins comes into play. His best days came with Deshaun Watson as his quarterback. The Watson and Hopkins tandem destroyed opposing defenses especially when they went off schedule. Like Watson, Jackson's running style gives defenses another thing to think about.

Both have the ability to scramble to throw which leaves defenders in a catch 22 situation having to decide if they'll come off their coverage assignment to tackle the scrambler or stay with their man while the quarterback scrambles. Those are types of plays that Watson and Hopkins thrived under for years with the Houston Texans.

At 30 years old, Hopkins isn't quite the same player he once was, but he still has some left in the tank. He has two seasons with over 1,500 yards and four with at least 100 receptions with Watson throwing him the ball. While he missed six games in 2022 due to a PED suspension, Hopkins still finished as the Cardinals' leading receiver with 717 yards and three touchdowns.

An incentive laden deal should get it done and bring Hopkins to the Ravens. He already has a familiar friend on the team, as though he trained with Beckham in the offseason.

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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.

Employment Notice

DRUM Healthy Families, Inc.

Job title: **Opportunity Youth Coach (OYC)** Salary Range: \$34,000 - \$38,000/yr.
Location: **DRUM Healthy Families, Inc.** 2100 Eutaw Place | Baltimore, MD 21217
Salary: \$34k - 38k/year. Medical/Vision/Dental and Paid leave
Hours: 9 am – 5:30 pm (Some late nights & Saturdays, as necessary). Transportation required

Job Summary:

The Opportunity Youth Coach (OYC) will optimize the home environment and leverage community resources to form partnerships that positively impact the physical, mental and emotional well-being of youth at-risk for adverse life course outcomes, ages 16 – 24 years. The OYC will investigate resources to foster trusting client/coach relationships and will assist in strengthening coping, interpersonal and workforce skills that support the youth in creating a circle of security. The OYC will secure gainful employment/training and personal development opportunities for clients and will work with individual clients and facilitate youth groups.

The OYC is responsible for securing workforce development, life skill services, and follow-up supports to participants referred from local Home Visiting Programs, BCHD and FLBC Partnerships. Targeted support will include: vocational activities, goal planning, Individual Plan (IP) Goals, referrals, and community linkages to ensure access and service attainment.

Email cover letter and resume to: info@drumhealthyfamilies.org

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