



# THE BALTIMORE TIMES

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## New Slavery Exhibit Opens at the Great Blacks in Wax Museum



*(L-r):* Renowned artist Stephen Hayes, National Great Blacks in Wax Museum co-founder Dr. Joanne Martin, and The Baltimore Times founder and publisher, Joy Bramble during the Opening Reception and Artist Gallery for Cash Crop, the Museum's newest exhibit. Created by Hayes, the exhibition features 15 life-size sculptures of human figures cast in concrete and bound in chains. Joy Bramble cut the ribbon to open the doors to the Cash Crop Gallery. The moving exhibit will remain on view through August 2024. (See story on pages 8 & 9.) Photo by Ursula V. Battle



## Building a more inclusive economy: Q&A with JPMorgan Chase's Thelma Ferguson

All communities should have the resources they need to strengthen their economic futures. This Black History Month, JPMorgan Chase is affirming their commitment to breaking down barriers -- including the racial wealth gap -- and promoting opportunity for all.

In recognition of Black History Month, we connected with Thelma Ferguson, Global Head of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and Vice Chair, Commercial Banking at JPMorgan Chase, to get her insights on how she's celebrating Black History Month, how JPMorgan Chase is advancing equity and inclusion and what she hopes to achieve in the year ahead.

• **1) Tell us a little about yourself and your role at JPMorgan Chase?**

The majority of my 25-year tenure at JPMorgan Chase has been in Commercial Banking, providing clients with the financial solutions they need to grow their businesses. Yet, no matter what my role was, I have always been focused on driving inclusion and equity.

Today, as the Global Head of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, I'm proud to look after our leading strategies to uplift employees, clients and the communities we serve as the bank for all. I also continue to serve as Vice Chair for Commercial Banking, building and managing key client relationships from coast to coast.

• **2) What does Black History Month mean to you and how are you celebrating?**

Black History Month is an important opportunity to reflect on the achievements and struggles of our Black communities. To me, this means

honoring the immense reach, depth and richness of Black communities' global history, in addition to its connection and intersection with other communities. At JPMorgan Chase, we organize events and activities to honor the designation, highlight Black history and culture, and enable impactful conversations and opportunities to continue our commitment to help create more equitable pathways for all.

• **3) How is JPMorgan Chase working to advance a more inclusive economy?**

We believe that we are only as strong as the communities we serve and the economies they support. We also understand that our company can play a role in helping communities grow, driving local economies, and helping people build their prosperity.

We're helping to power economic growth by breaking down barriers and creating opportunities in communities across the globe. We do that through a focus on advancing diversity, equity and inclusion within our own workforce, as well as through business and community investments and policy advocacy.

• **4) How has your company's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion strategy evolved over the past couple of years as the spotlight has been put on the country's lingering racial inequality and social injustice issues?**

We're working to address inequities, including the racial wealth gap, in a meaningful way. Our efforts to support inclusive growth dates back decades. One more recent example is our \$30 billion, five-year Racial Equity Commitment (REC) focused on advancing sustainable

homeownership, driving small business growth, bolstering financial health and expanding access to banking. Through this commitment, we're helping to create greater access to affordable home loans, low-cost checking accounts and financial health education workshops in the communities we serve and particularly in historically underserved neighborhoods. Our goal is to help close the racial wealth gap and ensure all members of communities -- including our own employees -- can access the resources they need to strengthen their economic futures.

• **5) How should other companies and individuals be thinking about diversity, equity and inclusion as it relates to the growth of their business?**

Inequity stifles economic growth. If you start with that fact, it becomes clear how engaging more communities and helping to create more equitable opportunities is just smart business. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion are not buzzwords. Their tenets should be core ingredients in the design and execution of your business strategies and run with the same commitment and rigor as other parts of your business.

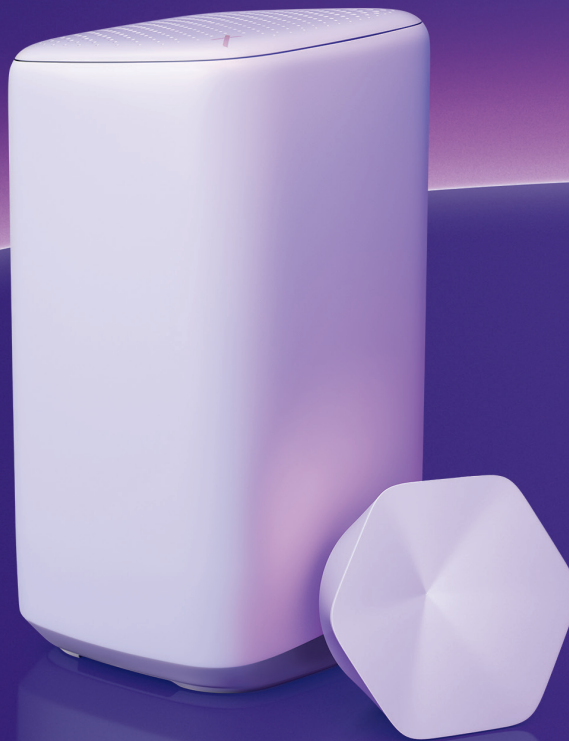
• **6) What are your goals for this year and what are you looking forward to in 2024?**

This year, my goals include deepening our culture of inclusion for our 300,000 employees, across all backgrounds and geographies and perspectives. I'm also focused on further embedding inclusive practices and solutions within JPMorgan Chase to inform our business, gain efficiencies and deepen impact. I am optimistic about the road ahead and continued progress in helping to lift all.



*Thelma Ferguson,  
Global Head of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and  
Vice Chair, Commercial Banking*

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# A Few Notable African Americans in the Field of Information Technology

By **Karen Clay**

Clay Technology and Multimedia, L.L.C.

February typically is the month during which we focus on the contributions of African Americans in various aspects of our society. While we should highlight our achievements throughout the year, I will take this opportunity to present four individuals who contributed in significant ways to the technology we enjoy today. Their stories symbolize the resilience and creativity of how we overcome barriers to open doors for others and chart new territories in technology.

### **Roy L. Clay Sr.: The Godfather of Silicon Valley**

Roy L. Clay Sr. (no relation to the author) is widely considered the “Godfather of Silicon Valley” in recognition of his career achievements and creation of programs to create pathways for other Blacks in technology. He was one of the first Black men to graduate from St. Louis University. In his first computer science job at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL), he developed his first computer program to measure how radiation would spread after an atomic explosion. After leaving LLNL, Clay was instrumental in Hewlett-Packard’s early forays into computing as the lead developer of the HP 2116A, HP’s first minicomputer. When it hit the market in 1966, it was the second such machine in the world. It was a crucial building block in the personal computing revolution, making technology more accessible and impactful for future generations. When Clay left HP, he was elected as Palo Alto’s first Black council member in 1973. He also was the first person of color to play golf at San Francisco’s Olympic Club, opening the way for other golfers of color.



**Karen Clay,**  
*Clay Technology and Multimedia*  
Courtesy, Karen Clay

### **Marian Croak: Innovator in Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP)**

Dr. Marian Croak was born in 1955 and grew up in New York City. She attended Princeton and the University of Southern California, where she earned a PhD in social psychology and quantitative analysis. She began her career at Bell Labs, now AT&T, in 1982. She envisioned Internet connections not only linking computers but also being used to make reliable and high-quality calls. She has become a visionary in the field of telecommunications, with over 200 patents to her name, 100 of which directly relate to the Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) technology. Her innovations have transformed the way the world communicates, making it possible for voice and video communications to travel over the internet. This breakthrough has had a profound impact on global communications, enabling more efficient and cost-effective connections across distances. Today we use this technology



**Celebrating Significant Black Contributors to Technology** Graphic design by Karen Clay

to make calls from our smartphones, computers, tablets and watches. VoIP is so common that landline telephones really seem like a thing of the past. In 2022, she was inducted into the National Inventor Hall of Fame. As a Vice President at Google, Dr. Croak continues to lead and inspire in the development of technologies that address societal challenges, including disaster response and internet accessibility.

### **Mark Dean: A Cornerstone of Personal Computing**

Dr. Mark Dean stands tall among the giants of computer science, holding three of IBM’s original nine PC patents. His contributions are foundational to the usability and functionality of personal computers. As a co-creator of the IBM personal computer released in 1981, Dean’s work facilitated the widespread adoption of PCs, transforming the way society interacts with digital

technology. Dean’s invention of the Industry Standard Architecture (ISA) bus enabled the integration of more devices and capabilities into computers, enhancing their utility and performance. His groundbreaking work in computer science has paved the way for innovations that continue to influence the tech industry today.

### **Lisa Gelobter: Revolutionizing Digital Media**

Lisa Gelobter has been at the forefront of internet technology and digital media. Over the past 25 years, she has become a leader in the tech industry. One of her most notable jobs as an engineer was her work on the

earliest interactive multimedia platform, Shockwave. She also helped develop the software behind the very first online videos. Her contributions to the launch of Hulu and her work on the technology that underpins GIFs have played a critical role in bringing dynamic content to digital platforms and enriching the user experiences across the globe. Beyond her technical achievements, Gelobter is a passionate advocate for diversity and inclusion in technology, working tirelessly to ensure that the digital age benefits all sectors of society equitably.

The stories of these four individuals are beacons of inspiration, highlighting the crucial role of African Americans in the field of technology. Their achievements not only reflect extraordinary intellect and innovation but also a commitment to opening doors for the generations that follow.



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# Global Health Summit Ensures Women Can Build Wealth By Gaining Equal Access to Government Contracts

Despite owning 42% of all businesses in the U.S., women entrepreneurs still face formidable challenges when starting and growing their business. Particularly striking is the glaring gap when it comes to women business owners securing government contracts.

As the largest buyer of goods and services across the country, the federal government commits 10% of its spending on contracts with 23% of that total going to small businesses. Although the government set a 5% goal to purchase from certified women-owned businesses, that target was only met twice – in 2015 and 2019 – over a span of 30 years.

To ensure women in the healthcare industry gain equal access to government contracts, Health LeadHER, the first Global Health Disparities Innovation Hub and Health Business & Career Accelerator, has partnered with Black Door Society (BDS), a membership organization for business women of color, to host the Diaspora Women in Health Global Business Conference, February 22-24, 2024 at the Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center.

“We initiated this effort because we realized so many multicultural business owners, particularly in healthcare, are lacking opportunities,” said Ogo Ekwueme, a U.S delegate for global health innovation, government health contracts strategist, health systems engineer and founder of Health LeadHer. “We aim to bring business owners and government leaders together to collaborate and transform the health of our communities both locally and globally – and allow businesses to build wealth while doing so.”

According to Sharrarne Morton,



**Sharrarne Morton**  
Photo courtesy of Black Door Society

first founder and president of BDS, “This conference will provide invaluable insights into government contracting and empower women, especially those from diverse backgrounds, to take the lead in shaping local and global health solutions. Our goal is to be transformative, bridge health disparities and foster generational wealth.”

At the Diaspora Women in Health Global Business Conference, attendees will hear directly from government leaders about upcoming community health priorities and new contracting opportunities in 2024; attend workshops on important health-related topics; and gain essential tips for forming strategic partnerships that can lead to contracting opportunities. Attendees will also get a firsthand look at advanced software tools that simplify



**Ogo Ekwueme**  
Photo courtesy of Health LeadHER

the process of pursuing contracts – making it achievable in less than a day.

“What is equally exciting is that we will offer over \$10 million in health contracting opportunities to every conference attendee, including those new to government health contracting,” Ekwueme added. “Health LeadHER will prequalify opportunities to ensure they align with our attendees’ capabilities. And we will facilitate matchmaking to connect participants with potential partners.”

“This conference will be a game changer,” said Morton. “We’re going to put women entrepreneurs on an upward trajectory to legacy and wealth right then and there.”

To learn more and register for the conference, visit [mwih.com](http://mwih.com).



# Highland Beach: Frederick Douglass' Summer Home Roots in Annapolis

By Andrea Blackstone

Frederick Douglass (Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey) —civil rights leader, abolitionist, orator and author— was born enslaved in 1818 on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Anna Murray, a Black woman who was born free in Denton, Maryland; and an active member of the Underground Railroad, became Douglass' first wife and the mother of their five children.

Perhaps a lesser-known fact is that the couple's sons, Major Charles Redmond Douglass and Sergeant Major Lewis Henry Douglass, volunteered and served in the all-Black 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, which was one of the first Black infantry regiments. The elder Douglass helped recruit Black soldiers to enlist in the United States Colored Troops (USCT).

"As the Civil War began in April 1861, many abolitionists believed that free and formerly enslaved Black men should be allowed to join the Army," The National Museum of The United States Army reported.

Although African Americans previously served in the Army and Navy, few remained during the Civil War.

Charles Remond Douglass rose to the rank of Major. His other accomplishments include working at federal agencies and being appointed as a trustee for the District of Columbia schools in 1872.

"He worked to employ the first African-American teachers in the district's schools and assured they received equal pay," according to information provided online by the Frederick Douglass Museum and Cultural Center.



*Frederick Douglass' summer cottage ("Twin Oaks") now houses the Frederick Douglass Museum and Cultural Center located at Highland Beach in Annapolis, Maryland.*

*Photo: Andrea Blackstone*

Despite Major Douglass' success in the Union Army, when he and his wife, Laura visited a restaurant at the Bay Ridge Resort and Amusement Park along the Chesapeake Bay in 1892, the couple was denied service due to their race. After the incident, Charles purchased acres of farmland from Daniel Brashears, a free Black farmer. The trailblazer developed it and sold lots to family and friends. Thereafter, Highland Beach, a community of prominent African Americans in Annapolis, Maryland was founded in 1893. The historical refuge is also believed to be the first African American summer resort in the United States. It was incorporated in 1922 and was the first African American municipality in Maryland.

Although restrictive covenants on deeds disallowed real estate sales to Blacks in other places, the private community evolved into a gathering place welcoming upper-class Black guests and residents who were educated or well-known. They



*Frederick Douglass approved of his son's idea to start a community where persons of color could enjoy carefree summers without fear of discrimination so prevalent at that time. Courtesy photo*

included notable individuals such as poet Paul Laurence Dunbar; civil rights activist Mary Church Terrell; and Dr. Charles Drew, a surgeon and a pioneer in the field of blood transfusions who improved techniques for blood storage.

Highland Beach is a place where generations of families and friends have built memories of piling in the car to fish, crab, swim or enjoy relaxing times while sitting on porches or indulging in summertime social fun.

Major Charles R. Douglass had one home built for his family and the other ("Twin Oaks" summer cottage) for his father.

"Frederick Douglass passed away in February of 1895 just months before his summer home was completed," the Frederick Douglass Museum and Cultural Center shared online.

Twin Oaks, built in 1895, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1992. It now serves as the Frederick Douglass Museum and Cultural Center, Inc. A second-floor view offers a breathtaking view of the Chesapeake Bay.

Venice Beach is near Highland Beach. According to The Venice Beach Citizens Association, "The Brashears' property was bordered by the Chesapeake Bay on the east and Black Walnut Creek and Oyster Creek on the north and south, respectively. The Brashears family farmed corn and tobacco on their plot of land until the early 1890s. The descendants of William and Charity Brashears eventually sold 28 2/3 acres of their farm to Charles and Laura Douglass in 1893, which became Highland Beach, and 13 1/3 acres to Osborn T. Taylor in 1922, which became Venice Beach."

Twin Oaks was purchased by architect Charles Bohl in the eighties. He renovated the house when it needed major repairs.

Additionally, "in 1995, the State of Maryland and Anne Arundel County acquired the property and deeded it to the Town of Highland Beach as a memorial to Frederick Douglass, one of Maryland's most famous sons," per the Town of Highland Beach's website.

Today, the remaining Highland Beach descendants of original residents strive to keep their history nestled in beachfront property intact. Black History was made in a resilient community that should permanently retain the rich legacy that it holds.

Visit [www.fdmcc.org](http://www.fdmcc.org) to learn more about Highland Beach.



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## New Slavery Exhibit Opens at the Great Blacks in Wax Museum

By Ursula V. Battle

Cash Crop, an installation by renowned artist and creator Stephen Hayes, recently opened at The National Great Blacks in Wax Museum (GBIW). The exhibit features 15 life-size sculptures of human figures cast in concrete and bound in chains and metal of the Atlantic slave trade.

An Opening Reception and Artist Gallery Talk was held at GBIW's Mansion on Friday, February 9, 2024. The exhibit will remain on view through August 31, 2024.

Noting that the museum has had wax figures exhibited in Florida for decades that are no longer welcome, GBIW co-founder Dr. Joanne Martin talked about Cash Crop.

"In February, I would be in Florida," said Dr. Martin. "We were told they wouldn't be bringing us back to Florida. But when you tell your story, uncompromisingly and unapologetically, things like that happen. Stephen Hayes and Cash Crop scream uncompromising, unapologetic, and I am thrilled to introduce to you Stephen."

Hayes said the concrete figures were cast from 15 of his family members and friends. The artist noted that the exhibit represents the 15 million African people forcefully brought to the Americas between 1540 and 1850.

"A couple of them said 'I would want to kill myself or try and kill somebody because I couldn't imagine being in a hole of a ship for six or eight weeks, with no space of not knowing, obviously, the light of day, not being able to go into the bathroom when I wanted to, or not being able to eat,'" said Hayes when asked how those who posed for the casts felt about the experience.

Hayes' woodcuts and sculptures

are made from materials that draw on social and economic themes ingrained in the history of America and African Americans. The concrete figures are connected to one another with shackles Hayes said he made from railroad tracks and other materials used for transporting goods from one place to another.

"This body of work serves as a reflection of the past and a glimpse of our present," said Hayes. "The rear of each model displays a map outline of the Brookes slave ship. The map outlines correspond to how slavery in the Americas was established, maintained, and provided economic wealth for Europeans."

He added, "Through the mending of materials, this exhibition brings a new dynamic to the history of the slave trade for modern-day visitors. Cash Crop is not only about the transporting of people as commodities, but it is also about how America still benefits from outsourcing and sweatshop labor in developing countries."

Hayes is a native of North Carolina and earned his MFA from Savannah College of Art and Design. Cash Crop launched Hayes onto the international stage. The exhibition has toured for over a decade at prestigious museums including the African American Museum of Philadelphia.

The exhibit also includes an ingrained pallet and a wall display showcasing boxes he made by hand – each telling its own story of the slave transportation experience.

"The pallet has a focus on it which is about capitalism," said Hayes, highlighting that his pieces tell a harrowing story of gluttony and consumption. "What this exhibit says is that these people are tired. They're out there, burning, and broken open, so you can look inside of them. Just imagine what happened inside."



**"What this exhibit says is that these people are tired," said Hayes. "They're out there, burning, and broken open, so you can look inside of them. Just imagine what happened inside."**

By Stephen Hayes, Artist

*Stephen Hayes and Dr. Joanne Martin*

*All photos by Ursula V. Battle*



*The concrete figures were cast from 15 of Stephen Hayes' family members and friends. The artist noted that the exhibit represents the 15 million African people forcefully brought to the Americas between 1540 and 1850.*



Hayes is Professor of the Practice of Art, Art History, and Visual Studies at Duke University and a 2023 recipient of the coveted Black Rock Senegal Residency.

Dr. Martin co-founded GBIW with her late husband Dr. Elmer Martin, the visionary behind the museum. Located at 1601-1603 E. North Avenue, the Museum is committed solely to the study and preservation of African American history, and its presentation of life-size, life-like wax figures highlights historical and contemporary personalities of African ancestry.

For more information about Cash Crop, exhibition hours, and more visit <https://www.greatblacksinwax.org/exhibitions>.



*Vashtied Battle-Brown, Jessica Clark, Patricia Turnstall, Sharon Bunch, Dena Wane and Ursula V. Battle during the event.*

*All photos by Ursula V. Battle*



*The powerful exhibition mesmerized attendees.*



*Concrete figures of an adult and child.*



*Hayes, shown discussing Cash Crop, is Professor of the Practice of Art, Art History, and Visual Studies at Duke University.*



*A wall display showcasing boxes Hayes made by hand.*



# Maryland Couple Founds Entrepreneur Ball to Empower Entrepreneurs

By Andrea Blackstone

Cryssy McArthur, founder and CEO of Cocktails by Cryssy, started Cocktails by Cryssy in 2019. However, her entrepreneurial leap is linked to her bartending talents.

“Before the pandemic, I was providing in-person, on-site beverage services. Once the pandemic hit, I had to pivot and found my niche as a mobile bartending service. I was able to provide beverage service via mail and drop-offs. It took off from there,” McArthur said, recalling key components of her productive journey.

During the pandemic, product shortages and the usual highs and lows of the service industry were barriers that McArthur faced as an entrepreneur. Some months, McArthur had a full schedule of bookings, while others she had none. She knows firsthand that entrepreneurs can benefit from taking a break to mingle with a professional network.

McArthur has provided beverage service; event curation; full planning; and event staging services to the WNBA (Washington Mystics), NBA (Washington Wizards) and others who seek private event assistance in the District of Columbia, Virginia and Maryland. Depending on the event size, 5 to 25 people work with the entrepreneur.

Cryssy’s husband, Reggie McArthur, assists with planning and logistic support.

Cryssy added, “Cocktails by Cryssy is more than just cocktails. We are a full event curation service and it takes teamwork to make the dream work.”

Reggie observed the hard work that Cryssy illustrated to build and pivot Cocktails by Cryssy and felt that a celebration was needed.

“We also realized that other



*Cryssy and Reggie McArthur, event curators of The Entrepreneur Ball*  
Photos: The Entrepreneur Ball / Cocktails by Cryssy

hard-working entrepreneurs deserved that as well,” Cryssy said.

The McArthurs founded an inaugural event in January 2023 called The Entrepreneur Ball. According to a press release, “It embodies a commitment to nurturing a supportive ecosystem where entrepreneurs can thrive, collaborate and lead impactful ventures.”

The residents of Laurel, Maryland are curating the 2024 Entrepreneur Ball that is themed “Navigating the Path to Entrepreneurial Success.” Attendees should show up to the adult-only event in their best elegant attire on February 18, 2024, at 7 p.m., located at Grand Occasions in Laurel, Maryland.

An Empowering Entrepreneurs for Success Panel discussion that is intended to offer valuable perspectives on the entrepreneurial journey will be moderated by comedian, actor and entrepreneur, Dwain Watts. He owns Watts So Funny, LLC.

“People should attend this event because it is important to build a network of resources to make sure you have a sound business foundation. Networking can be a game-changer for your business or brand. Lots of amazing opportunities



*(L-R): Cryssy McArthur and Shameeka Morel of Morel's Exquisite Designs during the 2023 Entrepreneur Ball*

have come from an unexpected connection. This event will have a mix of all of that and also a celebration,” Watts said.

Panelists will share their insights and experiences. They reportedly include Tijania Goodwin, creative director and branding consultant; Safiya Parker, a finance and wealth management expert; Alquincia Selowane, a strategic solutionist; Folasade Ogunmokun, an entrepreneur and Shopping Network owner; Jean Austin, a government contracting consultant; and Monique Rose Sneed, a multi-hyphenated entrepreneur.

The upcoming Entrepreneur Ball will showcase Black Alley with DJ Supaman and DJ Corey Cranks. Attendees will indulge in the exquisite flavors of Caribbean Cuisine provided by Mad Cow Grill and delectable desserts by Desserts by Dee. The evening will include an open premium bar and hors d’oeuvres.

Additionally, guests will walk the Silver Carpet, hosted by Spotlight Over The City. They will have the opportunity to network with other aspiring and successful entrepreneurs,

fostering connections that may lead to collaborative ventures and shared successes, according to the press release.

“This event is different because we are providing knowledge and resources that will keep entrepreneurs inspired, motivated and also solve problems they may be facing,” Reggie said, explaining what will make The Entrepreneur Ball different from other events for entrepreneurs.

“This event is not just for entrepreneurs only. It is for those who support entrepreneurs, as well as those who are thinking about becoming an entrepreneur,” Reggie said.

Cryssy further stated that during the previous inaugural ball, a multitude of connections were made and opportunities found among the guests.

“Many of the attendees have shared their success stories of partnering for major events and other opportunities that are still thriving to this day.”

Tickets will be available at the door and online. Secure your seat at [emb2024.eventbrite.com](https://emb2024.eventbrite.com), if you would like to attend the evening of elegance, empowerment and entrepreneurial insights.



**Jayne Hopson**  
Courtesy Photo

By Jayne Hopson

The Baltimore Times' Health Matters series, "Illiteracy: Black America's Public Health Enemy #1," begins on a vital exploration of the complex interplay between literacy, health, and racial injustice in the African American community. This periodic reporting will dig deep into the historical roots of Black illiteracy, tracing its origins back to the era of slavery, and examine its contemporary implications, revealing how illiteracy remains a significant barrier to achieving equitable health outcomes for African Americans.

The genesis of this crisis can be traced to the draconian policies of the slavery era, where laws explicitly forbade the education of enslaved African Americans. These policies were not merely acts of suppression but were strategically designed to maintain control over the enslaved population. The fear instilled by the potential of literacy, which was viewed as a tool of emancipation, led to the enforcement of these laws with severe punishments. This historical context is crucial for understanding the enduring mental shackles of illiteracy within the African American community, a legacy

## Illiteracy: Black America's Public Health Enemy #1

that has perpetuated educational disparities to this day.

Despite the abolition of slavery and significant legal milestones like the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, which aimed to end segregated education, the struggle for literacy equity remains an elusive achievement. The series highlights a troubling reality: a substantial number of Black adults today possess reading skills at or below the level considered necessary for functional literacy. This deficiency not only limits individual empowerment but also has direct implications for health outcomes.

It is nearly impossible to calculate how many patients die each year because they could not correctly read a prescription medicine label nor determine the number of patients who became ill after surgery because they could not read critical home care instructions.

The link between illiteracy and health disparities is a central theme of the series. It posits that without adequate literacy skills, African American communities will continue to face significant obstacles in combating health inequities. The series intends to identify ways the battle against health disparities can be won by raising awareness of the deep-seated challenges and attitudes to address the persistent root causes of illiteracy in the Black community.

Furthermore, the series does not shy away from the broader societal implications of this issue, suggesting that the persistence of educational inequalities reflects deeper currents of racial and social injustice. It calls for a reflective examination of America's past to understand and address these long-standing inequities.

Some of colonial America's first laws were "slave codes" created to make it

illegal to teach Black people, freedman or slaves how to read. These mandates preceded Black Codes and Jim Crow laws that will be scrutinized for their role in perpetuating illiteracy among African Americans.

The series makes it clear that economic interests and the maintenance of the status quo were underlying factors in these oppressive policies. Notable figures such as Frederick Douglass, who defied these restrictions and became a symbol of the transformative power of literacy, are highlighted to underscore the potential of education as a tool for liberation and advancement.

Yet, the legacy of these historical barriers continues to echo in the present day, influencing the educational and health outcomes of African Americans.

By connecting the dots between the historical suppression of literacy and current health disparities, The Baltimore Times challenges the medical community and society at large to confront these intertwined issues.

The series is not just a recounting of past injustices; it is a call to action, urging stakeholders, including healthcare providers, policymakers, and patients, to address the critical



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links between literacy, health disparities, and racial injustice with the urgency and dedication that the situation demands.

"Illiteracy: Black America's Public Health Enemy #1" is intended to be more than a series of articles; it is meant to be a compelling examination of a multifaceted public health crisis. By shedding light on the historical roots of Black illiteracy and its impact on health outcomes, The Baltimore Times not only informs its readership but also mobilizes them towards meaningful change.

*Jayne Hopson is a 2024 Commonwealth Health Care Performance Fellow. The special series "Illiteracy: Black America's Public Health Enemy #1" is funded by Association of Health Care Journalists (AHCJ) and supported by The Commonwealth Fund.*



# Embodying Authentic Masculinity

By Tiffany C. Ginyard

Coach Michael Taylor, a self-proclaimed “irrepressible optimist with a passion for the impossible” is convening a Brotherhood of Kings on Saturday February 17, 2024 at the One God One Thought Center for Better Living located 3605 Coronado Road, Windsor Mill, Maryland 21244.

This is an event for men seeking a safe, judgment-free zone to explore manhood, to learn, to grow and heal in the company and support of other like-minded men.

In a recent interview, Coach Michael tells why he believes this is the best time to be alive on the planet, the story behind why he loves his work, and a preview of what men can expect when he brings his four-hour workshop experience, “Embodying Authentic Masculinity,” to Baltimore.

**Q: What lights you up about being a major voice in the conversation about manhood and masculinity?**

A: I believe the greatest challenge facing our world today is to redefine manhood and masculinity. My belief is that we have to create a new paradigm of masculinity. And here’s how I define paradigm. A paradigm is simply a rigid way of believing, thinking, and behaving. If we’re going to change the paradigm, we have to change what we believe, how we think, and how we act.

If we pay attention to society as a whole, there’s a huge shift that occurred. It started, probably, back in the 70s when the women’s



*Author of Amazon Bestseller “Black Men Rock,” Coach Michael Taylor is coming to Baltimore to share with men in our spiritual community, and community at large, tools for awareness and resources for personal growth.*

*Photo courtesy of Michael Taylor*

movement started. As the roles for women changed, the roles for men also changed. But unfortunately, a lot of us, as men, aren’t keeping up with those changing roles. And so this new paradigm that I’m talking about is men coming together to understand that the roles that are changing are actually for the better. But it goes against the societal conditioning of men.

As those roles change, men have to begin asking themselves, ‘well, am I comfortable with these new roles?’ And the truth is, most men aren’t, because we’re driven by the

old paradigm, the old ways of thinking about being a man. Because now women are making their own money. Women don’t need men to provide anymore, technically.

**Q: If Michael Taylor was a book, what would the cover read?**

A: Based on the challenges I’ve had in my life, “Adversity Is Your Greatest Ally,” would be the perfect title. The reason that would be the title is because I had to overcome being a high school dropout, divorce, bankruptcy, foreclosure, and a deep state of depression.

I was homeless for two years living out of my car. And so overcoming all of those obstacles to now being an author of twelve books, a motivational speaker, podcaster, and certified life coach, to overcome all of those obstacles, to now living my version of an extraordinary life, that title would be absolutely perfect for me.

**Q: What’s the story behind the Brotherhood of Kings?**

A: We provide men with the tools to do that inner work so they can create inner peace, dynamic health, great relationships and financial abundance.

I believe Black men are thriving,

but you very seldom see that in mainstream media. So, unfortunately, a lot of Black men have a mindset that ‘I can’t succeed.’ Well, the Brotherhood of Kings is designed to let you know that you can succeed. But in order to do so, you’ve got to do some work. You’ve got to be willing to do the inner work. And we provide the tools.

**Register for “Brothahood of Kings: Embodying Authentic Masculinity,” a four-hour workshop, that is going to be very transformational to men who are committed to their growth and empowerment at Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.com/lebrothahood-of-kings-embodying-authentic-masculinity-tickets-822216019247>). Learn more about Coach Michael and his work at: <http://coachmichaeltaylor.com>.**

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# Ravens Zach Orr Living a Dream as DC

By Tyler Hamilton

The Baltimore Ravens knew they had a prime candidate to take over the play calling for their defense in former Ravens linebacker, Zach Orr. It's been a long journey for Orr, but he's finally arrived at a point he's thought about over the years.

"Becoming a defensive coordinator was one goal of mine, so it's just crazy to see it all come together," Orr said during his introductory press conference. "Initially, it definitely was not ... I never thought this would happen."

The Ravens moved quickly after former defensive coordinator Mike McDonald took over as the Seattle Seahawks head coach. Orr assumed the role only one day later.

"It was crazy," Orr said. "I didn't even have a chance to process what happened the day before [in the AFC Championship game]."

"I had conversations with [Head] Coach [John] Harbaugh starting on Monday, because we knew the possibility of things that could happen with the [coaching] staff. I was talking with him Monday, going through the interview process with him, as well as Tuesday.

[I had] two days of really detailed conversations. I talked to [the] Green Bay [Packers] on Monday. I interviewed with them Wednesday. [On] Wednesday, after the interview with Green Bay, I had another conversation with Coach Harbaugh. That's when things really started to pick up steam."

Orr began his coaching career in August of 2017 when he was hired by the Ravens as a defensive analyst under head coach John Harbaugh. He served that role until 2021 when he was hired by the Jacksonville Jaguars as their



**Zach Orr**

*Photo credit: Phil Hoffman/Baltimore Ravens photos*

outside linebackers coach under head coach Urban Meyer.

The Ravens brought Orr back in 2022 when he was named their inside linebackers coach. Orr held the position last year as well.

Inside linebacker Patrick Queen ascended to a Pro Bowl level player last year. Queen had 117 tackles, five sacks and two interceptions in 2022. It's no coincidence this season came the same year Orr arrived and the Ravens acquired fellow linebacker Roquan Smith in a blockbuster trade with the Chicago Bears.

Orr's playing experience and deep Ravens' ties surely helped. He was

signed by the Ravens as an undrafted free agent in 2014. He made the 53-man roster as an undrafted rookie.

The 2016 season saw Orr start 15 games, recording 132 tackles, five passes defended, three interceptions, and a forced fumble. He was placed on injured reserve on Dec 30, 2016.

Despite the abrupt end to the season, Orr was named a second-team All-Pro.

Orr announced his retirement from the NFL on Jan 20, 2017. The retirement was due to a congenital neck/spine condition that ended his season.

"It was tough initially when I had to come in and sit with you guys the last

time [in this auditorium] and hang up the cleats, hang up the pads [and] hang up the helmet, but like I said, I had great support from my family and from the organization," Orr stated last week.

Having the opportunity to coach for a team he played for is something Orr doesn't take lightly.

"I know what the standard is here as a defense here in Baltimore, and it means a lot to me," Orr said. "There have] been a lot of great coaches [that] come through here [and] a lot of great defensive coordinators [that] have come through here, so yes. I'm next in line. I have a big challenge and a big opportunity, but I'm excited for it."

## Legal Notice

### LEGAL NOTICE: NOTICE OF HEARING

STATE OF MAINE

DISTRICT COURT  
LOCATION: SKOWHEGAN  
DOCKET NO.: SKO-PC-2023-011

IN RE: MICHAEL P.

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN TO Unknown Father, whereabouts unknown:** Pursuant to 22 M.R.S. §4001 et seq., the Maine Department of Health & Human Services (hereafter, "DHHS") has petitioned the Court for a Child Protection Order and/or Termination of Parental Rights Order, concerning the child: Michael P. d/o/b: 09/21/2007. The mother is Lucy DeMille and the father is/or may be Unknown Father. DHHS has met the requirements of M.R. Civ. P. Rule 4(g)(1)(A)-(C). Hearing on the pending Petitions will be held at **Maine District Court, 47 Court Street, Skowhegan, ME 04976, on April.23.24, at 3:15 PM a.m./p.m. Failure to appear at this hearing may result in the issuance of a child protection order, the termination of your parental rights, and/or any other order permissible under 22 M.R.S. §4001 et seq.** You may be entitled to legal counsel in these proceedings. Contact the court at the above address or 207-474-9518. To obtain a copy of the Petition(s), contact the court or DHHS at 207-624-7900, 2 Anthony Ave. Augusta, ME 04333. DHHS is represented by the Maine Office of the Attorney General, 84 Harlow Street, Bangor, ME 04401.

Dated: FEB 06 2024

Andrew Benson  
Judge, Maine District Court

Susan Furbush  
A True Attested Copy  
Clerk, Maine District Court

## Legal Notice

## Legal Notice

CITY OF BALTIMORE  
DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES  
SPECIAL NOTICE

**GS16810RRR – Mitchell Courthouse Roof Replacement**

### CORRECTION:

The Pre-Bid Meeting for this project has been rescheduled. It is now:  
"A "Pre-Bidding information" session will be conducted at the site: **100 N. Calvert Street, Baltimore, MD 21202, Room 509 Mitchell on TUESDAY, February 20, 2024 at 1:00 p.m.**"

## Legal Notice

Searching for the whereabouts of:  
Mr. Kelvin Thornton, Son of Mr. Theodore L. Thornton who passed away this year January 2024. Last known residence: Baltimore Maryland.

Please contact: Ruby Thornton (Wife)  
304-344-5858 - Rev. Lloyd A. Hill (Family Friend) 304-421-1710

To place  
Legal Notices,  
call: 410-366-3900  
email:  
[legals@btimes.com](mailto:legals@btimes.com)

## Small Business Administration Announces Further Action to Help PPP and COVID EIDL Borrowers

**WASHINGTON** – The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) has announced expanded flexibility and accommodations for COVID EIDL and PPP borrowers to help bring them into compliance and avoid the repercussions of defaulting on a government loan.

For COVID EIDL and PPP borrowers with loans under \$100,000, the SBA has implemented a 60-day goodwill exception period starting January 1 and lasting through March 3, 2024. During this period, the SBA will build on its extensive outreach to affected businesses to ensure that PPP borrowers know how to apply for forgiveness and COVID EIDL borrowers are aware of all repayment options — including the opportunity for hardship repayment plans. Further, the SBA will refrain from escalating collections activities until after the goodwill exemption period.

Small business borrowers in delinquency or default who take action and obtain good standing with the SBA will improve their long-term financial health substantially. The benefits of getting, and staying, current on SBA loans include better credit scores, which make it cheaper and easier to buy a home or car in the future; eligibility for future government financial assistance, like a VA loan or help after a natural disaster; and, in some cases, avoidance of federal and private collections activities which can include withholding tax returns and wage garnishment.

### For PPP Borrowers:

Hundreds of thousands of PPP borrowers can avoid default and the repercussions that come along with it without repaying the loan. Those who have met the payroll requirements can simply [complete the PPP forgiveness application](#), which takes most borrowers less than 15 minutes. If PPP borrowers are unsure if their loan has been forgiven, they can check by logging in to the [MySBA loan portal](#). Once logged in, borrowers will see all of their SBA loans, including PPP loans, and the status of each loan. For PPP loans, the status will show "paid in full" if the PPP loan has been forgiven.

PPP borrowers who are not sure if their loan has been forgiven and see other statuses should apply for forgiveness immediately. See [the SBA website](#) for instructions on how to apply for PPP forgiveness.

Borrowers who need assistance with forgiveness can contact SBA at our dedicated forgiveness call center: 877-552-2692. The call center is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. ET.

### For COVID EIDL Borrowers:

All COVID EIDL borrowers must repay their loans, but the SBA has programs to help — including expanded hardship accommodation plans. COVID EIDL hardship accommodation plans significantly lower monthly payments — sometimes as low as \$25 per month — for six months, and then payments gradually increase over a multi-year period. More information for COVID EIDL hardship accommodation plans is available on [the SBA website](#). Many borrowers can apply for a hardship accommodation plan directly through the [MySBA loan portal](#). Once logged in, COVID EIDL borrowers can click "Loan Summaries" in the toolbar, then "Hardship Accommodation Plan" in the bottom right corner, and finally "Learn More and Enroll."

For further assistance, please contact COVID-19 EIDL Customer Service at 833-853-5638 (TTY:711), email [COVIDEIDLService@sba.gov](mailto:COVIDEIDLService@sba.gov), or send a message through the MySBA Loan Portal. COVID-19 EIDL Customer Service is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET.

### For All Borrowers

The SBA offers free or low-cost counseling for small businesses through its national network of Resource Partners. These partner organizations may be able to help small businesses fit loan repayments into their budgets, provide information on applicable tax benefits, and offer other counseling services. [Contact your local District Office](#) for assistance with locating a Resource Partner to address your needs or [search to see what is available in your area](#).

The SBA remains committed to its core mission of supporting America's small businesses and will make a significant effort to bring borrowers back into compliance before escalating collection activities.

For more information about SBA's loan programs, financial assistance, and other services, visit [sba.gov](#).



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