

## Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Died 47 Years Ago, April 4



*August 28, 1963: American minister and civil rights leader Dr Martin Luther King Jr (1929 - 1968) waves to the crowd of more than 200,000 people gathered on the Mall during the March on Washington after delivering his 'I Have a Dream' speech, Washington, DC. King was assassinated April 4, 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee. (See commentary on page 5) (Photo by Hulton Archive/Getty Images)*

# Baltimore student wins prestigious entrepreneurship award

By Stacy M. Brown

Cyprian Ekeagwu used to fix remote control toys when he lived in Nigeria before moving to the United States.

So, about three years ago when a teacher at Patterson High School in Baltimore asked him to design “something good, something fresh,” the aspiring entrepreneur immediately recalled his roots and came up with what instructors called a captivating idea.

“We had to design and build a project in our class, so I came up with the idea of a hovercraft,” said Ekeagwu, now a junior at Morgan State University who is pursuing a double major in transportation and industrial engineering. “When my teacher first saw it, she told me that I could do better, so I started to think critically and came up with the hovercraft.”

He named the design, Green Tech, a radio controlled educational hovercraft toy built exclusively from recyclable materials and on March 25, 2015, Ekeagwu joined an exclusive group of others from around the country at the Network For Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) Global Showcase in New York to accept the Global Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award.

“I was astounded,” Ekeagwu said. “It’s an honor to be chosen out of all the many people in Baltimore, in Maryland and to have ideas like this to be recognized and put in a category with people from different states and countries is such a great, great honor.”

Winners of the honor receive scholarships and other business start up incentives and, in New York, Ekeagwu’s 3D prototypes really thrilled the audiences, officials said.



*On March 25, 2015, Cyprian Ekeagwu received the Global Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award at the Network For Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) Global Showcase in New York. He designed a radio controlled educational hovercraft toy built exclusively from recyclable materials. Courtesy Photo*

He said he received support from 3D Maryland and educator Sharon Brackett to further his mission to develop a 3D prototype.

“People from all over the world came to the awards ceremony and each country choose their best, so it was a chance for me to be a part of something great,” said Ekeagwu, who noted that he plans to eventually become a mechanical engineer.

The 20-year-old says he knows he has a lot of schooling ahead of him, but is enjoying the experience. He said despite the heavy representation of other cities, states and countries at the awards ceremony, Baltimore had no shortage of honorees and participants.

University of Baltimore graduate Keenen Geter served as master of ceremonies for the event while NFTE’s global educator, Karl Sanzenbacher of Roland Park, received an honor for his work helping students in the classroom develop their entrepreneurial skills and mindset.

Dr. Dawn Gayapersad also received a special award for exemplary volunteer service for her work with young individuals in Charm City. She was selected from a pool of 11 national candidates who were nominated for the honor.

When asked what winning the award means to him as an aspiring entrepreneur, Ekeagwu said it can’t easily be measured but it provides a solid foundation on which to build what appears to be a successful future.

“I have all of the tools now,” Ekeagwu said. They’ve showed me the road to success and I’m going to take that road all the way to the end.”

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## Good Friday, Passover and Easter in Perfect Order

Providence has designed that Good Friday, Passover and Easter follow each other in perfect succession this year.

This is exactly how things were aligned on that first Holy Week when Jesus was crucified.

On the Thursday, (Maundy Thursday or Holy Thursday) at night, he was betrayed after his last Passover meal.

On Friday (Good Friday) he was crucified and buried. The story goes that he had to be buried that night of the 'preparation' for the Sabbath. Saturday was the Sabbath Day.

Of course, Sunday became the very first Easter or resurrection day, because according to the story of Christians, Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday.

Again, let us quietly observe that Good Friday, Passover and Easter are lined up in perfect order, exactly as it would have happened at the beginning of the Christian era.

Now, we need to notice something else that is strangely happening this year at the same time. An event that is very important to black Americans, is inserted plum and in the very center of these momentous, epoch forming, nation building and "religion" founding events!

What is the event that has inserted itself, plum and at the center of these historic life and culture changing events? The death date of Martin Luther King, Jr.! Yes, this year, placed in the middle of these significant events is April 4th, the day on which King was assassinated—murdered or sacrificed.

We think that this happening may be forcing upon the black race a moment when they are called upon to interpret why the cosmic powers are aligning themselves in this way, at this time—when after all the bad, sad and gross things that have happened to blacks over the years—their race has now produced the most powerful man in the world in the person of President Barack Obama!

Could it be that this cosmic alignment, at a time like this, is begging blacks to interpret just what this all means? See, bad things may happen, but it is incum-

bent on those who experience these bad things to interpret them. They could be interpreted for good or for evil. Most other peoples interpret the happenings in such a way as to bring a benefit. Why? Because the power to overcome matters like these rests solely in their interpretation.

Wish to see how Joseph in the Jewish Old Testament Story chose to interpret his being sold by his brothers into Egyptian slavery—with all the horrible experiences that followed? Read Genesis 45:1-50: for the end of the story.

However, it is in these words that we discover how winners interpret evil experiences and turn them into good: "I am Joseph your brother whom you sold into slavery and be not grieved that you did this to me; you meant it for evil, but God meant it for good!" The victory comes in the interpretation of the story.

See also how Christians interpreted the cruel death on the cross, making the very instrument of death the symbol of their victory! "Oh Death," they say,

"Where is your sting, Oh grave, where is your victory!" They interpret the awful happening by turning it around. They then boldly and strangely name the day "Good Friday." They celebrate the day each year; they remember and recall the awfulness of the day, but claim that good comes out of that evil.

Maybe the cosmic forces are forcing upon us the moment for our learning from these paradigms of the past as we do a series of things.

Firstly, just as the Jews under Moses changed the verb "to Passover" into the noun "The Passover," so too should blacks, around ML King's death change the verb "shall overcome" into the noun "The Overcome."

Secondly, they should date the happening at a time in history. Just as Good Friday, Passover and Easter are dated and set on the calendar, we must date "The Overcome" on April 4.

Miraculously, in centuries and millennia to come, "The Overcome" will keep falling in the general period of Passover,

Good Friday and Easter, always in the spring when life is being renewed offering blacks a chance to retell the story of battles and victories along the way!

In all of this, remember one key thing: You need permission from no one to do this new thing. Choose only to reinterpret all experiences in a way that leaves you victorious. Use it as Christians and Jews do as the time to remember, retell, celebrate and teach those who come after, that what was intended by others for evil—killing King, demeaning black people—was meant by God, for good—it led to Barak Obama! Then challenge all to lead lives that ensure that they, like the many other successful blacks who succeeded despite the odds, must make it their cause célèbre to overcome whatever obstacles are placed in the way, now and always.

*If you are interested in further exploring these thoughts, follow The Overcome Book on Twitter @theovercomebook.*



## Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Died 47 Years Ago, April 4

By Dr. Peter Bramble

Forty-Seven years have now gone by since our esteemed, leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was murdered in Memphis, Tennessee.

By the time of his death, King had become the symbol of the civil rights movement.

He was there for the Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown vs Board of Education* condemning "separate but equal" in public education.

He was there when Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a public bus to go to the back seats in order to make room for white riders. He was at the forefront of the demonstrations that followed—the bus boycotts and the street demonstrations.

In short, from the mid-nineteen fifties to the time of his death, King was involved as a leader in just about every significant civil rights action. He led many a demonstration and was there to witness many successes along the road.

By the time of his death, on April 4, 1968, Martin Luther King was in every sense the very embodiment of the civil rights movement.

From time to time we hear people wondering how King would view the progress of black Americans almost fifty years since his historic time. In these days and times, what would King say and do about the state of black America?

No one really knows. Most people continue to say that "we have come a long way, but we have a long way to go!" And they are right in some sense.

However, if we as a society were to follow the pattern of what happened after the great work of leaders like

Africa after Nelson Mandela led a movement for freedom, even after many years of suffering and imprisonment for almost a complete generation! South Africa was changed forever!

However, when we look at what has happened since King's death, blacks continue to speak and act as though things have not changed. Despite the fact that many favorable laws are now in place; despite the fact that we actually have a black man holding the highest office in the land; despite the fact that

Suppose we followed the examples set by Moses, Jesus, Gandhi and Mandela and establish something that marks the "before and after" of black existence by using King and his assassination date as the marker. Moses did the Passover; Jesus gave us Easter and the Christian Church; and Mandela and Gandhi left changed nations.

How about letting King give us "The Overcome," just as Moses gave the Jews The Passover!

How about allowing Martin to leave us a name change that points to our character and NOT the color of our skins. Suppose we allowed Martin to make us OVERCOMERS... people who claim that all they have gone through—Middle Passage, Slavery, Segregation, poverty and all the hurts that went with those experiences—served to hone the character of a new people who as overcomers pledge from this time and going forward to overcome or vanquish any and all barriers to our leading successful lives, because of the character bequeathed to us by Martin Luther King Jr. and all those who went before us.

Starting right now, we can pledge to stop singing that 'we shall overcome.' "So, we claim that in King and all those who suffered for us, we have already overcome and we thereafter think, talk, hope and act/ behave as overcomers! What a wonderful world this would be! What a gift to the memory of King! What a positive teaching and organizing tool for the future.

*Dr. Peter Bramble has written a rite for doing "The Overcome." Get it here for free. Call him at 347-267-0803 to discuss, add or improve the concept.*

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***"Suppose we followed the examples set by Moses, Jesus, Gandhi and Mandela and establish something that marks the 'before and after' of black existence by using King and his assassination date as the marker."***

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Martin Luther King, Jr. we would do something very different.

Look at what happened after Moses in the Book of Exodus confronted the Pharaoh of Egypt. He celebrated the Passover (Passover this year providentially falls on April 4) and the Jews went on to form a nation.

Look at what happened after Jesus led a movement with his 12 disciples; after he too was murdered on a cross—celebrated on Good Friday, April 3, this year! His disciples founded the Christian Church which is thriving today with a worldwide membership in excess of two billion members!

Look at what happened after Gandhi led the non-violent movement in India. They went on to change a nation and in about sixty short years, India has become a power to be reckoned with.

Look at what happened in South

we have leaders in all walks of life, we continue to think and talk as though nothing significant has changed.

We continue to sing the song: "We Shall Overcome Someday!" A great song to prepare and ready us for battle but not the song we should sing after.

As long as we continue to sing that song from our own lips, we are doing two sad things.

Firstly, we are saying that as of today, all that our great leaders like King, all that our fore parents have suffered and died to accomplish was for naught.

Secondly, we are postponing our moment of victory into the future, while claiming that we are living forever in the penultimate of our victory.

That is not smart. We know of no successful people who sing songs telling themselves and everyone else that they "just can't win for losing."

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# Nine-month program hopes to stem prevalence of diabetes

By Stacy M. Brown

The statistics are sobering, if not eye opening!

Approximately 400,000 Maryland residents live with diabetes and nearly 1.2 million have pre-diabetes and are at risk of developing the debilitating disease.

For the Baltimore chapter of the American Diabetes Association (ADA), the numbers are far too high and, while officials at the nonprofit organization are concerned about everyone, they have put a bulls-eye on women, who are seen typically as the health care champion in the home and the individual who's most responsible for preparing healthy meals.

"We don't have a grasp on how serious a disease diabetes is and how increasingly common it is," said Dr. Michelle Gourdine, who serves on the board of the ADA.

"Sometimes people refer to diabetes as having a touch of sugar and it makes it seem harmless but it's not."

"People with diabetes are susceptible to heart disease, going blind, losing limbs, all terrible outcomes to a disease that we can take steps to prevent in the first place."

ADA officials said nearly 12.6 million women in the country are affected by diabetes, and the incidence of type 2 diabetes is more than double in the African-American community.

To address this, the Maryland chapter

of the ADA held a screening event on March 24, 2015, at which more than 100 women were invited to take ADA's Diabetes Risk Test.

Of the women taking the test, the ADA plans to select 50 to participate in "Fabulous You!" — a nine-month, educational, interactive diabetes wellness program geared toward helping women take control of their health.

"Clearly we're targeting women not because they're the only ones affected but we understand women are often the gateway to healthcare that may influence their mates to take care of their health," Gourdine said. "We [women] prepare the meals and many other things and we want to make sure that women also focus on themselves by providing self care which isn't a selfish thing."

Gourdine says it's her belief that women were raised to be natural providers, nurturing and putting others ahead of themselves. "But, we shouldn't leave ourselves out of the equation by not taking care of us," she said.

According to a recent study published by the Kaiser Family Foundation, nearly 40 percent of women are mothers with children under 16 years of age living at home and over 80 percent of those women shoulder the main responsibility for taking care of their children's health.

Developed as a science-based and culturally relevant community initiative, "Fabulous YOU!" is also an interactive



*Dr. Michelle Gourdine  
Board Member  
American Diabetes Association  
Courtesy Photo*

learning experience designed to address diabetes management for a select cohort of women who are living with or at high-risk for diabetes.

The program begins with "Diabetes Care Day," a women's screening event, to capture biometrics and level of commitment to improving health.

It will also feature cooking demonstrations, supermarket tours, fitness demonstrations, motivational talks and incentives.

"We will tour the supermarket and the healthy and unhealthy parts of the supermarket," Gourdine said.

Participants will be connected to mentors who will support them in achieving their goals during and after the program, as well as medication management provided by the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy.

The inaugural program participants will support next year's class as mentors, Gourdine said.

"We are certainly looking for those who will support this going forward with funding and resources," she said.

ADA officials will track participants to ensure effectiveness and to help decrease weight, which Gourdine said contributes to diabetes.

"What's most important to us is not only to motivate the women but to show real control and positive health outcomes from this program," she said.

For more information, visit [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org) and to take a diabetes test, visit [www.diabetes.org/are-you-at-risk/diabetes-risk-test](http://www.diabetes.org/are-you-at-risk/diabetes-risk-test).

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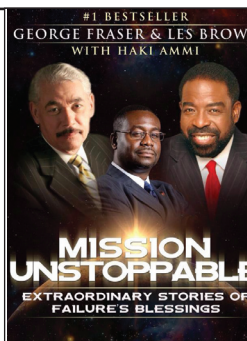
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## Sound Off Live!

*Bands will compete on April 9 and 10, 2015 to perform at Artscape*

Baltimore— Get a sneak peek at Artscape, America's largest free arts festival! Sound Off Live! showcases local bands as they compete for the chance to perform at Artscape in July. Music lovers can support their favorite bands or discover new ones during this free two-night event.

The competition takes place on Thursday, April 9 and Friday, April 10 from 5 p.m. to 10:15 p.m. at Metro Gallery, located at 1700 North Charles Street in Baltimore.

Sound Off Live! is a program component of Artscape. The 2015 festival takes place July 17-19 on Mount Royal Avenue and North Charles Street. Artscape is produced by the Baltimore Office of Promotion & The Arts.

Bands will perform in front of a live audience and panel of judges. The winners of the competition will be determined by the judges. Winners will be announced at the Artscape press conference on Monday, June 8, 2015.

For a complete list of all bands and the date and times of their performances, visit: [www.artscape.com](http://www.artscape.com) or call 410-752-8632. Artscape fans can stay in touch with festival information all year long on Facebook and Twitter and use the hashtag #ArtscapeBmore.

# College students use spring break to volunteer, give back

By Charlene Mayo

Spring break is usually a time when college students go home to visit their families, work to save money or most likely party! It's not often that you hear about young college students donating their spring break to give back to less fortunate communities.

Student United Way Worldwide is a group that offers students from a variety of universities a month long alternative spring break program which gives the young adults the chance to help rebuild neighborhoods, schools, houses, help with family stability and fundraise.

Starting in 2006, the year after the Hurricane Katrina disaster, Student United Way Worldwide sent 100 student volunteers from each state to do long term recovery throughout Mississippi and Alabama. Since then Student United Way Worldwide has been working with Student United Way in different states like Michigan and Maryland to host alternative spring breaks for students.

This spring break in Maryland set the



*On Tuesday, March 10, 2015, student volunteers participating in the Alternative Spring Break program cleaned the auditorium at the Benjamin Franklin High School – United Way Family Center in Baltimore. They also cleaned and organized the basement of the center to create storage and added space for future programs. Student United Way Worldwide is a program that helps less fortunate communities and gives college students a chance to give back.*

**Photo by Charlene Mayo**

March Funeral Homes and King Memorial Park present...

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record for the largest amount of volunteers in the nation to date.

Amanda Townsend, a junior at Penn State University, is a site director for the Penn State team. A major in criminology, Townsend has been working with Student United Way since her freshman year. Townsend explains that she wanted to go into the communities where criminals come from so she can see things from their perspective.

"I would like to know more about why they commit the crimes they do, so, I can relate to them," Townsend said.

She wants to work within the system to change the system. She wants to reintegrate them back into society rather than condemn them and lock them behind bars. Learning a new perspective makes Townsend feel inspired.

Ben Rowles, is a sophomore at Penn State studying English. Rowles wants to be an English teacher after he graduates from college. When asked why he is volunteering his spring break to give back to society, he says he'd rather be doing something meaningful instead of going home and indulging in relaxation.

# Ravens defensive backs coach Chris Hewitt has work to do!

By Turron Davenport

The Baltimore Ravens are known for having one of the more stingy defenses in the NFL. However, one area of the defense that requires improvement this year is the secondary.

Last year's defensive backs coach, Steve Spagnuolo has moved on to become the defensive coordinator for the New York Giants. As a result, Chris Hewitt will take over as the new defensive backs coach. He was the assistant secondary coach in 2014.

Coach Hewitt has been with the Ravens since 2012. He previously served as an assistant coach for special teams. Special teams coach Jerry Rosburg first encountered Hewitt when he was an assistant coach at the University of Cincinnati and Hewitt was a defensive back. Current Ravens head coach John Harbaugh was a special teams coach with Cincinnati while Hewitt was there.

Hewitt was an assistant coach at Rutgers University before joining the Ravens' coaching staff. He played high school football in New Jersey and has lived there since he was five years old. Hewitt's first exposure to coaching in the NFL came by participating in the NFL Minority Coaching Fellowship Program. He completed training camp stints with the Cleveland Browns, Philadelphia Eagles and the Ravens.

The Ravens secondary was struck with injuries last season. Their biggest loss came when Jimmy Smith injured his foot and was out for the remainder of the season. Smith played corner as well as anyone in the NFL at the time of injury. Veteran corner Lardarius Webb also missed time due to a lingering back injury. Webb began to regain his form very late in the season.

As of now, Webb and Smith are set to be the starters at corner. Asa Jackson missed a large portion of last season due to injury but he will be back this year to serve as a nickel corner.

The safety position is an area that the Ravens have attempted to address by way of free agency and early draft picks and signed free safety Kendrick Lewis recently. The team used a first round draft pick on struggling safety Matt



*Ravens secondary coach Chris Hewitt instructs the defensive backs during a drill in training camp last year.*  
Courtesy Photo/baltimore Ravens.com

Elam in 2013 and used a third round draft pick on Terrence Brooks last year. One move that did work out was bringing in Will Hill after being released by the New York Giants.

Hewitt will be charged with getting the veteran secondary up to speed. He was very excited about the Lewis signing and expressed it when the team introduced Lewis at a press conference.

"He's a guy that we were looking for in free agency. I think he's a guy that's going to come here and solidify our defense, especially on the back end. So, this was a dear addition that we needed for our team, as far as leadership, especially on the back end, and we're very proud and happy to have Kendrick be a part of our team," Hewitt said.

The team will likely add to their secondary by way of the 2015 NFL Draft. The Ravens have been linked to many defensive backs at the East-West Shrine game, the Senior Bowl and at the NFL Scouting Combine. The team holds the 26th pick in the first round, which could very well be used on a cornerback.

One first round option that is likely to be on the board for the Ravens is Marcus Peters from the University of Washington. Peters was dismissed from the Washington football team but has said that he has learned from his past mistakes. His man press ability is a perfect match for the Ravens scheme.

Coach Hewitt will have to be a steady influence on Peters, if the Ravens decide to use their first round pick on the talented cornerback. The team has also been linked to USC corner Josh Shaw, who has faced some trouble as well but he has said that his focus is on

football and that he realizes the opportunity that he is blessed with.

The first season as Ravens secondary coach will be a key one for Hewitt. He will need to rely on his past experience as an NFL defensive back along with his coaching history to make it all work.

A movie poster for the film 'Furious 7'. At the top, the text reads 'VENGEANCE HITS HOME' in a bold, italicized font, followed by 'FURIOUS 7' in a very large, bold, italicized font. Below the title is a black and white photograph of the main cast members standing in a line, looking towards the right. At the bottom of the poster, there are several logos and text elements: 'ORIGINAL FILM' on the left, a 'PARENTS STRONGLY CAUTIONED PG-13' rating box in the center, and '© 2014 UNIVERSAL STUDIOS' and 'IMAX IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF IMAX CORPORATION.' on the right. At the very bottom, it says 'IN THEATERS AND IMAX' and 'STARTS FRIDAY, APRIL 3 CHECK LOCAL LISTINGS FOR THEATERS AND SHOWTIMES'.



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## Guest readers use Dr. Seuss to promote a love of books at Historic Samuel Coleridge-Taylor



Baltimore— Faculty, staff, friends and students of the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) read to children on Friday, March 27, 2015 as part of “Read Across America” Day at The Historic Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Elementary School (HSCT), a UMB partner school in West Baltimore.

This event is one in a series to enrich the lives of students through Promise Heights, a UMB School of Social Work-led initiative that improves the lives of families and children from cradle to college or career.

Promise Heights partners include government, faith-based and non-profit organizations such as United Way of Central Maryland, which sponsored a “Read Across America” call for volunteers. In response, volunteers appeared at schools across central Maryland.

In Baltimore, some lucky children got to meet the main character from the book, “The Cat in the Hat,” by Dr. Seuss. At HSCT, the United Way provided an actor dressed as the cat, who delighted first-graders by reading the book in the classroom of Jennifer Hoke as well as a child’s favorite, “Are You My Mother?”

In other classrooms, selections were read by, among others, HSCT Principal Kelvin Bridgers; Promise Heights Executive Director Bronwyn Mayden, who is assistant dean of the University of Maryland School of Social Work; and Promise Heights Programs Director Rachel Donegan. Bridgers and Mayden both chose to read “Green Eggs and Ham.” The selection of books by Dr. Seuss were chosen to celebrate the March birthday (March 2, 1904) of the beloved children’s author.

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# Local designer creates luxurious, 'nostalgic' handbags

By Stacy M. Brown

What do Fashion Affair magazine, Luevo and News Channel 12 in New York have in common? They have all showed off designs by Baltimore-based handbag and accessories brand Linell Ellis.

They are not the only ones, the designs by Linell Jackson, who named the company Linell Ellis because her husband's name is Ellis, also have popped up on a fashion week runway in the Bronx, New York, and in several fashionista blogs, including Kassie's closet.

"Our handbags and accessories are what I like to call accessible luxury," Jackson said. "They are always reminding you that luxury should be embraced every day and we believe in a classic approach to design, with fanciful color and charming prints, making every piece one that can be worn today, tomorrow and for years to come."

The bags have also contributed to excitement within her family with each being named after a relative.

"I am continually inspired by my mother and grandmothers and I'm waiting to name a bag after each of them because I want it to be the right bag," Jackson said.

She named her rattan, royal python, brown snake and colorful novelty print after her aunt Florence because Jackson said her aunt had "a personality of ten thousand. She was fun and had the best laugh."

The clutch stingray and black leopard bags, named for Alice another aunt, brings visions of beautifully placed hair and of someone who was "quite put together," Jackson said, adding that, "She had flair!"

The Nikki collection named for a cousin features the coral alligator, the turquoise alligator and the leopard clutch, in part because Jackson said her cousin is a go-getter with a warm heart.

Finally, there is cousin Candi, whom Jackson described as a beautiful and strong individual with the most contagious smile she has ever seen. The "Candi" line includes the ruby red satchel, the satchel cork and the satchel leopard.



**Linell Jackson and her husband Ellis are the founders of the luxury handbag and accessories company, Linell Ellis. Each line of handbags created by Linell Ellis is named after a relative. (From top) Coral Alligator Nikki clutch, named for a cousin; Rattan Florence clutch, Black Snake Florence clutch and Novelty Florence clutch, named for an aunt. All Linell Ellis handbags are made locally.**

Courtesy Photos/Linell Ellis

"We are a happy brand and we believe that true luxury is found in life's experiences so we try to evoke the feelings of nostalgia for our customers," Jackson said.

Mostly, though, she says she is proud that many in the collection are locally made.

Jackson, a graduate of UMBC, says she carefully designs each of her handbags because accessories often serve to make individuals happy and add confidence.

In an industry where researchers say Americans spend \$250 billion each year on women's luxury designer goods, the average woman buys three new handbags yearly, Jackson said business has done quite well with her bags ranging from \$150 to \$525.

More than the price, Jackson said she simply enjoys creating accessories others love and can use. She noted that she travels extensively to come up with ideas.

"I derive my inspiration and create a board for each session. For instance, with one [design] we started in Morocco

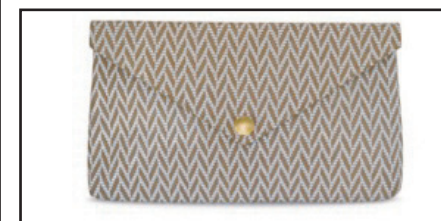
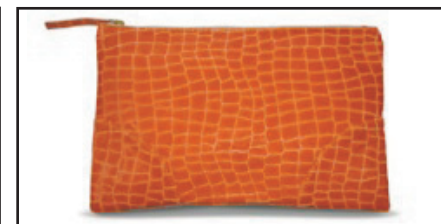
and examined all of the colors and textures and then went to a Caribbean location which is also in the sun in a different part of the world," Jackson said. "It had beautiful, vibrant colors and textures so we took the similarities and built the collection which focuses on color and texture."

From that point, Jackson makes a prototype from construction paper and then tests its texture to ensure sizing and other important details.

"Once the sample is made and any and all changes have been done, we go to production," she said.

For the Baltimore designer, it all began about 15 years ago when Jackson said she had a passion and "really just sort of this addiction to accessories and handbags." She said she had been seeking a creative outlet and, along with her husband, decided to start a business.

Jackson said her love for fashion began at home with her mother whom she would watch get dressed and make herself up in front of a mirror. However,



Jackson still pursued and thrived in a career as a technology executive.

After many changes at work, she said she sought to reconnect with her fashion instincts and she hasn't looked back.

"Having spent my career in the conservative technology field, I was always accepting roles where the focus was on people; getting to talk to, inspire, and be inspired by the incredible personalities I was meeting," she said. "One day it hit me. Why am I not combining my love of people with my happy memories and fondness for beautiful style? I decided to take my love of people and help them feel beautiful, confident and happy by making handbags. We went all in. I took what was happening at work as an opportunity to follow a new path and I went out and taught myself and I've found what works, my true voice."

Jackson's products are featured on ahalife.com, trovea.com and several other outlets. For more information, visit [www.linellellis.com](http://www.linellellis.com).

# Wells Fargo launches campaign for African-Americans to tell their stories

By Stacy M. Brown

Chaquita Venable tells a compelling story about her late father Clem Venable, who because of segregation in Virginia missed five crucial years of schooling and never recovered. However, that never stopped him from strongly encouraging an academic course for his five children, all of whom he witnessed earn college degrees before his death in 2013.

“My dad told me not to worry about people calling me a nerd because I studied hard and hit the books,” Chaquita Venable, a 2010 graduate of Old Dominion University in Virginia and a Baltimore resident.

“Dad said, ‘Your education will take you a long way. Get it while you can because you can’t get back missed opportunities.’ That’s what we’ve all done,” said Venable, who’s a part of Wells Fargo’s Black/African Connection Team Member Network.

Former Army Master Sergeant Harold Cole said his family has a long legacy of military service, including his grandfather who served in World War II and several cousins who served recently in the Middle East.

Cole enlisted in the military in 1942 when he was 17 because he had experience riding horses. He was assigned to all-black Troop F of the Ninth U.S. Cavalry in Texas.

“I was a bit nervous about going to Texas because I had heard bad stories about the South,” Cole said. “When I got there, I noticed that the southern officers treated us better than the northern officers. I guess they were more accustomed to interacting with black people.”

The stories of Venable, Cole and so many others are coming to life in a new Wells Fargo & Company initiative called, “The Untold Stories Collection,” a social media movement dedicated to sharing personal stories that define what it means to be African-American today.

Each of the stories can be read in their entirety on the company’s designated webpage.

Lisa Frison, Wells Fargo’s vice president and African-American segment manager says the program leverages the reach, power and influence of social media to provide an intimate look into the African-American experience.

Using the hash tag #MyUntold, the aim



**Chaquita Venable stands outside the Robert Russa Moton Museum, previously the school that her father, Clem, had to leave when Prince Edward County closed its schools in 1959 instead of integrating them. Courtesy Photos/Wells Fargo**



**By 1959, many Virginia schools had begun to integrate, but not Prince Edward County, whose supervisors voted to close the schools rather than integrate—an act marked by the signs posted at schools (above left) and the Moton Museum exhibits today (above right).**

is to create a platform for building cultural awareness and promoting healthy dialogue. It is a catalyst for self-expression that celebrates the community by showcasing the broad range of experiences among a common culture, according to Frison.

“By contributing, individuals are upholding the long-standing African-American tradition of storytelling in a way that is relevant today,” Frison said. “Being an

African-American woman, when you think about our perseverance and the character of black people, there are so many stories out there way beyond what we’ve captured, so we want to continue this.”

Wells Fargo, which recently helped to bring the Kinsey Collection to the Reginald F. Lewis Museum, launched the official #MyUntold website to serve as the central hub to upload, share and view stories.

Individuals can view untold stories from unknown and more well-known African Americans across the country, including influencers, community leaders and celebrities, like Cornell William Brooks, the president and CEO of the NAACP, who shares how his life is a direct result of the sacrifices made by him and others that he will never know, according to a news release.

Actors Niecy Nash and Marcus Scribner and film director Reginald Hudlin, also shared stories about challenges they faced as African-Americans in the entertainment industry. However, it’s the stories of the not-so-famous, everyday people that are most inspiring, according to Wells Fargo officials.

“The platform is really about every day people and we’ve just launched a landing page hub where we’re inviting people to share their stories,” Frison said. “We do have celebrity engagement and great representation from across the country as well as their achievements, their accomplishments and there are a lot of great positive stories.”

Frison says that Wells Fargo officials knew that there were many who wanted to share their stories and she says the level of transparency has proven to be remarkable.

“When you think of social media, it’s like an online barbershop someone once said. A lot of people reflect the way we communicate,” she said. “What’s great is that people are talking about a lot of different things, family, education and being a business owner. We want to have more people exposed to the fact that this platform is out there.”

The #MyUntold program aims to continue the dialogue that began during the Kinsey Collection tour, which focused on uplifting the community by dispelling myths and amplifying triumphs and achievements.

“#MyUntold seeks to highlight stories of historical significance that paved the way for future generations while bringing light to modern experiences that are equally important,” said Candace McCullom, vice president of brand and advertising at Wells Fargo. “It’s storytelling in a way that is relevant.”

To tell your story, visit <https://untoldstories.thismoment.com/>

## Community event encourages conversation about bullying



**Cinnamon Brown-Mack discusses the impact of violence and bullying in our community.** Photo: Phinessa Demps

Last week was Youth Violence Prevention Week (March 23-27). The Weinberg Family Center Y located 900 E. 33rd Street in Baltimore, hosted a community event to discuss how the issues of violence and bullying impact young people.

To help facilitate the conversation about the very a serious concern in our community, Cinnamon Brown-Mack and her organization, Victorious Attitudes For Everyday Life Inc. (VAEL) led the discussion. VAEL is an educational 501-C3 non-profit organization, serving the Maryland community with a mission is to educate, empower and enrich the lives of children, youth and adults through high quality educational programs, workshops and resources.

“The goal of this meeting is to inform the community as to being able to spot potential issues and signs of bullying in your home regardless of it’s your child doing the bullying or being bullied, steps to prevent bullying and more importantly to open the dialogue about this issue. We have to continue to talk and educate about this problem because it is not going away,” said Brown-Mack.

The workshop was very well attended and included parents, community members, teachers and police officers. Interactive participation was included in the workshop. Four adults were chosen from the audience to demonstrate how bullying starts and the cause and effect of bullying. One scenario demonstrated how a person who has been bullied, often becomes the bully. The program also showed how social media is by far one of the main culprits of bullying.

“It is really up to the parents, regardless of their socioeconomic situation to make sure they know what their child is doing on these social media outlets as well as what they are allowing them to view on television, and who they are associating with. Again, we as adults and parents must be more aware about what’s happening in our kids lives not only at home but in school and in the community,” said Brown-Mack.

For more information about Victorious Attitudes For Everyday Life Inc. and the services the organization it provides, visit: [www.victoriousattitudes.org](http://www.victoriousattitudes.org) or call: 443-803-6730.

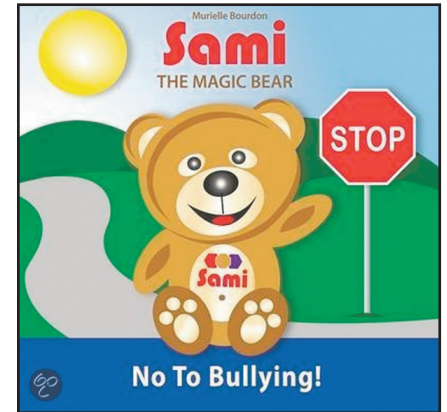
## Indie Soul Book Review: Bullies and poetry

By Phinessa Demps

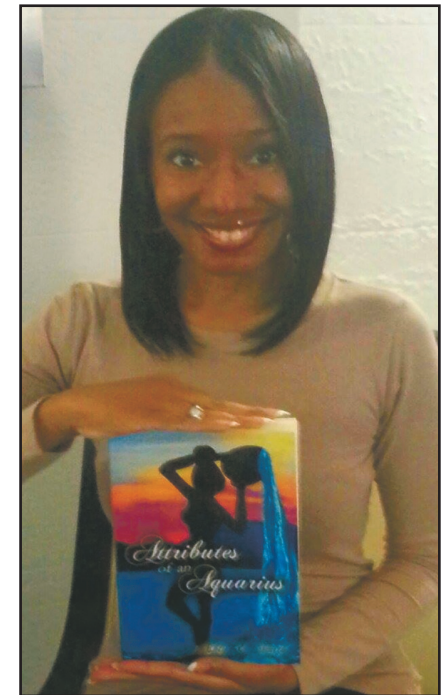
Once it again it’s time to pick our books of the month! This week, Indie Soul offers one for children and one for poetry lovers.

The children’s book “Sami the Magic Bear: No to Bullying!” adds to the many discussions about the subject of bullying. This book deals with bullying in elementary school-aged children. With more and more parents choosing to allow younger children to have access to cell phones and social media, children are more exposed than ever to being bullied. The illustrations in the book demonstrate the emotions, conversations and actions of young children who are being bullied. Author Murielle Bourdon brilliantly paints a picture of how bullying takes place and a child’s fears. It encourages children to tell an adult what’s going on. The book offers a good way to start a conversation with your child about bullying. For more information about “Sami the Magic Bear: No to Bullying!” visit: [www.collectionsami.com](http://www.collectionsami.com).

Attributes of an Aquarius: “I want to be that voice for others who are looking for someone to turn to. I love to write and I want to be an example for others, especially for women,” said author Ashly E. Smith about her book “Attributes of an Aquarius.” The entertainment writer for the Examiner and various other publications has written a wonderful, well thought out book of poetry and encouragement. The Baltimore native and Towson University graduate tries to live her life as a role model and bravely shares her personal life experiences in her poetry from being bullied to her love for her grandmother and Michael Jackson. Through her poetry, Smith has blossomed from a shy young girl into a woman who wants to be a leader and healer with the power of words. For more information or to purchase “Attrib-



**Author Murielle Bourdon’s book, Sami the Magic Bear: No to Bullying!**



**Author, Ashly E. Smith**

utes of an Aquarius,” visit: [www.river-shorebooks.com](http://www.river-shorebooks.com)

Indie Soul welcomes your questions and comments. To contact Phinessa Demps, call 410-366-3900 ext. 3016 or 410-501-0193 or email: [pdemps@btimes.com](mailto:pdemps@btimes.com). Follow him on Twitter@pdemps\_btimes

## Indie Soul: Fifth Speaker Series featuring Sonja N. Hines



*Times Community Services, Inc. and Coppin State University School of Business 5th Speaker Series with Sonja N. Hines, President & CEO H&S Resources Corporation with students, local businesses, and entrepreneurs. Photo: Phinisse Demps*

Coppin State University School of Business partnered with Times Community Services, Inc. to present the spring edition of the Speaker Series featuring Sonja N. Hines, president and CEO of H&S Resources Corporation, on Wednesday, March 25, 2015 at Coppin State University.

“The purpose of the series is to bring local businesses and entrepreneurs together to mentor a select number of business students from the Business School at Coppin State University,” said Dr. Ronald Williams, interim dean of Coppin’s College of Business.

Master of Ceremonies, James Roberts said, “This program is so needed, as we

want these students to be thinking about opening their own businesses instead of working for someone else. There is a wealth of information at these Speaker Series.”

Hines shared with the students the importance of not burning bridges, finding your passion and pursuing dreams.

“It is not just preachers, who have a calling, but we all are called to be something. Find out your purpose in life.” Hines said. “People [may] not understand your vision. Don’t let that stop you— your vision is your vision.”

Justin Brown, a junior at Coppin’s Business School said, “This is my second time attending this event and I really

appreciate this event as I am making my connections learning from others in the community so that I will be prepared to open my business.”

The next Speaker Series will be held in the fall of 2015 and will feature James P. Grant, president and CEO of Grant Capital Management Corporation.

If you are a business owner or entrepreneur and are interested in sharing your knowledge in an effort to mentor the students of the business school, call 410-366-3900.

*Sonja N. Hines, president and CEO of H&S Resources Corporation.*  
Courtesy Photo



## Time for Employers To Sign Up for AACC’s Spring Job Fair

### Job Fair Usually Draws 750 Jobseekers

Employers planning to hire workers this spring or summer should sign up now to have a booth at Anne Arundel Community College’s Spring Job Fair from noon to 4 p.m. on Thursday, April 16, 2015 in the David S. Jenkins Gymnasium on AACC’s Arnold campus

located at 101 College Parkway in Arnold.

The fair is open to jobseekers in the Maryland-Washington, D.C. Metro area and typically draws at least 750 jobseekers, including career-changers as well as recent or soon-to-be college graduates. The early deadline for registering is February 15 with a \$325 cost for a booth.

After that date, the cost jumps to \$450. To sign up, visit <http://www.aacc.edu/careers/employmentservices/jobfair.cfm> for more information and a link to the registration page.

For additional questions, email [CTRC@aacc.edu](mailto:CTRC@aacc.edu) or call 410-777-2770 or 410-777-2512.

Courtesy Photo/AACC



# Local history maker featured in documentary during Annapolis Film Festival

By Andrea Blackstone

A piece of local history made it to the screen during this year's Annapolis Film Festival on March 27, 2015. A special preview screening of "JFK & LBJ A Time for Greatness" was held at Asbury United Method Church. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 were two highlighted statutes that were prominent in the film directed by Alastair Layzel. The late Geraldine Whittington who graduated from Wiley H. Bates High School (Bates) in 1948 was also portrayed in the documentary. Whittington reportedly lived in South County. She attended Bates, because it was once the only high school black students could attend in Anne Arundel County.

The yet-to-be released PBS documentary explored aspects of President Lyndon B. Johnson's (LBJ) plan of action after Kennedy was assassinated. Johnson reportedly called Whittington one evening in the early 1960s to ask if she wanted to join his secretarial staff. Whittington accepted the job to work as president Johnson's personal executive secretary.

"She [Whittington] was always ready when the president (Johnson) had to leave," 80-year-old Alma Cropper said, recalling a story she heard about Whittington's pre-packed suitcase.

Cropper is the event chairman of the Wiley H. Bates Legacy Center. The fellow Bates graduate appeared in the documentary to help tell the story of the first African-American executive secretary who worked in the White House. Cropper was also instrumental in connecting filmmakers with another Bates graduate who is her good friend and Whittington's cousin. Gladys Holt Peevy, who also appeared in the documentary, provided intimate details of Whittington's life, along with stories that Cropper recalled hearing.

"My involvement came when these persons called the Bates Legacy Center where I am the event chair. They wanted



*Suzanne Kay, daughter of movie star Diahann Carroll; Ambassador Shabazz, eldest daughter of Malcolm X and Betty Shabazz and Chris Haley, nephew of Alex Haley participated in a panel discussion moderated by Kurt Schmoke, president, University of Baltimore.*  
Photo Credit: The Annapolis Film Festival

to know if anybody knew Geraldine Whittington. I said I remember Geraldine. She went to school here and was from down in the country. They asked me if I could give them information. I knew that we had a yearbook. I knew something about her, because I had heard some of her stories," Alma Cropper said. "Almost about a year later, they (producers) called me and said they were ready for the interview."

Moviegoers clapped for Cropper as she walked to the front of the church to be recognized. Cropper later said that participating in the documentary was an exciting time for her. She reminded how rare Whittington's prestigious employment opportunity was in the 1960s.

"She (Whittington) was an African-American woman being asked to work for the president of the United States. That was a big deal in itself—just being a part of that. That was just history, because back in those days, nothing like that was likely going to happen, but they did. I felt that was just an opportunity that the president (Johnson) saw that could possibly help to break the ice in

this country for racism and all of those things," Cropper said.

Kurt Schmoke, the former mayor of Baltimore and current University of Baltimore president, moderated a discussion of celebrating 50 years of civil rights through film, after the documentary was shown. Chris Haley, a writer, actor and Director for the Study of the Legacy of Slavery for Maryland; Suzanne Kay, a producer, writer and journalist; and Ambassador Shabazz, a speaker, diplomat and eldest daughter of Malcom X participated in a panel discussion.

The third year of the film festival was marked by observable growth and increased partnerships. The Rev. Dr. Carletta Allen, pastor of Asbury United Methodist Church, opened the doors of the church to host film events and panel discussions during the Annapolis Film Festival. She attended the screening of "JFK & LBJ A Time for Greatness," in addition to other films.

"It's just wonderful to be in partnership with AFF (Annapolis Film Festival). Personally, I am a big fan of indie artist," Allen said. "There are a lot of



*Alma Cropper participated in the documentary, "JFK & LBJ A Time for Greatness." Photo: Andrea Blackstone*

important films being shown at AFF that I believe need to have an audience, so it is just wonderful to be a part of that."

Lee Anderson and Patti White serve as Annapolis Film Festival directors. They are also co-founders of the festival. Anderson and White were also in attendance.

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# Traffic fatalities in 2014 decline to lowest point in 66 years!

*50 years of legislation, enforcement and technological advancements reduce fatalities from 872 in 1968 to 442 in 2014*

Towson— Transportation Secretary, Pete K. Rahn; Acting State Police Superintendent, William M. Pallozzi; and Motor Vehicle Administrator and Governor's Highway Safety Representative Milt Chaffee joined elected officials, AAA Mid-Atlantic's Managing Director, Mahlon "Lon" Anderson; and highway safety advocates to announce the number of traffic fatalities on Maryland roads in 2014 was 442— the lowest number since 1948. The highest number of traffic fatalities was 872 in 1968.

"Maryland has cut the number of fatalities in half on our roads thanks to 50 years of hard work on our highways, in our communities and in the legislature," said Secretary Rahn. "This historically low number of traffic fatalities means we truly can make a difference when we work together to save lives."

Thanks to the collaborative work with federal, state and local partners, as well as strong support from members of the General Assembly, Maryland has implemented comprehensive and aggressive initiatives to enhance highway safety over the past five decades.

These efforts range from targeted outreach and enforcement initiatives to laws that combat impaired and distracted driving and increase seat belt and motorcycle helmet usage. Advances in technology and life-saving medical care, including the introduction of Maryland's Medevac Program and completion of the R Adams Cowley Trauma Center (Shock Trauma) in 1969, also have been key to saving lives.

"Maryland state troopers and allied law enforcement officers across our state work diligently each day to reduce the potential for traffic crashes and increase the level of safety on our roads," Colonel Pallozzi said. "We are fortunate to have a coordinated state agency effort that combines the expertise and initiatives of the State Highway Administration, the Maryland Highway Safety Office, the Motor Vehicle Administra-

tion, and our local, state and federal highway safety partners in a focused approach to reducing highway fatalities and saving lives."

The state's plan to reduce roadway fatalities and injuries, known as the Strategic Highway Safety Plan, addresses six major areas of traffic safety: Aggressive Driving Prevention, Impaired Driving Prevention, Distracted Driving Prevention, Highway Infrastructure, Occupant Protection and Pedestrian Safety. Traffic crashes are one of the leading causes of death through age 44 and represent a leading cause of death throughout a person's life. Many of these efforts are achieved through the four "Es" of highway safety: Engineering, Enforcement, Education and Emergency Responders.



"The fewest killed on Maryland's highways in 66 years—it's a tremendous accomplishment. Congratulations and thanks to all who contributed including the police, the state and local agencies, the legislators and advocacy groups," said AAA Managing Director Anderson. "Most especially, congratulations and thanks to the motorists who have chosen to buckle up and to drive safely. AAA Mid-Atlantic is proud to be a partner with the Maryland Highway Safety Office. Well done!"

In an effort to help end DUI in Maryland, transportation officials recently launched an innovative smartphone app that is intended to prevent impaired driving by helping people plan ahead or find a safe ride home if they have been drinking.

The ENDUI (pronounced End-DUI) App, now available at Google Play for Android phones or at the iTunes Store for iPhones, was developed by the Maryland Highway Safety Office to combat impaired driving and save lives.

Other educational highway safety campaigns include "Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over" and "Checkpoint Strikeforce," which are major components of Maryland's Toward Zero Deaths campaign. This campaign focuses on preventing impaired driving, aggressive driving and distracted driving, while also promoting seat belt use and pedestrian safety.

For more information on the "Toward Zero Deaths" campaign, visit [www.towardzerodeathsmd.com](http://www.towardzerodeathsmd.com).



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