

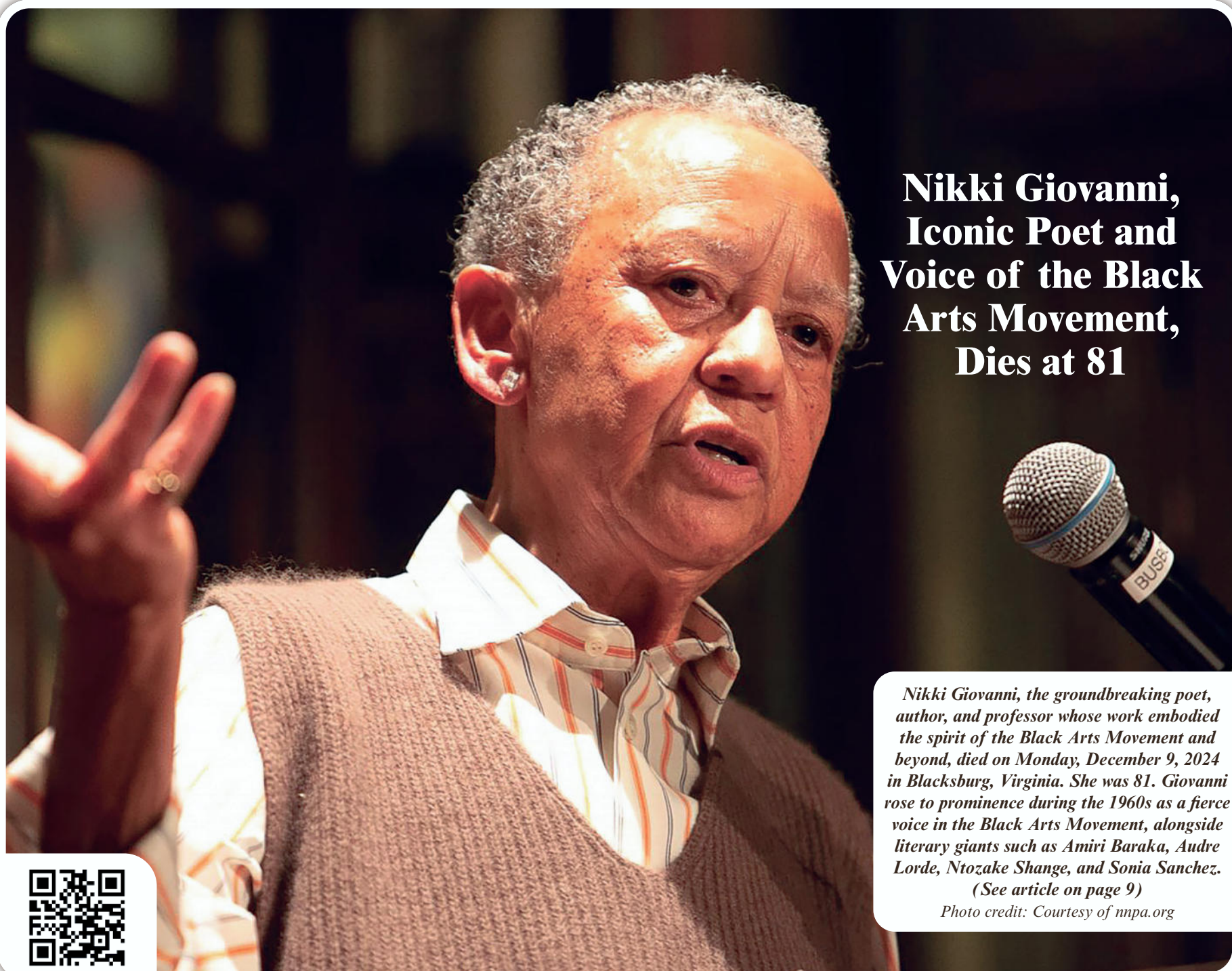


# THE BALTIMORE TIMES

Vol. 39 No. 8

December 13 - 19, 2024

A Baltimore Times/Times of Baltimore Publication



## **Nikki Giovanni, Iconic Poet and Voice of the Black Arts Movement, Dies at 81**

*Nikki Giovanni, the groundbreaking poet, author, and professor whose work embodied the spirit of the Black Arts Movement and beyond, died on Monday, December 9, 2024 in Blacksburg, Virginia. She was 81. Giovanni rose to prominence during the 1960s as a fierce voice in the Black Arts Movement, alongside literary giants such as Amiri Baraka, Audre Lorde, Ntozake Shange, and Sonia Sanchez. (See article on page 9)*

*Photo credit: Courtesy of nnpa.org*



## 5 Tips to Become a Homeowner in 2025

Homeownership is the largest financial undertaking for most Americans and a key to building generational wealth. It can provide a base of security, as building home equity provides you with more financial options in the future. For instance, home equity can be used to pay off debt, increase savings, start a business or invest for the future.

Below are five first-time homebuyer tips to help financially prepare you for buying and owning a home.

### 1. Save today for tomorrow's financial goal.

If you know you want to be a homeowner, don't wait until you've found the house you want to buy – start saving now. There are many expenses along your homebuying journey, including deposits, home inspections, appraisals, down payment and closing costs. Boosting your savings now can help you prepare for expenses that can occur even after you move in, including unplanned maintenance and repair costs. Begin by setting up an automatic transfer to your savings account from each paycheck and try to set aside bonuses and tax refunds.

### 2. Exercise financially healthy habits.

Your credit score is an important measure of your financial health and gives lenders a good indication of how responsibly you use credit. There are several things you can do to improve your credit score, including using monitoring services offered by your financial partner. Set up alerts to track any new activity, including charges, account openings and credit inquiries.

### 3. Describe your dream home.

The home buying process often brings up a lot of questions related to your finances and lifestyle. *How are the*

*nearby schools?*

*Is it close enough to work? Is this the right price?*

The first step to looking for a home is to consider what you truly need in your home. While you may have always dreamed of a two-story house with a yard, take the time to make a list of things you need and want in your new home. Having a clear understanding of your housing needs will help you identify what's most important when looking for homes.

### 4. Buy within your financial comfort zone.

Your true housing cost includes more than your mortgage payment. A good first step is to use a mortgage calculator to estimate your monthly payment. Still, you'll need to add in utility costs (e.g., electric, gas, water and sewer), property taxes, homeowners insurance and any other monthly costs. Also consider the cost of home maintenance, including lawn care, unplanned repairs and a possible Homeowners Association fee. Utilize tools like Chase's affordability calculator ([https://www.chase.com/personal/mortgage/calculators-resources/affordability-calculator?jp\\_cdf=chase.com-tnt-1128a](https://www.chase.com/personal/mortgage/calculators-resources/affordability-calculator?jp_cdf=chase.com-tnt-1128a)) to help you determine how much you can

comfortably afford based on your income and debt.

### 5. Research down payment assistance programs.

Down payment assistance programs may be provided locally or even through your mortgage lender. Work with your lending professional to understand your options and what may be available to you. Chase, for example, offers eligible customers a \$5,000 Homebuyer Grant that can be used toward down payment, closing costs, or even to buy down your interest rate. Learn more about this grant and see if a property you're interested in is eligible

at [chase.com/affordable](https://chase.com/affordable).

Many resources are available to help first-time homebuyers boost their knowledge of homeownership. For more discussions around the home buying process, this podcast, *Beginner to Buyer*—[beginnertobuyer.com](https://beginnertobuyer.com)—offers conversations with real buyers and expert guests who take listeners through each step of the process—from navigating mortgage rates to preparing for closing.

For more information on home lending financial tools, such as a mortgage calculator, visit [chase.com/mortgage](https://chase.com/mortgage).



Photo courtesy of Pexels

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# Author Empowers Young Readers to Embrace Books, Learn History

By Andrea Blackstone

David C. Miller, Ph.D., a scholar-activist and children's books author, recalls growing up in West Baltimore while being raised by two parents who stressed the importance of reading.

"We spent considerable time going to the Pratt Library," Miller said.

The product of Baltimore City Schools fell in love with National Geographic Books. Although he learned about distant lands through music, food, and rituals that helped him develop a global perspective as a child, Miller also stated that he was a horrible student. He failed many classes and got in plenty of trouble based on his behavior.

"Growing up I never felt connected to school and thought most of the classes would not help me in the future," he said.

Miller had a change of heart.

"As I got older, I realized reading saved my life, and I had an ethical responsibility to write books for children who had not had great school experiences."

Miller, who is now based in Washington, DC, co-leads Baltimore Rites of Passage Initiative (BROPI), a program that helps young Black boys in Baltimore City enter manhood with the help of Black men who have completed their own rites of passage. Miller earned a BS in political science from the University of Baltimore, an M.Ed. from Goucher College, and a Ph.D. in Social Work from Morgan State University.

Black Caucus American Library Association, an organization established in 1970 to advocate for the improvement of library services for the African American community, recognized "Chef Toussaint," a book written by Miller and illustrated by C.J. Love, with the 2021 Best of the Best Booklist in the Pre-k-4th Grade category.

To date, Miller has self-published

nine children's books. He mentioned that the inability to read and write is key to creating a permanent underclass.

"I am an example of the power of literacy in transforming your circumstances. I went from a kid who barely graduated from high school to achieving a Ph.D. About two percent of the U.S. population holds a Ph.D. Not bad for a kid from West Baltimore," said Miller.

The seasoned author's latest book, "Charlie Drew and His Missing Stethoscope," was published on December 2, 2024. It features Charlie Drew, an 11-year-old genius in his first year at Howard University Medical School.

Miller added, "Charlie is confronted with a moral dilemma. He loses his \$400.00 stethoscope and struggles whether to tell his parents. The story pays homage to Charlie Drew, the well-known Black surgeon whose medical contributions during World War II are seldom discussed."

Miller explained that he was inspired to write the book by his encounters with so many young scholars in schools who may never realize their full potential.

"Sadly, most schools focus on students who are struggling versus students who are gifted and talented academically. I write stories to compete with cell phones. Given the overwhelming popularity of cell phones and social media, leisure reading is no longer popular among many children and youth," he shared.

The author's two primary audiences for his latest book are young scholars ages seven and up and children who do not believe reading can be fun. He wants them to know that dreaming is possible and that although life



*David C. Miller, Ph.D., signs books at Intrepid Museum (NYC) New York City Department of Education on March 9, 2023.*



*David C. Miller, Ph.D.  
Courtesy photos*

can be difficult at times growing up, focusing on their education can help them achieve greatness regardless of their current situation. Additionally, Miller stated that understanding Black history and culture is critical to our survival and provides strategies to help children and adults navigate racism and bigotry.

Miller remains driven to write more children's books while carrying on the tradition of great writers like Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, Toni Morrison, and Alice Walker.

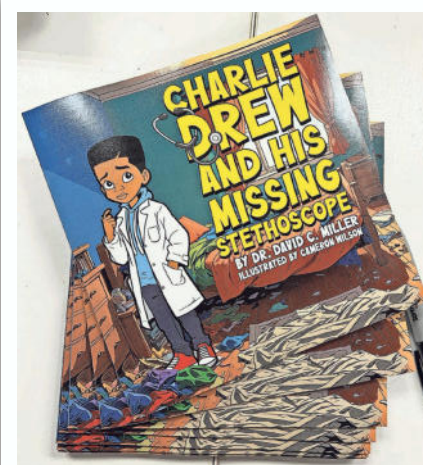
Diverse representation in children's literature is needed in the book market.

"It is important for all kids to see themselves on pages," according to The National Education Association (NEA).

NEA also revealed that diverse books can provide insight into the experiences of children from other backgrounds and build empathy for youth who are often overlooked or stereotyped in popular culture.

Miller, a local author who strives to create stories that offer inclusion and positive self-images, underscores this observation.

"Our children deserve rich stories that reflect our traditions and culture."



*David Miller, Ph.D will sign his new book at Flourish Baltimore, located at 4337 Harford Road, Baltimore, Maryland on Sunday, December 22, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.*

Miller will sign books at Flourish Baltimore, located at 4337 Harford Road, Baltimore, Maryland on Sunday, December 22, 2024 at 2:00 p.m. Visit [www.iamdavidmiller.com](http://www.iamdavidmiller.com) to stay up-to-date regarding future book signings. Follow Miller via <https://www.instagram.com/uchangenow>.

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## DECEMBER IS NATIONAL DRUNK & DRUGGED DRIVING PREVENTION MONTH

### *Residents Encouraged to 'Steer Clear' of Impaired Driving This Holiday Season*

**BALTIMORE** – December is National Drunk & Drugged Driving Prevention Month, and the Baltimore County Department of Health is reminding everyone to avoid driving while impaired. Impaired driving includes drunk driving, drugged driving, and distracted driving. Also known as #3DPreventionMonth, it is a great time to reiterate the importance of driving safely this holiday season.

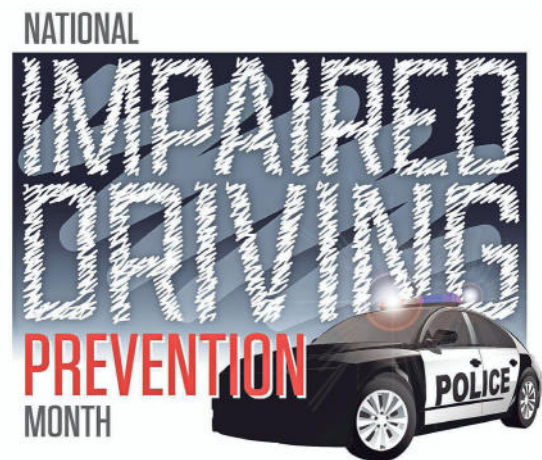
According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), from 2017 to 2021, NHTSA recorded more than 4,500 deaths in drunk driving traffic crashes during the month of December. From 2019-2021, NHTSA conducted a study at several trauma centers and medical examiner offices involving drivers who were seriously injured or killed. The study found that among drivers in trauma centers, about 25% had active THC, which is found in marijuana, in their system. NHTSA notes in 2022, distracted driving killed 3,308 people, highlighting that cell phone use has become the most common distraction.

The Baltimore County Department of Health is urging residents to encourage responsible decision-making and to celebrate safely this holiday season. During National Drunk & Drugged Prevention Month, special emphasis is also placed on encouraging young people to live free of drugs and alcohol. Youth.gov offers a variety of resources highlighting the importance of driving sober.

Maryland residents between the ages of 18-25, could win up to \$95

by completing a 10-minute survey about perceptions and use of alcohol.

HHS offers a variety of services including harm reduction and other resources to Baltimore County residents.



**gp<sup>2</sup>** Black & African American  
Connections to  
Parkinson's Disease Study

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The University of Maryland, Baltimore is seeking individuals aged 18 years of age and older from the Black or African American community — **both with and without Parkinson's disease** — to join the BLAAC PD study. Participants will help advance knowledge about Parkinson's disease in Black and African American people.

To learn more and see if BLAAC PD may be an option for you, please contact:  
The University of Maryland Research Team  
410-328-1883  
[blaacpd.org](http://blaacpd.org)

**gp<sup>2</sup>** Global Parkinson's  
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**“No mail, low morale”**

## **BCAC of Delta Sigma Theta, Inc. Hold Premiere Viewing of Six Triple Eight**

By Ursula V. Battle

Audiences left the Premiere Screening of “The Six Triple Eight,” on December 6, 2024 raving about the moving film, which tells the story of the brave women of the first and only Women’s Army Corp Unit of Color stationed overseas in World War II. The Baltimore County Alumnae Chapter (BCAC) of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. (DST) presented two film showings at the Next Act Cinema located at 921 Reisterstown Road in Pikesville, Maryland.

The Delta Red Carpet event packed out both shows. Attendees sat riveted to their seats as they watched the star-studded cast of Kerry Washington, Oprah Winfrey, Ebony Obsidian, Milauna Jackson, Kylie Jefferson, and others deliver moving performances. Written and directed by Tyler Perry, the film will be shown at Next Act Cinema through December 15 and will air on Netflix on December 20.

The event included a discussion by Master Sergeant (Ret.) Elizabeth Anne Helm-Frazier and a Q&A session. Attendees received Six Triple Eight (6888) swag bags, pins, and other items. The Arts and Letters Committee of BCAC, in partnership with the Lambda Kappa Chapter (UMBC) and the Baltimore County Delta Foundation (BCDF), sponsored the screening. The Foundation was also instrumental in ensuring that Baltimore County would be considered a pre-release site before the Netflix December 20 airing of the Six Triple Eight movie.

“The collaboration with Baltimore County Alumnae Chapter, DST, Inc. is significant since the 6888th battalion leader Commander Charity Adams was a member of DST, Inc.,” said Heather Ross, President of BCDF.



*Master Sergeant (Ret.) Elizabeth Anne Helm-Frazier (far left) and fellow veterans salute during the December 6, 2024 Premiere Viewing of “The Six Triple Eight,” at Next Act Cinema, 921 Reisterstown Road in Pikesville, Maryland.*

*Courtesy photos*

Driven by their motto, “No mail, Low morale” the 6888th Central Postal Battalion, nicknamed the “Six Triple Eight,” had a daunting assignment - sorting through a two-year backlog of undelivered mail amidst deplorable conditions, unfamiliar territory, and discrimination to deliver the mail to American soldiers. Against all odds, they successfully completed their assignment, fulfilling their mission of getting a whopping 17 million pieces of mail to U.S. soldiers.

Delta Red Carpet Events supports the National Chapter of Delta Sigma



*Members of BCAC’s “Pioneering 31” Janice Bowie (left to right) Adrienne Jones-Taylor, Dr. Mabel Lake-Murray, Gloria Richardson-Marrow (Chartering President), Ernestine Jones-Jolivet, Anna Jones-Lipscomb, and Deborah Peaks-Coleman during the event.*

See 6888TH, page 13

# THE BALTIMORE TIMES

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**SAT: 1PM - 7PM**

**SUN: 1PM - 5PM**

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# Congress Honors Shirley Chisholm with Congressional Gold Medal for Trailblazing Legacy

By Stacy M. Brown

NNPA Newswire Senior National Correspondent  
@StacyBrownMedia

U.S. Senator Laphonza Butler (D-Calif.) and Representative Barbara Lee (D-Calif.-12) announced the passage of bipartisan legislation awarding the Congressional Gold Medal to the late Shirley Chisholm, a pioneer in American politics and the first Black woman elected to Congress in 1968. The Shirley Chisholm Congressional Gold Medal Act will now head to President Joe Biden for his signature.

The bill, introduced in the Senate by Senators Butler and Reverend Raphael Warnock (D-Ga.) and in the House by Rep. Lee, received widespread bipartisan support. The legislation recognizes Chisholm's extraordinary contributions to American society, including her advocacy for racial and gender equity, low-income communities, and her historic 1972 presidential campaign.

"Shirley Chisholm's courageous leadership opened doors for countless others and redefined what was possible in American politics," said Butler. "This medal is a tribute to her unwavering dedication to justice and equality."

Lee, a protégé of Chisholm, spoke eloquently about the significance of the honor. "As the first Black woman elected to Congress and the first to run for president from a major party, Shirley Chisholm's legacy is unparalleled. Her motto, 'Unbought and Unbossed,' continues to inspire leaders today," Lee said.

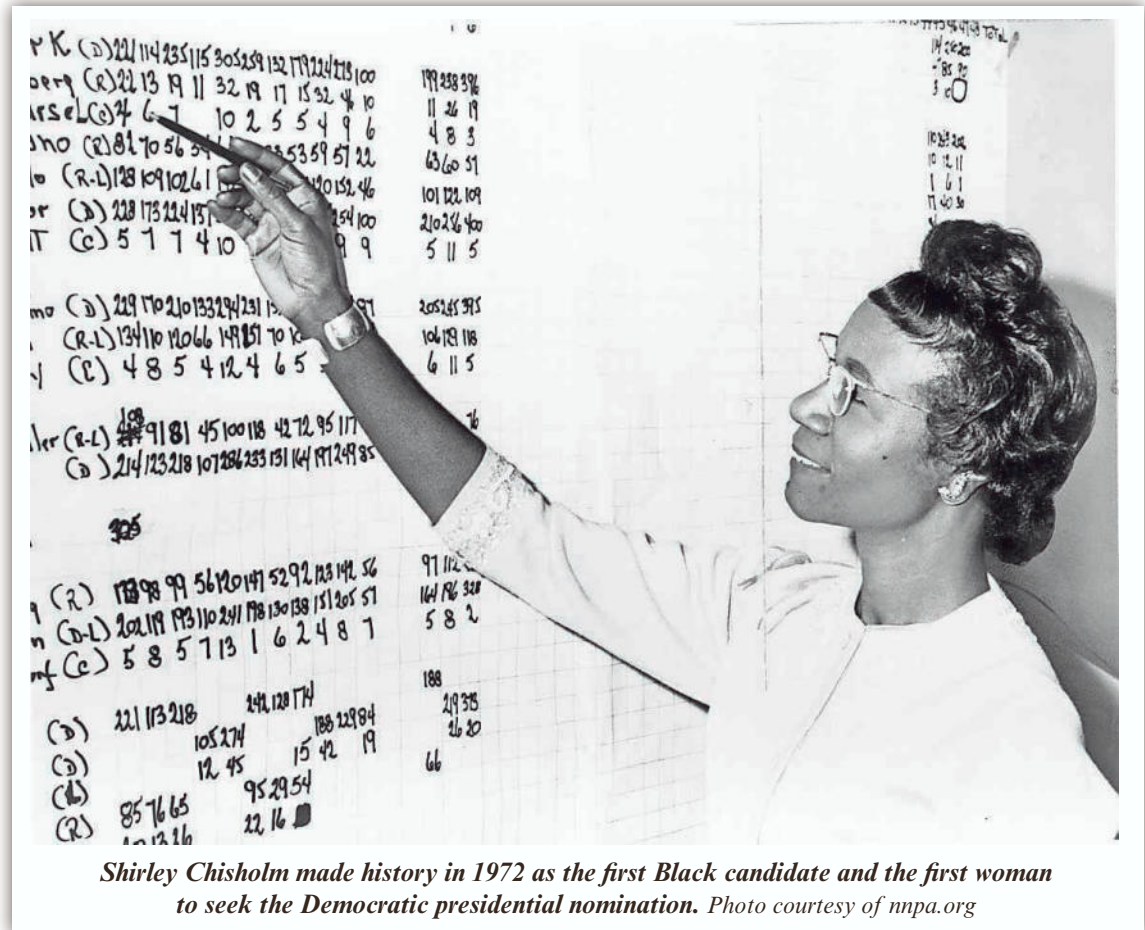
During her seven terms representing New York's 12th Congressional District, Chisholm

introduced more than 50 pieces of legislation and was a vocal advocate against the Vietnam War. In 1972, she made history as the first Black candidate and the first woman to seek the Democratic presidential nomination. Though her campaign faced significant barriers, including exclusion from televised debates, Chisholm's run was a symbolic act to pave the way for future diverse candidates.

"I ran because someone had to do it first," Chisholm wrote in her book, *The Good Fight*. "The door is not open yet, but it is ajar."

Chisholm's legacy was recalled in New York, where officials recently commemorated her 100th birthday on November 30, 2024. Vice President Kamala Harris, whose historic 2024 presidential bid followed in Chisholm's footsteps, routinely paid homage to Chisholm. "So many of us stand on her broad shoulders," Harris said. "Let us continue to speak truth to power and fight for equality and justice for all."

The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest honor Congress bestows, and Chisholm's recognition follows her posthumous receipt of the



Shirley Chisholm made history in 1972 as the first Black candidate and the first woman to seek the Democratic presidential nomination. Photo courtesy of nnpa.org

Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Barack Obama in 2015. Senators and representatives across party lines lauded the legislation, with Senator Susan Collins (R-Maine) calling Chisholm "an inspiration for millions" and Senator Kyrsten Sinema (I-Ariz.) highlighting her role as a "catalyst for progress."

Chisholm's life began in Brooklyn, New York, where she was born Shirley Anita St. Hill on November 30, 1924. She graduated cum laude from Brooklyn College and earned a master's degree from Columbia University while working as an early childhood educator. Her political

career began in 1964 with her election to the New York State Legislature, followed by her historic win in Congress four years later.

"Shirley Chisholm was a fighter who shattered glass ceilings and inspired generations," said Warnock. "Her life's work reminds us of the power of representation and the need to continue her fight for equity."

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., of which Chisholm was a member, expressed pride in her legacy. "Her unbought and unbossed spirit guides our work today," said Elsie Cooke-Holmes, the sorority's international president.



“i hope i die warmed by the life that i tried to live” – Nikkii Giovanni

## Nikki Giovanni, Iconic Poet and Voice of the Black Arts Movement, Dies at 81

By Stacy M. Brown

NNPA Newswire Senior National Correspondent  
@StacyBrownMedia

Nikki Giovanni, the groundbreaking poet, author, and professor whose work embodied the spirit of the Black Arts Movement and beyond, died on Monday in Blacksburg, Virginia. She was 81. Her wife, Virginia C. Fowler, confirmed the cause was complications from lung cancer.

Born Yolande Cornelia Giovanni Jr. on June 7, 1943, in Knoxville, Tennessee, Giovanni spent her formative years in Cincinnati, Ohio, but returned to Knoxville every summer with her sister to visit their grandparents. These visits helped shape her sense of identity and belonging, themes that would become central to her work.

She graduated with honors in history from Fisk University, a historically Black college in Nashville and her grandfather's alma mater. While at Fisk, Giovanni's defiant spirit and intellect were evident. Expelled briefly due to issues with authority, she returned after a period of reflection and was readmitted with the help of a supportive Dean of Women. This early experience of rebellion and reconciliation laid the groundwork for her unapologetic approach to life and art.

### A Voice of Rebellion and Resilience

Giovanni rose to prominence during the 1960s as a fierce voice in the Black Arts Movement, alongside literary giants such as Amiri Baraka, Audre Lorde, Ntozake Shange, and Sonia Sanchez. Her early works, including “Black Feeling, Black Talk” (1968) and “Black Judgement” (1968), were steadfast in their militancy and pride.

Her poetry grappled with the injustices faced by Black Americans, including the brutal murder of Emmett Till and the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, which killed four Black girls.

At a time when mainstream publishers showed little interest in the work of a young Black woman writing what they labeled “militant” poetry, Giovanni took matters into her own hands. She self-published her work, founding a company to distribute her collections. “No one was much interested in a Black girl writing what was called ‘militant’ poetry,” she once wrote. “I thought of it as good poetry.”

Her boldness paid off. In 1972, at just 29 years old, she sold out Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center, reading her poetry to a crowd of more than 1,000 alongside the New York Community Choir. The following year, for her 30th birthday, she filled the 3,000-seat Philharmonic Hall, where the choir joined her again, along with Melba Moore and Wilson Pickett. The audience erupted joyfully when she recited her now-iconic poem, “Ego-Tripping.” The piece, a celebration of Black female strength, begins with the lines:

“I was born in the congo  
I walked to the fertile crescent and built  
the sphinx...”  
And concludes triumphantly:  
“I am so perfect so divine so ethereal  
so surreal  
I cannot be comprehended  
except by my permission  
I mean...I...can fly  
Like a bird in the sky...”

### A Prolific Career

In addition to her poetry, Giovanni wrote children's books, essays, and a memoir, “Gemini: An Extended

Autobiographical Statement on My First Twenty-Five Years of Being a Black Poet (1971).” She was known for her candid reflections on race, gender, and identity, blending the personal with the political in provocative and deeply human ways.

Giovanni's interview with James Baldwin on the television program “Soul!” in 1971 remains a touchstone in American cultural history. Their two-hour conversation, filmed in London, explored the intersections of race, gender, and societal expectations. At one point, she posed a raw question about the cycle of violence affecting Black families: “What do you do about a man who is mistreated in the world and comes home and brutalizes his wife? Where does that leave his daughter?” Baldwin's response: “Sweetheart. Our ancestors taught us how to do that.”

### An Educator and Mentor

In 1987, Giovanni joined the faculty at Virginia Tech, where she became a University Distinguished Professor. She remained there for 35 years, influencing generations of students with her wit, wisdom, and unwavering commitment to truth. Even in academia, her rebellious spirit shone through. Giovanni famously supported her student, Seung-Hui Cho, before he committed the tragic mass shooting at Virginia Tech in 2007. She had him removed from her class when she sensed his troubling nature.

Giovanni earned seven NAACP Image Awards, a Grammy nomination, and the distinction of having three of



Nikki Giovanni speaking at Emory University 2008

Photo: Brett Weinstein, CC BY-SA 2.0

her books listed as New York Times and Los Angeles Times Best Sellers—a rare feat for a poet.

Giovanni described herself as a dreamer. “My dream was not to publish or to even be a writer,” she remarked. “My dream was to discover something no one else had thought of. I guess that's why I'm a poet. We put things together in ways no one else does.”

### A Legacy of Dreams and Defiance

Giovanni's poetry was a lifeline for many, especially young Black women who saw their power and potential reflected in her verses. She wasn't just a poet but a cultural force who celebrated Blackness, womanhood, and the art of dreaming. “I'm a writer. I'm happy,” she demanded.

Nikki Giovanni leaves behind her son, Thomas, and her granddaughter. Her father, mother, sister, and aunt preceded her in death.

# Spiritual Entrepreneur Helps Strengthen Women, Empowers Others Globally Through Charity

By Andrea Blackstone

Sometimes, individuals struggle to identify their purpose and remain determined to stay the course. Tera Carissa Hodges, a deeply spiritual leader, serves as an example of someone who incorporates a passion to help others redefine and live their best lives while pursuing entrepreneurship.

“I am called to empower. Ever since I was a teen, I knew I was called to minister in an effort to transform lives, especially women,” Hodges said. “My mother still has notes from my second-grade teacher who wrote home to say I said I saw angels in the classroom.”

The author, philanthropist, international women’s empowerment speaker, entrepreneur, investor and certified life coach utilizes faith-based principles and incorporates her gifts in adulthood as the owner of LR Global Media Group.

Hodges stated that she verifiably became a millionaire at thirty-five years old. However, success included challenges such as needing to be healed physically from a polycystic ovarian syndrome diagnosis, having the right spouse, and distancing herself from toxic relatives.

“My prayer from day one has been: ‘God, make me wealthy and at peace in my wealth.’ I knew that I would have to go on a journey to become at peace in every area for me to not just have wealth, but peace in every area of my life with my wealth.”

Hodges divulged that she despises seeing people beaten down, living beneath their God-given privileges.

“It’s something that has angered me even as a little girl. Why should anybody be held back, defeated? Life might give you lemons, but everyone at minimum, should have the opportunity

to get in there [back into life] and make lemonade,” she said.

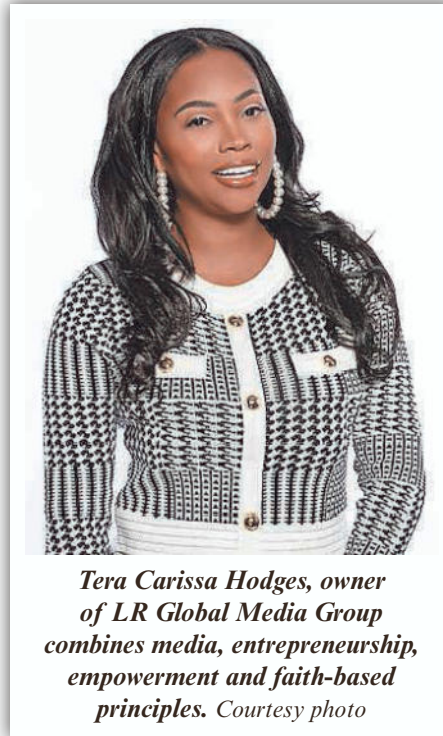
While anyone can be empowered through information provided on her website, [www.successbullying.us](http://www.successbullying.us) is primarily geared toward women.

“Success bullying is the negativity that is thrown your way out of sheer jealousy, spite and envy,” she explained.

Hodges also shared that adversity has blessed her more than her critics and haters had hoped.

She added, “Adversity has blessed me more than my critics and haters had hoped. I am a firm believer in one of the laws of physics which states, energy is not created or destroyed, it is transferred. When toxic people have sent lies, rumors, attacks, plots, you name it, my way, I sat in prayer long enough to ask God to show me how to alchemize it and use it for my good. That’s where perseverance comes in. Sometimes, you have to wait on God to answer. I used both to create topics and programs I teach from and more. What my critics meant for evil, I used it, and I’m not done using it.”

Hodges also embraced her inner voice to be authentic as her reach grew although she was not trying to develop an audience at the time. She used Twitter to leverage her brand and develop an audience by tweeting her thoughts from her own Bible studies, coaching sessions, and television shows she watched.



*Tera Carissa Hodges, owner of LR Global Media Group combines media, entrepreneurship, empowerment and faith-based principles. Courtesy photo*



*Tera Carissa Hodges sponsored philanthropy work in Africa in 2023. Photo: Uchechi Okonmah*

Hodges now provides group coaching through a platform. People can join by registering, after receiving alerts from her text club by texting LIVE to 833-677-0216.

“It is imperative that every woman has a strong faith connection with God and self. There is peace and power in knowing who you are and whose you are. Next, it is imperative that women have a community to share in, thrive in and network in. This builds relationships and that is where safety is found.”

Some of Hodge’s perspectives are included in “Mastering Wealth Volume 1 which was led by Percy “Master P” Miller. It is a compilation of authors who share tidbits about how they made financial achievements. “The Wealth Circle” with Dr. Sabrina McKenzie and “Your Story Sells” with Les Brown are more of the collaborative author’s

book projects.

Giving back through philanthropy is extremely important to the multi-talented entrepreneur.

“Internationally, I have funded water wells being built; water purification systems; sanitary items for women; food drives; supplies for female farmers and more,” Hodges explained.

She is most proud of how she earned success because she did not undercut anyone to get it.

“I did not do anything I am not proud of. As a mother and champion for women, I love being able to say this as it lets women know you can have standards, operate in integrity, and still be blessed,” Hodges shared.

Visit [www.teracarissa.com](http://www.teracarissa.com) to learn more about Hodges and her endeavors.

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## Don't Let a Holiday Grinch Ruin Christmas Gift Giving

By Andrea Blackstone

Shopping online during the Christmas season can offer the convenience of a wider selection of items and a chance to skip long lines. Imagine finding the perfect gift online for a friend or loved one, then a holiday Grinch steals it before you can unbox and wrap it. It is heartbreaking when toys and gifts are taken by sly thieves who watch for delivery trucks, search for unlocked cars well stocked with recent purchases, or unscrupulous robbers who grab presents stored in homes.

Fight against potential theft in advance. Do not become careless after investing in holiday tokens that you paid for. Take precautions to secure gifts while considering that unseen grinchers may be on the prowl.

### Track Packages

When purchasing gifts online, it is wise to track packages and verify delivery times. Since porch pirates watch for deliveries before taking items, plan to decrease their window of opportunity to steal. Find out when your items are scheduled to arrive so someone can be at home to retrieve items from porches or doorsteps. If you are not available to do it yourself, perhaps a trusted family member or friend who may be available during the day can help to get the item as soon as possible.

### Pause Package Delivery

When no one is available to retrieve your packages, find out if the delivery company can hold your package until you are available. Perhaps you can arrange to pick it up from the post office, UPS or FedEx location or from the store.

### Take Advantage of Self-Service Lockers and Special Services

Another option to consider is having packages shipped to a self-service locker where you can pick them up around your availability. For example, Amazon packages can be sent to an alternate location near you that is not your home or business address. <https://www.aboutamazon.com/news/operations/how-to-use-amazon-locker> Shipping to an Amazon Locker is free for Prime members. A friend or family member who has access to the delivery confirmation email containing instructions can pick items up for you.

Additionally, Walmart InHome membership allows subscribers to request deliveries into their garages, kitchens or refrigerators without added fees and tips. Find out more about a trial offer if you are a Walmart customer.

### Tap Into Apps

Some apps allow users to track delivery details of online purchase deliveries in one place. Streamline tracking numbers, package status and arrival alerts.

### Increase Home Security Measures

Install a highly visible security camera or doorbell camera to deter porch pirates from paying you an unwanted visit. Footage can be turned over to law enforcement if packages are taken. Some neighbors share footage and information about porch pirates on NextDoor. The neighborhood app allows for information about local concerns to be exchanged.

### In-Person Holiday Shopping Reminders

Shopping online during the Christmas season can offer the convenience of a wider selection of items and a chance to skip long lines, but some consumers still take physical trips to malls and stores.

“In 2024, about seven in 10 consumers in the United States said they were likely to shop for holiday gifts through online-only retailers. Over half said they were likely to shop at mass merchants, while about a third were thinking of shopping at off-price stores or department stores,” according to Statista, a global data and business intelligence platform.

### Secure Wallets and Purses

Shoppers who look for gifts in person should remember to secure their purses or wallets. Consider using a crossbody purse while shopping.

### Ask for Help

If you need help taking items to your car after purchasing them, just ask someone in the store. Decrease the chances of fumbling with cumbersome or heavy purchases. Thieves can quickly and easily steal items while you are distracted.



Photo: Metro

### Lock Cars, Guard Keys, and Secure Your Home

Keep in mind that packages can also be taken from unlocked vehicles when items are left in cars while shopping. Put them in the trunk and lock it. Double-check to make sure that all windows are secure. Cover valuables so thieves cannot see bags or boxes. Park in a well-lit, busy location and never leave your keys in the car or your unattended vehicle running. Bold thieves may even steal vehicles.

Do not leave Christmas packages in the car until the next day because you are tired, even when your vehicle is parked in your driveway or near your home. Thieves who target neighborhoods may be watching you.

Close the blinds and lock the doors. Remember, do not post information about purchases or upcoming travel plans online!

# 6888th

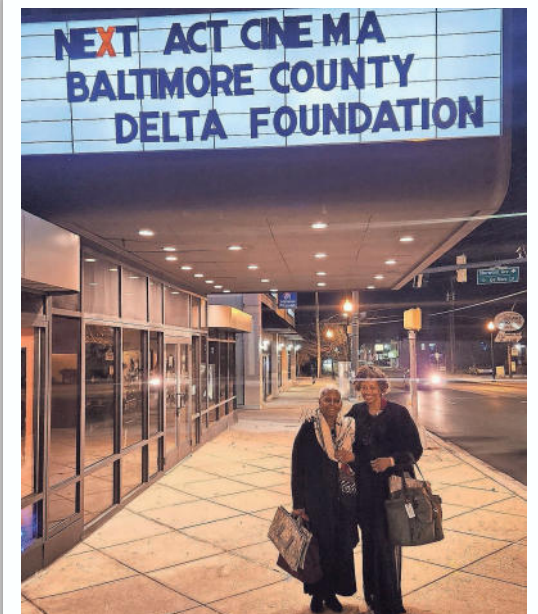
Continued from page 6

Theta Sorority, Inc.'s effort to create blockbuster opening weekend sales for selected films, art exhibits, dance, musicals, spoken word performances and emerging artists.

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., was founded in 1913 on the campus of Howard University to promote academic excellence, provide scholarships, support the underserved, educate and stimulate participation in the establishment of positive public policy, and highlight issues and provide solutions for problems in their communities. Today, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority has over 300,000 initiated members and more than 1,000 chapters worldwide, including seven in Wisconsin. The Sorority creates its national and local programs using its Five-Point Programmatic Thrust of economic development; educational development; international awareness and involvement; physical and mental health; and political awareness and involvement. For "Six Triple Eight" showtimes at Next Act Cinema, visit <https://www.nextactcinema.com/movie/the-six-triple-eight>



*Master Sergeant (Ret.) Elizabeth Anne Helm-Frazier holds a scarf emblazoned with the image of the 6888's Corporal (CPL) Lena Derriecott Bell King.  
Courtesy photos*



*Ernestine Jones Jolivet, Event Chair, member of the Baltimore County Delta Foundation and Baltimore County Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta, Inc. and Dr. Regina Clark, Co-Chair of "The Six Triple Eight" Premiere Screening event.*

## HEALTH INSURANCE FEEL OUT OF

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Get a health plan at [MarylandHealthConnection.gov](https://MarylandHealthConnection.gov)

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By Rosa Pryor

Hello everyone,  
I am doing much better. Thank you for asking, but I still have a long way to go, according to my doctors. I guess when you get screws and bolts put into your spine, it takes more than ten days to heal. I plan on testing the waters soon starting this week, so look for me.

Baltimore's renowned song stylist Aleta Green has passed away. For decades, Aleta Greene was a "household name" widely known on the Baltimore music scene. Her powerful, sulky voice graced many venues and stages singing old rock, R&B, Blues, and Jazz in clubs such as The Brass Elephant, summer concert series at the Sculpture Garden of the Baltimore Museum of Art, as well as being a regular at Artscape. Aleta was also a great songwriter. I had the pleasure of booking her into a few clubs myself. I was never disappointed, and she always packed the house. Aleta passed away on November 7 at age 69. Her funeral was on November 25 at Vaughn Green in Randallstown, Maryland. She will always be remembered by her many fans. May she rest in peace.

Live R&B music will be coming soon to Old Town Inn, located at 14745 Main Street in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. Showtime will be 7-9 p.m. Free admission every second and fourth Wednesdays of the month. Good food and drinks as well as good music will be available for your pleasure.

Oh, My Goodness!!! Guess what? My dear friend, and former board

## Baltimore's Own Song Stylist Aleta Green Has Passed Away

member of the Rosa Pryor Music Scholarship Foundation, Dr. Donna Hollie and godson, Aaron Waller have opened his new store named Mahogany Makers located 1623 Thames Street in Baltimore, open daily from noon- 6 p.m. It is a family-run business. He makes his own skincare products, massage oils, and homemade soaps. Other products include body butter; bath salts; scrubs; deodorants; body spray; hair care and beard oils, just to name a few. So, check him out and tell him "Rambling Rose" sent you.

I almost forgot to tell you about Baltimore Center Stage, Head Theatre. Dance Baltimore will present "A Holiday Celebration" with live music and dance to celebrate the season on Sunday, December 15 at 2 p.m. The special tribute to classic holiday movies will feature performances by Dance Baltimore Repertory Ensemble, Fearless Dance Empire, Stephanie Powell Dance Ensemble and Tevin Brown, music director. Vendors, hot chocolate, and holiday cookies will be available. Enjoy a special onstage tribute to classic holiday movies, such as "Charlie Brown Christmas"; "The Preacher's Wife"; and "Home Alone." Donations of a new, unwrapped toy or book are requested from all attendees for the Preston Mitchum, Jr. Foundation Holiday Drive.

Well, my dear friends, I don't know about you, but I have to go now and put a heating pad on my back. Sitting up and talking to you has been fun. I will see you soon. Remember, if you need me, call me at 410-833-9474 or email me at [rosapryor@aol.com](mailto:rosapryor@aol.com).

**UNTIL THE NEXT TIME,  
I'M MUSICALLY YOURS.**



*Aleta Greene, a dynamite entertainer, my dear friend and one of my favorite singers who I worked with in the early 90s for many years died on November 7, 2024, at age 69. Her funeral was on November 25, 2024, at Vaughn Green in Randallstown, Maryland. May her soul rest in peace.*



*The Palovations is one of the headliners for the Rasheed & Sons "Bring in the New Year's Eve Old School Cabaret." Acts such as "Philly's Own "Tribute to the Legends, J'KAR, Ten Karat Gold, Christal F, Epiphany, Shades of Darkness and John Hall will be featured on Tuesday, December 31 from 2-7 p.m. located at the Palladium Building, 2900 Liberty Heights Avenue in Baltimore, Maryland. I am the Mistress of Ceremony for this event. I have tickets. Call 410-833-9474 or email me and let me know how many tickets you want at [rosapryor@aol.com](mailto:rosapryor@aol.com).*



*Rev. Henry Turner, Jr. the son of Reverend Henry Turner Sr., pastor of First Corinthian Baptist Church, passed away last week. His funeral will be held Saturday, Dec 14, 2024. The viewing will be at 9 a.m. and the service will follow at 9:30 a.m. at Lord's Church, 5010 Park Heights Avenue.*



*Shades of Darkness will headline Carlos Hutchins Productions 6th Annual "Home for the Holidays" on Sunday, December 15 from 3-8 p.m. at the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Lodge of Maryland, located 1307 Eutaw Place. The event is a celebration and toy drive for less fortunate children. It is a must for you to bring a new unwrapped toy. For ticket information, call 443-963-5711. It is cabaret style. We will see you there!*

## Ravens Reset During Bye Week

By Tyler Hamilton

The Baltimore Ravens got the bye week at the latest point in the season this year but it came at a good time after their 24-19 loss to the Philadelphia Eagles at M&T Bank Stadium. Now, the Ravens at 8-5 sit two games behind the Pittsburgh Steelers in the AFC North division race. Baltimore is currently one of the wild card teams.

Ravens coach John Harbaugh likes the timing of the bye week for his team. They'll face the New York Giants on the road at MetLife Stadium this week, (December 15). He wants to make sure they take nothing for granted despite being favored to win the game. Harbaugh firmly believes the bye was good for a reset as they gear up to finish strong over the final four weeks of the season.

"I can find a lot of positives in it being this past week. It felt like it was at the right time," Harbaugh said. "Everything else is just a sideshow; everything else is just a distraction. None of it is important. What's important is our football. The football. Getting the football right, playing our best football that we're capable of playing, everybody locked in for that – that's really what it's all about. Nothing else matters; everything else is just static."

One of the possible distractions Harbaugh was referring to involved wide receiver Diontae Johnson who was suspended one game for conduct detrimental to the team. Johnson refused to enter the game against the Eagles because he was frustrated about a lack of usage since the Ravens acquired him from the Carolina Panthers.

Johnson won't practice with the team this week. But he does have support



**Rashod Bateman**  
Photo: AP Photo/Julio Cortez

from his fellow wide receivers.

"He's one of my guys. He's one of our guys," receiver Zay Flowers said. "Diontae Johnson will be welcome back. It's not a distraction."

The reps may be even more scarce for Johnson since Rashod Bateman returned to the practice field after a knee injury limited him to 18 snaps against Philadelphia.

"I feel good. I got a little banged up [in the] Eagles game, but the bye week was big for me. I was able to get healthy," Bateman said. "We've been playing for a long time, now – 13

games straight. Some teams [had] already had their bye, but we didn't, so [it's] definitely good to go take a break, see some family and come back to the game. I think we all did [that]."

The break also was good for kicker Justin Tucker. Tucker missed two field goals and an extra point attempt in the loss to Philadelphia. The normally on the money kicker's 70.4 field goal percentage is well below his career average.

Tucker stayed around the facility during the break and feels refreshed now that the team is into game week.

"I'm ready to go. It was good to get back in here first thing this morning [and] see all the guys. I was here all week, for the most part, anyways – in and out of the building. It's good to come back in and see everybody; getting in the meeting room; get out on the practice field and just get right back to work," Tucker said.

With four games left, the Ravens have to play their best football if they want to host at least one game at home. As of now, they'd be the second wild card team which means they'd need to win a couple of road games to get to the Super Bowl. That's what they had to do back in 2012 when they last won the Super Bowl.

Harbaugh was the coach then and is looking toward his troops on another deep postseason run.

"We have a four-game season in front of us right now. This is the season; it kind of begins now," Harbaugh said. "The season is important to determine the important outcomes for the rest of the way – that's what we're focused on. We'll be focusing on this game, putting everything we've got into it, and then we'll go from there."

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