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BGE celebrates National Volunteer Week



BGE employees volunteer at real Food Farms in Baltimore City as the company kicks off a month of service events in celebration of National Volunteer week. (Left to right) Melissa Cheek; Rachael Lightly; Stephanie Leach; January Mallory; Amanda Engel; and Morgan Vessels. This event is the first of more than 30 volunteer events for BGE employees focused on environment, education and community enrichment planned at nonprofits across central Maryland throughout the month of April. (See article on page 11) Courtesy Photo/BGE

'Kidz N Charge' kid-friendly music to be featured on MTV Jams, other video websites

Markel Anderson is a nine-year-old boy who likes technology and computers and his 10-year-old brother, Michael Anderson, Jr. loves to play video games. Although the boys from Fort Washington, Maryland have typical hobbies of youth their ages, since 2013, Markel and Michael have also been living their dream by performing R&B, pop and rap music in their group, "Kidz N Charge."

Markel, whose performance name is "Young KELLZ" is the primary singer and Michael, known as "Mike J" onstage, raps and primarily performs backup vocals.

"I like going to different places that I have never been before and making other kids happy," "Young KELLZ" said.

In 2014, the brothers completed their first CD called "It's Party Time." Fans who listen to their kid-friendly music typically find them through social media and word-of-mouth. Online promotion is paying off. The brothers have over one million subscribers to their website.

The Anderson family's movement to bring back wholesome and positive music for youth is growing. Vevo, MTV Jams and Revolt TV, a new music cable network owned by Sean "Puffy" Combs, will play the Maryland-based group's music this month.

On April 20, 2015, Vevo, MTV Jams and Revolt TV will show the video for their single, "Best Friend." It will be added into their rotation for their online video sites. According to the boys' father Michael Anderson. "It's Party Time" has generated over one million views on their website. The featured songs from their album have received 53,700 views on YouTube.

The song, "Come With Me," was dedicated to children who lost their lives to senseless acts of violence. "Kidz N Charge" was granted clearance to perform "Cool It Now" by the Harry Fox Agency, which provides licensing and royalty services for artists. Whenever the boys perform the New Edition hit, parents reportedly dance and clap as much as the youth. However, the brothers often perform original songs about kids having fun, problems affecting youth, puppy love and friendship. Victor Allen volunteers to help

Kidz N Charge
— It's Party Time —
www.kidzncharge.com

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Brothers Markel "Young KELLZ" Anderson and Michael "Mike J" Anderson, Jr are the music group "Kidz N Charge." The duo create and perform positive and "honest" music for youth. Their video "Best Friend" is scheduled to be shown online on Vevo, MTV Jams and Revolt beginning on April 20, 2015.

Courtesy Photo

"Michael J" to write original song lyrics and Charles Ford volunteers to help "Young KELLZ" pen his songs.

"We wanted to bring that old era back where you had 'Immature,' 'New Edition,' 'The Temptations' and feel good music. You could get your point across without having to use vulgar language and [we wanted to] keep it kid-friendly," Michael Anderson, Sr. said.

You can spot Michael Anderson, Sr. and his wife, Kia Anderson accompanying "Mike J" and "Young KELLZ" to local performances at kiddie cabarets, schools, nursing homes and to private functions

like birthday parties. They travel to perform in other places like Ohio, Atlanta and Richmond. Kia, their manager, noticed that her sons possessed musical

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talent during a home sing-off. After asking the boys what they wanted to do with their talents, Kia began working with them on a consistent basis to practice vocals and listen keenly to music.

"Markel told me that he wanted the world to be able to hear his voice and to be able to show what children can do," Kia said. "Markel has always had an interest in music since he was three years old. He came to me at seven and showed me that he could sing in front of people. His brother [Michael] had been dancing before that. One of their idols is 'Mindless Behavior.' They want to perform like them."

Although "Kidz N Charge" gets booked for paid gigs, the Andersons decided that "Young KELLZ" and "Mike J" should reach more children through volunteer work. In early March, the brothers volunteered to perform at the sixth annual "I Am Not My Hair" Alopecia Awareness show, which was held in Hampton, Virginia. The event helps young people who have alopecia cope with bullying and it increases awareness about the condition. The duo also performed at the Emeritus at Woodward Estates in Bowie for senior citizens and their families, during Easter weekend.

"Young KELLZ" and "Mike J" are making their parents proud of their musical accomplishments and personal development.

"I think they are learning how to work well with each other, and to show other children that whatever you put your mind to, you can achieve. They always had a dream to sing and perform for others and that's what they are doing," Kia said.

Visit <http://www.kidzncharge.com> for more information about "It's Party Time" and Kidz N Charge.

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Guest Editorials/Commentary

United States and United Nations Failed Somalia

By Bill Fletcher, Jr., NNPA Columnist

In 1991, I watched Somalia disintegrate. It was not just the breakup of a state, as we were to see in the former Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union. It was the complete collapse of the state structure and the devolution into "war-lordism."

Some part of me thought that the United Nations or some other global body would intervene to reinforce the Somali nation-state. That did not happen. In the public mind, the intervention by the United States associated with "Blackhawk Down," was theoretically a humanitarian operation, but it did nothing to play the role of the honest broker in bringing the conflicting sides together. As a result, Somalia lay in shambles, subject to external rape; pirating; conflicts among warlords; foreign invasions; brief moments of calm; and ultimately the rise of jihadist terrorism.

Through all of this it has felt that much, if not most of the rest of the world could give a damn.

It would be bad enough if Somalia were the only country to disintegrate. Yet, it has not stopped there. Ironically, as long as global capitalism can continue to find ways to operate in these collapsed nation-states, no one seems to lift a finger. To add insult to injury, when external forces help to accelerate nation-state disintegration—as in Iraq and Libya—the perpetrators throw their hands into the air and blame the people on the ground for somehow not grasping basic principles of governance.

In the case of Libya, whether one supported or opposed the regime of President Qaddafi, the NATO intervention in the midst of the civil war quite apparently contributed to not only the overthrow of Qaddafi but the collapse of the Libyan political system. There was no cohesive leadership to replace the Qaddafi regime, and guns started flowing not only within Libya, but throughout much of North Africa. Disputes between factions within the anti-Qaddafi movement have now evolved into a proxy war for different countries in the Arab World along with the introduction of jihadist terrorists.

In all of this there is nothing approaching self-criticism by the U.S. and/or NATO. There is no suggestion that, having directly contributed to the disintegration of the Libyan state, the USA and NATO might have some obligation—if not legal, then certainly moral—to work with the African Union and the United Nations towards a peaceful reconstruction of the country. This is especially ironic given that the African Union attempted to mediate a resolution to the political conflict that resulted in the overthrow of Qaddafi, and NATO ignored this effort.

As a result, NATO and the USA walked away and no lessons were learned, making it infuriatingly odd when one hears Congressional Republicans suggest or call for war with Iran. What would one think would be the impact(s) of the collapse and disintegration of the Iranian state in the world in which we find ourselves?

In a country—the USA—where history is denigrated in favor of myth, perhaps there are those who feel that such questions need not be asked...and answered.

Bill Fletcher, Jr. is the host of The Global African on Telesur-English. He is a racial justice, labor and global justice writer and activist. Follow him on Twitter, Facebook, and www.billfletcherjr.com.



Bill Fletcher, Jr.
Courtesy Photo



Community Affairs

Orioles "Birdland Passport" Program returns in 2015

Baltimore—The Orioles announced that the popular "Birdland Passport" program, designed to reward fans who visit Oriole Park at Camden Yards and the Orioles' local minor league affiliates, is back for another season.

All five minor league affiliates—the Norfolk Tides, Bowie Baysox, Frederick Keys, Delmarva Shorebirds and Aberdeen IronBirds—will continue to participate this season.

"The Birdland Passport program has been widely successful at showcasing America's Pastime throughout the Mid-Atlantic Region," said Greg Bader, Orioles Vice President of Communications & Marketing. "Our fans have embraced the program from the beginning and continue to appreciate the family-friendly atmosphere the Orioles and our affiliates provide throughout the professional baseball season."

Fans can sign up for a complimentary passport at the Fan Assistance Center in



the Warehouse at Oriole Park or at any of the five minor league ballparks. Fans who visit five of the six Orioles affiliated ballparks and have their passport marked with a 2015 stamp will receive a limited edition Birdland Passport Drawstring Bag (one per customer, per passport). Those who visit all six ballparks in one year will be entered for a chance to win a trip for two to see the Birds play in 2016 at Ed Smith Stadium in Sarasota, Florida.

More information about the program is available at www.orioles.com/passport.

Page Opposite/Commentaries

Creating Conscious Black Millionaires

By James Clingman,
NNPA Columnist

Black folks have the ability to create our own conscious millionaires. We have certainly done it for others for a long time now. Conscious black millionaires, by definition, would most assuredly use some of their money to assist the black collective; conscious black millionaires would not hesitate to use their resources to help empower our people; conscious black millionaires would not be afraid to espouse the principles of economic empowerment and then use their money to support it.

This is not a pipedream, folks. It can, should and must be done. To make real progress, we must move beyond rallies, speeches, protests, philosophy, pontification, intellectual rhetoric without commensurate action, and mere symbolism without real substance.

Every rational person knows that at some point, everything we do to challenge injustice and to obtain the economic and political reciprocity we seek and deserve, will require money. Look at

the amount of money spent on travel and accommodations to attend all the marches and demonstrations of the recent past. It would have been better spent on legal battles in the courts and placing initiatives on local ballots across the nation.

Who should fund the initiatives we take on to deal with inequities and unfairness against blacks? Who should benefit from the dollars we spend to

some of them would do what the founder of Compro Tax, Jackie Mayfield, did in Beaumont, Texas. He and Brother Yusef Muhammad built their own convention center. They are, indeed, conscious black millionaires and, like others that I know, they are not only taking care of their families, they are also doing a great deal to help others, via business opportunities and philanthropy. Many are unaware that they

to purchase one pint of Ice Supreme from Ashiki Taylor's company we would have a conscious millionaire. The same by buying one T-shirt from a black company, one book from Rosie Milligan, one pound of Nefertiti Coffee from Roger Madison's Izania marketplace, one product from Keidi Awadu or Bob Law's Namaskar Health Foods, or even a couple of rolls of toilet tissue from Freedom Paper Company. C'mon y'all; this is not difficult.

Those folks will use their resources to assist us in our fight for empowerment. They will do it because their consciousness will allow them to do no less. Conscious brothers and sisters consider it their "reasonable" service to support one another, to contribute to one another's causes, and to let their actions speak louder than their words.

We have created a lot white millionaires by buying their products. Don't you think we should be able to look at their work and see a reciprocal benefit to black folks? There should be some collective gain. Have they given us a return on our investment? Or, have they and their friends and families been the only ones to gain? Stop supporting shysters, hustlers, and hucksters.

Let's use more of our money to create "conscious" black millionaires. Imagine the possibilities. Go to www.iamone-ofthemillion.com, sign up, and let's get started!

Jim Clingman, founder of the Greater Cincinnati African American Chamber of Commerce, is the nation's most prolific writer on economic empowerment for black people. He can be reached through his website: blackeconomics.com.

"Currently, our dollars are benefiting everyone else as we run for freedom, as we protest, as we demonstrate, and as we conduct our conventions and other meetings around the country."

accomplish our goals? As Ken Bridges would say, "That be us, y'all."

The revolution will not be televised, but it must be financed, and we should benefit economically from our expenditures and activities associated with our fight for freedom.

Currently, our dollars are benefiting everyone else as we run for freedom, as we protest, as we demonstrate, and as we conduct our conventions and other meetings around the country. I recall how proud I was when I attended the "Bring Back Black" meeting, in 2007 at the black-owned and operated Dudley convention complex in Kernersville, North Carolina—a black caterer prepared our food, and everything else that could be done with black vendors was done. It was the same at our MATAH conferences from 1998-2002.

Every convention cannot do that, but if we create conscious black millionaires,

helped Maggie and John Anderson in their efforts to get the Empowerment Experiment off the ground. No fanfare, just quietly and humbly paying it forward, the way conscious black people do. Is Compro Tax preparing your return this year, or is your money going to one of those companies that do nothing for black folks in return?

Imagine the progress we would make by creating millionaires like Jackie and Yusef. The good news is that we can do it merely by putting our financial support behind the efforts of a conscious brother or sister who have demonstrated a willingness to sacrifice and walk the walk when it comes to the overall empowerment of black people.

Creating conscious black millionaires is one of the objectives of the "One Million Conscious Black Voters and Contributors Campaign." We know that simply by issuing a call for our members

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Dr. Levi Watkins a ‘Man among Men’

By Stacy M. Brown

The accolades keep pouring in, from colleagues, friends and individuals who were touched in many ways by him.

Each have a similar story—including how Dr. Levi Watkins, a giant on the medical scene in Baltimore and throughout the country, paid close attention to each patient, showed genuine interest in friends and families and wasn’t beyond heaping praise upon his colleagues.

Dr. Watkins died on Friday, April 10, 2015 at Johns Hopkins Hospital. He was 71.

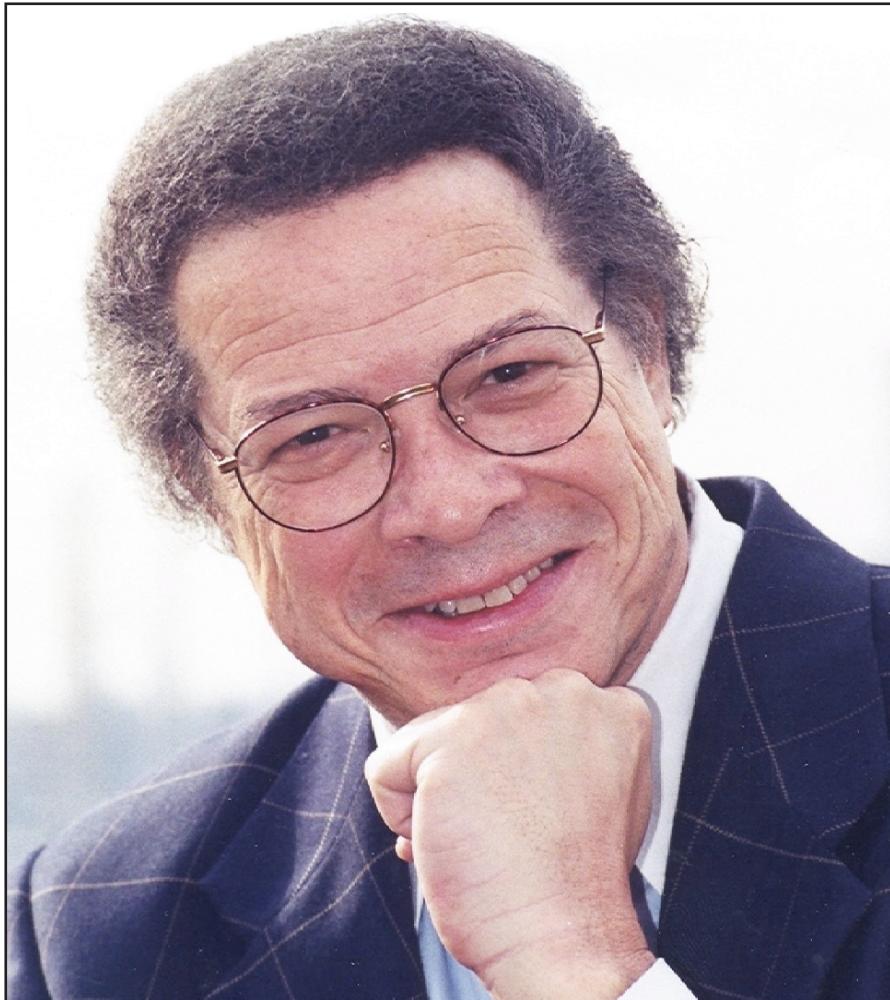
“Levi died at his beloved Johns Hopkins Hospital, where he saved thousands of patients as a world-renowned heart surgeon,” Watkins’ brother Donald Watkins said in a statement. “His spirit lives on in the three million patients worldwide whose hearts beat in a normal rhythm because of the implantable defibrillator he invented.”

Dr. Watkins’ death came only days after his longtime friend, colleague and another famous Baltimore doctor Elijah Saunders died at the age of 80.

An award given by the American Heart Association was named after Dr. Watkins and Dr. Saunders. It honors the groundbreaking clinical, medical and community work of the two medical pioneers and it recognizes individuals whose work exemplifies excellence in their endeavors to diminish healthcare disparities in Maryland. Coincidentally, Dr. Watkins died after preparing to deliver remarks at Saunders funeral.

“Levi was a mentor to me as well as a personal friend. I’ve known him for over 40 years from the time we started working together at Johns Hopkins,” Baltimore City Council President Bernard Jack Young said in a statement delivered through his deputy chief of staff Lester Davis.

“His dapper outfits caught my attention and his wonderful personality made me his friend. He was a civil rights leader who kept the past in front of us so we wouldn’t make the same mistakes in the future,” Young said. “He’s been an inspiring giant in Baltimore and around the world. Hopkins is a better place because of Levi. My condolences go out to his family.”



Dr. Levi Watkins
1943 — 2015

Dr. Watkins was the first African-American to hold the title of chief resident of cardiac surgery at Johns Hopkins University.

Thirty-five years ago, he performed the first implantation of an automatic defibrillator into a human heart, a procedure that’s now credited with saving the lives of more than 100,000 patients.

Dr. Watkins received honorary degrees from Morgan State University; Spelman College; Meharry Medical College; and Sojourner-Douglass College. His career and life were featured on a 1993 Public Television Systems’ “The New Explorers” program episode called “A Dream Fulfilled.” The program later aired on Maryland Public Television.

Lauded as a renowned cardiac surgeon and a champion of racial equality and diversity, Dr. Watkins became the first

African-American to be admitted to Vanderbilt University’s School of Medicine (VUSM) in Tennessee in 1966. Four years later, he became the first black person to graduate.

While at Vanderbilt, Dr. Watkins won election into the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society and has been credited with helping the university become nationally recognized for admitting students who are considered underrepresented in medicine.

He interned at Johns Hopkins University Hospital in 1978 and also conducted research at Harvard Medical School.

Before retiring in 2013, Dr. Watkins also helped develop the cardiac arrhythmia service at Johns Hopkins.

“Levi Watkins changed the way medical centers think, act and feel, as he guided

us with a firm hand to implant principles of equality in medical training,” said friend and former colleague Dr. Jeff Balser, who is vice chancellor for Health Affairs and dean of the School of Medicine at Vanderbilt. “Dr. Watkins accomplished this through courage and tenacity, charting frontiers early in his career at Vanderbilt, and later at Johns Hopkins through a tireless devotion to mentoring students, residents and young faculty now working all over the world. I count myself among the many that relied on his wisdom, his warm friendship and his steadfast support and encouragement.”

Dr. Watkins’ friend, Susan Moss Thomas, also paid tribute to her fallen mentor.

“A true man among men, [Dr. Watkins] was a friend, mentor and he introduced to me the world of color I thought I knew but could never, ever have been taught,” Thomas said.

Dr. George Hill, professor of Medical Education and Administration Emeritus, formerly the Levi Watkins Jr. Professor and Distinguished Professor of Pathology, Microbiology and Immunology, told reporters at Vanderbilt that Dr. Watkins “was a man of courage, character, commitment and conviction, the true definition of a leader. We will honor his legacy as long as the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine exists with the annual Levi Watkins Jr. Lecture in his honor, where he was the first speaker in 2002.”

Hill said that Dr. Watkins attended every Watkins lecture. Next year will be the 50th anniversary of Dr. Watkins’ admission to VUSM.

“I was looking forward to celebrating with him,” he said.

In a message to the Johns Hopkins community, Paul B. Rothman, the dean of the medical facility, and Ronald R. Peterson, the president of the Hopkins Hospital and Health System, thanked Dr. Watkins for transforming the hospital.

“Johns Hopkins was a great institution then, but it is a far, far better place now,” the men said. “[There is] more diversity, more innovative, more connected to the community that surrounds us, and more welcoming. We have Levi Watkins to thank for a lot of those changes.”



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University of Maryland player takes 'Long' road to Ravens' Pro Day

By Turron Davenport

The road that Maryland wide receiver Deon Long has traveled up to this point is a very uncommon one. Long has played in multiple college football programs prior to getting ready to enter the professional ranks. The experience he has gained will be something he can lean on as he enters the next stage of his life.

Long is one of the local college football players who will attend the Baltimore Ravens local college prospect pro day, which will be held at the Ravens facility in Owings Mills, Maryland. It will give a number of prospects another opportunity to showcase their skills.

The journey for Deon Long began at Dunbar High School in Washington, D.C. He decided to play football after spending a lot of time boxing, which helped to develop his trademark toughness. It showed him the value of putting in hard work.

Long talked about having to lean on the lessons of hard work that boxing taught him.

"Since day one when I graduated from high school, I always took the extra mile to put the work in. I did what I had to do to get schoolwork done early so that I could go to West Virginia and take part in spring ball," Long said.

Long enrolled at the University of West Virginia in 2010 and spent a short time there. He was not getting the opportunity that the then head coach had told him he would give him. As a result, he transferred to the University of New Mexico. Unfortunately, he had to sit out a year as per NCAA rules.

Mike Locksley, the head coach at New Mexico was fired and numerous players left the program as a result. Long was one of those players but he didn't want



University of Maryland wide receiver Deon Long hauls in a deep pass during the 2014 college football season.

Courtesy Photo/www.umterps.com

to sit out another year, so he followed his coach to Iowa Western junior college. Long discussed his reasons for transferring in a recent interview.

"Regardless, I was going to go wherever he was going. I already knew his offense, I wouldn't have had to put as much time into learning a new offense and I could help teach other players," Long said.

Transferring to Iowa Western was a wise decision. He recorded 100 receptions 1,625 yards and 25 touchdowns in his lone season of junior college football. That one season led to almost 100-division one college football offers. Once again Long's loyalty to coach Locksley factored in another decision that faced the young receiver.

Long and coach Locksley reunited at the University of Maryland after their

successful time at Iowa Western. Coach Locksley became the offensive coordinator at Maryland and he brought along his feature player.

Some may look at the multiple schools that Long has attended as a red flag. However, the many schools are an example of a high character trait—loyalty. Long gave coach Locksley his word and stuck to it, even when bigger schools than Maryland offered him a scholarship.

Going to Maryland afforded Long the opportunity to meet another NFL bound star receiver, Stefon Diggs. The two formed a very close bond.

"Since day one, it has been me, Stefon Diggs and Ricardo Young. Unfortunately, Ricardo didn't get the opportunity to show his skills as a QB. He brought Stefon and I together." Long said. "Stef and I have been through a lot

together. We built it over the years. We broke our legs together. We pushed each other in the weight room and on the field. We have the same fire for the game."

Long and Diggs had the opportunity to show their skills at the University of Maryland pro day last month. Both players did very well in drills and running routes for over 19 teams including the New England Patriots whose head coach Bill Belichick attended the event. Coach Belichick took some time to talk to Long and actually joked with him about his shiny cleats.

Long's final year at Maryland helped him really develop as a receiver, thanks in large part to former NFL wide receiver and new position coach, Keenan McCardell.

"If I had to choose one word to describe coach, it would be dedication. As an inside receiver, an outside receiver, he really knows his stuff. I learned so much from him. At the next level, everyone is good. It's the little things that make the difference." Long said. "He is an all of the time guy, if you see him do it one time, you'll see him do it all of the time. He preaches consistency."

Deon Long isn't on everyone's radar but he is a player who can potentially be a much better professional than he was in college. He can also contribute on special teams in the return game. He needs to land in the right scheme that will allow him to show his athleticism that allows him to play both inside at the slot and outside over top of the numbers.

However, above all else, Long has a newfound inspiration. He is now the father of an almost one-year-old son. He knows that he has to provide for more than just himself. Be sure to keep an eye out for Long as he looks to enter the NFL and makes a name for himself.

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**Baltimore attorney receives Trailblazer Award
at National Summit of Black Women Lawyers**



McGuireWoods partner Ava Lias-Booker receives the Trailblazer in Excellence and Diversity Award at the 2015 National Summit of Black Women Lawyers gala April 10, 2015 in Chicago from Michael A. Boyce II, the event's master of ceremonies.

Courtesy Photo/Eugene McKinney, Young Minds Mediaworks

Baltimore—Ava E. Lias-Booker, managing partner of McGuireWoods' Baltimore office, received the Trailblazer in Excellence and Diversity Award at the 2015 National Summit of Black Women Lawyers on April 10, 2015 in Chicago. The award recognizes lawyers for extraordinary career accomplishments and for supporting and advancing diversity in the legal profession.

An awards committee received nominations nationwide and chose Lias-Booker after a competitive vetting and selection process.

The three-day summit hosted by the Black Women Lawyers Association of Greater Chicago provided a forum for diversity advocates, African-American women lawyers and thought leaders to connect and exchange ideas for developing and empowering African-American women in the legal profession. The event included panel discussions on topics such as the diversity pipeline, mentoring, and career and professional development.

"I'm honored to receive this recognition and grateful to the Black Women Lawyers Association for all that it does to develop and promote African-American women in the legal profession," Lias-

Booker said. "The National Summit is so important to advancing that mission, and I was proud to participate in this year's event."

Lias-Booker was a featured speaker on two panels. She joined managing partners from other large law firms for the program "All Eyes on Us: Combating the Decline of Black Female Associates." She also joined a panel of highly successful lawyers for a roundtable titled "Make it Rain: Building a Multi-Million Dollar Book of Business."

"I can't think of a more worthy honoree than Ava," said McGuireWoods Managing Partner Tom Cabaniss. "Not only is she an accomplished lawyer and valuable contributor to our firm, she also is an outstanding leader and a role model for all of us. We're so proud she has received this recognition."

Lias-Booker heads McGuireWoods' Baltimore litigation practice group. She represents businesses in complex commercial and civil litigation in state and federal courts and frequently speaks on litigation, leadership and diversity issues. In 2010, the Minority Corporate Counsel Association named Lias-Booker a "Leading Law Firm Rainmaker."

Billie Holiday's 100th Birthday celebrated in fine style



All singers and performers were on stage together for the grand finale at the Billie Holiday 100th Birthday Celebrations at the historic Orchard Street Church in Baltimore on Tuesday April 7, 2015.

Photos by Yvonne J. Medley

By Rosa Pryor

Produced by Tom Saunders of Renaissance Productions and Tours and the Greater Baltimore Urban League, the musical tribute celebrating Billie Holiday's 100th birthday was done in the finest of style at Baltimore's historic Orchard Street United Methodist Church on Tuesday, April 7, 2015. The event's theme was "God Bless the Child."

Almost 400 people showed up to pay tribute to Billie Holiday at the well organized event. It was if the sky had opened up and all the folks who used to hangout at the Sphinx Club and Pennsylvania Avenue who are still alive and kicking were there. The guests were dressed to the nines and the second floor of the church hall where the celebrations were held was beautifully decorated.

The entertainment provided by Dr. Phillip L. Butts' Big Band was worth a million bucks! The band members looked amazing in their formal tuxedoes seated behind their music sheet stands. The band's look and sound took you back to the late 30's and 40's while the vocal sounds of Baltimore's gifted and talented singers, Sheila Ford; Marlene Ross; Larzine Talley; Kermit



Tom Saunders of Renaissance Productions and Tours greets the guests as the Billie Holiday 100th Birthday Celebrations gets underway.

Golden; Irene Jalinti; Denyse Pearson; Sasshay; and Irene Jalenti took turns crooning Billie Holiday songs.

"Good Morning Heartache" was sung by Larzine Talley; "Lady Sings the Blues" was sung by Denyse Pearson; "Strange Fruit" was sung by Sheila Ford; "God Bless the Child" was sung by Marlene Ross; "I'll Be Seeing You" was sung by Irene Jalinti; Kermit Golden sang "A Change is Gonna Come" and Steve Flynn sang "Lover Come Back To Me."

The band played many instrumentals including "April in Paris" as performed by Count Basie. Each singer presented Holiday's songs superbly in voice as well as attire. Each of the female singers wore carnations in their hair and beautiful long evening gowns. James "Big Jim" Staton, WEAA 88.9 FM radio personality did a fantastic job as Master of Ceremonies.

At the sold-out event, the guests enjoyed dancing to the music as well as listening to the nostalgic tunes with pride on their faces. The beautiful hostesses—hand-picked by Tom Saunders—dressed in black evening wear with white corsages were very attentive to the guests. This indeed, was an evening that all the guests will remember for a long time.

BGE celebrates National Volunteer Week



BGE volunteers completed landscaping and planting projects at Real Food Farms to prepare for the spring planting season. (Left to right) Priscilla Akuako; Amanda Engel; Morgan vessels; Rachael Lightly; Davis Milton; Melissa Cheek; Stephanie Leach; and January Mallory.

Courtesy Photo/BGE

Baltimore—Employees from across Baltimore Gas and Electric Company (BGE) celebrated National Volunteer Week (April 12-18) by participating in nearly 30 employee-led service projects in central Maryland and the Baltimore and Washington, D.C. metro area throughout the month of April. The month of service events kicked off today at Real Food Farm in Baltimore City. BGE employee volunteers completed landscaping and planting projects, refreshed signage and worked in the hoop houses, weeding and gardening, to prepare them for the spring. Real Food

Farm is Civic Works' innovative urban agricultural enterprise engaged in growing fresh produce on eight acres in and around Clifton Park in northeast Baltimore.

National Volunteer Week is an annual, nationwide celebration of people working to improve their communities through volunteer service. Each year, BGE employees organize community service projects for the company's 3,200 employees, family members and friends to participate in throughout April. This year, more than 550 BGE employees will donate more than 1,800 hours fo-

cused on projects that include cleaning up parks and other public spaces, planting trees, maintaining the Chesapeake Bay Oyster Gardens, serving meals to people struggling with poverty and helping rebuild homes, among others. For a full list of BGE's National Volunteer Week projects visit bge.com/giving.

Whether it's through employee volunteer opportunities or charitable giving, BGE is proud to have a long history of empowering our employees to volunteer with organizations that have a positive impact on the communities, which BGE serves. Our employees are strongly dedi-

cated to giving back to communities throughout central Maryland.

Since the founding of the company nearly 200 years ago, BGE has played an integral role in working with Maryland communities to address economic development, public safety, civic issues and other initiatives that help enhance our neighborhoods. Through the use of shareholder dollars, BGE supports programs that deliver measurable and sustainable impact in areas of education, the environment, community development and arts and culture.

House of Mandela Wines Celebrates Family and Legacy

By Emelda De Coteau

It's dreary outside, but Tukwini Mandela, granddaughter of late legendary South African leader Nelson Mandela, is full of light and enthusiasm. Her visit to Baltimore is the last stop on a three-week U.S. promotional tour for House of Mandela, the wine company she runs along with her mother, Dr. Makaziwe (Maki) Mandela.

Their diverse portfolio, a mix of red and white wines, ranges from the mid-tier Thembu collection (Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Chenin Blanc, Merlot, Pinotage, Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon) to the premium Royal Reserve (Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz). Deep River, the most recent addition has two blends, Tukwini Mandela noted, "the Chenin Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot." The Vusani series, which will soon be available in America, focuses specifically on South African wines, including Pinotage and Chenin Blanc.

The Mandelas are wine negociants, who work directly with selected South-African wineries that adhere to the Mandela's values of fair trade and a diverse workforce. Launched in 2010, the brand continues to expand globally, and is currently in 15 markets, according to Tukwini Mandela. Still, they never forget a loyal customer base. "We have always received great support from Maryland and Washington D.C. There is a wonderful African-American community of wine drinkers here."

Less than two percent of winemakers in South Africa are black. "Yes, and even fewer are black women. I actually know all of them," she laughed heartily. Her response to the statistic is indicative of the family's resilience and determination despite seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Their royal bloodline dates back to the 1800s, and includes the esteemed Chief Mphakanyiswa, Chief of Mvezo and father of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. At one point, Thembu land (pronounced "tembu") was connected to a Kingdom in the country's Eastern Cape. Despite these earlier illustrious circumstances, their collective history is marked by challenges.

Tukwini Mandela pointed out the parallel between this background and the wine process. "We always thought the vine grew in a straight line, it does not. It sort of weaves and bobs, provided the viticulturist takes good care of it. Our family story is very similar to that. We did not necessarily have an easy road. My grandfather did not have an easy life. But our family produced this great son of Africa."

These unique experiences are inextricably reflected in the brand, beginning with its packaging. The bee on the Royal Reserve wine label alludes to Tukwini's grandfather's first name Rolihlahla which translated means "one who is brave enough to fetch the honey from the honeycomb," she revealed in an earlier interview. There



Tukwini Mandela and Makaziwe Mandela

Photo: Courtesy House of Mandela

are numerous branches on the bee's wings, and these symbolize the large Mandela family.

The ornate decoration on the Thembu collection bottles reference Nelson Mandela's favorite attire, the colorful Madibe shirts. Eschewing suits, Mandela often dressed in a manner that he felt communicated accessibility to the people. The wine, too, invokes this casual and down-to-earth tone.

It's also partly the deep connection to people which drew Mandela and her mother to the business. "We fell in love with the workers who produce the wine," she said. "Fair trade is there to make sure that the farm workers have adequate and acceptable living condition, and that they are paid fairly for their work." Nearly 350,000 South Africans are employed by this industry, which constitutes three percent of the country's GDP. Tukwini Mandela remains hopeful that in her lifetime more blacks, particularly younger people, will enter the industry and participate in a variety of roles. While, at the moment, there is no formal organization for black wine industry professionals, "the Department of Trade and Industry really goes out of their way to support black-owned businesses through funding," she said.

Mandela sees the diversity of South African culture,

and the warm disposition of its people as worthy of uplift; there is a different side of her country, she insists.

"We want to present the best of South Africa." Working with fair trade wineries is not the only way this family business gives back. They are involved with two charities in South Africa, My Life and St. Mary's Foundation. Both organizations focus on helping young people succeed and overcome the sting of poverty. In addition to those efforts, they work with Spring of Hope, a non-profit whose mission is "partnering with rural South African schools to bring them clean water sources and economic development opportunities."

Ultimately, the House of Mandela, would like their wines to inspire meaningful connections for their customers. "We hope they will talk about their own family stories. Their own lineage. Everyone has a great ancestor that has sort of changed the trajectory of their family."

Staying Connected:

Discover where to purchase the House of Mandela wines by visiting the Heritage Link Brands website at <http://www.heritagelinkbrands.com/houseofmandela>. Click on the link at the bottom of the page entitled "Online Shop."

Annapolitan designer debuts apparel for female clergy

By Andrea Blackstone

On March 18, 2015, a premiere party was held at Loews Annapolis Hotel to celebrate the television debut of Bishop Craig Coates' clothing line, Modern Priestwear. Coates, 48, designed a dress that was worn by actress Nicole Ari Parker on "Single Ladies," during the opening of the fourth season. The TV series that is produced by Queen Latifah airs on Centric and BET.

Coates' TV break emerged when Anthony L. Williams, the head clothing designer for "Single Ladies," was in search of clergy wear for Parker's TV role. The Atlanta-based designer, consultant and "Project Runway" All Star contacted Coates about his design for women clergy. The inquiry resulted in a favorable outcome. Parker, who plays a pastor, has reportedly worn several of Coates' dresses. The actress will be wearing his designs throughout the current season of "Single Ladies."

"It just so happens to be fashionable, appropriate and classy. They loved it!" Coates said.

The pastor of Fresh Start Church in Glen Burnie has been designing clothing since high school. He studied fashion design at the University of Maryland, College Park. Coates even made his wife's wedding dress. Whenever the couple attends a special event, Coates said that he makes something fabulous especially for Lady Sheree. Coates explained that his wife has been supportive since the moment he decided to start Modern Priestwear.

The genesis of the company has a noteworthy backstory. Coates previously focused on making and selling clergy apparel for men, until he decided to make a special gift for Pastor Candice Owens' installation at the Kingdom Agenda Church, when she started a church in Baltimore. After Coates made the dress that she wore, pictures of Owens wearing it were posted on Facebook. A large volume of comments and Facebook "likes" followed, so the designer had a feeling that he was on the right path.

"After that, I said let me test this dress, since I am going to go global with my company. That is how that dress came to be," Coates said. "I want to rebrand what women clergy look like. I'm redefining it because everything that is out there either looks like it was made for a man, or the clergy robes that are made for women look like menswear with darts (which bring together folds of fabric to provide shape of the garment) in the waistline and the bust for women. I just feel like women for so long have walked in a man's shadow with ministry, we've got to catch up here."

The talented pastor shared that several organizations who have women ministers in their group want Coates' modern look to be worn by all of them. Coates also said that clergywear is like other fashion trends. Creating new designs is required in order for him to compete in a global market.



On March 18, 2015 at Loews Annapolis Hotel, Sheree Coates wears Bishop Craig Coates' original sparkling chiffon silk set design on the red carpet. The couple celebrated the TV debut of Bishop Craig Coates' Modern Priestwear clothing line. Courtesy Photos

"I expect this dress to be in style for a very long time, but I expect for people to look for more and I have to produce more. I have learned a lot more about the design process from a commercial end versus just sewing for individuals. It's a big difference and it takes a lot of money," Coates said.

The pastor is grateful that Modern Priestwear has progressed well within the last year, but Coates shared that he feels that more work will be required to grow his business in the direction in which he is headed.

While enjoying his new journey, he reflects on how bringing wisdom to the table can be beneficial while striving to meet goals. Coates believes that it is never too late to pursue passions. He reminds us that people should not feel deterred by time that has passed, if they



New York fashion model, Ty'Ann Brown wears one of the dresses on the runway featured in the TV show Single Ladies. The dress was designed by Annapolitan, Bishop Craig Coates. He strives to modernize what women clergy look like in a flattering way.

are actively committed to pursuing a dream or new endeavor.

"If it is your passion, your age should not be the thing that stops you from going forward," Coates said.

Money Smart Week 2015 at The Pratt

April is Financial Literacy Month

Baltimore—As part of Money Smart Week across the nation, the Enoch Pratt Free Library is hosting several financial planning and money management workshops to encourage financial literacy among Baltimoreans.

Money Smart Week at the Pratt begins on Saturday, April 18, 2015, in the Poe Room at the Central Library located at 400 Cathedral Street in Baltimore. Money Smart Week is a partnership with AXA Advisors, Society of Financial Awareness, PNC Bank and Baltimore CASH Campaign.

"Baltimore City is invested in getting its residents in the best financial shape possible," said Ray Cruitt, Pratt Business Librarian. "The Enoch Pratt Free Library/ State Library Resource Center is committed to that goal and is therefore participating in this nationally recognized program that libraries all over the country participate in every National Financial Literacy Month."

For more information about the seminars listed during Money Smart Week 2015 at the Pratt Central Library, visit: www.prattlibrary.org.



Spending, Sharing, Saving

Saturday, April 18, 2015 — 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

PNC Bank presents an interactive family program on money management. Parents and children will have the opportunity to interact with PNC volunteers, ask questions and take valuable tools that will help them apply the concepts of spending, sharing and saving.

Investing Basics for Men and Women

Saturday, April 18, 2015 — 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Society of Financial Awareness (SOFA) presents a program on investing issues for both men and women. The subjects covered include asset allocation, investing issues for women, and how to manage investing in a fragile market.

Rock Your Credit! Presented by Baltimore CASH

Monday, April 20, 2015 — 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Learn about credit and its importance. Lecture will discuss the difference between credit score and a credit report, resources to help improve credit, and obtaining a free credit report.

Small Business Protection Strategies

Tuesday, April 21, 2015 — 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m.

AXA Advisors are hosting a lunch workshop for local business owners and interested entrepreneurs. This presentation discusses the main areas of risk for small businesses, the protection strategies to address the risks and tips on getting started. Registration required. RSVP to Ray Cruitt at 410-396-5317 or email: rcruitt@prattlibrary.org.

Johns Hopkins' neurosurgeon receives Cortes de Cadiz Prize from Spain

Baltimore—Johns Hopkins neurosurgeon Alfredo Quinones-Hinojosa has been awarded the Cortes de Cadiz Prize in the category of surgery by the city council of Cadiz, Spain. The jury prize, in which members of the Royal Academy of Medicine and Surgery took part, was awarded to Quinones-Hinojosa not only for his renowned scientific career but also for his "moving life experience," which, the judges noted, is full of "self-improvement and success."

The prize is named after Pedro Virgili, the doctor who in 1748 founded the Surgery Royal College of the Spanish Army in Cadiz, one of the first surgery colleges in Europe and the foundation for the first university of medicine in Spain.

"It is a great honor to represent our wonderful institution, our country and our cultures, and to find myself surrounded by so many wonderful people who have supported me through the years," Quinones-Hinojosa says. "It is humbling to know that this award is given to extraordinary people, and that this recognition is not about me but about my family, friends, colleagues and patients—they are the ones who are extraordinary and who truly deserve this recognition."

Quinones-Hinojosa is a professor of neurosurgery, oncology, neuroscience, and cellular and molecular medicine at Johns Hopkins. He directs the Comprehensive Brain Tumor Center at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, the Pituitary Tumor Center at The Johns Hopkins Hospital and the Brain Tumor Stem Cell Laboratory at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.

Quinones-Hinojosa was born outside Mexicali, Mexico, to a poor family. His difficult journey from humble beginnings to outstanding neurosurgeon at Johns Hopkins has been well documented in programs such as Hopkins and NOVA scienceNOW on PBS. After spending some of his teenage years working with relatives as a farm laborer in the United States, he tried twice to enter the country on his own. The first time, he was turned back just north of



Dr. Alfredo Quinones-Hinojosa

Courtesy Credit:
Johns Hopkins Medicine

the border fence that he had jumped. He made it across the second time and rejoined his relatives.

While continuing to work manual labor jobs, he attended community college in California. Encouraged by family and friends, he applied to prestigious U.S. universities and received a scholarship from the University of California, Berkeley, from which he graduated with honors. He went to medical school at Harvard University, graduating cum laude in 1999.

In 2005, he came to the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine as an assistant professor of surgery specializing in brain cancer and pituitary tumors, and by 2012 he had become a full professor.

When Quinones-Hinojosa is not in the operating room, he is teaching or working in his laboratory, which has been funded by the National Institutes of Health since 2006.

Quinones-Hinojosa focuses on the surgical treatment of complex primary and metastatic brain tumors, with an emphasis on motor and speech mapping during surgery, as well as the treatment of patients with pituitary and skull base tumors using minimally invasive surgical approaches.

Author discovers how to be ‘brave in a new world’

By Stacy M. Brown

It's a day that Yvonne Broady will never forget. On January 24, 2009, her beloved husband Clarence Cortez Loftin III, a distinguished venture capitalist and educator succumbed to pancreatic cancer sending her into deep depression and loneliness.

Broady says she scoured bookstores and other means to find solutions to the various emotions that she was going through, but none surfaced.

As she navigated her way through such a dark time, Broady knew she was entering into a new phase, a new world in which she had to be brave.

“The prospect of waking up every day and being faced with the same reality was very exhausting to me and I really wanted this to be over,” she said. “At night, I would go to bed and pull the covers over my head and hope that I would sleep for several hours, only to be met with the same reality of another day without my Chuck.”

A former art teacher, Broady went to work on a book about her experience with the goal of helping others dealing with similar trauma.

Earlier this year, she released the novel, “Brave in a New World: A Guide to Grieving the Loss of a Spouse,” in which she shares her journey through the grief process. Broady said while her husband’s anguish and pain from his battle with cancer had ended, hers had just begun.

“This book is about being brave and courageous in a brand-new world. This is not meant to be a definitive guide on how to grieve, but I hope my experience will assist those who are grieving the loss of a spouse by illustrating what can be expected as one embarks on a grieving journey,” Broady said. “After years of marriage, no matter how few or how many, it is up to the grieving spouse to re-create a life for her or himself. I hope this book helps to make that task easier.”

Through personal examples, she illustrates the new world that the death of a

**brave in
a new world**

A Guide to Grieving the Loss of a Spouse

YVONNE BROADY

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spouse brings and she discusses the steps she took to handle the emotional pain.

Broady narrates the effects of the grieving process, which she says is a long and arduous course, and the only one who can get through it is the one who is left—the bereaved spouse.

“People don’t understand that because a person has a terminal illness it doesn’t mean they’ve given up,” she said. “They might say that you knew [death] was going to happen, but in our case, Chuck

and I decided that we were going to be hopeful and we hoped for a miracle.”

She says after her husband’s diagnosis, she went to the World Trade Center in New York to put in her retirement papers.

“I didn’t get the opportunity to think about being retired and here I was at—of all places—the World Trade Center. The depression was already real because you’re supposed to be feeling elated but look where I was, and look at why I was putting in my papers,” Broady said.

Further, she says her husband insisted



Yvonne Broady
Courtesy Photos

on watching news coverage of the 2008 presidential election because there was “no way he was going to miss history seeing the first black president elected.”

He died shortly after the inauguration of Barack Obama.

“I just refused to believe he was going to pass away,” Broady said. “I went through so many emotions. I had emotional issues like anxiety, claustrophobia and I had a therapist come to my house and then I went into a bereavement group and attended church an extra day during the week.”

Over time, Broady says she began to come back to life and then decided to write the book. “I really gained the strength to know that I had the power to recreate and rebuild my life alone.”

Broady said she is now hopeful and enthusiastic about her life and believes her book can be a tool to help others.

“I want people reading this book to know that what they’re feeling is normal and they can get through this experience,” she said. “There is no time expectation. You want to reach that pinhole of light and then eventually that reawakening, but the fact that you start out feeling numb, that’s natural.”

“Brave in a New World: A Guide to Grieving the Loss of a Spouse,” is available for sale at: amazon.com; barnesandnoble.com or www.yvonnebroady.com.

Grief is in two parts. The first is loss. The second is the remaking of life. —Anne Roiphe

Indie Soul Book Review: 'Lil' V Walks Home from School' by Vonnya Pettigrew

By Phinesse Demps

This is definitely the year for independent authors and especially authors of children's books. Vonnya Pittigrew has written a very necessary book for parents of small children who are attending school.

"The story of Lil' V is loosely based off my experiences at school," said Pettigrew. "The character is me. The school in the book is where I attended. I wanted to write books, this being my first in a series, dealing with the issues that kids go through especially in this day and time. I want to inspire dialogue between the parents and their child."

"Lil' V Walks Home From School" does just that. Lil' V is ready to walk home from school, but her parents give her rules and instructions. One of the aspects of the book I like is that the family is multi-racial which is the case in today's society. The illustrations are by Alex T. Lee and they are awesome. Add this to your child's summer reading and be sure to follow up with a discussion.



Vonnya Pittigrew, author of *Lil' V Walks Home From School*.

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Netflix brings Marvel's Daredevil to streaming viewers

By Phinesse Demps

This review is strictly for my Super Hero geeks and comic nerds, like us here at Indie Soul. One of the all-time great comic book characters finally gets a real storyline, plot, and action courtesy of the folks at Marvel Productions, and the streaming service, Netflix. "Daredevil" made its debut on April 10th and it is captivating! Netflix continues to lead the way in streaming original content ("House of Cards" and "Orange is the New Black" are also Netflix shows).

The storyline? Lawyer-by-day Matt Murdock uses his heightened senses from being blinded as a young boy to fight crime at night on the streets of New York City's Hell's Kitchen neighborhood as Daredevil. Unlike the Daredevil movie that starred Ben Affleck and Jennifer Garner, that was lighter and sort of campy, this reboot, is darker with a better storyline and multiple stories with



each character having a story within the story. The casting was superb with Charlie Cox (Stardust, HBO's Boardwalk Empire), as Daredevil; Vincent D'Onofrio (Law & Order: Criminal Intent) as Wilson Fisk; Vondie Curtis-Hall (Sugar Hill, Crooklyn, Drop Squad, Eve's Bayou, Chicago Hope) as Ben Urich, newspaper reporter; and Rosario Dawson (Top Five, Men In Black II, Seven Pounds) as Claire Temple.

"Daredevil" is definitely one to watch as one of four planned Marvel releases on Netflix. I Can't wait for "Luke Cage," a black Marvel super hero, which will star Mike Colter, coming soon to Netflix.

Come see how SU is as distinctive as you!



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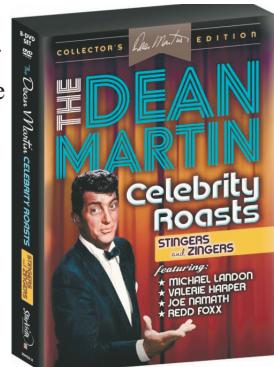
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Indie Soul Review: The Dean Martin Celebrity Roasts

By Phinesse Demps

The Comedy Channel recently had a celebrity roast of Justin Bieber. Why they chose Justin Bieber? Who knows! Today's roast is usually crass and rude. There have been some good ones, but nothing like the shows of the past. Perhaps today's roasters and jesters need to take a look back and at the "godfather" of the celebrity roast, Mr. Dean Martin.



StarVista Entertainment has released all 54 episodes of the of The Dean Martin Celebrity Roasts. From 1973-1984 Dean Martin presented the most entertaining, tears in your eyes, roasts of some the best stars in the business and not a soul was safe. Guest like Redd Foxx (Sanford and Son), Ted Knight (Love Boat), Wilt Chamberlain (Pro Basketball Player), Hank Aaron (Pro Baseball Player), Lucille Ball, Bob

Newhart, Mr. T and comedian Nipsey Russell, just to name a few.

If you are into comedy and classic comedy at that, this is one collection of some of the best comedic moments ever assembled on television. The comedy was real, the atmosphere was real, and the respect and love everyone had for each other was truly genuine.

More importantly, Dean Martin was the man when it came to this event. There are some unforgettable scenes and not enough space in the newspaper to list, but as we roll up on summer or on one of those Friday and Saturday evenings and nothing is on TV, pop in this DVD and without a doubt, these episodes will surely keep you entertained. The DVD collection was just released on April 14, 2015 and is available where DVD's are sold or visit: www.timelife.com



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Indie Soul Review: Stevie Wonder's Songs in the Key of Life Tour



Stevie Wonder performed at Royal Farms Arena in Baltimore on Thursday, April 9, 2015 as part of his "Songs in the Key of Life" tour.

Photo Credit: Phinesse Demps

By Phinesse Demps

Many of us have a list of things that we want to accomplish during our lifetime—seeing Stevie Wonder perform is on my list. On Thursday, April 9, 2015, I had the opportunity to do just that here in Baltimore at the Royal Farms Arena.

In town to perform music from the classic and brilliantly crafted albums "Songs in the Key of Life," Wonder had a packed and diverse audience up dancing, singing, and reminiscing. There was even a couple who got engaged at the show. That's the power of music. That's the power of Stevie Wonder. If you were present, you would swear you were listening to a recording because Stevie sounds that awesome live. Wonder was his very charismatic, charming, and fun

self. He is about taking you on a musical journey with love, pride, emotion, and realism.

The year was 1976 when "Songs in the Key of Life" was released. The key to the show wasn't the music, but it is what Mr. Wonder shared with the audience before beginning. Taking a shining moment to speak on racism and hatred he said, "If you are hating on someone for being different for the color of your skin, their beliefs, or whatever it is, you are blocking your blessings from God." That was a powerful moment! Check our Facebook Page: The Baltimore Times, for a few photos from the show.

The Nile Project comes to Maryland

By Stacy M. Brown

National Public Radio says the Nile Project is producing harmony in a divided region while the New York Times calls euphoric the performance that, to a traditionalist, looks like an ungainly mélange: a gathering of musicians from the 11 countries of the Nile basin, playing instruments that weren't made to share a stage or a song.

Founded on the belief that music can change perceptions and inspire action, The Nile Project brings together 27 musicians from the 11 countries along the Nile to encourage dialogue about sustainability in the Nile basin.

The project's residency at the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center culminates in a concert in the center's Dekelboum Concert Hall on Sunday, April 26, 2015 at 7 p.m.

Officials said in a news release that the residency will also include three discussion panels, a lunch discussion at the University of Maryland on "Female Perspectives on the Nile," a creative dialogue on the "Role of Musicians in Peace and Environmental Movements," which will be held on Monday, April 27, 2015 at 6:45 p.m. in the Baird Auditorium of the Smithsonian National Museum of History in Washington—and a panel on "Crowd Sourcing Solutions for a Sustainable Nile Basin at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, April 28 in the Leah M. Smith Lecture Hall at the Clarice.

"I was trying to be part of this new thing that's happening in Egypt," said Mina Girgis, an ethnomusicologist and the president and CEO of the Nile Project. "That's when I started talking to a friend of mine about starting a project together, a musical project that would bring together musicians from all over the Nile countries."

He said while visiting San Francisco, a friend who is a Japanese accordion player, invited him to watch him perform with an Ethiopian folk band.

"It was amazing," Girgis said. "I was amazed by the music and I was amazed by my own ignorance of music because Ethiopians are on the same river as we are in Egypt, and yet I'd never been exposed to their music or their culture."

From that point, Girgis says he realized that the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam was being constructed and conflict bubbled across the African continent.

He said he created the Nile Project as a way to spark positive discussion and expose individuals to various cultures while also encouraging everyone to understand that the countries situated along the Nile are part of one ecosystem.

"It was the kind of conflict that needed a solution, one that everyone could embrace," Girgis said. "Everyone always talked about the water, so we had to change the conversation and so we made it about music and we got all of these musicians together and I think it has really helped to make a difference."

Now, they are bringing the musicians and others to Maryland as part of an American tour that Girgis hopes



Created by Ethiopian-American singer Meklit Hadero and Egyptian ethnomusicologist Mina Girgis, the Nile Project is meant to pave the way, through music, for greater cooperation among Nile nations on critical issues involving the river.

Courtesy Photo by Peter Stanley

will shed light on the Nile and on togetherness.

The Nile Project is an education and development initiative that uses music to help find additional ways in which the water along the Nile can peacefully be shared. With periodic two-week residencies at institutions and universities like in Maryland, musicians from a variety of Nile basin countries gather to teach each other their musical styles.

The musicians collaborate to compose songs that speak to their relationship with the Nile and with each other, combining a variety of languages, tonal systems and rhythmic systems.

A powerful pan-Nile percussion section drives this orchestra of Ethiopian masenko and saxophone, Egyptian ney, oud, violin, simsimiya and tanbura, and Ugandan adungu, bass guitar and six vocalists, including Dina El Wedidi from Egypt, sing in their native tongue.

"It's so much fun to be a part of this and I've been able to learn a lot," El Wedidi said.

The combination of instruments prove to be an impor-



Mina Girgis (center) during Nile Projects scouting trip in May, 2012 Feluka Musical Encounter.

Courtesy Photo/Nile Project

tant element in the water conversation that's highlighted and necessary, Girgis said. "It's a conversation that is not defined by one person's priorities," he said. "It's an opportunity for everyone to voice their concerns."

Tickets for the performance at the Clarice Smith Center are \$25, \$20 and \$10 and can be purchased by calling 301-405-2787 or online at www.theclarice.umd.edu

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For more information, contact Erica Holmes at 443-263-1800 or email: holmes@maamc.org or visit the museum's website: www.AfricanAmericanCulture.org.

Encore Chorale holds Summer Camp for Singers



Encore Corale will hold two singing summer camps for older adults this year. The first Encore Summer Choral Institute takes place at Washington College in Chestertown, Maryland from June 4 to 18, 2015; and the second at Chautauqua Institute in Chautauqua, New York from August 30-September 4, 2015. For more information, call Encore at 301-261-5747 or email info@encorecreativity.org. Program details and registration forms are available online at www.encorecreativity.org.

Courtesy Photo

Baltimore— Registration is now open for Encore Chorale's Summer Choral Institutes offering "singing summer camp" for older adults. The Institutes are sponsored by Encore Creativity for Older Adults, the nation's largest choral singing program for adults 55 plus. The institutes, now in their eighth year, will attract adult students from all over the country, at all levels of vocal experience, for an exciting week of intensive choral music study.

The Encore Choral Institute at Washington College in Chestertown, Maryland will run from June 14-18 and is led by Encore founder and conductor Jeanne Kelly, and Stephen Harouff, music director of Towson Presbyterian Church and the Towson Encore Chorale. Singers have a full day starting with stretch/Yoga class and followed by a full choral rehearsal. After lunch singers will choose from a vocal technique class, a choral sectional, or free time. An afternoon choral rehearsal will follow. Repertoire will include spirituals, oratorio selections, songs from the American Song Book and Broadway. Singers may sit for rehearsals and performance. The program will culminate in a free grand finale performance on Thursday, June 18 for friends, family and the public in the Daniel Z. Gibson Center for Performing Arts on the Washington College campus.

Encore Chorale returns to the famed Chautauqua Institution in Chautauqua NY from August 30-September 4, 2015. The Choral Institute will be conducted by Jeanne Kelly, founder and Executive Director of Encore Chorale, and Jeffrey Dokken, an accomplished composer and the conductor of the Symphony Orchestra of Northern Virginia and its Chorale, as well as the Alexandria and Leisure World Encore Chorales. The repertoire will include spirituals, oratorio selections, songs from the American Songbook and Broadway favorites. Morning and afternoon rehearsals as well as sectionals and vocal technique classes will offer singers opportunities to improve their skills, and a grand finale performance on Friday, September 4, will be open to the Chautauqua community.

Participant program fees include all classes, materials, accommodations on site, and meals. Commuter students are welcome at both locations and fees adjusted accordingly. Non-participating spouses or guests are also welcome and their fees include shared accommodations with the singer, and meals with the program participants. Institute participants need not be current Encore singers. The registration deadline for the Washington College program is May 15, and for the Chautauqua program on August 1, 2015.

For more information and pricing, call Encore at 301-261-5747 or email info@encorecreativity.org. Program details and registration forms are available online at www.encorecreativity.org.

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