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#PaintingHerstory



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Years of Women's
Basketball



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Greetings from the Mayor

Brandon M. Scott
Mayor of Baltimore



On behalf of the people of Baltimore, I am delighted to welcome you to the Food Lion 2025 Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) Men's and Women's Championship Basketball Tournament. This week, thousands of people will visit Baltimore for five action-packed days of basketball, entertainment, and networking.

The Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association is the nation's oldest historically Black athletic conference, and this year marks the 80th anniversary of the Men's tournament, 50th anniversary of the Women's Championship and the CIAA's 5th year in Baltimore. You are sure to enjoy the 26 basketball showdowns, Fan Fest, step shows, parties, Career Expo, Education Day, A-list performances, and more.

The CIAA is one of the most popular college basketball tournaments and one of the nation's top ranking sporting events. This year, the CIAA and Visit Baltimore have worked together to bring amazing HBCU sports, educational programming, and scholarships for the benefit of the community and student-athletes.

Thank you for joining us for what promises to be a memorable celebration of HBCU culture, academic excellence, athleticism and community.

In service,

Brandon M. Scott
Mayor
City of Baltimore

Welcome to
Charm City



STATE OF MARYLAND

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR



Dear Friends,

Welcome to Charm City!

Maryland is honored to be part of the CIAA Tournament's legacy of excellence in athletics and education. This year, we are especially honored to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the CIAA Women's Tournament. Baltimore City inspires innovation and is a driving force behind Maryland's future—we are proud to welcome student-athletes, coaches, parents and spectators to experience the best our city has to offer.

I want to give a special shoutout to our home team, the Bowie State University Bulldogs. Founded in 1865, Bowie State is the oldest HBCU in Maryland and one of the oldest HBCUs in the country. On behalf of all Marylanders, we wish both the men's and women's teams the best of luck on their journey to take home the CIAA title.

We are incredibly grateful to CIAA for their partnership over the years and for bringing their family to Maryland for the 2025 CIAA Basketball Tournament.

Wishing all of this year's competitors the best of luck.

Sincerely,

A blue ink signature of Wes Moore.

Maryland Governor
Wes Moore

Greetings

Aminta H. Breaux, Ph.D.

President, Bowie State University



Greetings and Welcome to the 2025 CIAA Tournament!

As chair of the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) Board of Directors and president of Bowie State University, the host institution for the CIAA Tournament, I take great pleasure in welcoming basketball fans and supporters back to Baltimore to cheer on the student-athletes from our member institutions competing throughout the week.

We are excited to return to Charm City for our fourth year and to bring the legion of fans to watch the games, patronize local businesses, and participate in the educational programs created to benefit our youth, our next generation of leaders.

The CIAA Tournament allows our student athletes to display their skills on the court at the CFG Arena, and to introduce audiences to the academic excellence of our historic institutions. This year also marks the 50th Anniversary of women's basketball in the CIAA. We are looking forward to honoring all the athletes who have contributed to creating history for women in basketball.

For Bowie State University, the oldest Historically Black College and University (HBCU) in the state of Maryland, returning to Baltimore is especially meaningful this year. 160 years ago, Bowie State was founded in the basement of a church located at the corner of Calvert and Saratoga Streets. Today BSU is home to more than 6300 students and growing because of essential support provided to HBCUs.

I encourage you to take advantage of everything Baltimore and the CIAA Tournament have to offer. Participating in official CIAA activities helps fund scholarships, provides opportunities for students at each member institution, and ensures our CIAA colleges and universities will continue to thrive as anchor institutions in our communities. Enjoy the Tournament and thank you for continued support of the CIAA and our students!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aminta H. Breaux".

Aminta H. Breaux, Ph.D.
President

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Welcome to Baltimore for the 2025 CIAA Tournament!

On behalf of Visit Baltimore, we are honored to welcome the 2025 Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) Men's and Women's Basketball Championship Tournament to Baltimore. We are excited to continue shining a spotlight on Black excellence, the achievements of HBCUs, and the vibrant culture of Baltimore.

This year's tournament is bigger and better than ever, with new ways to experience the city and connect with the rich history and community spirit that make Baltimore special.

- For the first time, Maryland residents in select zip codes can score \$50 tickets for Championship Saturday—an incredible opportunity to witness two thrilling games at one of the most exciting sessions of the tournament.
- Beyond the games, this week is packed with enriching events, including a Health and Mental Wellness Forum, the Money Moves Financial Summit, the Tech Summit and the Youth Sports Clinic.
- Back for its fourth year, the Black-Owned Restaurant Tour runs from February 23 – March 2 and highlights 16+ incredible Black-owned restaurants offering specialty menus and curated events throughout the week. From soul food to fine dining, this is your chance to explore Baltimore's thriving Black culinary scene.
- Be sure to check out special tournament-inspired activations at Harborplace and explore Baltimore's Black-owned businesses in the BOOST Boutique, which are at the heart of our city's culture and transformation.

As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Women's games and the 80th anniversary of the Championship Tournament, we invite you to experience all that Baltimore has to offer. Whether you're here for the basketball, the culture, the food, or the community—there's something for everyone. For more information, visit Baltimore.org/CIAA.

Enjoy the games, explore the city, and let's make this the best CIAA Tournament yet!

Al Hutchinson

Al Hutchinson
President & CEO
Visit Baltimore


CIAA MEN'S & WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

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*Josh Wallace, Sports Management major from Detroit Michigan
Photo Credits: Kaiyon Courtney of Omarri Photography*

Josh Wallace | 3-Point Play: Mastering Academics, Sports and Entrepreneurship

By Josh Wallace

I'm Josh Wallace, a senior Sports Management major from Detroit, Michigan, and a proud member of the Livingstone College men's basketball team. Over the past four years as a student-athlete, I've worked to master my own "3-point play": balancing academics, excelling in sports, and pursuing entrepreneurship.

Off the court, I am the founder of **Seneca Visions Media**, a digital marketing company, and I also own a photography business called **OkayJwall**. My passion for photography and videography began when I noticed my own videos and photos often lacked a creative touch. Recognizing my unique eye for storytelling, I decided to take the leap and start my own ventures.

Since launching Seneca Visions Media, I have produced two short films, including one released on Valentine's Day, and a documentary spotlighting several North Carolina HBCUs—Livingstone College, Winston-Salem State University, Shaw University, North Carolina Central University, and North Carolina A&T State University.

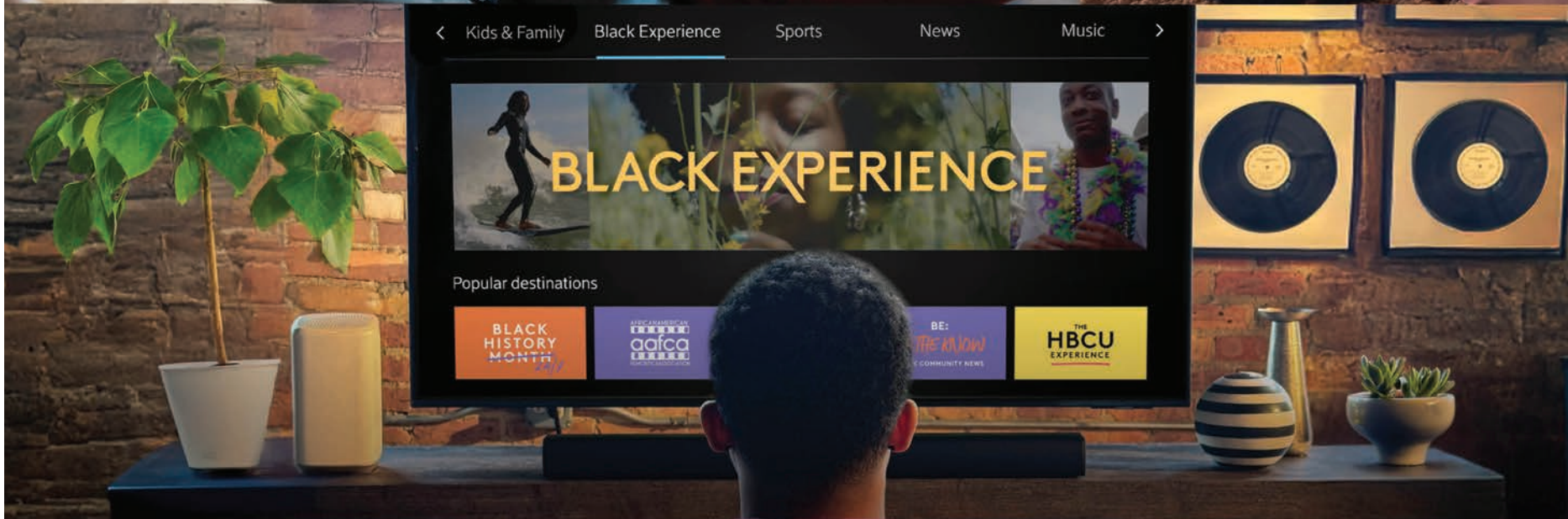
This documentary is currently available on our YouTube channel. Beyond these projects, we focus on marketing and creating ads for Black-owned businesses throughout North Carolina.

I am excited to continue my journey, both on the basketball court and behind the camera, showcasing my passion for creativity and community engagement. Connect with **Seneca Visions Media** on all social media platforms to follow our work and stay updated on our latest projects.



On the set: Josh Wallace's company, Seneca Visions Media filming a segment for a series in May 2024. Follow his company @SenecaVisionsMedia on IG | Photo Credit: Instagram

Check out Josh Wallace's short films at Creatively Black Baltimore, 301 Light Street, 2nd Floor, Light Street Pavilion, Baltimore Inner Harbor, Wednesday, February 26, through March 1, 2025. Check out other CIAA 2025 activities and activations as part of Hoops & Happenings, The Baltimore Inner Harbor, Pratt and Light Street Pavilions.



BLACK HISTORY MONTH IS FOR ALL OF US.

The genius, pride, wisdom, and truth of Black stories are what continue to inspire more than just Black audiences – they touch us all. This Black History Month, everyone can enjoy a rich variety of curated movies, series, documentaries, and specials on the Black Experience on Xfinity.

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Since returning to Baltimore in 2022, the CIAA Basketball Tournament has ranked among the highest attended and most popular sporting events in town, attracting thousands of supporters from all over the U.S. The weeklong competition returns Feb. 25 to March 1 in downtown Baltimore. Photo Credit CIAA

Excitement Awaits as CIAA Basketball Tournament 2025 Approaches

By Demetrius Dillard

Along with the likes of Preakness and the Maryland Cycling Classic, the CIAA Basketball Tournament has grown to become a cherished sporting event since its recent return to Baltimore City, drawing overwhelming support from local residents, HBCU alumni and sports enthusiasts.

This year's tournament, held Feb. 25 to March 1 at CFG Bank Arena, will look slightly different than it has in recent years and will be particularly special.

Themed “#PaintHerStory,” the upcoming tournament will mark the 50th anniversary of the women's basketball tournament, which began in 1975. The entire tournament week will be centered round highlighting the progress, contributions and achievements of women in the CIAA.

“This year marks a monumental milestone for the CIAA and women's sports as we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Women's Basketball Tournament and honor the trailblazing athletes who have shaped its legacy,” CIAA Commissioner Jacqie McWilliams Parker said.

“The Food Lion CIAA Men's & Women's Basketball Tournament is more than a competition, it is a testament to the hard work of our member institutions, the resilience of our student-athletes, and the vibrant culture of our HBCUs and our community.

Thanks to the unwavering support of partners like Food Lion, Under Armour, ESPN, we remain committed to creating opportunities, expanding access and inspiring the next generation of leaders on and off the court.”

As usual, the CIAA, which is the nation's oldest HBCU athletic conference, will be a culmination of Black History Month while serving as the “precursor” to March Madness. Students, alumni and supporters of the conference's 13-member institutions are expected to be in attendance.

Tournament week festivities officially begin Feb. 22 when the Middle Branch Recreation and Wellness Center hosts a youth clinic. The following week or so will be loaded with family-friendly activities, seminars, educational events, meaningful initiatives and its fair share of entertainment.

Along with Bowie State women's basketball Coach Shadae Swan, the tournament will welcome 16 student-athletes from Baltimore City. This totals the most local participants involved in the tournament since the event returned to Baltimore in person in 2022.

Once again, the 22 games played during an action-packed week will be broadcasted on ESPN+ while championship games on March 1 will appear on ESPNU.

In 2024, the Lincoln men's basketball team won a hard-fought conference title over Fayetteville State, 54-51, avenging themselves of a CIAA championship loss the year prior when they fell to Winston-Salem State. The Lions sit atop the Northern Division standings with a 10-2 conference record (as of Feb. 11) and look to reclaim the conference crown in a few weeks.

On the women's side, Fayetteville State was victorious after securing a slim 64-59 over Elizabeth City State. The Broncos are in a favorable position (as of Feb. 11) with the No. 1 seed in the Southern Division standings. Through 22 games so far, they are 15-7 overall and 10-3 against CIAA opponents.

As aforementioned, this year's tournament will look different. Here's how:

- Former NBA player and ACC Player of the Year Julius Hodge will lead the Lincoln men's basketball team as the program's new head coach. Hodge comes to Lincoln after spending the last three seasons as an assistant coach at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.
- The Winston-Salem State men's basketball program welcomed first-year Head Coach Corey Thompson. He replaces former Head Coach Theo Pinson Jr., who led the Rams to a 2023 CIAA Tournament title.
- Perhaps the most noticeable change of this year's tournament is the suspension of St. Augustine's athletics programs. This means the men's and women's basketball teams will not be competing in the tournament. The CIAA made the announcement last fall after the conference's board of directors concluded that St. Augustine's failed “to meet conference compliance requirements, in addition to the concerns regarding SAU's continued challenges to meet NCAA sports sponsorship and scheduling requirements for the 2024-25 season.”

Last year, the tournament generated an economic impact of \$32.5 million, which supported 1,315 part-time and full-time jobs and generated \$3.1 million in state and local taxes. Visit Baltimore President and CEO Al Hutchinson expects this year's tournament to exceed those numbers. “The CIAA Tournament is more than just basketball—it's a week-long celebration of Black excellence, HBCU pride, and community,” Hutchinson said.

“We are thrilled to continue our partnership with the CIAA, bringing new and enhanced experiences for fans to enjoy. From the excitement of championship games to community events showcasing Baltimore's rich Black history and vibrant culture, we invite both visiting and local fans to take part in this unforgettable week.” Due to the efforts of CIAA officials, sponsors, partners, local business leaders and elected officials, the soon-approaching CIAA Basketball Tournament is expected to bring a week of exhilarating basketball, culture and community to Baltimore.

Local Ties



From Left to Right: Bowie State guard Caleb Johnson is now in his senior season. (Courtesy of Bowie State University Athletics.) | Coach Shadae Swan is in her ninth season as head of the women's basketball program at Bowie State. (Courtesy of Bowie State University Athletics.) | Livingstone senior guard Jamal Cannady Jr. is one of the CIAA's top scorers. (Courtesy of Livingstone College Athletics.)

CIAA Tournament to Welcome Nearly a Dozen and a Half Participants from the Area

By Demetrius Dillard

This year's CIAA Basketball Tournament will feature a record number of local student-athletes since the weekly event has returned to Baltimore.

In addition to the 17 participants from Baltimore City, the tournament will feature numerous others from around the region – including Baltimore, Howard, Anne Arundel and Prince George's counties – who will likely attract support from family, friends, old teammates and coaches.

Baltimore's rich, storied basketball legacy has largely shaped its identity as a town. Numerous hoop legends got their start in the playgrounds, recreation centers and Boys & Girls clubs throughout the city.

Earl "The Pearl" Monroe, will remain an iconic figure in Baltimore sports history. The CIAA legend ranks among the greatest HBCU athletes of all time, making history as the highest HBCU NBA draft selection ever. After a superb run at Winston-Salem State, Monroe was drafted second overall to the Baltimore Bullets in 1967.

Other recognizable names who have ties to Baltimore and the CIAA include venture capital executive Stanley Tucker (Morgan State); former Harlem Globetrotter and nonprofit leader Choo Smith (Bowie State); Baltimore City College head basketball coach Omarr Smith (Bowie State); former Harlem Wizard Arthur Smith (Bowie State); and Forest Park High School Athletic Director Jermaine Dunn (Virginia State).

Not to mention, Poly girls basketball coach Kendall Peace-Able attended Lincoln University and City College Athletic Director Rolynda Contee was an athlete during her time at Virginia State. Simply put, the CIAA has produced an abundance of influential figures who have made their marks on and off the hardwood.

An awaited return to Baltimore is more than a homecoming affair for CIAA participants with local

ties – it will be a chance to register an impressive showing in front of relatives and friends in a quest to keep their respective team's postseason hopes alive.

Here are the 17 participants featured in this year's tournament who are from Baltimore:

Women's basketball

- **Coach Shadae Swan (Bowie State):** The Baltimore native and former St. Frances standout is back for her ninth season as head of the Bowie State women's basketball program. She has led the Bulldogs to a favorable second-place ranking in the conference standings (stats good as of Feb. 10) with a 16-8 overall record. The Bulldogs are 10-2 against CIAA opponents and have won four straight. As the tournament approaches, Swan and the Bulldogs hope to capture the program's first conference championship since 1999.

Local Ties Continued

- **Destiny Ryles (Bowie State):** A two-sport athlete in high school, the 5-foot-3 guard comes from St. Paul's School for Girls, where she led the girls basketball team to multiple IAAM conference titles before starring at the University of the District of Columbia. Through 22 games, the senior is recording a team-high 18.2 points per game to go with 4.3 rebounds and 3.5 assists. She will play a pivotal role for BSU in her return home to CFG Bank Arena.
- **Kristin Sterling (Bowie State):** The 5-foot-10 forward is a newcomer to the program who most recently competed for N.C. A&T, a well-known HBCU that was once part of the MEAC. In high school, she earned numerous honors as a standout for the Pikesville High School girls basketball program. So far, she's averaging about three points and 2.6 boards in 14 minutes of action per contest.
- **Chaniya Taylor (Bowie State):** The 6-foot-1 freshman has seen limited minutes so far this season. While at Forest Park High School, she was a crucial piece to the team's success. Taylor also played volleyball at Forest Park.
- **Kaziah Akinniyi (Lincoln):** Akinniyi followed in the same footsteps as Poly girls basketball coach Kendall Peace-Able, who also attended Lincoln. The 5-foot-9 guard is a third-year player in the program, and her role has increased considerably since last season. As of Feb. 10, she's averaging 5.6 points and about two rebounds. Before her Lincoln career, Akinniyi contributed to Poly's MPSSAA 3A state championship run in 2022.
- **Riley Holliday (Lincoln):** The sophomore returner is looking to contribute to the Lions' postseason run when she returns to her hometown. Holliday, a 6-foot-2 forward, competed alongside Akinniyi at Poly.
- **Ariana Makumi (Lincoln):** Makumi, a freshman, also played for the Poly girls basketball team. She recorded a season-high 12 points in 30 minutes of action against Johnson C. Smith on Nov. 17. Makumi will likely serve a pivotal role come tournament week, considering she's started 13 of 14 games for Lincoln.
- **Maya Gray (Livingstone):** The freshman guard has contributed in spots throughout the season, recording seven points against Mansfield and USC Aiken earlier this season. Gray was part of the Western High School girls basketball dynasty under Coach Tasha Townsend.



Sterling: Kristin Sterling transferred to Bowie State from N.C. A&T. (Courtesy of Bowie State University Athletics.)



Ryles: Destiny Ryles is tied as the second-leading scorer in the CIAA so far this season. (Courtesy of Bowie State University Athletics.)



Chaniya Taylor is a freshman forward at BSU. (Courtesy of Bowie State University Athletics.)

Local Ties Continued

Men's basketball

- **Caleb Johnson (Bowie State):** Johnson is in his senior season with the Bulldogs, who are 14-10 overall (as of Feb. 10). In past seasons, the 6-foot-2 guard has been one of the team's primary leaders. Though his scoring averages are down this year, Johnson is often relied upon to lead and control the tempo of the game. For instance, he's just coming off a 27-point performance that powered Bowie to a win over Bluefield State on Feb. 1. Johnson is a graduate of Archbishop Curley, which is where he played high school ball.
- **Jordan Downs (Bowie State):** Downs is a 6-foot-4 freshman who comes from basketball powerhouse St. Frances Academy in East Baltimore. He helped lead the Panthers to a 2024 Baltimore Catholic League title before bringing his talents to Bowie. Downs recorded five points and three steals at Shippensburg on Dec. 1, 2024.
- **Tyler Buckhanon (Bowie State):** The third-year player has contributed in spurts for the Bulldogs with a slightly expanded role from last season. The 6-foot-9 junior earned several honors as a standout at Bath County High School in Kentucky and is seeing a little more playing time this season for BSU.
- **Detwan Montague (Bowie State):** A former standout at St. Frances Academy and Springdale Prep in Carroll County, the 6-foot-8 Montague is a redshirt junior forward. Montague's role has been limited this season, but his post presence could be useful for the Bulldogs during the tournament, depending on matchups and several other factors.
- **Che Evans (Virginia Union):** Evans made his way to a CIAA program after bouncing around a few Division I programs, including San Diego State, UTEP and USC Upstate. The 6-foot-7 forward is tallying about nine points per game for the Panthers so far as one of the main contributors on the team. Before college, he led Dulaney High School (Baltimore County) to an MPSSAA 4A North regional title after averaging 20.5 points, eight rebounds and six assists his junior season. He netted 16 points at UDC last November.
- **Jamal Cannady Jr. (Livingstone):** Cannady, a former star at Dunbar and New Era Academy, also played for Trevecca Nazarene and Bryn Athyn at the collegiate level before transferring to Livingstone this season, where he is one of the club's premier talents. Cannady, a 6-foot-1 senior, is a top-five scorer in the conference, averaging 16.5 points per game on 41 percent shooting from the field. He hopes to bring his offensive prowess to the CIAA tournament as Livingstone strives to stay alive in the postseason.

The 2025 CIAA Basketball Tournament tips off on February 25, 2025 at CFG Arena in downtown Baltimore. The conference will release the tournament brackets within the next few weeks as teams conclude the regular season.



Buckhanon: Tyler Buckhanon is a 6-foot-9 junior forward with the Bowie State men's basketball program. (Courtesy of Bowie State University Athletics.)



Donovan Leak is a junior guard at Livingstone. (Courtesy of Livingstone College Athletics.)



Montague: Bowie State's Detwan Montague is a redshirt junior forward. (Courtesy of Bowie State University Athletics.)


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Baltimore's Black Artist Women's Tribute



(First Row) Aisha Butler, Photographer; Unique Robinson, Spoken Word Artist, Author and Professor (Second Row) Yemonja Smalls, Mixed Media Artist; Tamara Payne, Curator, Interdisciplinary Artist; Linnea Poole, Art Practitioner (Third Row) Alma Roberts, Abstract Expressionist Artist; and Espi Frazier, Visual/Fiber Artist | Photo Credit: Aisha Butler

A Local Tribute to 50 Years of CIAA Women's Basketball

By Tamara Payne

Interdisciplinary artist, professor, and curator Tamara Payne is commissioned by **Visit Baltimore** to design a space that offers ticket holders the chance to win the **Ultimate Baltimore Stay Giveaway**. The winner enjoys a two-night stay at the historic **Lord Baltimore Hotel**, just steps away from the CFG Bank Arena. The space is adorned with Baltimore-centric décor, special amenities from local makers, and a few Charm City surprises along the way.

Known for her community collaborations, Payne decides to incorporate the works of her “tribe” into this design experience. Her dynamic work explores the constructions of marginalized communities through multimedia, fashion, public installations, film, portraiture, literary art, and performance. “The idea of incorporating other Black women artists in Baltimore is never a second thought,” she says.

Thematic elements and recurring themes throughout her work include Black women, relationship building, the importance of creating safe spaces for communal healing practices, and other issues that Black women deem significant. “I am excited to celebrate 50 years of women in the CIAA tournament,” Payne says. “This celebration aligns directly with my work.”

She explains, “The field of art is predominantly male-dominated, and women—particularly Black women—have far fewer opportunities. We need more diversity and inclusion in the design and art world. The lack of Black designers and art spaces motivates my work.”

Tamara Payne curates the design space in the historic Lord Baltimore Hotel. The room features works by several Black women artists from Baltimore, showcasing the city’s thriving artistic talent and celebrating 50 years of CIAA women’s basketball in a vibrant, creative way.



Fully upholstered curated African textile headboard with wings.
Photo Credit: Tamara Payne



Custom Lamp from Dear Black Girl: You are the Blueprint Portrait Series. Pictured on lamp shade is Mrs. Tonette Harris.
Photo Credit: Tamara Payne

Participating Artists:

- Aisha Butler, Photographer
- Jamine Chandler, Fashion Designer
- Espi Frazier, Visual/Fiber Artist
- Nia June, Dancer, Filmmaker, Poet and Educator
- Tamara TeeKay Kumoji, Author and Designer
- Abisola Yele Oladeinde, Fashion Designer
- Linnea Poole, Art Practitioner
- Unique Robinson, Spoken Word Artist, Author and Professor
- Anike Robinson, Mixed Media Artist,
- Alma Roberts, Abstract Expressionist Artist
- Yemonja Smalls, Mixed Media Artist
- Noreen Smith, Collage Artist
- Marketa Wilson, Seamstress

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CIAA Tournament Week will specifically highlight the achievements, progress and contributions of women leaders and female student-athletes as the conference celebrates the 50th year of its women's basketball tournament. Photo Credit: CIAA

'PaintingHERStory': CIAA Women's Hoops Tournament Turns 50

Milestone anniversary reflects the bridging of past and present while inspiring the future

By Demetrius Dillard

The Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association is observing a notable milestone this year as the conference's upcoming women's basketball tournament will celebrate its 50th anniversary.

Down through the years, women's hoops has faced its share of challenges. Basketball would not be the sport it has emerged to become without the women – on and off the hardwood.

Programming, initiatives and activities slated for the soon-approaching CIAA Tournament Week will be exclusively centered around paying tribute to achievements, contributions and perseverance of the athletes and icons who have shaped women's basketball.

Themed #PaintingHERStory, tournament week will feature events that particularly focus on female leaders in sports, some of which include the EmpowerHER Town Hall; Women's Empowerment Brunch; "the Mind, Body, Soul" Panel; John B. McClendon Jr. CIAA Hall of Fame Breakfast; and Ladies' Night on Championship Saturday.

The CIAA, the nation's oldest HBCU athletic conference, would not be where it is today without women's basketball. For more than a decade, the conference's commissioner has been a woman. Bowie State President Aminta Breaux also serves as chair for the CIAA board of directors. Numerous other CIAA leadership roles are held by women, in addition to the hundreds of female student-athletes who reflect the resilient spirit of past trailblazers while inspiring generations to come.

"This year marks a monumental milestone for the CIAA and women's sports as we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Women's Basketball Tournament and honor the trailblazing athletes who have shaped its legacy," CIAA Commissioner Jacqie McWilliams Parker said.

In addition, a CIAA 50th Anniversary of the Women's Tournament Committee (simply put "50th anniversary committee") has been formed to coordinate some of the aforementioned events and initiatives along with theme-focused social media campaigns.

Matisse Lee, Claflin University's senior associate director of athletics and senior woman administrator, serves as the chair of the committee.

"It's the year of the woman as the commissioner said, and I'm so grateful that we are able to put our efforts together," said Lee, who was in Baltimore a few weeks ago at the CIAA Basketball Tournament press conference.

"Like Mayor [Brandon Scott] said, I think the women's game is better. It's more exciting and I think they're playing harder, they're showing a lot of grit, so they're ready for this stage and they're ready for this moment. I think the other unique thing is our men athletes have been supportive of what we're doing... So we're just excited about getting back to Charm City for the tournament."

The 50th anniversary committee consists of student-athletes, sports information directors, senior women administrators and athletic directors, Lee pointed out. A subcommittee has been tasked with exploring and sharing historical information on the women's basketball tournament.



Matisse Lee: Matisse Lee, chair of the 50th anniversary committee, speaks during the CIAA Basketball Tournament press conference in downtown Baltimore on Jan. 23, 2025.

Photo credit: JJ McQueen

At some point during the basketball regular season, every member institution's women's basketball program has held events – whether games, banquets or otherwise – dedicated to the 50th anniversary milestone.

George Napier Barnes III, a sportswriter based in Phoenix, has thoroughly researched the history of CIAA women's basketball, tracing its origins and mind-boggling evolution. The first-ever CIAA women's basketball tournament, held in 1975 on the campus of Virginia State University, was in a different venue than the men's tournament at the Greensboro Coliseum (N.C.).

Norfolk State was crowned the champs of the women's inaugural basketball tournament and went on to win eight more conference tournament titles before leaving the CIAA for the MEAC.

Here are a few other interesting historical details that Barnes noted:

- While the CIAA men's championship game was shown on live television, it took a while before the women's championship game followed suit.
- At one point, the CIAA men's and women's championship tournament only consisted of the top four teams in the Northern and Southern divisions. Since 1983, all teams belonging to the conference have had an opportunity to compete for the CIAA crown.
- Jackie Dolberry (Hampton University) is the all-time leading scorer in the women's CIAA history. Dolberry, the only three-time player of the year, scored 2,645 points from 1985-89.
- Though the women's tournament began in 1975, the event's most outstanding player and coach wasn't featured until 1988.
- The CIAA men's basketball tournament debuted in 1946 in the nation's capital – 34 years after the conference was founded.

Barnes, a Fayetteville State University graduate, said he recalls attending the women's tournament as early as 1979, when the event was still in its infancy.

"I think it's great [for the CIAA to achieve this milestone]," Barnes said. "From what I've discovered, the (women's tournament) has gotten a lot better."

Clafin guard Janelle Sample is one of the student-athletes on the 50th anniversary committee. Sample, a Richmond, Va., native, was brought on to the committee to bring new, fresh ideas, she said.

"Although we've come a long way, we're just getting started really," said Sample, a master's student who also works at her school's athletics department.

"Fifty years may sound like a lot but at the same time, it was just right around the corner. It's just crazy to think we've been in the tournament for only 50 years, and the impact we've had over the 50 years has been incredible."

The CIAA Basketball Tournament is scheduled for Feb. 25 to March 1 at downtown Baltimore's CFG Bank Arena.



Janelle Sample, a Clafin women's basketball player, is one of the student-athletes on the 50th anniversary committee. Photo credit: Clafin University Athletics



February 26 - March 1, 2025

Location: Light Street Pavilion
301 Light Street Baltimore, MD 21202

Hoops & Happenings is transforming the Light Street Pavilion into a vibrant two-day event featuring over 30 local crafts, apparel, Harborplace's finest restaurants and dessert vendors united to showcase their best Charm City flavors. Visitors can enjoy an all-day celebration with live DJ sets, an unique Karaoke experience, mixers, art, sorority RUSH, Alumni Meet & Greet, and a curated shopping experience showcasing the best of Baltimore. Stop by the **Boost Boutique** for unique finds, **Made in Baltimore** storefront for locally made goods, show off your CIAA team spirit gear from Collegiate Luxe, get game-day ready with onsite makeup services by Celebrity Makeup artist and more!

**WED
26
FEB**

1:00PM - 7:00PM

Creatively Black Baltimore: The Largest Pop-Up Regional Exhibition of Black Art

FEATURED FILM SHORTS BY JOSH WALLACE, ATHLETE, LIVINGSTONE COLLEGE & ENTREPRENEUR & OWNER OF SENECA VISIONS MEDIA AND OKAYJWALL PHOTOGRAPHY.

LOCATION: LIGHT STREET PAVILION, 2ND FLOOR & AUDITORIUM

**WED
26
FEB**

5:00PM - 7:00PM

Virginia State University & Bowie State University Pop-up Event HOSTED BY: CUPLES TEA & VINYL & PAGES

LOCATION: RENAISSANCE HOTEL

**THU
27
FEB**

12:00PM - 6:00PM

Sorority RUSH event HOSTED BY: YELE & MILTON'S DAUGHTERS

**LOCATION: BOOST BOUTIQUE
LIGHT STREET PAVILION, ENTER THROUGH MADE IN BALTIMORE STORE**

**THU
27
FEB**

1:00PM - 7:00PM

Creatively Black Baltimore: The Largest Pop-Up Regional Exhibition of Black Art

FEATURED FILM SHORTS BY JOSH WALLACE, ATHLETE, LIVINGSTONE COLLEGE & ENTREPRENEUR & OWNER OF SENECA VISIONS MEDIA AND OKAYJWALL PHOTOGRAPHY.

LOCATION: LIGHT STREET PAVILION, 2ND FLOOR & AUDITORIUM





February 26 - March 1, 2025

Location: Light Street Pavilion
301 Light Street Baltimore, MD 21202

THU
27
FEB

4:00PM - 6:00PM

Meet & Greet with Bowie State University

HOSTED BY: CUPLES TEA & VINYL & PAGES

LOCATION: VINYL & PAGES STORE
HARBORPLACE LIGHT STREET PAVILION, 1ST FLOOR

FRI
28
FEB

10:00AM - 2:00PM

Alumni Mixer & Kiddie Breakfast

HOSTED BY: SATURDAY MORNING CAFE

LOCATION: SATURDAY MORNING CAFE AT PRATT STREET PAVILION

FRI
28
FEB

1:00PM - 7:00PM

Sorority RUSH event

HOSTED BY: YELE & MILTON'S DAUGHTERS

LOCATION: BOOST BOUTIQUE
LIGHT STREET PAVILION, ENTER THROUGH MADE IN BALTIMORE STORE

FRI
28
FEB

1:00PM - 7:00PM

Creatively Black Baltimore: The Largest Pop-Up Regional Exhibition of Black Art

FEATURED FILM SHORTS BY JOSH WALLACE, ATHLETE, LIVINGSTONE COLLEGE & ENTREPRENEUR & OWNER OF SENECA VISIONS MEDIA AND OKAYJWALL PHOTOGRAPHY.

LOCATION: LIGHT STREET PAVILION, 2ND FLOOR & AUDITORIUM

FRI
28
FEB

3:00PM - 10:00PM

Shopping with Local Vendors, DJ & Dancing, Cash Bar, VIP Champagne Lounge, Live Muralist, Karaoke, Beauty Bar

PRODUCED BY: MONESHA PHILLIPS, OWNER, PANDORA'S BOX

LOCATION: HARBORPLACE LIGHT STREET PAVILION



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SAT
1
MAR

12:00PM – 9:00PM

HOOPS & HAPPENINGS

Shopping with Local Vendors, DJ & Dancing, Cash Bar, Happy Hour, Muralist, Karaoke, and Beauty Bar

HOSTED BY: PANDORA'S BOX

LOCATION: HARBORPLACE LIGHT STREET PAVILION

SAT
1
MAR

1:00PM – 4:00PM

The Delicious Day Party on the Waterfront

ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT INDOOR/OUTDOOR BRUNCH HOSTED BY: CRUST BY MACK

LOCATION: HARBORPLACE PRATT STREET PAVILION, 2ND FLOOR

TICKET REQUIRED
SCAN TO PURCHASE



SAT
1
MAR

1:00PM – 7:00PM

Creatively Black Baltimore: The Largest Pop-Up Regional Exhibition of Black Art

FEATURED FILM SHORTS BY JOSH WALLACE, ATHLETE, LIVINGSTONE COLLEGE & ENTREPRENEUR & OWNER OF SENECA VISIONS MEDIA AND OKAYJWALL PHOTOGRAPHY.

SAT
1
MAR

3:00PM – 5:00PM

Black Women Leaders Event

HOSTED BY: YELE & BOOST BOUTIQUE

LOCATION: BOOST BOUTIQUE
LIGHT STREET PAVILION, ENTER THROUGH MADE IN BALTIMORE STORE

SAT
1
MAR

2:00PM – 4:00PM

Shawn Martinbrough Book Signing HOSTED BY: VINYL AND PAGES

6:00PM – 8:00PM

You are invited to a night of Games Gratitude

DRESS CODE: BROWN AND TAN

LOCATION: HARBORPLACE LIGHT STREET PAVILION | VINYL AND PAGES

SAT
1
MAR

3:00PM – 6:00PM

Closing Celebration: Live DJ, Tea Tasting and Giveaways

HOSTED BY: VINYL & PAGES

LOCATION: VINYL & PAGES STORE
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MARCH 1, 2025 12 - 9 PM

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A wax figure of Mary Elizabeth Bowser. A former slave, Bowser became a spy and is credited with helping the U.S. win the Civil War. (Courtesy Photo)

The Black Spy Who Infiltrated the Home of a Confederate Leader

By Ursula V. Battle

The 2025 Black History Month theme is “African Americans and Labor.” The Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) notes that the theme sets out to highlight and celebrate the potent impact of this work. In recognition of this theme, The Baltimore Times will publish articles highlighting key individuals in labor who have wax figures in their likeness at the National Great Blacks in Wax Museum (NGBIW).

When it comes to labor, there is an African American woman whose work as a spy helped to infiltrate the home of a key Confederate leader, ultimately playing a significant role in the struggle to end slavery. Born a slave, Mary Elizabeth Bowser, worked as a domestic servant, cleaning and cooking for the family of Confederate President Jefferson Davis – simultaneously spying and reporting her findings to abolitionist Elizabeth Van Lew as part of an elaborate woman’s spy ring.

Bowser worked on the John Van Lew plantation outside Richmond, Virginia. After her father’s death in 1851, Van Lew freed Ms. Bowser and other Van Lew family slaves. Recognizing her potential and intelligence, Van Lew sent Bowser north to attend school. During the Civil War, Van Lew organized the spy ring, eventually sending for Bowser after deciding to plant a spy in the home of Davis. Bowser, who was said to have a photographic memory, gained employment in the Davis mansion in Richmond, where she reportedly pretended to be dull and unconcerned, but was intently listening to and memorizing conversations between Davis and his visitors.

According to a bio about Bowser by the U.S. Department of the Army, she read war dispatches as she dusted furniture at the Davis mansion and would later travel to the Van Lew mansion to recite from memory the private conversations she overheard and documents she read.

The bio notes did not have much information as to what Bowser was able to report back to as a spy, as all of her dispatches to Van Lew were destroyed out of fear that they would lead to severe repercussions. However, the bio points to Van Lew’s diary entries, implying that Bowser’s reports were critical in helping the Union navigate its way toward victory during the war.

“When I open my eyes in the morning, I say to the servant, ‘What news, Mary?’ and my caterer never fails!” Van Lew reportedly wrote. “Most generally, our reliable news is gathered from negroes, and they certainly show wisdom, discretion and prudence, which is wonderful.”

Born Mary Jane Richards, Bowser is believed to have been born between 1839 and 1841 and used aliases, which included Mary Jane Henley and Mary Jones.

Bowser’s story is remarkable, and her legacy is forever enshrined through her likeness at the National Great Blacks in Wax Museum (NGBIW) located at 1601-1603 E. North Avenue. NGBIW was established in 1983 by Dr. Joanne Martin and her late husband, Dr. Elmer Martin. According to Dr. Martin, Bowser’s wax likeness is among 10 of the museum’s figures currently on display at Fashion Centre in Pentagon City. The figures are exhibited on the second floor of the mall in observance of Black History Month.

“Mary is in the White House working, and she is hearing all of these secrets,” said Dr. Martin. “And she’s reading, not just hearing, all of these secrets. And they have no idea that this woman can read or write.”

According to the U.S. Department of the Army, Jefferson Davis knew the Union somehow kept discovering Confederate plans but never discovered the leak in his own household.

“Ms. Van Lew understood the importance of giving Mary an educational opportunity because her primary goal was to have Mary work to help the United States win the war,” said Dr. Martin. “You had these two young women, one Black...Mary Elizabeth Bowser...and one white... Elizabeth Van Lew worked together on a major effort to help win the Civil War for the United States of America.”

The Commonwealth of Virginia Office of Workforce Engagement credits intelligence and planning from Bowser with helping a group of Union prisoners escape Richmond during the war. According to the Office of Workforce Engagement, at the end of the war, Bowser joined the Freedman’s Bureau, eventually running an entire school by herself in St. Mary’s, Georgia.

“It is important to recognize the significant yet often overlooked contributions of Black women in history, particularly in the military and as spies,” said Dr. Martin. “The strategic planning behind Van Lew’s espionage was astute, intellectual, and smart. There is a need for greater inclusion and recognition of Black women’s historical roles and achievements. Bowser’s intelligence and literacy were crucial to her role, facilitated by her benefactor Elizabeth Van Lew.”

For more information about this year’s Black History Month theme visit <https://asalh.org/black-history-themes/>. To learn more about Bowser and Van Lew visit <https://www.history.com/news/female-spies-civil-war-mary-bowser-elizabeth-van-lew>. NGBIW hours, exhibits, and other information can be found on <https://www.greatblacksinwax.org/>



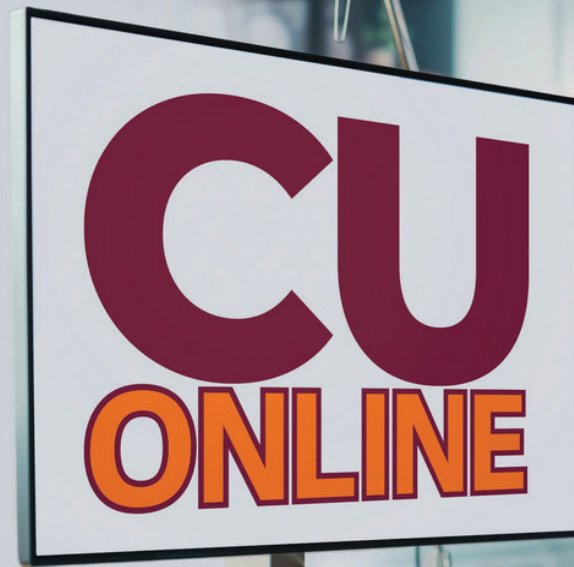
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BLVD
LUNCH

ROOTED ROTISSERIE
1116 HOLLINS ST
DINNER

MON, FEB 24TH

YEBO KITCHEN
2219 MARYLAND AVE
HAPPY HOUR

TUES, FEB 25TH

MAGDALENA
205 E. BIDDLE ST
HAPPY HOUR

WED, FEB 26TH

SOUL STREET
819 E. PRATT ST
HAPPY HOUR

THU, FEB 27TH
THE EMPANADA LADY
10 SOUTH ST. STE 100
HAPPY HOUR

PROPER CUISINE
206 E REDWOOD ST
DINNER

FRI, FEB 28TH

PAPI CUISINE
2 E. WELLS ST. #116
LUNCH

SLUTTY VEGAN
/ BAR VEGAN
2424 DISTILLERY ST
HAPPY HOUR

SAT, MAR 1ST

TEAVOLVE
1401 ALICEANNA ST
BREAKFAST

CRUST BY MACK
201 E PRATT ST #2075
LUNCH

UNITY
111 W CENTRE ST
DINNER

SUN, MAR 2ND

JERK AT NITE
21 N. EUTAW ST
BRUNCH

THE GARDEN ROOFTOP
411 N. PACA ST
HAPPY HOUR





Justin Tucker | Photo credit: Greg Flume/Getty Images

Justin Tucker Accusations are a Bad Look for Ravens Organization

By Tyler Hamilton

Anyone who has been around the NFL knows the Baltimore Ravens have been a model organization over the years. But then again, no one is perfect. This organization is no stranger to controversy. There's no need to name the previous ones. That horse has already been beaten to death.

But the latest accusations facing kicker Justin Tucker must be addressed soon. The Baltimore Banner reported last month that six unnamed massage therapists had accused Tucker of sexual misconduct. Three more victims came forward soon after the initial report.

Seven more massage therapists have also recently accused Tucker of inappropriate sexual behavior. The total number of accusers is now 16. Tucker passionately denied the accusations and released the following statement on X in response to the story in the Banner:

“I have never been accused of acting inappropriately in front of a massage therapist or during any massage therapy session... never received any complaints from a massage therapist ... and have never been told that I was not welcome at any spa or other place of business.”

“In accusing me of misconduct, the article takes innocuous, or ambiguous, interactions and skews them so out of proportion they are no longer recognizable, and it presents vague insinuations as fact. This is desperate tabloid fodder.”

The Ravens organization released a statement regarding the initial allegations:

“We are aware of the Baltimore Banner's story regarding Justin Tucker as well as his response. We take any allegations of this nature seriously and will continue to monitor the situation.”

Obviously, there's only so much that can be said since this is a legal matter, but at least the organization acknowledged what has been filed. Sure, they're only accusations as of now. But in the court of public opinion, Tucker is guilty until proven innocent rather than innocent until proven guilty.

The NFL stated on January 30 that it “first became aware of the allegations from the reporter investigating this story” and intends to “look into the matter.” A league spokesperson said the matter remains under review of the personal conduct policy.

It's just a bad look for the organization. That's very unfortunate given how much effort the franchise puts into its community outreach. Multiple players give their time on days off to take part in community giveaways, and reading at local schools, among other things to help the city.

That's not to take away from what allegedly happened to the victims. No one deserves to be subject to such treatment, if true. The situation is truly sad all around.

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2025 Food Lion CIAA Men's and Women's Basketball Tournament Honors the Contributions of the Divine 9

Metro Baltimore National Pan Hellenic Council (NPHC), and the Y in Central Maryland Join the CIAA to Give Back to Charm City

The **Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA®)**, the nation's oldest historically Black athletic conference, will place the **Divine 9** at center court and will celebrate the history, contributions and lasting legacy of the **Metro Baltimore National Pan Hellenic Council (NPHC)** on CIAA's Greek Night, held Wednesday, February 26th at CFG Bank Arena in Baltimore.

Beginning with the evening games at 6:40 p.m., ET and 8:50 p.m., ET, all Divine 9 sorority and fraternity members will be invited to wear their colors with pride and represent their historically Black Greek letter organizations throughout the evening at the CFG Bank arena. All members of the Greek organizations will receive a discount on tickets for the evening by using a special code. Students, fans and alumni will also be invited to attend the ever-popular CIAA step show on Friday, February 28.

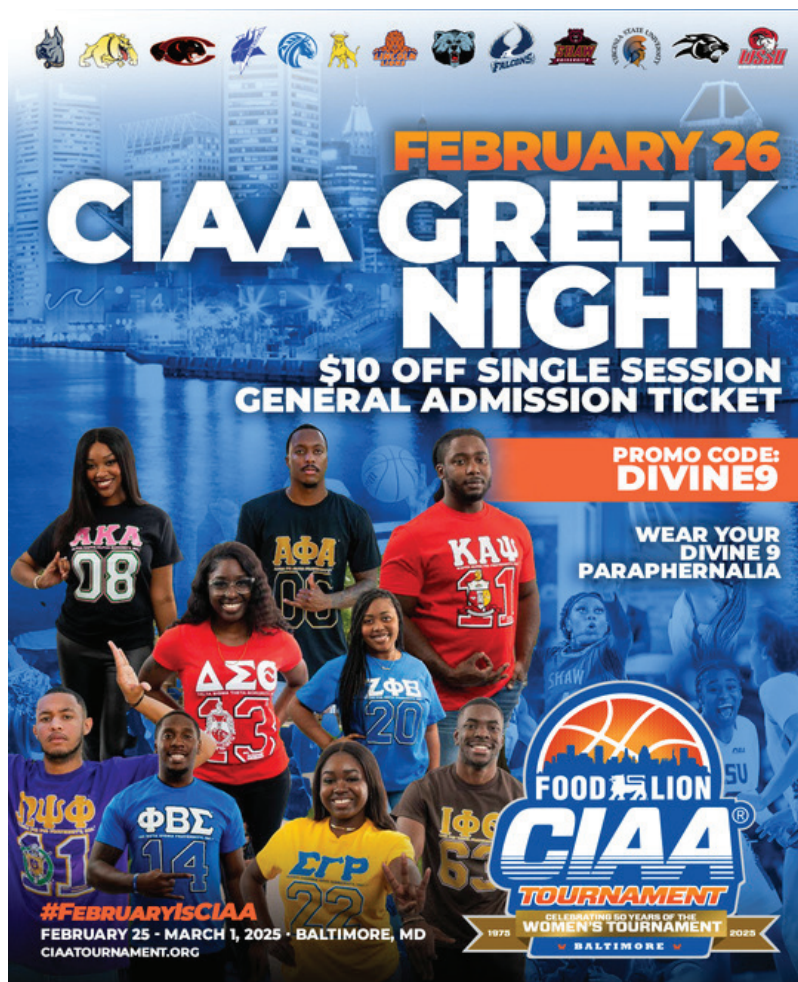
The Divine 9 is a symbol of Black excellence and their many contributions are an example for our student athletes as we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of our Women's championship. We are proud to honor the Metro Baltimore National Pan Hellenic Council and all it represents on CIAA Greek Night.

For the third year in a row, the (NPHC) will also partner with CIAA and the Y in Central Maryland to focus on giving back to the community through **"Blanket Baltimore,"** a competitive donation drive that fosters unity among members of the nine historically Black Greek-letter organizations (BGLO).

The fun-filled competition has yielded over 30,000 needed personal supplies for the Baltimore community every year for the last 10 years.

"Despite our organization's separate missions, we all recognize and focus on community service and enrichment," said Norbert Robinson, Metro Baltimore-NPHC Vice President and Co-Chair Blanket Baltimore. "We are pleased to partner with the CIAA during CIAA Tournament Week to further expand our impact and help fellow citizens in need."

To get tickets to CIAA Greek Night on February 26 or any games held during the Food Lion 2025 CIAA Men's & Women's Basketball Tournament held from February 25 - March 1 at the CFG arena in Baltimore, MD, or for more information about FanFest and all tournament events visit ciaatournament.org.



Learn More
Purchase Tickets



SCAN HERE

ABOUT BLANKET BALTIMORE

Blanket Baltimore is an initiative that combines giving back to the community while having fun and "blanketing" the Baltimore area with over 16,000 needed personal supplies every year for the last 10 years. Developed by the Metro Baltimore National Pan Hellenic Council (NPHC), participating members include alumni with ties to local universities and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) who compete against each other to raise items for local shelters and youth-serving organizations. Divine 9 organizations include: Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity; Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority; Omega Psi Phi Fraternity; Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity; Delta Sigma Theta Sorority; Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity; Zeta Phi Beta Sorority; Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority; and Iota Phi Theta Fraternity.

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(L-r): David Springer, an Our Kids Read board member; Kaira Springer; Myrleen Springer, an Our Kids Read board member; Ava Croslin, Our Kids Read's office manager; Andria Lake, wife of the nonprofit founder; Jahmal Lake, Our Kids Read executive director; and Thomas Lake. Back row: Jonathan Tennis, an Our Kids Read volunteer from Microsoft at Our Kids Read's grand opening. Photo Credit: 1982 Creative Studios

Our Kids Read promotes literacy and provides free books that inspire, educate, and reflect diverse cultures.

Free Bookstore for Children Launches in Eastpoint Mall, Features Diverse Books

By Andrea Blackstone

Our Kids Read Baltimore Literacy Hub held a grand opening at Eastpoint Mall on February 15, 2024. The nonprofit provides free books for children ages 0-18.

“Our Kids Read serves primarily pre-K through fifth graders but has books for all ages. Our mission is to spark the joy of reading in children in underserved communities across the country! We accomplish this in two ways: free diverse books through our Baltimore Literacy Hub and national Free Book Festivals and through our evening virtual literacy-focused mentorship program (Our Reading Buddies Program),” said Jahmal Lake, executive director of Our Kids Read.

Lake honored a wish of his mother, the late Dr. Obiagele Lake, by founding Our Kids Read in 2019. The activist, philanthropist, educator and humanitarian specified that a portion of her son's inheritance should be used to start a program to uplift people of color and make a meaningful difference in their lives. Our Kids Read is an organization that is committed to fighting against childhood illiteracy in Black and brown communities.

“Literacy was my mother's choice for the focus of Our Kids Read because she saw it as a direct mechanism to break the cycle of poverty in underserved communities. She knew that literacy is key to giving future generations a chance at the best careers and professional opportunities. She felt the ability to read was fundamental to almost all other pursuits,” Jahmal explained.

More than 50,000 books are currently in stock at the newly opened Our Kids Read Baltimore Literacy Hub. Jahmal stated that the organization anticipates that another 100,000 books will be donated over the next six months by the publisher sponsors: Scholastic, Penguin, Random House and Simon and Schuster. Eighty percent of the books are diverse books, featuring positive representations of African, African-American, Asian, Hispanic and Native American characters.

“I am delighted to be engaged in an organization that promotes reading, especially when the kids can see themselves in the stories,” said Myrleen Springer, an Our Kids Read board member.

Jahmal stated that each visiting child can take five free books per visit. Our Kids Read anticipates being able to serve over 10,000 children in the coming months.

“The children do not have to be Baltimore residents, books are available on a first-come-first-serve basis to any children who come in-person to the Literacy Hub,” Jahmal stated.

He added, “The plan, assuming the success of the Baltimore Hub, is to expand to Portland, St. Louis and New York, areas where we have the most donor support.”

The nonprofit's space in Eastpoint Mall has been donated for three years by MCB Real Estate, according to Jahmal.



(L-r): Baltimore County Councilman Todd Crandell with Our Kids Read executive director, Jahmal Lake. | Photo Credit: 1982 Creative Studios

Additionally, through Our Kids Reads’ Remote Reading Buddy Program, adult volunteers who have been screened and trained are matched with children from the partnering Title 1 schools. Through the Our Kids Reads’ Remote Reading Buddy Program, students read with their adult mentors once per week for 45 minutes over Zoom for 12 weeks. Students and mentors can elect to continue to read with each other after the 12 weeks.

Christina Reid, the program manager for Our Kids Read, said that 2,200 free books have been distributed to date through Our Kids Read. The opening of the nonprofit’s bookstore is making reading even more accessible to children.

“But that’s not all—this space isn’t just about giving books away; it’s about creating a community around reading. Now, kids can come in, grab a cozy spot, and actually read in a welcoming space instead of just stuffing books in their backpacks and running off,” said Reid.

She also stated that the nonprofit is using the opportunity to expand their Reading Buddy Program.

“With a physical location more families can learn about the program, sign up on the spot, and get matched with a Reading Buddy.”

The community can support Our Kids Read by making a donation at www.ourkidsread.org/make-a-donation. Another way to help is by becoming a volunteer Reading Buddy. Sign up is available by visiting www.ourkidsread.org/reading-portal.

“Even if you can’t donate or volunteer, sharing our mission with friends, family, and on social media goes a long way! The more people know about Our Kids Read, the more impact we can make together. No matter how you choose to support us, you’re helping build a brighter future—one book at a time. And for that, we’re forever grateful!”

Visit Our Kids Read at Eastpoint Mall. It is located at 7839 Eastpoint Mall, Baltimore, Maryland 21224. Use entrance #5 near Gables. Learn more about the nonprofit via <https://www.ourkidsread.org>.



Our Kids Read promotes literacy and provides free books that inspire, educate, and reflect diverse cultures. | Photo Credit: 1982 Creative Studios



Bowie Coach Brian Nichols sets plays for Team Excellence. | Photo Credit: Ian Harpool

HBCU Lacrosse Teams Converge for Allstar Event at St. James Mega Complex

Premier Lacrosse League Hosts Historic Match-Up of Outstanding Black College Players

By Adrian Harpool

While the cold winter evening winds howled outside, some of the brightest and most promising stars in the orbit of Historically Black Colleges (HBCUs) and Universities lacrosse teams brought the heat. Hosted by the Premier Lacrosse League (PLL), standout athletes from schools throughout the DMV and as far away as Atlanta united in heads-up battles to claim bragging rights among men's and women's teams to participate in the history-making inaugural HBCU ALL-STAR GAME.

Paul Rabil, PLL co-founder and CEO, created the event. Premier Lacrosse League Assist is PLL's diversity program. Haleigh Pannell and Wyeth Martin work as coordinators. The All-Star Games are further evidence of Rabil's personal commitment to sharing his beloved sport and related opportunities with previously overlooked communities.

The games brought together players from famed HBCU athletic programs not frequently known for the sport of lacrosse. Inspired by an effort sponsored by the PLL to support and encourage more African American youth to participate in the sport, it is slowly making a comeback on Black college campuses while gaining broader interest among Black middle and high school students and parents. Players on the all-star teams represented Spelman College; Norfolk State; Bowie State; Morgan State; Howard; Lincoln; and Morehouse Universities.

The St. James, a 20-acre 450,000-square-foot multi-purpose sports complex in Springfield, Virginia, served as the perfect venue for these action-packed matches and provided an unrivaled backdrop for this historic event.

Facility developer, owner, and sports enthusiast Kendrick Ashton was also in attendance cheering on the visiting teams and welcoming players, parents and supporters.

Major threads that connect many of these teams and players are Coach Lloyd Carter and Blax Lax. Carter co-founded the organization with his former Edmondson High School (Baltimore, Maryland) teammate Anthony "Merc" Ryan. The group was established to preserve and amplify the history and impact that African Americans have had in the sport of lacrosse. Carter, who currently coaches the Norfolk State Lacrosse Team is credited for bringing lacrosse to Hampton University. As a member of the storied Ten Bears (Lacrosse Team) of Morgan State University MSU), Coach Carter was the subject of a PBS Documentary and a book by the same name.

Assuming brands like Legacy and Excellence, the men's teams squared off in a fast-paced game shaped by the relatively new format for lacrosse play known as "Sixes" which features 8-minute quarters with a 5-minute halftime and two 2-minute breaks. The women's all-star teams sported team names of Royalty and Magic.

Members on Excellence's team roster included Norfolk State (Nasir Thornton and Elliot Bourne); Morgan State (David Antwi); Bowie State (Sean Peavy, Brevin Blalock, and Sean Williams); Howard (Kojo Osei-Ntansah); Coppin (Dereck Green, Jr.); Morehouse (Orion Cooper and Will Scipio); University of Maryland Eastern Shore (Ismail Shakur); and Lincoln (Malachi Wright Casey). The team was coached by Brian Nichols – (Bowie State); Paul Bresil – (Lincoln University, Pennsylvania); and Lloyd Carter – (Norfolk State).



(L-r) Spelman Women's Team Players Olivia Robinson, Cierra Hickson, Parker Hall and Chyna Beale. | Photo Credit: Ian Harpool

Legacy's team roster included: Norfolk State (Eli Poller); Howard (Charles Hatton and Marcus Quincy); Bowie State (Khalil Anderson and Maurice Butler); University of Maryland Eastern Shore (Jaiden Woodyard); Morehouse (Joshua Vaughn and Jaden Jones); Coppin State (Jason Bandoh and Au'Brey Ballard; Lincoln (Tresean Maurice); Morgan State (Jaylen Brown and Mark Evans) coached by Ryan Pratcher-Bey (Coppin State); and Skyler Hargrave (Morgan State).

The women's teams reflect the growing investment toward equity and inclusion in lacrosse. The PLL has partnered with cosmetic giant Maybelline as women's lacrosse draws more interest and larger crowds at collegiate and professional levels. The level of play has reached new heights, as demonstrated by the talent on display from these two teams at this event.

Team Magic: The roster included Morgan State (Sasha Jones and Kayla Drummond); Hampton (Paris Hendricks); Coppin State (Princessliz Ebong and Makeda Richardson); Spelman (Parker Hall, Chyna Beale and Olivia Robinson); Bowie State (Nyah Plummer and Aajhae' Wilson); Norfolk State (Tamyia Vest Turner and Ramiyah Shaw). The team was coached by Ryan Jones (Morehouse) and Ryan Pratcher-Bey (Coppin State).

Team Royalty: The roster included Coppin (Diamond Maple, Aniyah Carrington and Justice Downing); Morgan (Jasmine LaRocca, Jayla McKenny, Angelina Pinto and Aaliyah Ekani); Spelman (Cierra Hickson); Bowie (Kiyanna Quille); Hampton (Leala Spence); and Norfolk (Amerie Ussery and Torrey Stacy). Team coaches were Malacal Davis (Morgan State) and Brian Nichols (Bowie State).

When the final whistles sounded for the games to end, the results declared Team Excellence as the winner of the men's title with an 18 to 16 victory, and the women's title was called 10 to 8 for Team Magic. As the players and organizers celebrated their successes, Coach Carter remarked, "the real winner for the evening was the game of lacrosse."



Norfolk Coach and Black Lax Founder Lloyd Carter with PLL Owner Paul Rabil. | Photo Credit: Ian Harpool



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NMLS #2453988

LEGAL NOTICES

CITY OF BALTIMORE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION PUBLIC NOTICE

In an effort to educate the community and receive public comment the upcoming project, a community meeting will be held.

PUBLIC MEETING FOR Old Town Mall Improvements

Thursday, March 6, 2025
6:00 PM to 7:15 PM

Paul Laurence Dunbar High School,
Cafeteria
1400 Orleans Street,
Baltimore, MD, 21231

Virtually: www.buff.ly/40TiBSR

By Phone: 408-418-9388

Pass code: 2334 769 2313

If you have any questions, comments or need special accommodations, please contact via mail:

Jon Leishman, Project Manager
Department of Transportation, Planning
417 E. Fayette St., 5th Floor,
Baltimore, MD 21202

Email: jon.leishman@baltimorecity.gov,
Or by leaving a voicemail at: 443-651-0848

Accommodation requests should be received by Tuesday, February 25, 2025
Comments on the general scope should be received by Thursday, March 20, 2025

Receive regular updates via Facebook, at Baltimore City Department of Transportation's project website www.streetsofbaltimore.com/oldtownmall, or on "X" formerly known as Twitter at @BmoreCityDOT.

Veronica McBeth, INTERIM DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Legal Notice

CITY OF BALTIMORE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION PUBLIC NOTICE TR19309 & TR25301 DOT Intersection and Traffic Signal (Sector 1,2,3 & 4)

The Department of Transportation has cancelled the sector meetings for TR19309 and TR25301, initially scheduled for March 3rd, March 6th, March 13th, and March 19th, 2025. The new meeting dates will be released once the department confirms the project's timelines.

Veronica McBeth, INTERIM DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

CITY OF BALTIMORE DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS NOTICE OF LETTING

Sealed Bids or Proposals, in duplicate addressed to the Board of Estimates of the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore and marked for **BALTIMORE CITY NO. RP24814 NORTH HARFORD PARK PLAYGROUND & FIELD** will be received at the Office of the Comptroller, Room 204 City Hall, Baltimore, Maryland until 11:00 A.M. **APRIL 2, 2025**. Positively no bids will be received after 11:00 A.M. Bids will be publicly opened by the Board of Estimates in Room 215, City Hall at Noon. The proposed Contract Documents may be examined, without charge, at the Dept. of Rec & Parks at 2600 Madison Ave, Baltimore, Md. 21217 by appointment only on Monday through Friday, 8:30am – 4:00pm by emailing benitaj.randolph@baltimorecity.gov starting **FEB 21, 2025** and copies may be purchased for a non-refundable cost of **\$100.00**. **Conditions and requirements of the Bid are found in the bid package.** All contractors bidding on this Contract must first be prequalified by the City of Baltimore Contractors Qualification Committee. Interested parties should call (410) 396-6883 or contact the Committee at 4 South Frederick Street, 4th Floor, Baltimore, Maryland 21202. **If a bid is submitted by a joint venture ("JV"), then in that event, the document that established the JV shall be submitted with the bid for verification purposes.** The Prequalification Category required for bidding on this project is **G90132: PARK REHABILITATION**. Cost Qualification Range for this work shall be **\$4,000,000.00 to \$4,700,000.00**. A "Pre-Bidding Information" session will be conducted **at 2600 Madison Ave at 11:00 A.M. on March 5, 2024**. Email your contact information to martha.sam@baltimorecity.gov to receive an invite to the Microsoft Team (video conference meeting) no later than **March 4, 2025 at 4:00pm**. Principal Items of work for this project are New Playground, baseball field, football field, concrete walking path, stormwater water, water management treatment/facilities, and landscape improvements. The MBE goal is **27%** and WBE goal is **10%**.
APPROVED: M. Celeste Amato, Clerk, Board of Estimates

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DATE 📅	TIME 🕒	VENUE 📍
22nd February, 2025	10:00am- 3:00pm	Downtown Cultural Arts Ctr., 401 N. Howard st., Baltimore

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EVENTBRITE



EXPO'S KEYNOTE
SPEAKER

Dr. Lance London

CEO of Big City Foods and The Carolina Kitchen

TIME

12:00PM

<https://facebook.com/bmorenews.comofficial>

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