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National Great Blacks in Wax Museum Begins \$75 Million Expansion



Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake and other officials joined Dr. Joanne Martin on Monday, November 23, 2015 as deconstruction work began on a number of properties previously purchased by The National Great Blacks in Wax Museum in the 1600 block of East North Avenue in Baltimore. The deconstruction paves the way for a \$75 million expansion that will help fulfill the vision of the museum's founders, Dr. Joanne Martin and her late husband, The museum will expand from the current 15,000 square feet to 120,000 square feet. (See article on page 10)

Photo: Gar Roberts

Sharing and Caring event promotes education, provides meals and gifts

By Stacy M. Brown

More than three hundred underprivileged Baltimore youth and their families will be provided food, gifts and a day of entertainment as the Sharing and Caring Committee at John Wesley United Methodist Church hosts a daylong community event on Saturday, December 19, 2015. The event will be held at the church located at 3202 W. North Avenue in West Baltimore from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

The Sharing and Caring program, which has been held annually for the last 34 years, will include a performance by a children's choir and other entertainment. Children attending will be provided hats, gloves and needed school supplies.

"It started with just me and some family members before the church adopted the program and they began to give donations toward it," said Sharing and Caring founder Doris McQuaige-Duncan.

Inspired by Mary McLeod Bethune, the famed educator and leader best known for opening a private school for African-Americans in Florida, McQuaige-Duncan says that she is driven by education, a foundation that she says is needed by all children.

"I am very big on education. The one thing about this program is that it promotes education and reminds the children how important it is to learn," she said.

Additionally, the Sharing and Caring Committee promotes higher education by awarding students who have perfect attendance, averages of B+ or higher in reading, language or mathematics and improved social/emotional behavior.

Students come to the event from Rosemont Elementary, Edgewood Elementary, Belmont Elementary and Alexander Hamilton Elementary schools as well as City Springs Elementary/Middle School, according to McQuaige-Duncan.

"Sometimes, we ask schools for 25 or 50 people, but often the schools will send more," she said. "We don't turn



The Annual Sharing and Caring Program sponsored by the John Wesley United Methodist Church will be held at the church, located at 3202 W. North Avenue in West Baltimore on Saturday, December 19, 2015 from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. More than three hundred underprivileged Baltimore youth and their families are expected to attend. (Above) Doris McQuaige-Duncan (front center green shirt) and staff of the Caring and Sharing Committee at John Wesley United Church.
Courtesy Photo

anyone away and sometimes schools from the county will send children, who must come with their report cards so that we can see their grades."

The Sharing and Caring program event will begin at approximately 9:30 a.m. with attendees provided a choice of hot or cold cereal, fruit, pancakes, sausage and juice. Coffee is available for adults as well, McQuaige-Duncan said.

More than 300 children and parents are expected and McQuaige-Duncan said she's hoping that local residents and others will open their hearts and wallets to help provide toys and coats for children as well as bicycles, analog watches and other gifts.

"Last year, we gave out more than 30 watches. We don't do digital because I want children to learn how to tell time," said McQuaige-Duncan, who has reached deep into her own pockets, using money set aside to pay her mortgage to help fund the event.

"When you learn that the child who came previously is still on the honor roll and then you see them stand up and say they've earned it, it's a beautiful thing," she said.

"It's essentially important to the com-

munity that the primary purpose is that you're supporting education; encouraging and motivating children to attend school and stay in school."

Many of the children live in tough neighborhoods, most of which are drug-infested and the most of the families receive public assistance.

"With education, you learn the correct way to do things, the importance of hard work and honesty," she said. "There's nothing like it because honesty and hard

work can motivate children. And, for us who can help, I'm a firm believer that God blesses us to help others. I'm an adult who was a high school dropout, got pregnant and married shotgun style. But, my children saw me graduate."

Donations are welcome and can be dropped off at John Wesley United Methodist Church located at 3202 W. North Avenue in West Baltimore. When making a donation, please indicate that the contribution is for Sharing and Caring.

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Can We Please Stop?

Laura Finley, Ph.D.

Surely some uber-conservative political candidates will call me out on “politicizing tragedy” but I don’t care. I don’t want to pray for victims. I don’t want to seek vengeance on perpetrators. I want this never to happen again; I want to never feel this weight again.

Not just something but so many things must be done. My heart is so heavy to learn of not one but two mass shootings in the United States today. While the news is focused on San Bernadino, California, as I write at least 14 people are dead and 17 seriously injured, another mass shooting occurred earlier in the day on December 2 in Savannah, Georgia.

We have now endured more shootings in 2015 than days in the year. Yes, that’s right— an average of more than one per day.

What do we do? It won’t be easy, that’s for sure. But there are some obvious components, and some other things we need to consider that are rarely part of the public dialogue.

Gun control? Check. We have to create sensible policies that at least make it more difficult for dangerous people to acquire dangerous weapons.

Provide better mental health services? Check. Without a doubt we need to be way better at recognizing who is suffering from mental illness, who among that population might be a threat to themselves or others, and offer supports for them to reduce the chances of horrific violence.

However, in addition to those seemingly obvious answers, we also need to think about what motivates mass shooters in the first place. While some suffer from mental illness, many are simply people who have lost hope, who see themselves as worthless. The above-listed solutions do nothing to address how we change the hearts and minds of people. I don’t profess to have all the answers, nor do I think any one thing is “the” solution, but I do think we need to talk a lot more, and act a lot more, to create a populace that sees violence itself as abhorrent. We need to create a society in which people’s natural instinct for dealing with difficult times is not to pull out a gun or other weapon but rather to seek help and guidance and to use their humanity and creativity to work out another answer.

What I am not hearing much about is the importance of teaching people to think and act differently. We need to teach young people (and every age—it’s never too late!) that they can and have to express how they feel. We need to teach people how to receive that information and how not to judge but to empathize and support. We need to help people learn how to adapt when things don’t go as planned, and we need to learn to be better cheerleaders for one another. We need to teach people resiliency, as things will likely be challenging at some point and with ample coping skills we can not only survive but thrive. We need to figure out how to help people see a ray of light, a bit of hope, in what can often be perceived as a hopeless situation.

In essence, we need peace education. Everywhere, all the time! Peace education teaches people that not only are there nonviolent ways to resolve conflict but that each one of us is responsible for doing so. It emphasizes that we have to build our capacities for love, acceptance and understanding if we want a better world. Laws and policies can help, but changing the way we think is imperative.

Can we please agree to do this? It’s hard, but also not that hard. Our future seriously depends on it. Another way is possible, people. Let’s make it happen.

Laura Finley, Ph.D., teaches in the Barry University Department of Sociology & Criminology and is syndicated by PeaceVoice.



Community Affairs

With winter approaching, prepare for snowstorms and cold weather

Reisterstown, Md.— The arrival of the holiday season is the right time to make sure you are prepared for winter weather. No matter what part of the state you live in, the winter season brings the potential for cold weather and slippery roads and sidewalks.

“It is difficult to predict exactly what type of winter weather will affect Maryland in any given year, but history shows us that most of the State will have to deal with some bad weather over the next few months,” said Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) Executive Director Russ Strickland. “It’s better to make preparations now so you can avoid the last minute rush for snow shovels, salt, and other winter essentials.”

When cold weather hits, you should check on the welfare of family, friends and neighbors who are particularly vulnerable to cold, snow and ice— this may include the elderly and those with access and functional needs. It is also important to make sure your vehicle is ready for winter travel and that you have prepared

your pets for bad weather.

Follow a trusted weather source such as the National Weather Service and local news media, to be aware of any predicted frozen precipitation or severe cold. In addition, MEMA recommends taking the following actions prior to the winter season:

- *Build a home preparedness kit that includes winter supplies such as snow shovels, ice melting products, extra warm clothes and blankets, flashlights and batteries.

- *Insulate your home by installing storm windows or covering windows with plastic from the inside to keep cold air out.

- *If you will be away during cold weather, leave the heat on in your home and set the thermostat to no lower than 55° Fahrenheit

- *Check and winterize your vehicle, including all fluids, wiper blades, lights and systems before the winter season begins. Have a car emergency kit in your vehicle.

- *Keep your gas tank near full to avoid ice in the tank and fuel lines.

- *ID your pet with up-to-date nametags and rabies tags; include your cell phone number on the tag.

To see the recently released a winter preparedness video, visit: www.youtube.com/user/StateMaryland-MEMA.

Raynard Jackson Introduces Maryland Lieutenant Governor to Black Republicans

By **Barrington M. Salmon**
Special to The Baltimore Times

For far too long, Raynard Jackson argued, the Republican Party has overlooked a potentially lucrative pool of constituents by ignoring African Americans. So he organized an event last month in downtown Washington, D.C. and invited more than 100 black Republican businesspeople, government officials and other professionals to discuss their systematic exclusion from the upper echelons of Republican circles and offer the GOP advice on how to draw them into the “Big Tent.”

“The Republican Party has a brand problem. The best message in the world won’t go anywhere. They hire these people and then they’re calling asking me for advice and direction. I don’t want you to hire a 20 year old, and then they’re calling me to pick my brain,” Jackson said.

Jackson took a wad of cash out of his suit breast pocket and waved it around.

“I will give anyone in this room a thousand dollars if they can produce a list of black Republican staffers who work on

Capitol Hill,” Jackson joked to a standing-room-only lunch crowd of black republican faithful. “There are 30-40 black staffers on the Hill, major staffers on committees, but no one knows who they are. They think if they walk into a room, they may not be able to leave because they’re Republicans. We don’t have a database of black Congressional staffers because there isn’t one. I’m developing a database.”

Jackson pointed out loyal republicans in the audience at the National Press Club who served on cabinets from Richard Nixon to George W. Bush, and offered public service in local governments, governors’ offices and state governments.

Jackson engaged the event’s special guest, Maryland Lt. Gov. Boyd Rutherford, in a wide-ranging discussion about the promise and viability of the Republican Party and what the Hogan administration has been doing in its 10 months in office to enhance the lives of blacks and other Marylanders. Rutherford said he encounters blacks all the time who are afraid to embrace the GOP despite having a good deal in common at different levels.

“I’m interested in getting more people to support the Republican Party. It’s getting out there and letting people know it’s okay to have the views we have,” said Rutherford, a District of Columbia native and Howard University alum. “The number of registered independents has shot up. It’s black people not wanting to be saddled with the Democratic Party. They play with people emotions. I tell people I choose to be Republican.”

“What has the 96 percent of support of the Democrats gotten black people? One side takes you for granted because you’ll be there. The other side doesn’t think it will get you, so it just ignores you.” Rutherford said that while on the campaign trail, black voters would express interest in the party but they’re scared to vote Republican because Democrats have cynically played on their fears.

“This guy said he’s afraid and I asked him of what? I joked that I’ll send him back to the plantation— maybe there he’ll have steady work,” Rutherford said.

Jackson spoke of Rutherford’s work for former President George W. Bush and in Republican administrations in Maryland. Despite this, Jackson quipped that Rutherford, who graduated from the University of Southern California Law School, didn’t leave his ‘black’ card at home.

Up and coming R&B recording artist Bria Marie, who voted for the first time in the 2012 presidential election says she and her friends are concerned about crushing student loan debt, getting a quality education, police brutality and are supportive of the “Black Lives Matter” movement.

“Mitt Romney wanted to cut all student loans. Middle class parents don’t have the money and some students have had to drop out of school,” said Marie, the 22-year-old Philadelphia resident and humanitarian. “There is a racial divide and it will be hard to get the black vote if you don’t talk to black people. Republicans should at least acknowledge the ‘Black Lives Matter’ movement. Hillary Clinton is going in on the movement and

other candidates have said nothing.”

Former NFL player, businessman and United Nations Ambassador Jack Brewer described himself as a social and fiscal conservative but said he’s troubled by a number of positions Republican leaders and this crop of presidential candidates have taken.

“I’m as conservative as they come, but I’m caught in an awkward situation: You can’t represent something that goes to your grandma’s heart,” said Brewer, 36, of the Republican penchant to slash Medicare, unemployment and elements of the social safety net. “I’m socially and fiscally conservative, but I want to help my people. It’s commonsense things. I’m not gonna vote for someone who votes for the National Rifle Association. I embrace certain principles and values. There are a couple of things my heart won’t allow me to do.”

Michael Graham, senior executive for Heart & Soul Magazine, said if given the opportunity, he would decline to meet with Donald Trump because of the damage he has done to the party.

“It’s important for me to articulate how the GOP needs to grow to encompass all who’re interested in being in the party,” he said. “Although I’m Republican, I vote my interests. If you insult my intelligence, why should I support you? When you start [to] talk about building a 10-foot wall to keep out black and brown people from Mexico but not put up a wall between us and Canada—that’s where you lose me. The problem is, presidential candidates don’t have black people in their ear saying, ‘Man, you can’t say that.’”

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Hopkins-Teachers Partnership Expected to Produce Big Results for Baltimore Schools

By Stacy M. Brown

The new partnership between Urban Teachers and Johns Hopkins University is a game changer for the teaching profession and Baltimore area schools seeking more diverse and even better trained candidates, according to those involved in the new seven-year agreement.

The Johns Hopkins University School of Education, the top ranked institution of its kind in the country, and Urban Teachers, a heavily lauded and rigorous alternative teacher certification program, have formed a seven-year partnership to train teachers for public schools.

The arrangement includes a clinical residency model as rigorous as the Johns Hopkins residency model for doctors, according to officials from both organizations.

“It really is a game changer,” said Jennifer Green, the CEO of Urban Teachers. “We have been working in Baltimore City for the past six years and we’re starting to see real results from our teachers. This partnership helps us to team with the number one school of education in the country.”

Formerly called the Urban Teacher Center, Urban Teachers was founded in 2009 to solve a critical challenge in urban education— new teacher quality. The organization built a “break-the-mold” teacher preparation program from the ground up to ensure every teacher would get the experiences and support they need to produce results with students.

They began in two of the highest-need districts in the nation, Baltimore and Washington, D.C. and since 2010, they’ve welcomed more than 500 aspiring teachers for district and charter schools in both cities, Green said.



(Left) Jennifer Green, CEO and Founder of Urban Teachers. Formerly called the Urban Teacher Center, Urban Teachers was founded in 2009 to solve a critical challenge in urban education— new teacher quality. (Right) In the classroom of an Urban Teachers participant. Courtesy Photos/Urban Teachers



“We think we have a real shot at 200 new teachers per year and, since we’ve announced the partnership, we have three times the applicants we had at this point last year,” she said. “If those numbers increase— and we think it’s a real possibility— we’ll see about 100 new teachers next year and certainly the local school districts have a need for that so the demand is there.”

For the current school year, Urban Teachers participants and alumni will reach more than 15,000 students, including 5,900 in Baltimore. They’ve also welcomed 206 residents in Baltimore and Urban Teachers, of whom 51 percent are individuals of color, will teach this school year in 40 Baltimore schools.

For its part, Hopkins said it has built the partnership to expand the number of well-trained, career teachers to enter into urban Baltimore classrooms and national low-income schools.

“The Johns Hopkins University has been a leader in producing both top-

notch doctors and teachers,” David W. Andrews, dean of the Johns Hopkins School of Education, said in a statement. “We’re thrilled with the partnership with Urban Teachers. It will produce more excellent educators who are prepared to handle any obstacles they face from their first day in the classroom.”

The collaboration will directly benefit urban schools throughout the United States, including Baltimore City where, 84 percent of students are considered to be low-income and only 12 percent of fourth graders are performing at or above the proficient level in math, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

Also, just 11 percent are considered at or above proficient in reading.

The partnership will prepare an increased number of high-performing, committed teachers who are ready and able to improve the outcomes of thousands of students in urban settings who are in need of a great education, Green said.

It will provide an opportunity for aspiring teachers who enter the program to receive a Master of Science in Education with a concentration in educational studies that equips them to teach in urban environments and it will offer new teachers training in general and special education, equipping them to meet the needs of all learners.

All graduate coursework is clinically based, allowing for teachers to practice their skills immediately in the classroom.

“To ensure they are ready for the job, the program will provide candidates with a yearlong residency to practice effective teaching techniques before becoming responsible for their own classroom,” Green said. “We are excited to be partnering with the top-ranked graduate school of education in the country to provide new teachers with the training needed to help students learn and succeed.”

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New Nonprofit Registering Black Women to Vote

By Stacy M. Brown

A successful kickoff event for the nonprofit “Black Girls Vote, Inc.” has further energized the organization and a community that longs to make a difference.

“The kick off was a huge success,” said Monique Lyle, the director of Black Girls Vote, Inc., a local organization designed to represent the concerns and interests of women, particularly young black women between the ages of 18 and 25.

The group held a kickoff event on November 30, 2015, at Western High School in a drive that helped to underscore its vision to improve the lives of black women one vote at a time.

“We registered over 50 students in the morning [alone],” Lyle said. “We held voter registration volunteer training in the evening where over 30 people got certified as voter registration volunteers, and many who attended the 6 p.m. forum had a number of great ideas regarding how we can make inroads to addressing education, quality health care and economic development.”

The kick off event featured appearances by Associate Black Charities CEO Diane Bell McKoy; Western High Principal Michelle White; Purpose for Life Ministries Pastor Dr. NeVor Mitchner; and Community Activist Malacka Reed-El.



Headed by an executive team that includes Morgan State University graduate Kellie P. Easton; Baltimore native Edward Clark, II; Spelman graduate Tamyra Garcia and others, Black Girls Vote, Inc. officials say they are pursuing an intensive grassroots effort to recruit, train and educate young black women on the election process and political issues impacting them and their families in Baltimore City.

Lyle cited a 2012 Center for American Progress report that indicated that black women voted at a higher rate than any other group— across gender, race and ethnic-

ity— and along with other women of color, played a key role in the reelection of President Barack Obama.

“Our first priority is to train at least 200 women in Baltimore City to conduct voter registration,” said Black Girls Vote, Inc. CEO and Founder Nyki Robinson. “In addition, Black Girls Vote, Inc. will create an agenda in Baltimore City focused on advancing education, economic and health care opportunities for women,” Robinson said.

Founded in October, the organization isn’t affiliated with a political party, but Robinson and Lyle said they are invested in ensuring that black women are well equipped to advance education, economic development, and quality health care and improve outcomes.

“The goal of Black Girls Vote is to close the opportunity gap focusing on family, community and country and lending our collective voice to policies that support Black Girls Vote, Inc. vision, mission and strategic goals to advance education, economic development and advance quality health care while improving outcomes,” Lyle said.

“We are currently working on a high school voter registration and education tour. As those plans are solidified, that information will be on our website.”

For more information about the organization, visit: www.blackgirlsvote.com.

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Kaelin Clay has seized the moment with the Ravens

By Turron Davenport

Football is a game that resembles life in many ways. There are always people who are just waiting for a chance to show what they're capable of. That's the beauty of the NFL. Players get the chance to prove their worth in a national spotlight.

That is exactly what Baltimore Ravens return man Kaelin Clay did recently. Many know Clay primarily for his blunder against the University of Oregon during his days at the University of Utah. He showboated prematurely at the end of what would have been a 79-yard touchdown and dropped the ball at the one-yard line. An Oregon defender picked the ball up and returned it the other way for a defensive touchdown.

That play is something that Clay knows will stay with him for a while, despite his recent success in the NFL.

"I don't think people will ever stop talking about that. It is what it is," Clay said. "I don't care about it anymore, it's in the past."

It was back at Long Beach Polytechnic High School in Long Beach, California that Clay began showcasing his play-making ability. Ironically, Desean Jackson, another dynamic playmaker from Long Beach Poly committed the same error by dropping the ball in celebration before crossing the goal line against the Dallas Cowboys on Monday Night Football in 2008.

According to an NFL Network interview, Jackson called Clay's father around this time last year to offer words of encouragement and advice. He said he wanted Clay to make sure he didn't get down on himself.

Clay played both wide receiver and running back during his senior season at Long Beach Poly. He rushed for 1,048 yards and posted 524 receiving yards, which gave him 1,572 rushing total



Baltimore Ravens punter Kaelin Clay crossing the goal line after an 82-yard punt return for a touchdown against the Cleveland Browns on Monday, November 30, 2015 at FirstEnergy Stadium in Cleveland, Ohio.

Courtesy Photo/www.NFL.com

yards. He scored 15 touchdowns— eight receiving, seven rushing— and had 13 punt returns for 206 yards.

Clay made his presence felt during his only season at Utah after transferring from Mt. San Antonio College. He was named to four different All-American teams as a return specialist in 2014 and was named first-team All-Pac-12 as a return specialist. He finished the season with three touchdowns and he averaged 15 yards over 23 punt returns.

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers selected Clay in the sixth round of the 2015 NFL Draft, but released him when they cut their rosters down to the 53-man requirement before the season. Clay cleared waivers and was signed to the Buccaneers practice squad. The Buccaneers released him again and was signed a week later to the Detroit Lions practice squad.

The Ravens signed Clay and added him to their active roster in mid-November. He made his NFL debut against the

St. Louis Rams soon after being added.

Barring any major mistakes or injuries, Clay may have cemented a spot on the Ravens active roster after his 82-yard

punt return for a touchdown against the Cleveland Browns. Preparation paid off for the rookie and he was sure to credit his teammates for paving the way.

"I have to give credit to the other ten guys on the punt return unit and the coaching staff for a great scheme. I studied this punter for a long time and I knew we'd have room to catch the ball," Clay said after the Browns game. "You just have to get it and go. It was instincts and you have to set up your blockers for everything to happen."

The big play was not enough to make Clay complacent, even though it was a relief to have had such an impact. He knows that players are evaluated on a weekly basis in the NFL.

"It feels good but you never have any satisfaction because you know you can do better and you can do more," Clay said. "It's always been my mindset to never be happy with just certain results. The touchdown took some weight off of my shoulders, but now I have to prove it every week and that's my goal."

You Better Watch Out.

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National Great Blacks in Wax Museum Begins \$75 Million Expansion

By Stacy M. Brown

Already among the country's most dynamic cultural and educational institutions, the National Great Blacks in Wax Museum is further cementing its legacy as a cultural gem and a foremost preserver of African-American history.

On Monday, November 23, 2015, deconstruction work began on a number of properties previously purchased by the museum in the 1600 block of East North Avenue in Baltimore, paving the way for an expansion that will help fulfill the vision of the museum's founders, Dr. Joanne Martin and her late husband, Dr. Elmer Martin.

"Elmer Martin had a vision which was to challenge those who would say that people of African descent have no history that's worth preserving," Joanne Martin said.

"We had to bring people kicking and screaming with the notion that you can have tourism in an African-American neighborhood and getting people to understand that you can spur revitalization and economic development with a museum."

The \$75 million project will span the entire block between Broadway and Bond Street, with a sprawling green space in the back. It will contain space for exhibits, a gift shop, a genealogy center, theater, garden and classrooms.

It is being designed by Washington, D.C., architecture firm Davis Brody Bond and has a targeted completion date for sometime in 2018, according to Marin.

The museum, which in great artistic detail, highlights the practice of lynching; the use of slave ships; black inventors; and religious figures and scenes of segregation in the 1950s features wax statues of African-American heroes like Frederick Douglass, Nat Turner, Thurgood Marshall and many others.

The museum was founded in 1983 with \$30,000 the Martins had saved to buy a home. Initially a storefront on West Saratoga Street, the museum now sits along several houses in an old fire station on East North Avenue.

The Martins, who were both professors at Morgan State University, came

up with the concept in the early 1980s when they created figures of Frederick Douglass; Mary McLeod Bethune; Harriet Tubman; and Nat Turner.

The couple would take the figures to schools, churches and into local malls to help teach African-American history lessons. Martin says their goal was to display notable blacks and help students and others appreciate their accomplishments.

"Elmer's ideas made sense. Sometimes, too much sense because he was always far ahead of everyone else," Martin said.

Among the many ideas was to place alongside the wax figures in the museum such elaborate scenes as a full model slave ship that depicted African slaves being transported from across the Atlantic Ocean.

The lynching of blacks by racist whites in the 19th and early 20th centuries is also depicted at the museum, providing a complete history of African-Americans and their oppression and struggles.

There are also various depictions of how the criminal justice system failed blacks in America and the economic disadvantages African-Americans historically have faced.

"When you look at art districts throughout the nation and Elmer Martin was so far ahead of his time, when they were first talking about art districts, Elmer was saying that a single cultural entity can do the same and he called it a cultural hub," Dr. Joanne Martin said. "We get people who call from New York and ask us what else is there to do after the visit to the museum. The Cheesecake Factory and other businesses love us; so we say, 'Why not do it?' Bring it into our community, revitalize our community."

Recognized as a national historic institution by the U.S. Congress, the National Great Blacks in Wax Museum attracts about 350,000 visitors each year and, with the expansion, it's believed that as many as 500,000 will trek to the landmark.

"My husband use to walk down the street and stretch out his arms and say 'This is my empire,'" Martin said. "If



Dr. Joanne Martin spoke of the need for African American institutions to be willing to stay in the African American community, She said, "We [late husband Elmer]were going to create a museum so compelling that people from all over the world and all over the nation were going to come to visit and in that process, we could make the point and demonstrate that on a corner of North and Bond Streets, in a fragile East Baltimore community, in a fragile low income community of East Baltimore—tourism can thrive!" Photos: Gar Roberts



David Fakunle, Ph.d student at Johns Hopkins University sang and beat his drum at the expansion announcement.

anyone had told me [when I was] growing up that I'd sleep across the home from [wax figures of] Harriet Tubman, John Brown and others, I wouldn't have believed it. But, very little surprises me, even that we're still here."

"Maybe that's because I have the

lumps and bumps to show for it. Look, we've remained true to the mission and our community deserves to have this museum and this was a battle that was well-worth fighting for," she said.

Dream Girls Mentoring Program, Inc empowers teen mothers

By Andrea Blackstone

According to a press release issued by Baltimore City Health Department in February of this year, Baltimore's birth rate among 15-19 year olds in Baltimore City dropped by 32 percent, between 2009 and 2013. However, Baltimore City reportedly has a teen birth rate that is nearly twice as high as the national average and more than twice as high as the state of Maryland.

Since 2008, a courageous 28-year-old named Tamira Dunn has responded to the issue of teen pregnancy by empowering teen mothers in Baltimore who need guidance to finish high school, pursue higher education, address job readiness, adjust to parenthood and connect with needed services.

Dunn, who earned a bachelor's degree in Psychology from Morgan State University (MSU) and a master of science degree in Human Service Administration from the University of Baltimore (UB), took a leave of absence while working at the Baltimore City Department of Social Services (BCDSS) in 2013 to run her nonprofit, Dream Girls Mentoring Program, Inc. (Dream Girls). The word, DREAM (Dedicated, Responsible, Aspiring and Motivated) represents her organization's mission to produce girls with these qualities, upon completion of the unique program.

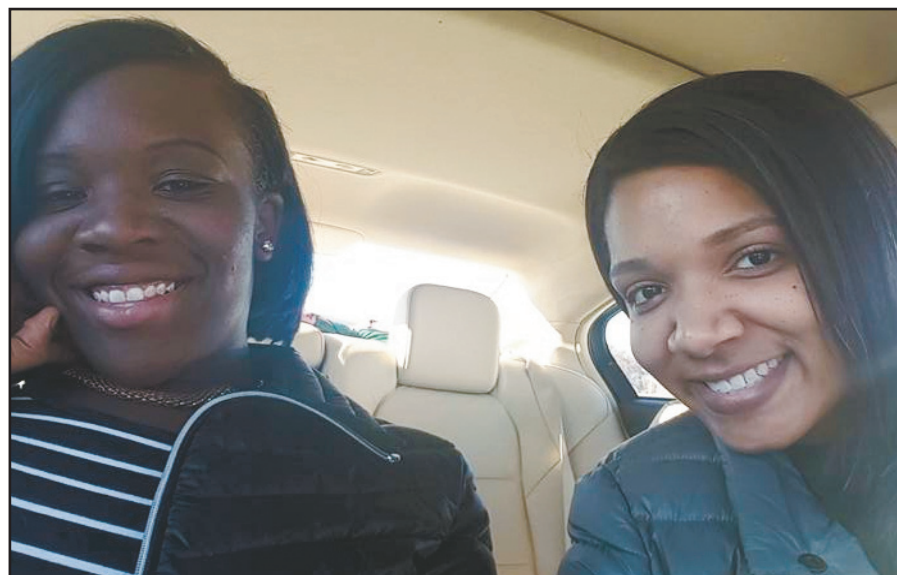
Dunn's passion to support teen mothers dates back a friend's high school pregnancy. Her friend needed help and at age 19, she began to raise her two-year-old goddaughter with the help of her mother, Kim Summers while working two jobs and attending MSU. Dunn raised the girl until the child was able to rerun to live with her mother at the age of seven.

"We can come up with 100 programs that prevent teen pregnancy, but the [girls] who still get pregnant, what are we going to do to help make sure that they succeed? That's kind of where we come in," Dunn said.

The visionary now has a 25-person Dream Girls team, which includes Terry Cornish; Samantha Willis; Zuri Battle; and Latoya Johnson. College-educated women 24 years of age or older volun-



Tamira Dunn (right), with her supportive mother Kim Summers at the 2014 Dream Girl Talk Conference. Dunn is CEO and founder of Dream Girls Mentoring, Inc. a nonprofit that assists pregnant teens and teen mothers ages 12-20 to finish high school, to pursue higher educations or to complete other programs to enable them to become self-sufficient adults. Courtesy Photos



A Dream Girl (left), spends time with her mentor during a monthly visit. Pregnant teen girls and teen mothers between the ages of 12-20 and college-educated mentors are being recruited to participate in the free program in Baltimore City. Dream Girls are supported to develop into strong and healthy adults, while overcoming obstacles that prevent could them from becoming self-sufficient, career-oriented, powerful women.

teer to mentor pregnant teens and teen mothers ages 12 through 20, one-on-one. Dunn is currently recruiting mentors and program participants for the year long program. The education component starts in January 2016. A program location in Baltimore will be

announced at a later date. Workshops, an annual community baby shower, parenting classes and a retreat outside of Baltimore and outreach activities will be held.

Since Dream Girls received grant funding from the Baltimore Women's

Giving Circle (BWGC) and Greenspring Wealth Management, the program will be free of charge for participants this year.

"We're looking for about 30 girls who can make the commitment of seeing their mentor at least once a month and can make the commitment to come to workshops once a month for two hours," Dunn said.

BWGC, an organization that empowers women and their families in Baltimore to achieve self-sufficiency has provided great support to Dunn's nonprofit. Wealth management and retirement consulting firm, Greenspring awarded 2015 Greenspring Grants to five nonprofit organizations that positively impact the community in Maryland or Georgia, including Dream Girls.

In a second role, Dunn serves as a program director for the H.O.P.E (Healing Ourselves through Peer Empowerment) Project at Roberta's House, which is a Baltimore-based family grief support center that provides supportive services to women who have lost a child either through fetal or infant loss. In 2014, Dunn lost her son while she was pregnant. Her unfortunate loss strengthened her resolve to teach young girls to value motherhood.

"The moment I attended the first meeting for Dream Girls, I knew that there was still hope for me to finish high school, and I did exactly that. I graduated with my son (David) by my side and the wonderful mentors of Dream Girls cheering me on," said Keishawna McCormick, 22, a 2013 Dream Girls program graduate and mother of a six-year-old. McCormick became a mother at age 16. "The Dream Girls Program taught me how to be self-sufficient and a better mom to my son, David. I have done things I never imagined doing—like going to college to further my education."

To obtain more information about participating in Dream Girls or about mentoring pregnant teen girls, call 410-635-4178 or email: info@dream-girlsmentoring.org. To learn more about the nonprofit organization, visit: www.dreamgirlsmentoring.org.

Rambling Rose

Birthday Celebration for Dance Legend, Norma Miller



Rosa Pryor Trusty

Hello, my dear friends, the year is coming to an end. It has been a rough year for many. This is a sad situation. But life goes on and we must live our life to its fullest and pray for the families who lost love ones.

This week, my headline goes out to a lady who is celebrating her 96th birthday in a big way right here in Baltimore. I am talking about the one and only Norman Miller. I just learned recently about this fantastic woman from Shirley Duncan when she invited me to an event a couple of years ago where I met Ms. Miller in person.

She is absolutely amazing. She was born on December 2, 1919 in Harlem, New York. Both of her parents were from Bridgetown, Barbados. Not enough room to tell you the whole story, but keeping it short. She got her start at the Savoy Ballroom in New York at the age 12. She entered the Savoy Lindy Hop Contest, which was held at the Apollo Theater and won. She is the author of several books about dancing and she has appeared in six films and four television series. Her best-known film appearance was in the swing dancing scene in the film "Helizappoppin" featuring Whitey's Lindy Hoppers. In 2003, Miller received an award from the National Endowment of the Arts for creating and continuing to preserve "the acrobatic style swing dance, known as the Lindy Hop. You can see and meet her at Shirley Duncan's event and help her celebrate her 96th birthday on Sunday, December 6, 2015, at Turf Valley Grand Ballroom located at 2700 Turf Valley Road in Ellicott City, Maryland. For tickets, call Shirley at 410-3708489.

A couple of weeks ago, a dear friend and musician, Philip "Sir Andre" Stancil, known for his gifted fingers on the keyboards and organ passed away. Last

week, Arnold Sterling another well known musician and alto saxophonist passed away very peacefully in his sleep. Sterling received his first horn at the age of 13 and taught himself to play. While attending Carver High School in Towson, Maryland, he formed a three-piece band and played for proms and dances. In the late 60s he joined the Bill Byrd Trio featuring Johnny Polite on drums and Liz Figueroa as vocalist, enjoying a lengthy stay at Buck's Bar on Pennsylvania Avenue. During this time, he met his mentor and good friend the late Sonny Stitt, who took him under his wing and taught him about the music business. Sterling joined Jimmy McGriff Band in the early 80's and traveled the country and overseas. He is featured on several of McGriff's albums and also recorded several albums of his own. Prior to his death, he freelanced around the Baltimore/District of Columbia area, especially the Westminster Presbyterian Church Jazz and Blues shows on 4th and I Street. Arnold loved his "straight ahead" jazz and always said he would play his horn until God called him home. Well, God has called him home. Rest in peace my friend. At Arnold's request, a funeral will not be held. However, musicians may contact Robert Shahid, Eleanor Janey, Ron Pender or Nevitta Ruddy who are working on a musical tribute in his honor.

Well, my dear friends, this is it. I am out of space. Just remember to send your flyers, press releases and pictures at least 3 weeks before the date of your event. If you are having a Christmas or New Year's Eve event I would need that information this week. If you need me, call me at 410-833-9474 or email me at rosapryor@aol.com. UNTIL THE NEXT TIME, I'M MUSICALLY YOURS.



Norma Miller known worldwide as the "Queen of Swing" dance and the foremost proponent of the "Lindy Hop" celebrates her 96th birthday with Shirley Duncan's and Norma Miller fundraiser event on Sunday, December 6, 2015 from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. at the Turf Valley Grand Ballroom located at 2700 Turf Valley Road in Ellicott City, Maryland. For ticket information, call 410-370-8489.



Dr. Phill Butts and the Sunset Band will perform at the Jazz Expressways Foundation Jazz Breakfast on Saturday, December 11, 2015 at the Forest Park Senior Center located at 4801 Liberty Heights Avenue in Baltimore from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Breakfast is served between 10 a.m. and noon. For more information, call 410-323-7295.



Minister Robert Wilson celebrates his 31st anniversary of the Shouting MC on Sunday, December 13, 2015 starting at 2 p.m. at the Miracle Deliverance Center Church located at 3108 Walbrook Avenue in Baltimore.



Renowned saxophonist Arnold Sterling passed away on Thursday, November 12, 2015 peacefully in his sleep.

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1⁷⁹
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single item at 1/2 price
BUY 1 GET 1 FREE

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Limit 2 Free

Hot SALE
6⁹⁹
EA

MVP



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Hot SALE
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New Chief Curator joins Reginald F. Lewis Museum



Charles E. Bethea
Courtesy Photo

Baltimore— The Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture welcomes Charles E. Bethea as the new Chief Curator and Director of Collections and Exhibitions. In his role, Bethea will principally oversee the research, content development, and interpretation of the permanent exhibition, changing exhibits, projects related to exhibitions, printed exhibition collaterals, and special projects.

“We are delighted to welcome Charles, who is an accomplished museum professional, to guide the museum’s Collections and Exhibitions

Department in advancing its focus on interactivity and engagement. Charles has the ability to relate to people from all walks in life, and he knows how to be a catalyst in helping diverse groups relate to one another,” said Executive Director Skipp Sanders.

As an artist, historian, and author, Bethea has dedicated his life to the preservation of American culture. Over the last 25 years, he has worked in a number of museums and cultural heritage organizations. Bethea has served as the executive director of the Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia, chief operating officer and curator at the DuSable Museum of African American History and the director of educational programming at the Hampton University Museum.

Bethea has served on the boards of several local and national organizations including Southeastern Museum Conference, African American Association of Museum, and chaired the Slavery Remembrance Steering Committee, appointed by then Virginia Governor Jim Gilmore. Utilizing his wealth of knowledge and enthusiasm, he has written several articles and presented numerous papers on museum education, curatorial issues and administrative practices at the American Alliance of Museums, the Virginia Association of Museums, and the Small Museums Association.

He holds a M.A. in Museum Studies from Hampton University and is a 2012 graduate of the Getty Museum Leadership Institute. He is a native of Bladensburg, Maryland.

The Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture is Maryland’s premier facility highlighting the history and accomplishments of African Americans with a special focus on Maryland’s African American community. The museum is located near Baltimore’s Inner Harbor at the corner of Pratt and President Streets.

For more information, call 443-263-1800 or visit www.Lewis-Museum.org.

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Where: Zeta Center for Healthy & Active Aging
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Time: 9:30 AM-1:30PM

Who is invited: All impacted by cancer diagnosis.
**Cancer Survivors, Families, Caregivers,
Oncology Professionals, Community Supporters
are welcome.**

TO REGISTER CONTACT: LaVerne Perry, LLS Patient Access Manager
LLS Patient Access & Survivorship Program, Baltimore
The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
Laverne.perry@LLS.org
443-471-1615 phone
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Doctors pioneer alternative procedure for removing painful fibroids

By Ursula V. Battle

LAAM-BUAO technique offers an alternative to hysterectomy

According to The Center for Innovative GYN Care (CIGC), by age 50, eighty percent of women will have fibroids, non-cancerous growths that originate from the muscle of the womb. CIGC further notes that African American women are three times more likely to have these painful and often infertility-causing cysts.

Unfortunately, many women are told their only option for removing fibroids is to have a hysterectomy. A hysterectomy is a surgery to remove a woman's uterus. The uterus, also known as the womb, is where a baby grows when a woman is pregnant.

Such was the case for Rasheda Fairnot. The Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, native suffered from painful fibroids for more than a decade. According to Fairnot, she had periods that would last a full week and sometimes twice in month with pain so bad that she could hardly get out of bed.

"I actually had a date scheduled to have a hysterectomy done," recalled Fairnot. "But I cancelled it because I was uneasy about it and it didn't settle well in my spirit. I also wasn't comfortable with such an open surgery. A friend of mine told me about Dr. Paul MacKoul and a procedure he had performed on her called myomectomy. She strongly advised that I have a consultation with Dr. MacKoul at The Center for Innovative GYN Care."

She added, "I met with Dr. MacKoul, and his prognosis was much more encouraging than what the other doctors had told me. With a hysterectomy, the recovery time is much longer, and I would not be able to get pregnant. With the [CIGC] myomectomy, the recovery time is much faster, and I could get



Dr. Paul MacKoul and Dr. Natalya Danilyants, co-founders of the LAAM-BUAO technique. The pioneering procedure has given women experiencing painful fibroids an alternative to having a hysterectomy. Courtesy Photos

pregnant one day. So I decided to have the myomectomy."



Rasheda Fairnot opted for a myomectomy to remove her uterine fibroids instead of a hysterectomy.

Fairnot, who is now 33, was 32-years-old when she had the myomectomy last year. A myomectomy means removal of fibroids from the uterus while keeping the uterus in place, making it possible

for women to get pregnant. Developed by surgeons at The Center for Innovative GYN Care, LAAM-BUAO is a hybrid myomectomy technique.

LAAM (Laparoscopic Assisted Abdominal Myomectomy) provides greater flexibility to effectively remove fibroids, despite their location, size or quantity. LAAM is a minimally invasive procedure with only two small incisions that can be completed in about an hour. Due to the advantage of the surgeon being able to feel all of the fibroids, LAAM is the most thorough minimally invasive technique used for a myomectomy.

BUAO (Bilateral Uterine Artery Occlusion) is the blockage of the uterine artery during the procedure to control bleeding. In general, the LAAM-BUAO procedure takes one hour (standard and robotic procedures are up to four hours), can be performed as an outpatient procedure, and significantly reduces recovery time and surgical complications.

"With the LAAM surgery, I was able to have my fibroids removed with two

small incisions and was back to work within two weeks," said Fairnot who now resides in Silver Spring, Maryland. "I am very glad my friend told me about The Center for Innovative GYN Care and the LAAM procedure."

CIGC is based in Bethesda, Maryland but also has locations in Annapolis, Maryland and Reston, Virginia. CIGC is dedicated to the techniques and procedures that optimize the surgical care and recovery of women with fibroids.

Dr. Natalya Danilyants co-founded the LAAM procedure with Dr. MacKoul five years ago.

"Dr. MacKoul and I realized after seeing patients, that they didn't know the facts about treatment, which motivated us to educate women about fibroids and treatment options," said Dr. Danilyants. "The response has been huge. LAAM is a minimally invasive approach, and allows the patient to go home the same day of the surgery."

She added, "Open surgery such as a hysterectomy usually requires six to eight weeks of recovery time and a three-day hospital stay. Women from all over the world are coming in to have the LAAM surgery done. We also offer a travel program for patients traveling from long distances who are having GYN surgery to make their travel as seamless as possible."

Dr. Danilyants wants women to know about LAAM-BUAO and other treatment options.

"It's wonderful to see a patient's face light up when they find out they do have options outside of a hysterectomy," said Dr. Danilyants. "The LAAM surgery improves their quality of life. Seeing women so happy, and with a new outlook on life is great."

To learn more about The Center for Innovative GYN Care and the LAAM-BUAO technique, visit <http://innovativegyn.com/>.

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BGE to collaborate with Power52 to increase access to solar energy for low income customers



Baltimore— In an effort to provide low-income residents of the Baltimore area with access to renewable energy sources, Baltimore Gas and Electric (BGE) is seeking to develop a community solar facility. With this development, BGE would be able to offer an innovative bill assistance program by providing the benefits of the solar energy generated by the facility to program participants. The company estimates participants could save approximately \$28 a month on their electric bills. BGE is requesting approval from the Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC) to move forward with the project and the bill assistance program. The proposed solar facility would be constructed and maintained by Power52, a recently formed company based in Maryland.

“BGE and Power52 share many of the same goals, including creating opportunities for customers to benefit from renewable energy regardless of income, providing options for lowering bills and ultimately spurring economic development in Maryland,” said BGE Chief Executive Officer Calvin G. Butler Jr. “We look forward to the benefits this solar project will bring to our region.”

Power52 was established to develop renewable energy projects that reduce the cost of energy for low-income communities and families.

“Working with BGE on this community solar initiative will help educate people on how to reduce their energy bills,” said Rob Wallace, the company’s president and chief executive officer.

“This project will also provide construction jobs and long-term employment opportunities, which is part of our mission,” continued Ray Lewis, founding partner and vice president of Power52.

The collaboration supports BGE and parent company Exelon’s commitment to advancing clean energy resources. While more than 10,000 BGE customers are currently participating in rooftop solar energy, only a small percentage are customers with low incomes. If the proposed community solar facility is approved and completed in 2016, customers will be able to begin participating in the bill savings program in early 2017. Participants would be selected from a base of customers who receive energy assistance through the Office of Home Energy Programs (OHEP). To learn more about BGE’s energy assistance programs, visit bge.com

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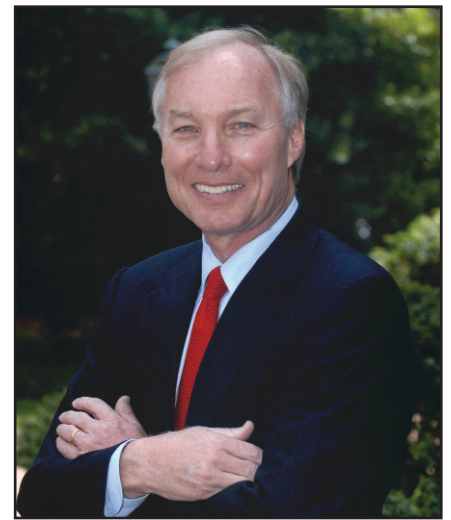
New legislation proposed to enhance protections against fraudulent tax claims, identity theft

Annapolis— Maryland Comptroller Peter Franchot announced his plans to introduce legislation in January called, “The Taxpayer Protection Act” to better protect Maryland taxpayers from tax fraud and identity theft at a roundtable discussion with media on Tuesday, December 1, 2015 in the Assembly Room of the Louis L. Goldstein Treasury Building in Annapolis. He later spoke to the Maryland Association of Certified Public Accountants at their annual luncheon in Baltimore where the proposed legislation was the main focus of his remarks.

“The Taxpayer Protection Act will improve our ability to prevent tax fraud, to expand our efforts to protect taxpayer information and to increase the authority of our field enforcement agents to effectively hold fraudulent filers and preparers accountable,” said Comptroller Franchot. “The new legislation will strengthen my agency’s ability to enforce Maryland’s Tax Code and protect Maryland taxpayers.”

Since taking office in 2007, the Comptroller’s Office has stopped nearly \$152 million in tax fraud. The proposed legislation will enhance the tools available to the Comptroller and his staff of highly skilled tax and enforcement professionals to detect and prevent tax fraud. Among the key provisions of the legislation are to make major tax crimes a felony and to extend the statute of limitations for tax crimes to six years from the current three years to allow sufficient time to properly investigate and charge in fraud cases in what are commonly highly sophisticated schemes.

“The Taxpayer Protection Act is absolutely critical to protect Maryland taxpayers and to combat fraud, and I am calling on my colleagues in the General Assembly to pass this critical piece of legislation in the next session,” Franchot said. “Passage of this act will allow my



*Comptroller Peter Franchot
Courtesy Photo*

agency to keep pace with rapidly-increasing fraud schemes and fast-changing threats to sensitive data.”

The bill also will:

- Change major criminal tax offenses to felony charges from misdemeanors.
- Add a fraudulent return preparer penalty.
- Make it a felony for anyone to try to evade or defeat any tax imposed under the Tax General Article and impose a penalty upon conviction of the offense.
- Provide legal authority to issue injunctions against preparers under investigation for fraud to protect consumers while investigations are ongoing.

The introduction of The Taxpayer Protection Act is just the latest in a series of actions that Comptroller Franchot has taken to combat fraud. During the past nine years, the Comptroller’s Office has made unprecedented investments in dedicated personnel and advanced technology to detect and prevent tax fraud. Earlier this month, the Comptroller signed a Memorandum of Understanding in collaboration with the Internal Revenue Service, State Departments of Revenue, Tax Industry Electronic Return Transmission and related financial service organizations to protect taxpayers from the burdens associated with identity theft and refund fraud.

“As Comptroller, my top priority is to make sure that everyone is playing by the rules and paying their fair share, and to aggressively go after those who don’t.”

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