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Baltimore Native Soprano Adia Evans wins 2026 George London Award



Soprano Adia Evans, a proud Baltimore native and alumna of the Baltimore School for the Arts, has been named a 2026 George London Award winner—one of six singers to receive the competition's top \$12,000 prize at the 54th annual George and Nora London Foundation for Singers Competition. The awards were announced February 20, 2026 at Merkin Hall at Kaufman Music Center in New York City. (See article on page 2) Photo credit: Beth Bergman



Baltimore Native Soprano Adia Evans Wins 2026 George London Award



George and Nora London Foundation President John Hauser, fourth from right, and pianist John Arida (fourth from left, with 2026 George London Award winners (left to right) Korin Thomas-Smith, Nicholas Newton, Trevor Haumschilt-Rocha, Tiffany Choe, Adia Evans, and Anna Thompson Photo credit: Beth Bergman

Baltimore's classical music community has a new reason to celebrate. Soprano Adia Evans, a proud Baltimore native and alumna of the Baltimore School for the Arts, has been named a 2026 George London Award winner—one of six singers to receive the competition's top \$12,000 prize at the 54th annual George and Nora London Foundation for Singers Competition.

The awards were announced February 20, 2026 at Merkin Hall at Kaufman Music Center in New York City, following the competition's final round. Evans, 32, was selected from a pool of 180 applicants representing some of the most promising young opera singers across the United States and Canada.

A total of \$80,000 in awards was distributed this year. Of the ten finalists who performed at Merkin Hall, six were named George London Award winners, each receiving \$12,000. The remaining finalists were honored with Encouragement Awards of \$2,000 each.

Evans performed "Es gibt ein Reich" from Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos*, earning the George London Award in memory of Leonie Rysanek, sponsored by Thurmond

Smithgall. Her performance is now available for public viewing on YouTube.

Continuing a Story of Excellence

Earlier this month, *The Baltimore Times* highlighted Evans' artistic journey in a February 12, 2026 feature that explored her Baltimore roots, rigorous training, and rising national profile. At the time, her momentum was already undeniable. Just days later, that promise translated into one of opera's most prestigious honors.

This latest achievement builds upon the foundation outlined in our previous coverage—one marked by discipline, competition success, and standout performances with major opera institutions. The George London Award not only affirms her vocal brilliance but positions her among an elite lineage of singers whose careers have accelerated onto international stages.

A Rising Voice on the National Stage

Currently a second-year soprano in Lyric Opera of Chicago's prestigious Ryan Opera Center, Evans continues to expand her artistic reach. During Lyric's 2024–25 season, she appeared in productions of *The Listeners*, *Blue*, and *Rigoletto*. She is slated to appear in the

company's 2025–26 production of *El último sueño de Frida y Diego*.

Her performance credits also include engagements with Santa Fe Opera, the Merola Opera Program, Fort Worth Opera, Opera Columbus, Tulsa Opera, and Knoxville Opera.

A graduate of University of Maryland, College Park and the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Evans holds both Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Music. Her master's work was completed as part of the Knoxville Opera Studio.

Her competition résumé is equally impressive. She was a semifinalist at Barcelona's *Concours Tenor Viñas*, a 2025 Lola Fletcher Award winner from the American Opera Society of Chicago, and a recipient of the 2024 Richard F. Gold Career Grant from the Shoshana Foundation. She also earned Third Place in the Midwest Region of the 2024 Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition and First Place in the 2023 Dallas Opera Lonestar Vocal Competition.

A Prestigious Legacy

Since 1971, the George and Nora London Foundation has awarded more than 300 grants totaling over \$2 million

to emerging opera artists. Past winners include celebrated voices such as Renée Fleming, Joyce DiDonato, Dawn Upshaw, and Ryan Speedo Green.

As *The New York Times* has noted, the competition has long served as a "springboard for major careers in opera."

The foundation was established by legendary bass-baritone George London and his wife, Nora London, to support and nurture the next generation of opera talent.

Baltimore's Cultural Pride

For Baltimore, Evans' win is more than an individual milestone—it is a reflection of the city's enduring investment in arts education and creative excellence. From the halls of the Baltimore School for the Arts to one of the most respected opera competitions in North America, her journey exemplifies the power of preparation meeting opportunity.

As *The Baltimore Times* continues to follow her ascent, one thing is clear: Adia Evans' voice is not only resonating in major concert halls—it is carrying the pride of Baltimore with it.



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Two African American Trailblazers, Saving Lives and Redefining the Wearable Tech Industry

By **Karen Clay**

Clay Technology and Multimedia, L.L.C.

In this week's article, I am taking a bit of a detour away from a security focus to highlight two individuals making their mark in the wearable technology space. Technology has advanced in so many ways and across so many facets of our lives that we now see its impact even in the world of wearable technology. When most of us think about wearable technology, we picture a smartwatch counting steps or tracking sleep. But for Shawn Springs and Dr. Amanda Watson, wearables are about something more urgent. Their innovations point to a future where what we wear doesn't just measure our lives, but also helps preserve it.

From the Gridiron to Impact Science

Shawn Springs is widely known as an NFL defensive back who played 13 seasons for the Seattle Seahawks, (the former) Washington Redskins, and the New England Patriots. His post-football career, however, has been shaped by a mission that grew from the repeated impacts, mounting concern about brain injuries, and the long-term risks associated with head trauma he witnessed playing the sport.

That concern became personal and concrete in two ways: Springs was affected by the death of teammate Junior Seau, who suffered from chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), and his experience of a frightening car accident involving his sons that left a lasting impression. He noted that the car was totaled, but his children were largely unharmed because of how effectively their car seats absorbed and redirected crash forces. Springs began asking a simple, powerful question. If safety technology could disperse impact

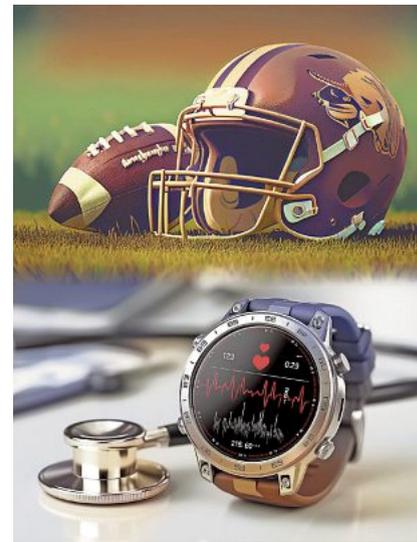
energy so well for children in a car, why couldn't protective sports gear do more for athletes on a field?

In 2011, Springs founded Windpact and developed "Crash Cloud" technology, a self-recovering, airbag-like padding system designed to absorb and disperse impact energy inside helmets. Unlike standard foam that compresses and stays compressed, Crash Cloud pads are designed to expand and contract dynamically with repeated blows, reducing the force transferred through the helmet. The technology was patented in 2014 and has been positioned for broader use beyond football, including military helmets, construction safety equipment, and even automotive applications.

Springs' work has earned a notable place in American innovation history in that the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History acquired original Crash Cloud prototypes for its permanent collection. His contribution underscores a key theme in modern wearable tech: sometimes the most meaningful "smart" design is the one you hope never needs to prove itself except when it matters most.

A Clinic on the Wrist

If Springs focuses on protection from the outside in, Dr. Amanda Watson is building wearables that work from the inside out by turning the wrist into a platform for precision health. Dr. Watson is an assistant professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering and Computer Science at the University of Virginia, as well as co-founder and CEO of Luminosity Wearables. Her aim is what she describes as "a clinic on the wrist," a smartwatch-like device designed to continuously monitor biomarkers such as glucose, lactate, cortisol, blood pressure, and even macronutrients, without needles.



Wearable technology is poised to save lives and improve health outcomes.

Graphic design by Karen Clay



*Karen Clay,
Clay Technology and Multimedia*

Courtesy, Karen Clay

At the center of Dr. Watson's approach is a technology called wearable optical absorption spectroscopy, which analyzes how light at different wavelengths moves through and reflects off the skin. By interpreting those optical signals, the device is designed to generate a real-time biochemical profile of the wearer. Her first product, Lumos, is a wearable spectroscopy sensor co-developed during her postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania's PRECISE Center. The promise is especially significant for chronic-condition management, such as noninvasive glucose monitoring, for example, which could reduce or eliminate the need for frequent finger-prick testing for many people with diabetes.

Dr. Watson's work also reflects a broader shift in wearables toward medically meaningful signals that can support earlier detection and more personalized interventions. Her lab is also exploring additional uses such as

opioid overdose detection, ACL injury prediction, and a vibrotactile shirt to support navigation for people with visual impairments. Her research has been recognized with major honors, including a DARPA Young Faculty Award.

Different Paths, Shared Purpose

While Springs and Dr. Watson arrived at wearable tech through very different doors (one through elite athletics and the realities of impact, and the other through engineering research and biosensing innovation). Their motivations have converged on the shared purpose of wearable technology being human-centered and preventive, thereby reducing harm and improving outcomes before problems become crises. As this field matures, the most powerful wearables may be those that quietly prevent injuries, flagging hidden health risks earlier, and making high-quality monitoring more accessible.

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Commentary

Economic empowerment has always been a part of Black History

By **Louis J. King II**,
President & CEO, OIC of America

As we celebrate the 100th anniversary of Black History Month, I'm reflecting on the century of economic volatility and roadblocks that have often defined the experiences of disenfranchised communities. Our collective legacy is marked by resilience in overcoming the economic challenges faced while pursuing the American dream.

For the last 50 years, many have pushed a single narrative: success can only come from a four-year college degree. While this opened the pathway to education, access, and wealth creation, this singular focus doesn't consider the varied ways people work to make our world move and operate. That path doesn't fit everyone, and it doesn't have to. Check the news: the best-kept secret is out, and it is a career in the trades.

Starting a career in the skilled trades now means entering an industry with financially rewarding, in-demand careers that are essential to the future of our economy. Skilled trades — like construction, plumbing, electrical work, carpentry, masonry, and HVAC — are not only in high demand, but they're also recession-resistant. As America rebuilds its infrastructure, provides disaster relief efforts, and moves toward a greener economy, these trades are leading the charge. And at OICA, we are building America's workforce to rebuild America by enrolling thousands of people per year to start their careers in the skilled trades.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than 500,000 skilled trade workers are needed every year to fill openings. And with

roughly 40% of skilled trades workers expected to retire in the next decade, the demand will continue to grow and more pathways to the middle class will open up. These are careers that can't be outsourced and that AI won't replace. They require technical know-how, problem-solving skills, and hands-on training. Another pathway to build a financially stable life.

At OIC of America, along with our affiliates across the country, we're working to dismantle the negative assumptions around vocational careers and open doors for young people and adults alike to explore these life-changing opportunities. We're also making sure women, returning citizens, multicultural and multigenerational folks are at the table — and in the field — where these good-paying jobs are waiting. By 2030, we're on track to place over 50,000 people in the skilled trades per year — a pivot that opens up a world of economic potential they were previously locked out of.

A career in the skilled trades is not just about working with your hands. It's about building an economic future — for yourself, your family, and your



Louis King
Courtesy photo

community. In my view, that's truly one of the best ways to honor the legacy of Black History Month. For more information or to be connected to a training program near you, visit www.oicofamerica.org.

Food, Labor, and Black Women's Bodies as Living Archives

By Michelle Petties

Black History Month asks us to remember. But remembrance is not only about names and milestones. It is also about what our bodies have carried.

For Black women, food has never been just food. It is history, labor, survival, creativity, and, too often, blame.

Last September, in Atlanta, at the Association for the Study of African American Life and History conference, I presented research on the theme of *African Americans and Labor*. The conversation made one truth clear: the way Black women cook, eat, nurture, and carry weight cannot be separated from the work we have done for generations.

From plantation kitchens to modern service industries, Black women have fed this nation while often being denied nourishment ourselves. We prepared meals we could not sit down to eat, stretched limited resources to sustain families, and turned scraps into traditions now celebrated as American cuisine. Our culinary legacy is brilliance born of constraint.

Food was labor. Food was survival. Food was control.

That history did not disappear—it adapted.

Today, Black women remain overrepresented in caregiving and food-related labor while also carrying the invisible work of nurturing families, communities, and institutions. We are praised for being strong, yet that strength often requires silence. We are expected to endure stress, grief, and exhaustion without rest.

Our bodies hold that record.

High rates of diet-related illness, chronic stress, and weight stigma among Black women are frequently discussed without context, as if they are personal failures rather than the cumulative

effects of history, labor, limited access, targeted marketing, and healthcare bias. When the solution offered is simply “eat better,” it erases the structural realities that shape our daily choices and our health.

To study Black history is to study labor. To study labor is to study the body. And for Black women, the body is an archive.

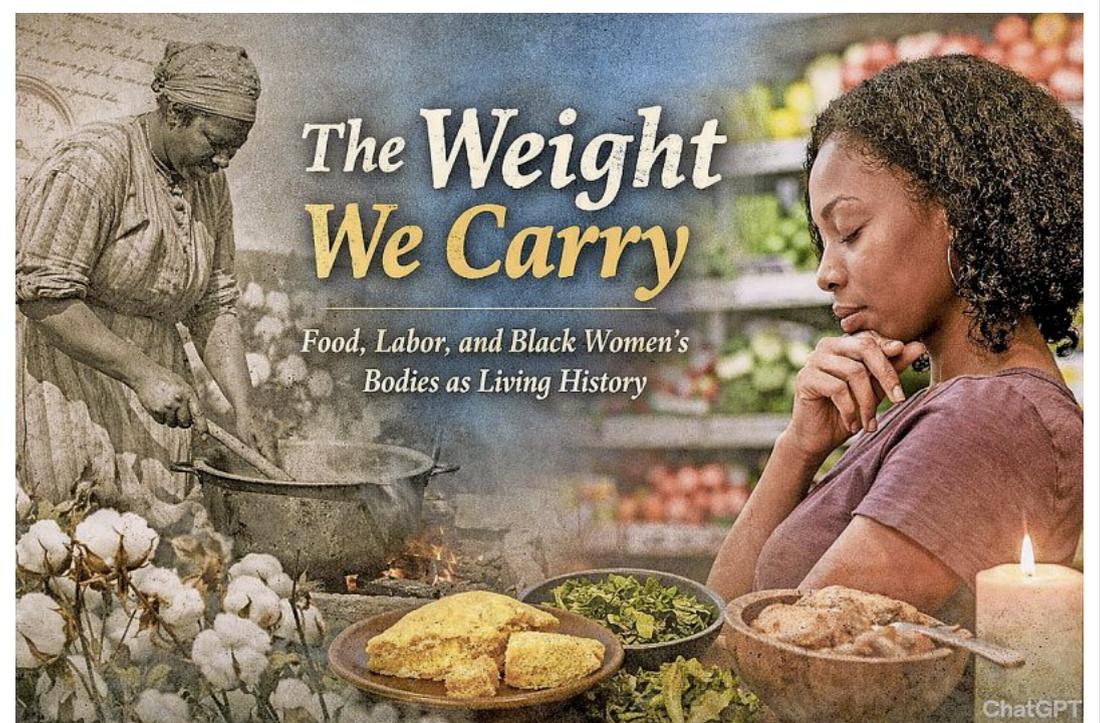
It remembers standing over hot stoves for hours. It remembers feeding others first. It remembers using food as comfort when rest was not available. The memory of being praised for our strength but rarely protected in our vulnerability.

Understanding this is not about making excuses. It is about telling the truth.

When we place how we manage food inside its historical and cultural context, shame begins to loosen. We move from self-blame to systems, from isolation to collective understanding. We begin to ask a different question: not “What is wrong with my body?” but “What has my body been carrying?”

That question is an act of self-love.

Self-love, in this context, is not indulgence. It is the radical practice of recognizing that our bodies reflect generations of labor without rest and care without reciprocity. It is honoring the ingenuity that turned scarcity into sustenance while also refusing to normalize exhaustion as our inheritance.



AI Generated

This is why I created *The Weight We Carry*, a research-based resource that gives language to what so many Black women have felt but were never taught to name. It connects the historical roots of food and labor to our present-day experiences and reframes our stories from personal failure to historical reality.

Addressing the heavy weight of our history with food is not about fixing our bodies. It is about understanding them with compassion and context.

Black History Month is a time to honor legacy. Part of that legacy lives in our kitchens, our caregiving, our survival strategies, and our health. When we examine that history honestly, we reclaim power over narratives that have long defined us without our consent.

Our bodies are not problems to be solved. They are living records of labor, love, and resilience.

And when we listen to them with truth, we practice a form of self-love that is as revolutionary as any movement that came before us.

Michelle Petties is a TEDx speaker, Food Story coach, and award-winning memoirist whose work explores the intersection of food, trauma, culture, and healing. After gaining and losing 700 pounds, Michelle discovered the secret to overcoming stress and emotional overeating. Her free workbook, *Mind Over Meals*, reveals her core principles for losing weight and keeping it off. She is available to customize *The Weight We Carry* workshop for churches, sororities, civic organizations, and community groups.

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HOST



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In a Watched City: The Baltimore Black Panther Party

By Dr. S. Rasheem

The Baltimore Black Panther Party was founded in 1968 by Warren Hart, a figure later revealed as an informant for the F.B.I. and the National Security Agency. He not only surveilled them, but he also encouraged them to commit crimes. His exposure began as Marshall “Eddie” Conway, and other Panthers began to notice discrepancies. Hart was the first of many informants. Baltimore’s Panthers operated under intense scrutiny from the outset. When Hart fled, he was replaced by John Clark, who was regularly harassed and jailed. Steve McCutchen, who was about 19 at the time of joining the Panthers, was the lieutenant of information and supported efforts to get Clark released, until he himself was jailed.

Because Maryland law prohibited the open carrying of firearms, the Baltimore chapter never adopted the armed police patrols that became synonymous with the Panthers elsewhere. Instead, they turned inward, embedding themselves deeply in neighborhood life. They organized free breakfast and lunch programs at Martin de Porres Catholic Church, feeding up to two hundred children a day. They opened a free medical clinic staffed by volunteer doctors and nurses from Johns Hopkins. They escorted sick residents to social services offices, intervened in eviction cases, and even offered free dry cleaning.

The Baltimore Panthers built an organization that looked less like a paramilitary outfit and more like a mutual-aid society under siege. The membership was overwhelmingly working class—high-school graduates employed in the city’s service and industrial sectors. Paul Coates, who started off as a community volunteer at the age of 22, after serving nineteen months in Vietnam, later became a member and co-founded the George Jackson Prison Movement.

The intention was twofold to develop a jobs program for returning citizens and provide books—many out of print and hard to acquire—to folks in prison. VP of Baltimore Brothers, Bilal Rahman recalls,

“that’s my first job. When I came home,.. Yeah, I’m a printer by trade. I got that trade out of prison, came home and started printing all his books down there. Yeah, yeah, definitely. I met so many authors... Paul Coates was my first boss at Black Classic Press. I was referred to him by my mentor, Eddie Conway,... He mentored me for years while I was incarcerated, and he knew that I worked in the printing shop while we was incarcerated, so he referred me to Paul Coates so that I could actually get down there. And, you know, print books with him, one of the best jobs that I had.”

While this aspect of the effort was short-lived, The Black Book—later to become Black Classic Press—has left a living legacy right here in Baltimore, a Black-owned publishing company that has printed over 4 million books by Black authors worldwide.

The party held regular political-education classes. Children attended “liberation lessons,” learning Black history and political consciousness alongside basic skills. To J. Edgar Hoover and local police, these programs were evidence of indoctrination; to parents,

they were often the only reliable source of food, care, and affirmation available.

The Panthers persisted, extending their organizing into labor struggles, including efforts to unionize incarcerated workers and to support Black employees at the Social Security Administration. They operated alongside a constellation of other reformist spaces—the Peace Action Center, Viva House, the federally funded Model Cities program—each attempting, in its own way, to address the failures of the urban state.

The Baltimore Black Panther Party disbanded in 1972. By then, many of the Panthers’ initiatives had either been absorbed by nonprofits or extinguished by austerity and repression.

Baltimore’s Panthers complicate the easy narratives. They were

neither reckless radicals nor romantic revolutionaries. They were pragmatic idealists, adapting to legal constraints, financial scarcity, and relentless surveillance while insisting that political struggle began with feeding children and keeping neighbors housed.

Their story is a reminder that grassroots movements are most vulnerable where they are most necessary and that the state’s gaze has often been sharpest when Black communities attempt to govern themselves. For organizers today, working without the insulation of wealth or patronage, Baltimore’s Panthers offer both a model and a warning: that meaningful change is built locally, sustained collectively, and contested at every step.



Baltimore Black Panther Party
Courtesy of Maryland Center for History and Culture

Black History Spotlight on Pullman Porters

Granddaughter Uncovers a Valuable Piece of Black History

By Andrea Blackstone

Michelle Williams Fisher, a native New Yorker who relocated to Baltimore about 22 years ago, typically enjoys hobbies such as listening to music, traveling, and exploring astronomy. However, months ago she embarked upon a new journey to learn more about her family history. Williams Fisher was drawn to learn more about her maternal grandfather, Harry W. Scott, Sr.

“He was born in Fredericks Hall, Virginia, on March 15, 1894, and died on April 14, 1963,” Williams Fisher explained. “Unfortunately, I have very little of my own memories of my grandfather because I was only a toddler at the time he was living, but family stories have provided lots of knowledge on the man that my grandfather was.”

Williams Fisher became more curious about her family history as she grew older.

“I wanted to learn more about my grandfather, who worked and retired after many years (38 years) as a railroad employee.”

An Interesting Revelation

It turned out that Scott worked as a Pullman porter with the Pullman Company. He was among the Black men hired by railroads as porters on sleeping cars after the Civil War. Porters were attendants who lugged baggage, shined shoes, received telegrams, worked in the dining cars, and served passengers in various capacities. Chicago businessman George M. Pullman had the idea of having Black men serve white passengers traveling across the country on his company’s luxury railroad sleeping cars, providing a high level of service. These first-class travelers chose to upgrade from coach to sleeping-car accommodation on long-distance passenger trains.



Michelle Williams Fisher is on a mission to preserve her family history.

The Significance of Pullman Porters

According to History.com (<https://www.history.com/articles/pullman-porters>), “the first Pullman porter began working aboard the sleeper cars around 1867, and quickly became a fixture of the company’s sought-after traveling experience. Just as all of his specially trained conductors were white, Pullman recruited only Black men, many of them from the former slave states in the South, to work as porters.”

Pullman porters endured long days with little sleep. Under the leadership of A. Philip Randolph, Pullman porters formed the first all-black union known as the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, in 1925.

“A. Phillip Randolph and the Pullman porters had such a cultural and historical impact on history,” Williams Fisher said. “They helped to forge the Black Middle Class.”



Michelle Williams Fisher’s maternal grandparents, Harry W. Scott (left) and his wife, Jeannette Scott. Photos courtesy of Michelle Williams Fisher

Scott, Harry W.		1 727 210	1
(Surname)	(Christian name)	(Army serial number)	* White * Colored.
42 W 137 St New York		NEW YORK	(State)
(Street and house number)		(Town or city)	(County)
* Enlisted * U. S. * N. G. * E. R. * Inducted		Y	1917
Place of birth: Fredericks Hall Va		Age or date of birth: 23 9/12	yr
Organizations served in, with dates of assignments and transfers:			
Co C 367 Inf in dish			
Grades, with date of appointment:			
Cvt Feb 1/19			
Engagements:			
Wounds or other injuries received in action: None			
Served overseas from June 10/18 to Feb 1/19			
Honorably discharged on demobilization Feb 10 1919			
In view of occupation he was, on date of discharge, reported 0 per cent disabled.			
Remarks:			
Form No. 724 I. A. G. O. * Strike out words not applicable. * Dates of departure from and arrival in the U. S. Nov. 22, 1919.			

Harry W. Scott, Sr.'s WWI Service Card

See History on page 12

Organ Donor Advocate Helps Mobilize Teens to Sign Up as Donors, Empower His Generation to Act

By **Andrea Blackstone**

Organ donation need not be a taboo topic; parents can include their teens in discussions about it. “More than 2,100 children under the age of 19 are in need of organ transplants,” according to Mid-America Transplant. (<https://www.midamericatransplant.org/news/the-most-frequently-asked-questions-about-pediatric-transplants>) This reality underscores the need to discuss organ donation more with people of all ages.

Liam Horner, 20, was first introduced to the topic of organ donation by his father, a firefighter. When his mother, Lisa Spicknall, began working for Donate Life Maryland (DLM), Horner was fully introduced to the topic of organ donation.

“I then, in my junior year of high school, had the opportunity to intern with the organ procurement organization for Maryland, Infinite Legacy,” Horner recalled.

He wishes more parents would discuss the topic of organ donation. They can save more lives than they realize by becoming an organ donor, according to Horner.

“One organ donor can save up to eight lives with organ donation and enhance up to 75 more with tissue donation,” he said. “By signing up as an organ donor, we are helping each other.”

Spicknall, the Executive Director of Donate Life Maryland, shared the organ donation process with Horner, how myths and misconceptions can cause fear among people asked to be organ donors, and why becoming an organ donor is important. Since Horner’s mother is an advocate for organ donation, her ability to educate and share information is key.

“As a family, we have always been very open about various topics, including organ donation. Ensuring Liam is educated, especially about donation myths and misconceptions, is important. Liam has always been very receptive and open to communicating. He asked many questions about the process and the importance of donation. These conversations have empowered Liam to have confidence in his decision to become an organ donor and to help advocate for organ donation,” Spicknall shared.

Horner signed up to become an organ donor when he obtained his learner’s permit at age 15 and 9 months, which is the legal age in Maryland to sign up to be an organ donor. “Luckily, I was educated when I got my learner’s permit as the agent at the MVA was unaware that teens could sign up as an organ donor before they were 18,” Horner stated. He added, “When you are asked at the MVA, ‘Do you wish to be an organ donor?’ teens are missing out on the gift of helping others, due to the lack of education. Generally, the first exposure teens have to organ donation is at 15 and 9 months, at the MVA. The impact teens may have on others is more tremendous than they realize. Education is key to ensuring teens understand the impact and importance of organ donation.”

Conversations about deceased donors do not scare Horner.

“What is scary is the over 100,000 people on the waitlist that may die optimistically waiting for that lifesaving organ transplant,” he shared. Horner remains motivated to share factual information about organ donation with friends who want him to clarify information, especially when they discover where his mother works.



Liam Horner

“My friends have asked questions about who can be a donor, how the process works, and we have discussed myths and misconceptions surrounding organ donation, specifically if doctors and first responders will save people if they are organ donors. I have had conversations with my friends that doctors and first responders have no idea if someone is an organ donor. Even if it is on your license, they are not checking that; it has to be checked by either Donate Life or the organ procurement organization, and that they do everything they can to save you,” Horner said. Horner stressed that teens can help others by signing up to donate when they start driving.

“That very same kindness may be returned to you in the future. We never know what will happen to us,



Lisa Spicknall the Executive Director of Donate Life Maryland; Delegate Stuart Schmidt, Jr., Dist. District 33, Anne Arundel County; and Liam Horner.

Photos courtesy of Lisa Spicknall

and if we may be the one in need of an organ transplant,” said Horner. “Organ donation is giving the gift of life to someone who is in need. It is the ultimate act of charity for everyone involved.” Register to join Marylanders who have already said “yes” to designating as an organ, eye and tissue donor. Visit <https://www.donatelifemaryland.org/how-to-register> to learn more about Donate Life Maryland and the process of becoming a donor.

Entrepreneur Includes Heart Advocacy, Women's Wellness in Social Media Content Creation, Comedy

By **Andrea Blackstone**

According to the CDC, “Over 60 million women (44%) in the United States are living with some form of heart disease. Heart disease is the leading cause of death for women in the United States and can affect women at any age.” <https://www.cdc.gov/heart-disease/about/women-and-heart-disease.html>

ShantaQuilette Carter-Williams (“Dr. Q”), PhD, MBA, is on a mission to amplify the voices of women who are often dismissed in healthcare spaces.

“Through humor, storytelling, and education, I work to close gaps in heart health, stroke awareness, and women’s health equity so people can advocate for themselves before a crisis occurs,” said ShantaQuilette, the founder of Quiddity Media and Entertainment, SQ Develle Enterprises LLC, and Girl B Natural.

Before entering health advocacy and media spaces, the now award-winning health equity advocate, comedian, author, globally recognized speaker, and executive producer spent years in federal service working in forensic accounting and compliance. Her life shifted after surviving a heart attack and multiple strokes following years of misdiagnosis.

“That experience transformed my purpose and led me to build a platform rooted in truth, education, humor, and healing,” ShantaQuilette explained. “I was misdiagnosed for nearly eight years. During that time, I repeatedly sought medical care because I knew something was wrong. I was told I was stressed, overworked, anxious, or simply doing too much. No one identified the underlying cardiovascular disease that was developing. That

prolonged dismissal delayed treatment and ultimately led to serious cardiac and neurological events.”

ShantaQuilette mentioned that her symptoms were subtle but persistent. They included extreme fatigue; shortness of breath; chest discomfort that did not present as sharp pain; brain fog; dizziness; and an overall sense that her body was not functioning properly.

“Because these symptoms did not match the typical male-centered heart attack narrative, they were repeatedly minimized,” she added.

ShantaQuilette’s heart health was directly connected to her strokes. She later learned that she had an undiagnosed, preexisting cardiovascular condition.

“I was eventually diagnosed with ASCVD, or atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease, which was related to long-standing cholesterol issues that were not properly addressed. I did not present with classic high blood pressure warning signs, which contributed to delayed recognition and intervention.”

ShantaQuilette’s recovery was extensive and ongoing. The stroke impacted her mobility, speech, stamina, and cognitive processing. Recovery required rehabilitation and long-term lifestyle adjustments. Ultimately, it led to her retirement from the IRS because her health and healing had to become her priority.

“Under medical supervision, I made significant lifestyle changes. I lost over 160 pounds, which was a critical part of improving my cardiovascular health. I addressed cholesterol through dietary changes, reduced sodium and processed foods, eliminated alcohol, incorporated consistent movement, and

focused on stress reduction and rest. These changes were guided by doctors who finally listened and treated my health comprehensively,” she added.

She became interested in heart health or women’s health equity, and her advocacy is rooted in lived experience.

“I realized that many women, particularly Black women, experience the same medical dismissal I faced. I became committed to using my voice, platform, and expertise to educate, advocate, and push for equity in diagnosis, treatment, and prevention. However, prior to that, I was focused on metastatic breast cancer through my nonprofit, the Pink Peppermint Project.”

However, ShantaQuilette became involved with the American Heart Association through her advocacy, speaking engagements, and community-based education on heart disease and stroke awareness.

“As a member of the Board of Advisors Committee, I provide patient-centered insight, help shape culturally responsive education strategies, and advocate for equitable messaging that reflects real-world experiences of women and underserved communities,” she stated.

When ShantaQuilette attempted to figure out what was wrong with her health, she wished that she had known that heart disease in women often presents quietly.

“I did not know that fatigue, brain fog, and subtle discomfort could signal serious cardiovascular disease. Most importantly, I did not know that being dismissed was a systemic issue and not a personal failure. It’s also important to know your family history.”

Today, ShantaQuilette’s health is stable and actively managed. She



ShantaQuilette Carter-Williams, PhD, MBA, an award-winning health equity advocate wants people to know that heart disease does not always look dramatic, loud, or obvious. Photo by Tavia Whitlow

remains connected to her medical team, lives intentionally, and prioritizes prevention. ShantaQuilette educates people through digital platforms, global speaking engagements, panels, conferences, and community conversations.

“On @heyshantaqtv (<https://www.youtube.com/@heyshantaq8213>), I combine humor, storytelling, and education to discuss heart disease, stroke warning signs, and health disparities in a way that is relatable and empowering.”

She added, “I am grateful to be alive and able to advocate for others.”

Learn more about ShantaQuilette via <https://www.HeyShantaQ.com> and follow her on Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/heyshantaq>.

History

continued from page 9

“Between 1870 and 1969, Pullman attached its sleeping cars to nearly every train that traveled over all or a portion of its route at night. At its peak in 1929, the company’s fleet of cars could sleep over 150,000 passengers each night. The system comprised 71 different contract railroads and over 115,000 miles of track nationwide,” the Museum of the American Railroad reported. (<https://www.historictrains.org/collection/philippe-9z32w>)

A Determined Granddaughter Researches Her Family History

“I am thrilled to say that my research paid off,” Williams Fisher shared.

She started her research about her grandfather’s work life by contacting research libraries, including The Newberry Library in Chicago; the B&O Railroad; Len Resto (President of the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western

Railroad Company/Society) and Wes Coates (a member); Ancestry.com; and author Larry Tye (“Rising From The Rails”) who advised her that she should “go back and ask the Newberry Library, to search again for additional documents.” Jo Ellen McKillop, a reference librarian who works at The Newberry Library, sent Scott’s Pullman Porter work documents to Williams Fisher.

Scott, a WWI U.S. Army veteran, was employed as a Pullman Porter from July 1, 1921, to August 27, 1959. He worked on the Hoboken, New Jersey Railroad line. Through her research, Williams Fisher also obtained several documents, including Scott’s U.S. Army Registration Card, a Pullman Company time card, railroad retirement papers, Pullman Company insurance papers, pension information, and a Social Security application.

“My grandfather retired from The Pullman Company in 1959, after 38 years of dedicated service,” Williams Fisher stated.

Scott owned property and homes in Queens, New York, and also in New York State.

Keep Hope Alive

Williams Fisher’s research was not an easy task because the Pullman Company ceased its U.S. operations on December 31, 1968, and was dissolved on January 1, 1969. She discovered that the historic Pullman administration building and many records were destroyed in a fire.

“I am also told that there are some additional Pullman Company boxed information, perhaps records that are still intact, and they will be released at some later time in the future to The Newberry Library,” Williams Fisher stated. “I am still hoping that a picture of my grandfather in his Pullman Uniform will be found.”

The Lesson

More stories like Harry W. Scott, Sr.’s, beg to be told. The contributions of family members should be preserved before it is too late to capture it. Williams Fisher encourages others to dig for unknown family information.

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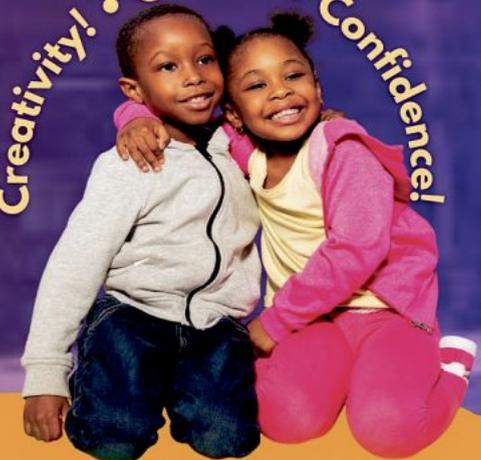
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Rambling Rose



By: Rosa Pryor

Well, my dear friends, enjoy the memories of our Black History, and celebrate. The photos and the stories that go with them. You know these photos are from Rosa Pryor's Archives and you can see the with story to go with them in her 2nd book, entitled "AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY, HISTORY & ENTERTAINMENT IN MARYLAND" in all of the Barnes & Nobel Book Stores and on Amazon.

I have to go now, I am out of space, I hope you enjoy the college of photos. Remember, 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.

1. Andhi Rock, bassist and vocalist
2. Andy Ennis
3. Beretta Mercer
4. The Birdcage regular patrons
5. Blue Dotson & Wash Washington having cocktails in the Sphinx Club on Pennsylvania Avenue.
6. Brenda Alford renowned vocalist.
7. Arnold Sterling, renowned saxophonist.
8. The late Liz Byrd Figero
9. The late Harold Adams
10. The late DJ Sugar Chris
11. Donald Jackson & Sara Jackson at Roots Lounge.
12. Donald Green
13. Earlene Reed
14. Freddie Brown
15. William "Wash" Washington was manager of the Sphinx Club.
16. Patrons hanging out at the Blue Caribbean Lounge - Park Heights 1980s

17. Jimmy Early was the general manager of Black Satin Lounge
18. Judd Watkins, baritone singer
19. Reuben Armstrong, drummer
20. Ronald Hubcap & Rick Hite was the owner of the Frankford Lounge.
21. The Gladiators night club Members & patron on Mulberry Street in 1980
22. The Odyssey Lounge
23. Patrons at Roots Lounge 1980's.
24. "The Posie" at 20 Grand Night Club on Bowley's Land.
25. The Regulars at Dunkin's M&M Lounge in 1980's
26. The Saloon on Baltimore and Stricker Streets, Top left is the owner, "Butch"
27. William "Wash" Washington was manager of the Sphinx Club.
28. Tiny Tim Harris Singing at the Sportsmen Lounge.
29. The late Warren Gantt renowned musician.



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**CITY OF BALTIMORE
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
OFFICE OF ENGINEERING AND
CONSTRUCTION**

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 **SANITARY CONTRACT NO. 949RR-Stony Run Wastewater Pumping Station Upgrade and Brooklyn Wastewater Pumping Station Vacuum Priming System Modifications** will be received at the Office of the Comptroller, Room 204 City Hall, Baltimore, Maryland until 11:00 A.M on **April 15, 2026**. 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 Contract Documents may be examined, without charge, at 4 South Frederick Street Baltimore, Maryland 21202 on the 3rd Floor (410) 396-4041 as of **February 20, 2026** and copies may be purchased for a non-refundable cost of **\$118.00**. **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 OBC at 4 S Frederick St., 4th Floor, Baltimore, MD 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 **E13003-Water and/or Sewer Treatment Plants and Pumping Stations**. Cost Qualification Range for this work shall be **\$10,000,000.01 to \$15,000,000.**

To purchase a bid book, please make an electronic request at: <https://public-works.baltimorecity.gov/dpw-construction-projects-notice-letting> For further inquiries about purchasing bid documents please contact the assigned Contract Administrator Latonia Walston, Lwalston@baltimorecity.gov

****PLEASE EMAIL THE CONTRACT ADMINISTRATOR TO SCHEDULE A TIME TO PURCHASE/EXAMINE BID DOCUMENTS****

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A “Pre-Bidding Information” session will be conducted virtually via Microsoft Teams. Vendor can call 1-571-360-4685, Conference ID: 701 583 791# or Microsoft Teams Meeting ID: 266 364 695 939 83, Passcode: ef2Jz35t on **March 3, 2026 at 10:00 AM**. A Pre-Bid site visit will be conducted on **March 4, 2026. All questions from bidders must be submitted in writing to the Project Manager, Antonio Johnson, Antonio.johnson@baltimorecity.gov by April 6, 2026 at 5:00 PM.**

Principal items of work this project are:

- *Provision of new pumping units
- *Replacement of existing grinders, valves, and gates
- *Station bypass
- *Replacement and upgrade of HVAC equipment
- *Replacement of electrical equipment
- *Upgrades to the process controls
- *Automation of the station
- *Reconfiguration of the suction and discharge piping
- *Miscellaneous work as shown on the Contract Documents.

The overall MBE goal is **34%**
The WBE goal is **5%**

APPROVED:
Clerk, Board of Estimates

APPROVED:
Matthew W. Garbark
Director
Department of Public Works

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**CITY OF BALTIMORE
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
OFFICE OF ENGINEERING AND
CONSTRUCTION
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 **SANITARY CONTRACT NO. 1028R-Cleaning of the Outfall Interceptor** will be received at the Office of the Comptroller, Room 204 City Hall, Baltimore, Maryland until 11:00 A.M on **March 18, 2026**. Positively no bids will be received after 11:00 A.M. Bids will be publicly opened by the Board of Estimates and can be watched live on CharmTV’s cable channel

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25/1085HD; charmtvbaltimore.com/watch-live or listen in at (443) 984-1696 (ACCESS CODE: 0842939) from City Hall at Noon. The Contract Documents may be examined, without charge, at Contract Administration 4 South Frederick Street Baltimore, Maryland 21202 on the 3rd floor (410) 396-4041 as of **February 20, 2026** 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 OBC at 4 S Frederick St., 4th Floor, Baltimore, MD 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 **G90129 – Large Diameter Sewer Cleaning**. Cost Qualification Range for this work shall be **\$5,000,000.01 to \$10,000,000.00.**

To purchase a bid book, please make an electronic request at:

<https://publicworks.baltimorecity.gov/dpw-construction-projects-notice-letting> and _dpwbidopportunities@baltimorecity.gov. For further inquiries about purchasing bid documents, please contact the assigned Contract Administrator Amber Coles-Johnson (amber.coles-johnson@baltimorecity.gov)

****PLEASE EMAIL THE CONTRACT ADMINISTRATOR TO SCHEDULE A TIME TO PURCHASE/EXAMINE BID DOCUMENTS****

A “Pre-Bidding Information” session will be conducted via Microsoft Teams. Vendor can call 1 667-228-6519 Passcode: 689032354# on **March 4, 2026 at 10:00 AM**. All bid inquiries must be emailed to amber.coles-johnson@baltimorecity.gov and carlos.stephenson@baltimorecity.gov by the Q&A deadline of **March 11, 2026**. Questions received in writing and by the deadline will only be considered.

Principal items of work for this contract include, but are not limited to:

Approximately 31,300 linear feet of cleaning and inspection of interceptor sewer CCTV and Sonar Inspection
Approximately 7,000 tons of disposal of

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sanitary sewer debris
Approximately 58 manhole inspections

The MBE goal is **12%**
The WBE goal is **6%**

APPROVED:
Clerk, Board of Estimates

APPROVED:
Matthew Garbark
Director
Director of Public Works

Community

Maryland Freedom Caucus to Hold Press Conference with Congressman Andy Harris, MD

Energy Affordability in Maryland

Annapolis, MD — The Maryland Freedom Caucus (MDFC) will hold a press conference on Wednesday, February 25, 2026, at 12:30 p.m. with Congressman Andy Harris, MD, to discuss energy affordability and the MDFC 4-Part Plan to Lower Electric Bills Now.

WHERE:
House of Delegates Office
Building, Room 2
18, 6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

WHEN:
Wednesday, February 25, 2026
12:30 p.m.

WHO:
Congressman Andy Harris, MD;
Delegates Matt Morgan, Kathy Szeliga, Ryan Nawrocki, Lauren Arikan, Brian Chisholm, Mark Fisher, Robin Grammer



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