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Sorority Celebrates the 110th Anniversary with Annual Prayer Breakfast



Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. was founded on January 15, 1908. "Sisterhood: Leading with Amazing Grace and Providing Exemplary Service" was the theme of the Rho Xi Omega Chapter, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Annual Founder's Day Prayer Breakfast celebrating 110 years of service to the community recently. Members were recognized for achievements in numerous categories, including members of the chapter with 50 years of service. Above from left to right:: Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Hale, Keynote Speaker, The Honorable Catherine Pugh, Mayor, Baltimore, Dr. Scheherazade W. Forman, President, Rho Xi Omega, Joan Pratt, Comptroller, Baltimore, Judith L. Fitzgerald, Esq., Chairman and Rev. Ernestine Council, Co-Chairman of the event. (See article on page 10) Courtesy Photo

Heart disease in black women

By Stacy Fisher, MD

Cardiovascular disease kills nearly 50,000 African-American women annually, according to the American Heart Association. About half of African-American women ages 20 and older have heart disease. Women are often so busy taking care of everyone else around them that they may not take the time to consider their own health.

One of the most important things a woman can do for herself is go to the doctor and find out her individual risk for developing heart disease. Many women are surprised by what they learn. But the earlier you know your risk, the sooner you can address it and take important steps toward preventing or managing heart disease.

A Heart Story

At 25-years-old, Maria Burns had her entire life ahead of her—a promising career, a husband and a young son. Maria was excited to be expecting twins. Because she'd had preeclampsia with her first child, she was considered high risk.

At only 25 weeks into the pregnancy with twin girls, Maria suffered a cardiac arrest that sent her into pre-term labor and landed her in the hospital in a coma. An emergency caesarean section had been performed during the arrest.

"That day, my life changed forever," said Maria of her heart event.

It was the beginning of what would be a long and winding road back to good health. Maria got an implanted defibrillator, which sends electric signals to her heart in order to keep it beating regularly and prevents complications of another cardiac arrest. She could no longer work, and instead had to endure extensive brain and cardiac rehabilitation. "I went from eating whatever I wanted to concentrating on sodium content and a heart-healthy diet. I went from exercising for aesthetics to exercising to keep my heart healthy."

Know Your Personal Risk

There are many factors that put African-American women at greater risk for developing heart disease. Diabetes, smoking, high blood pressure, high

blood cholesterol, physical inactivity, obesity and a family history of heart disease are all prevalent among African-American women, and are major risk factors for heart disease.

Here are some things you can do to reduce your risk for heart disease:

- Blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes: Go to the doctor to find out if your levels are anything to be concerned about. The doctor can help you develop a plan to manage high blood pressure, high cholesterol, pre-diabetes or diabetes. The doctor may advise you to adjust your diet and make other lifestyle modifications, or prescribe medication.

- Overweight: Talk with your doctor about your weight, and find out if you need to lose weight to lower your risk of heart disease. It is important to find out your body mass index as well as your waist measurement. If a woman's waist measures 35 inches or more and she has other risk factors, then her doctor may advise her to lose some weight.

- Smoking: If you smoke and need help quitting, talk with your doctor. You can also visit SmokingStopsHere.com or call 1-800-QUIT-NOW to find free and low-cost community resources available in Baltimore.

Even for the things that are beyond a woman's control, like family history, it's better to know so we can monitor and work through any issues that come up.

Know the Warning Signs

In addition to knowing their risk, women should also know the warning signs of heart failure and heart attack. The signs for women are often under-recognized. Women tend to downplay their health issues, go longer without treatment and may be treated less aggressively.

A heart attack can be deceiving in women. More often than not, a heart attack starts slowly in women, with mild pain or discomfort.

Common heart attack symptoms for women include:

- Chest pain or feeling like there's a big weight on the chest
- Upper body pain or discomfort including in the arm, back, shoulder, neck, jaw or upper stomach area
- Breaking out into a cold sweat



- Feeling lightheaded or dizzy
- Getting nauseous
- Feeling unusually tired
- Having shortness of breath

If a woman has any of these signs, she should call 9-1-1 to get to a hospital immediately.

For women, it's especially important to get into treatment as early as possible. If something does not feel normal in a profound or unusual way—for example, if you find that you are becoming short of breath more and more often, or you are getting tired more easily than you used

to—these could be signs that something may be going on with your heart. Often women think they have the flu or pneumonia and it turns out to be heart failure. Early referral into treatment helps a woman optimize her outcome.

Stacy Fisher, MD, is a cardiologist at the University of Maryland Medical Center and an associate professor of medicine at the University of Maryland School of Medicine. To reach her office, call 1-866-408-6885.

Help is available from the University of Maryland Medical Center:

- UMMC's Women's Heart Program helps women prevent, lower risk or manage heart disease. For more information, call 410-328-7877.

- UMMC also offers free and low-cost health and wellness programs to help with quitting smoking, blood pressure management, diabetes prevention, chronic disease management and more. For more information, call 410-328-8402 or email: GetHealthy@umm.edu.

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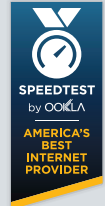
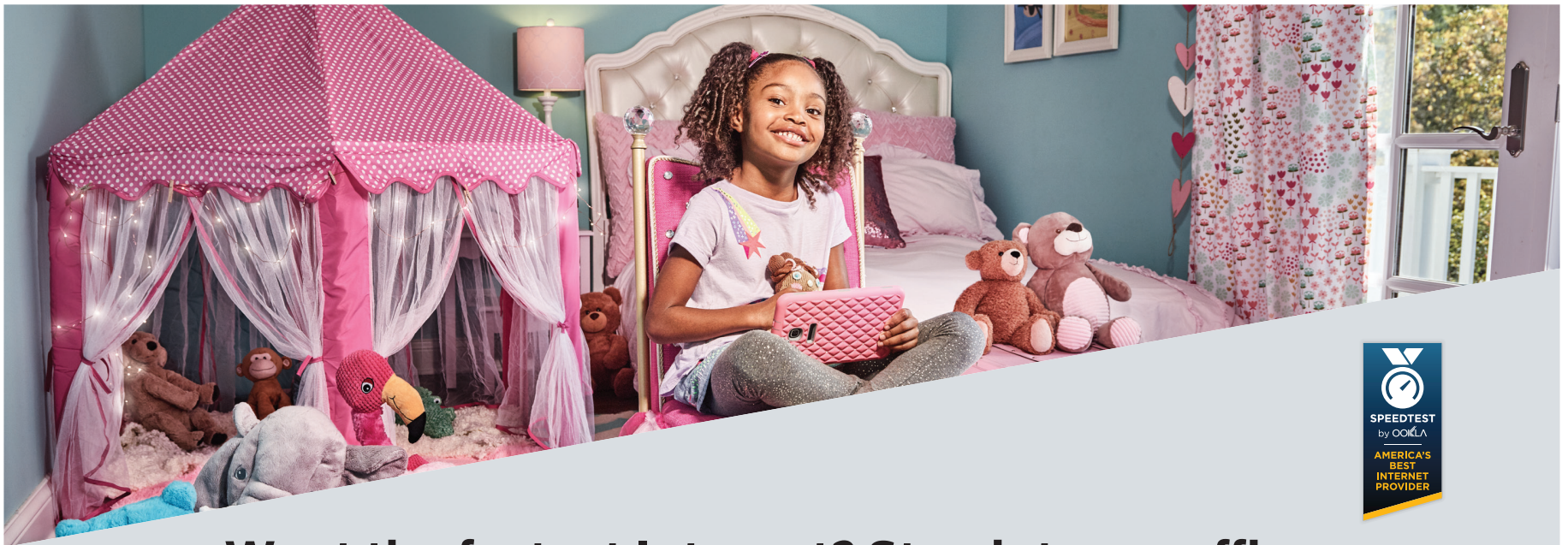
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Guest Editorials/Commentary

When you're in prison no one prepares you for coming home

By Johnny Perez

In my memories of prison, there are no colors. It was a dark, cold, and gray place. Incarceration, for me, was defined by deprivation not just deprivation of freedom, opportunity, and safety, but deprivation of the senses.

On the day of my release, I stepped off a bus at Port Authority and walked out into the world for the first time in 13 years. I remember feeling suddenly overwhelmed by the oranges, blues, reds, and neon greens of New York City streets. After so many years in a concrete box, I was finally free. That excitement, however, soon gave way to anxiety. What I remember most clearly from that day is the feeling of fear that I wouldn't be able to make it.

I spent 13 years in prison, but no one started talking to me about my release until 90 days before I finished my sentence. During those conversations, the burden of responsibility was placed on me. I was asked where I would be living, the clinics and reentry programs I would be taking part in, but at no time was I given tools to do research about my options.

People serving time in prison were required to take part in certain rehabilitation and work programs, but the violent culture of prison completely undermined their effectiveness. If I was in a carpentry class and I had to worry about whether some guy was going to take the hammer and beat me over the head with it because I owed him two packs of cigarettes, I probably was not going to learn much. If an anger management class was being taught by someone who I knew had gotten into a fight the previous week, the teacher was not going to fill me with confidence.

Despite the difficulties inherent in prison life, I was able to pursue my education, earning 30 college credits before my release. In the outside world, though, I had a difficult time proving my worth. No one wanted to hire someone with a criminal background, no matter my accomplishments in prison or my resolve to make a meaningful life for myself. In the six months that followed my release, I went to more than 50 job interviews. Every time, my criminal background acted as an automatic disqualifier. As a person with a record, I was constantly defined by the darkest chapter in my life. Anytime I tried to get ahead, I found myself having to answer for mistakes I made when I was teenager.

After months of job-hunting, I finally landed at the Mental Health Project of the Urban Justice Center. For every other job I applied to, I had tried to hide my criminal record — it was like I was in the closet about it. But the problem with doing 13 years is that you can't easily hide that time or shake those experiences. When I applied to the Mental Health Project, I led with the fact that I had a criminal background. I got the job right away. Now that I work with people who are going through the reentry process, my experiences trying to get back on my feet after incarceration are invaluable. Without the firsthand experience of incarceration and reentry, there's no way I could be as effective in my work now.

Today, I am an advocate to end mass incarceration and a voice for the formerly incarcerated. It is a backwards logic that has our society investing in locking young people up instead of creating opportunities for them or preparing them for life after prison. We need more investment in education and counseling for at-risk populations, including those who are currently or formerly incarcerated. I can never get back those 13 years, but I can make sure that young people in the future have better choices than I did.

Johnny Perez advocates against mass incarceration and to end solitary confinement as the director of U.S. Prison Program for the National Religious Campaign Against Torture and as a member of the NY Advisory Committee to The US Civil Rights Commission and the NYC Bar Association's Correction and Reentry Committee.



Community Affairs

Free museum tickets for Maryland volunteers for Black History Month

Annapolis— In celebration of Black History Month, the Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism Director, Van Brooks, announced that free tickets are available to the Frederick Douglass-Isaac Myers Maritime Park; the National Great Blacks in Wax Museum; and the Reginald F. Lewis Museum for Maryland volunteers.

The initiative was introduced to thank volunteers and encourage education on African American history in Maryland, and comes on the heels of Maryland Governor Larry Hogan's issuance of a proclamation declaring 2018 as the "Year of Frederick Douglass" in honor of the bicentennial anniversary of the birth of the renowned abolitionist and Maryland native.

"During Black History Month and in this Year of Frederick Douglass, we are pleased to introduce this "Free Museum Tickets" initiative and encourage Maryland volunteers to gain inspiration and insight from the experiences of our



nation's great African Americans during their museum visits," said Van Brooks, Director of the Governor's Office for Service and Volunteerism. "Our office hopes to inspire this generation of service leaders to continue on the work of their predecessors and continue to make a difference in Maryland communities."

Tickets are available at no cost to volunteers, and will be issued by the Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism. Volunteers may request up to 10 tickets to visit one of the participating museums.

For more information, including how to request tickets, visit the Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism's website: gosv.maryland.gov/blackhistorymonth.

Raising emotionally competent children

By Lynette Monroe

I don't remember my grandparents assisting me with homework beyond holding up flash cards for me to recite. They could have, I just don't remember. I do remember Lil' Bow Wow's release of "Beware of Dog" in 2000 followed by my incessant pleading to hang his poster on my bedroom wall. I also remember hearing my mother's inevitable "no" as she repeated her "no posters on these walls" policy.

In a fast-paced, tech-obsessed world, assisting your child with homework can prove a daunting task. New teaching methods are adopted every day. Even professionals with advanced degrees are not necessarily equipped to help children with homework.

However, all parents should feel empowered to teach their children social and emotional development. Social and emotional competence yields similar academic gains as strictly educational interventions. Parents, churches and communities bear the brunt of the responsibility for socializing children. This is where we, as a community, have an opportunity to shine.

A report from the Brookings Institution, published in May 2015, called for the prioritization of social and emotional development as the U.S. Congress worked on the bill that would become the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) that was signed into law by Barack Obama in December 2015.

The report, titled "Social and Emotional Development: The Next School Reform Frontier," claims social and emotional competence directly correlates to a child's ability to learn and achieve in school. The report cited the findings of a study of more than 200,000 students from kindergarten to high school who participated in social and emotional development learning (SEL) programs at school. The study found that students who completed SEL programs demonstrated greater social skills, less emotional stress, better attitudes, fewer conduct problems, and more frequent positive behaviors, such as cooperation and help for other students—benefits that translate to the workplace.

In November 2017, after all 50 states and the District of Columbia submitted their state ESSA plans, Lauren Poteat reported that states were ignoring opportunities to address social competency in the new national education law. Social and emotional development is a child's ability to understand and control his/her feelings, acknowledge and respect the feelings of others, and to form meaningful relationships. In layman's terms, social/emotional development is the authoritative, waving finger of your mother, father, grandma, grandpa, aunt or uncle saying: "Remember who you representin', when you walk out this door." Or,

for those of us familiar with Christianity, social and emotional development echoes Proverbs 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

So, what can Black parents do to supplement the lack of school-based SEL programs? Here are a few things my grandparents did.

1. Respect Your Child's Voice

If there was a rule I didn't agree with, my grandma always took the time to hear my perspective. She didn't listen just waiting to reply; she listened intently, to understand. Most times I didn't change her mind, but a few times I did. Those experiences taught me that my voice was valid, that you didn't have to agree with someone to understand their perspective, and that simply acknowledging someone else's perspective can create an environment for enlightenment.

2. Give Your Child Tangible Heroes

There was a 'no posters on these walls' policy in my house. I am almost certain my grandma didn't want posters of celebrities on her wall for respectability devotions. However, the unintended outcome was an elevated perception of self-worth. Since, my grandma never provided me the opportunity to idolize my favorite pop stars, I learned to look to the people around me for role models and guidance. Ultimately, I learned that whatever tools I needed to succeed were already within me. I learned how to control my behavior. I held the sole responsibility for my choices and whenever I felt confused, the first people I looked to for help were in my immediate support system.

3. Encourage Your Children

I never received a reward for expected behavior. I didn't get taken out for pizza or ice cream for good grades or behavior. Nevertheless, my grandpa never missed an opportunity to show his appreciation for a job well done, either through a big bear hug or a cheesy smile. My grandpa showed his love for me regardless of any accolades I obtained. He made it clear that he loved me; just for me. He told me I was beautiful before anyone else ever got the chance to. On bad days, I still hear his voice saying, "That's a pretty dress there. Twirl around, let me see it all the way around." In that moment I would feel as if I was the only girl in the world. I felt we had similar interest in pretty dresses and that made him more than just my father figure; that made him my confidant. I credit this experience for my ability to form meaningful relationships.

Neither of my grandparents graduated high school, however they were able to have a profound impact on my academic progress by simply validating my voice, providing a strong support system, and encouraging me regardless of accolades from the outside world.

Learn more about social and emotional development and the Every Student Succeeds Act at nnpa.org/essa.

Lynette Munroe is the program assistant for the NNPA's Every Student Succeeds Act Public Awareness Campaign and a master's student at Howard University. Her research areas are public policy and national development. Follow Lynette on Twitter @_monroedoctine.

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The Black Press remembers Lerone Bennett Jr.

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Contributor

Perhaps no other voice or pen, captured the real life of Africans and African Americans like Lerone Bennett Jr., the former editor of EBONY and Jet magazines who died on Wednesday, February 14, 2018 at the age of 89.

Chicago Sun-Times reported that, Bennett suffered from vascular dementia.

Among his many hard-hitting and compelling works was the exposé, “Before the Mayflower: A History of Black America,” in which Bennett traces black history from its origins in western Africa, through the transatlantic journey and slavery, the Reconstruction period, the Jim Crow era, and the Civil Rights Movement.

The book was later re-issued five more times and ultimately included life in the 1990s.

Bennett would go on to pen at least 10 books, including the eye-opening, 2000 book titled “Forced into Glory: Abraham Lincoln’s White Dream,” which, for some, shattered centuries-old myths about America’s 16th president’s involvement in the freedom of slaves.

A description of the book on Amazon.com said: “Beginning with the argument that the Emancipation Proclamation did not actually free African American slaves, this dissenting view of Lincoln’s greatness surveys the president’s policies, speeches, and private utterances and concludes that he had little real interest in abolition.”

Pointing to Lincoln’s support for the fugitive slave laws, his friendship with slave-owning Senator Henry Clay, and conversations in which he entertained the idea of deporting slaves in order to create an all-white nation, the book, concludes that the president was a racist



Veteran journalist and former editor of Ebony and Jet magazines, Lerone Bennett Jr. died on February 14, 2018 from advanced vascular dementia. He was 89.
Courtesy Photo/NNPA

at heart—and that the tragedies of Reconstruction and the Jim Crow era were the legacy of his shallow moral vision.

“Smart man and great author. His book [about Lincoln] changed my life,” said comedian Sinbad. “Before the Mayflower’ educated me about the need to research our true history.”

Others too expressed their sadness and profound gratitude for Bennett.

“I am personally saddened by the death of Lerone Bennett Jr. We have lost another great journalist who will be sorely missed,” said Dorothy R. Leavell, the chairman of the NNPA and editor and publisher of the Crusader newspapers in Chicago, Illinois and Gary, Indiana. “We knew him as the conscience and voice of EBONY and Jet magazines and through the many books he published. The world is richer, because of his work here on earth and we are grateful for his many contributions.”

Bennett counted as an elegant scholar

and freedom fighter who used the power of his pen to awaken millions of people to the true history of African people in America and throughout the world, said NNPA President and CEO Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr.

“Bennett’s journalistic genius will be missed, but his contributions to documenting the struggles and triumphs of Black men, women and children will continue to be cherished by generations far into the future,” Chavis said. “The NNPA salutes the living legacy of Lerone Bennett Jr. with a commitment to pick up his pen and put it into the hands of today’s freedom fighting publishers, editors and journalists.”

Bennett worked for EBONY for nearly 50 years, after starting at Jet in 1951 and then moving to the sister publication in 1953. By 1958, he was the executive editor.

“Lerone worked side by side with my father in establishing EBONY’s voice,” EBONY CEO Linda Johnson Rice told the

Chicago Sun-Times. “He was the guiding light for the editorial vision of EBONY. Lerone was not just essential in the formation of EBONY’s historic trajectory, he was a pillar in the black community.”

The Griot reported: “In addition to being remembered as an editor for these two magazines, Bennett, a graduate of Morehouse College, is known for his books, many of which cover the Black experience in America and the civil rights movement.”

Bennett’s footprints are cemented at the International Civil Rights Walk of Fame in Atlanta and he once served on President Bill Clinton’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities. The veteran journalist and historian also served as an early adviser to the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture.

In a tweet, the Reverend Jesse L. Jackson Jr., praised Bennett’s work.

“A classmate and biographer of Dr. King, during the turbulent 60’s, his was a pen that mattered. As historian, author of ‘Before the Mayflower,’ editor of Ebony magazine, the most read voice of the freedom struggle, his impact will long be felt and remembered,” Jackson tweeted.

From its official Twitter account, the NMAAHC tweeted, “it is with great sadness and profound sense of loss that we share the news of the death of Lerone Bennett Jr., a gifted historian and journalist.”

On Twitter, Bernice A. King called Bennett a beloved and brilliant man.

“If you haven’t read his books, I encourage you to. Even if you have, I encourage you to. Truly one of a kind historian & scholar,” King tweeted. “Grateful for what he’s meant to my family.”

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Annual MammoJam Music Festival scheduled for Saturday, March 3

By Stacy M. Brown

The 15th Annual MammoJam Music Festival will be held on Saturday, March 3, 2018 at 6:30 p.m. at Baltimore's famed 8x10. Proceeds will support local breast cancer screening and treatment programs for low-income women.

This year's festival will be a celebration of MammoJam's 15-year legacy of supporting local breast cancer screening and treatment programs for low income and underinsured women.

The lineup includes four bands that have made significant contributions to MammoJam's mission and the women they serve including Baltimore blues and funk sensation Ursula Ricks, South Baltimore's Roses and Rust and the return of 33 West. Alexandria stalwarts, the Reserves return for their 6th MammoJam performance.

"MammoJam has celebrated the courage of breast cancer survivors and the compassion of their friends and family members who've all been personally touched by the disease," festival

founder, Bill Romani, said in a release. "We owe our success to the sustained commitment of the bands, our neighbors, and the local businesses who've supported us these last 15 years."

MammoJam is an all-volunteer grassroots organization that has raised almost \$200,000 since it was founded in 2004. All proceeds, support local organizations like the Hoffberger Breast Center at Mercy Medical Center and Healthcare for the Homeless to provide crucial breast cancer screening and treatment to underinsured women in Baltimore City.

MammoJam was created in October 2003 by two friends passionate about live music and had loved ones who survived breast cancer. The idea to combine the two was inspired during the Baltimore debut of the band Grilled Lincolns also touched by breast cancer and by the emotional support of their fans and family.

Since that early Grilled Lincolns show MammoJam has used live music performances to promote the importance of early breast cancer diagnosis and treatment and to insure access to these vital resources for



Baltimore blues and funk sensation, the Ursula Ricks Project is among the performers scheduled at this year's MammoJam Music Festival on March 3, 2018 at the famed 8X10 in Baltimore. Courtesy Photo

the women who need them most.

For many, like Romani, MammoJam celebrates the "courage of breast cancer survivors like his mother and the compassion of friends and family members who are all personally touched by the impact that the disease has on their loved ones," he said.

Advanced ticket and parking sales for the 15th Annual MammoJam Music Festi-

val are available now until March 2 for \$45 online and at the 8x10 box office.

Parking is available in the parking lot behind Shofer's Furniture if purchased in advanced for \$11.

For more information about MammoJam or to purchase tickets including the opportunity for complimentary admission for breast cancer survivors, visit www.mammojam.org.

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'Break the Huddle and Run the Play'

CBS Sportscaster James Brown is also a minister

By Timothy Cox

Minister James Brown's Message:
"Break the Huddle and Run the Play"

Mention the name James Brown, and most people think of the legendary now-deceased musician. However, in broadcast media circles, the same name belongs to another hard-working black man with the exact same handle.

Recently, on Sunday morning at Bridgeway Community Center in suburban Baltimore, broadcaster James Brown displayed a moniker many people didn't realize he owned— a minister's role. As special guest speaker, Brown provided the Word during a month-long speakers series hosted by Bridgeway's resident pastor, David Anderson.

During his hour-long sermon, Brown delivered a passionate message reflecting his lifelong commitment to sports and spirituality. Having experienced life as a teenage high school and college basketball star, Brown would later use his court savvy to transition to a career as a network TV football announcer and analyst.

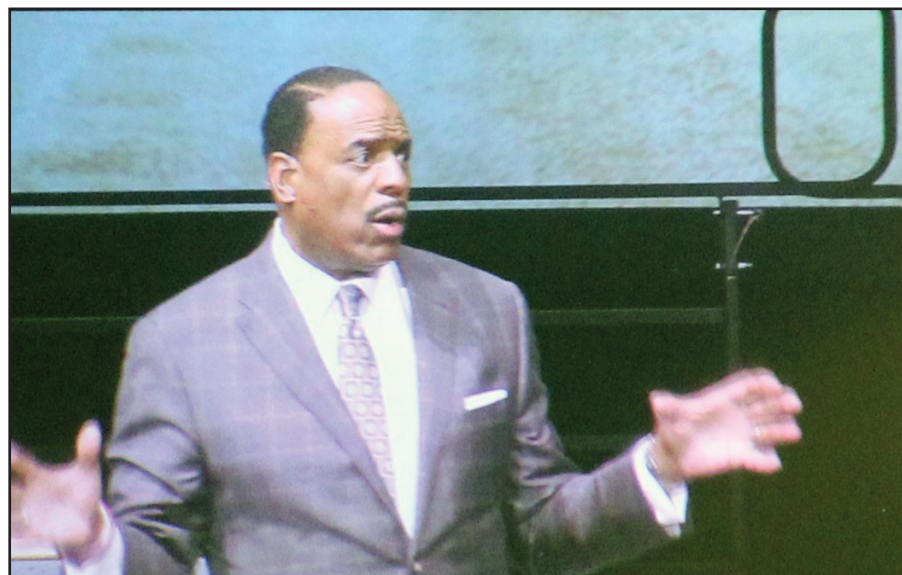
His recent sermon targeted the theme: "Break the Huddle and Run the Play." The football analogy fit perfectly, considering Brown currently hosts 'Inside the NFL' on Showtime, in addition to his regularly scheduled play-by-play football broadcasts that have aired on CBS-TV and FOX-TV in the past 30 years. He also hosts CBS News and contributes to '60 Minutes.'

Blessed with a smooth, engaging personality, the announcer/minister easily engaged the congregation, initially with stories about his wife, and four young grandchildren. Following his warm-up, Brown evoked his love for the Lord - and his knowledge of scripture.

During his sermon, he compared football huddles with attending church services, Sunday School and Bible studies - but never taking lessons learned in those forums, and "running the play" or applying what's learned for good use. He also



Dr. David Anderson (left), Minister James Brown (right) and a parishioner pray during recent services at Bridgeway Community Church in Columbia, Maryland. Photos: Timothy Cox



James Brown addresses the congregation at Bridgeway Community Church.

equated four quarters of football with the Biblical three-scores and 10 lifecycle.

"By age 16, you've completed quarter one, at 36, it's halftime; at 50, it's third quarter, and anything after 70, well, that's

over-time and ultimately, 'sudden death,'" he said to applause and chuckles.

After enjoying a star-studded career at DC's legendary DeMatha Catholic High School, Brown matriculated to Harvard

where he earned a degree in American Government, in addition to his continued athletic prowess as Harvard's premier hoopster. When a tryout with the NBA's Atlanta Hawks proved fruitless, Brown gathered his Harvard degree and entered corporate America with gigs at Xerox and Eastman Kodak.

Brown regularly attends DC's Rhema Christian Center, and speaks there on occasion. Bridgeway Community Church was founded by senior pastor David Anderson. The church reflects a spirit-filled, multi-culturally diverse congregation.

Dr. Anderson described Brown as "a devout man of God."

For more information about Bridgeway Community Church, call 410-992-5832 or visit: info@bridgeway.cc. The Columbia campus is located at 9189 Red Branch Road, Columbia, Maryland 20145.

Five reasons pre-school years are a prime time for learning

News & Experts— Much of the discussion about education focuses on the K-12 years, but some early childhood education experts suggest serious learning can start even earlier and pay dividends for the child in years to come.

“Young children have the capacity at a very young age to be academically challenged, and we need to educate them strongly during those years instead of waiting until they are older,” says Alise McGregor, founder of Little Newtons (www.littlenewtons.com), an early education center with locations in Minnesota and Illinois. “Children’s minds are like sponges when they are very young. Under age five is the most important time for development and our best opportunity to set up children for success. If we strongly educate children at a very young age, while their brains are so pliable, by the time they reach kindergarten, their brain capacity is much higher.”

Recent research confirms that the first five years of life are particularly important for the development of the child’s

brain. Harvard University’s Center on the Developing Child reports that in the first few years, more than 1 million new neural connections are formed every second, building the brain’s architecture.

This growth of the brain’s network establishes a fertile foundation for learning, thus an opportunity to be better prepared for grade school and beyond, experts say. One analysis of several studies, “Impacts of Early Childhood Education on Medium and Long-term Education,” showed that children exposed to high-quality pre-kindergarten education performed better academically in later years. Early education also led to higher graduation rates, fewer special education placements and less grade retention.

McGregor suggests five reasons parents should consider ramping up their pre-K child’s education:

•**Socialization**— Socialization with people other than the child’s family in a safe environment is an essential foundational element. “It’s important to introduce our children to other children and



support their transition into their own friendship groups, and the earlier we do this, it helps children overcome shyness and gain self-confidence,” McGregor says.

•**Personal experiences**— Experiences assist the brain’s organizational development and functioning in many situations, helping children develop learning skills as well as social and emotional abilities. “A good early-education center creates an environment where imagination, love and innovation all come together for a daily adventure,” McGregor says.

•**Enthusiasm for Learning**— Lessons can be given in a fun and exciting way that will encourage children to be effective learners. “Feeling inspired and excited to learn takes root in preschool,” McGregor says, “and can last a lifetime.”

•**Learning respect for others**— A fundamental building block for happiness, friendships and success in life starts early by learning how to share, cooperate, take turns and be nice. “By carrying on conversations, following rules, listening, accepting consequences of actions,

the child learns early how to start getting along in the world,” McGregor says.

•**Resilience**— It’s important that early childhood educators and parents work together to develop resilience in children as early as possible. “By creating a consistent and stable environment with clear expectations and predictable consequences, children can develop skills in managing themselves and their emotions,” McGregor says. “They may experience bumps, bruises or losing a game, but this is the foundation for building coping strategies for greater challenges in life.”

“The first five years of life are the most critical,” McGregor says. “It is far easier to train a child than it is to fix a broken adult.”

Alise McGregor is the founder of Little Newtons (www.littlenewtons.com), an exceptional childcare center focusing on early childhood education with four locations in Minnesota and one in Illinois. Also a nurse, she has a B.S. in Exercise Physiology with a cardiac rehabilitation emphasis.

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Life In Baltimore:

Sorority Celebrates the 110th Anniversary with Annual Prayer Breakfast

By Dr. Brenda Bowe Johnson

"Sisterhood: Leading with Amazing Grace and Providing Exemplary Service" was the theme of the Rho Xi Omega Chapter, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Annual Founder's Day Prayer Breakfast celebrating 110 years of service to the community.

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. was founded on January 15, 1908. It was the first Greek letter organization for college trained women of color. The purpose of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority is to cultivate and encourage high scholastic and ethical standards, to promote unity and friendship among college women; to study and help alleviate problems concerning girls and women; to improve their social stature; and to be of service to all mankind. Today there are chapters all over the world. Now in its 110th year, over 290,000 women continue to give over two million service hours every year to meet the needs of the community.

The presiding chairperson, Judith L. Fitzgerald, opened the program with the Invocation and introductions of special guests by Sherry Armstead.

Welcome addresses were extended to the audience from Dr. Scheherazade W. Forman, president, Rho Xi Omega Chapter; the Honorable Catherine Pugh, Mayor, Baltimore City, who stated that she is a "Fan" of Rho Xi Omega because of the many programs and services provided to the City of Baltimore from this chapter; and Comptroller Joan Pratt.

The Rho Xi Omega Chorale provided musical selections including grace followed by a video presentation tribute to the founders of the organization by Colombe Mongbo and a highly charged solo by Miriamm McKinney.

Ernestine Council introduced the speaker, Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Hale, founder and Senior Pastor, Ray of Hope Christian Church, Decatur, Georgia. As a woman of vision, Dr. Hale is revered locally, nationally, and internationally for her leadership, integrity, and com-

passion. As a recipient of numerous honors and recognitions, Dr. Hale has been in the ministry for 38 years. Her ministerial gift has drawn thousands as it did at this program to inspire, encourage and uplift the spirit in each of us to unit and care for each other.

"It is good for us to dwell together in unity. We should trust and support each other, celebrate each other, pray for each other and speak the truth in love and watch our tone. In all things Love, everyone is gifted in her own right," Dr. Hale exclaimed.

During this event, members are recognized for achievements in numerous categories, including: members of the chapter with 50 years of service to the organization called "Golden Sorors" were honored, Deleanor Harris-Boone and C.Yvonne Holt-Stone. Recognized for 25 years of service were Jeanine Dudley Gainers and Denise Saulsbury.

The Cultured Pearl Award is the highest award given to a member of Rho Xi Omega Chapter. It honors the member for significant contributions and distinguished service to the chapter and who continues to exemplify the qualities of an Alpha Kappa Alpha woman. The 2018 Cultured Pearl Award was presented to Gwendolyn Barbour with 65 years of outstanding service.

Other awards presented were: Community Partner Award, Cindy Harcum, Principal Baltimore City College; Professional Achievement Award, Kara King-Bess; New Soror, Keshawn Golsen; Outstanding Learship, Tracey Barbour-Gillette, Monica White, Dr. Nadine Finnegan-Carr, and Judith Britton; Unsong Soror Award, Janet Nance-Richardson; Sisterly Spirit Award, Angela Burnett; and Top Fundraiser Award, Jeanine Dudley Gainers.

In parting remarks given by the President, Dr. Forman, the group was reminded "be part of the solution; offer your gifts and talents, extend grace and mercy because God knows it has been shown to us."



Judith Britton and Monica White received the Outstanding Leadership Award
Courtesy Photos



Deleanor Harris-Boone and Yvonne Holt-Stone received recognition for 50 Years of service in Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. (Golden Sorors).



Gwendolyn Barbour received the highest Chapter Award, the Cultural Pearl of Service for Sixty-five years of continuous service in Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

Back in the Day

Two Hall of Famers Recall Baltimore's Boxing Legacy

By Stacy M. Brown

Author Thomas Scharf's compilation of more than 200 rarely seen photographs that skillfully illustrate Baltimore's heritage as an elite boxing town highlight the effect the city had on the sweet science.

Scharf, a boxing historian and member of the International Research Organization and elector to the International Boxing Hall of Fame, also touched on Joe Gans, a fighter dear to two of Baltimore's old-time sluggers— Louis Butler and Marvin McDowell.

"The first African-American world boxing champion Joe Gans, he's from Baltimore and he was one of the best lightweights to ever put the gloves on," said McDowell, who runs the popular UMAR Boxing Gym at 1217 W. North Avenue.

"Gans was the first African-American world champion in any sport," said Butler, who along with McDowell, are members of the Maryland Boxing Hall of Fame.

Gans became the first Baltimore resident and the first African-American to win a championship in 1902. "He earned the nickname, 'The Old Master,' because his skills far preceded his age. It was like he'd been here before," McDowell said.

Both Lewis and McDowell recalled the Baltimore boxing scene as being the gateway to champions and big name stars like Baltimore's Dwight Braxton (who changed his name to Muhammad Qawi) and Palmer Park Maryland's Sugar Ray Leonard.

They reminisced about tough fighters like Johnny Wilburn who boxed from 1975 to 1980, squaring off against the likes of future champions Michael Spinks and Eddie Mustafa Muhammad.

Venues like the Civic Center, Painters Mill and Fells Point hosted many fighters. On February 5, 1977, the Baltimore Civic Center played host to Leonard's professional debut where the eventual "Fighter of the Decade" defeated Luis Vega. Three months later, Leonard re-



(From left) Marvin W. McDowell, Jr., Gary Russell and Louis Butler

turned to the Civic Center and defeated Willie Rodriguez.

"For young and aspiring Baltimore fighters, there were plenty of heroes," Butler said.

"Mine were anyone I had watched on the black and white television. Guys like Joe Lewis, Sonny Liston, Sugar Ray Robinson and Jack Johnson," he said.

"One time someone told me I was like Jack Johnson and I was so happy," said Butler, who helped to kick-start the career of another Baltimore legend, Hasim Rahman, who would go on to become a two-time world heavyweight champion.

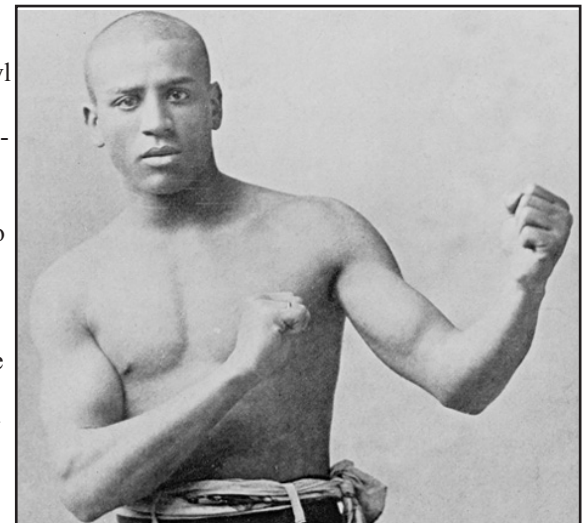
McDowell noted that the man who inspired him was Roberto Duran, the former world champion from Panama known as the "Hands of Stone."

"I was crazy about Duran and I was a great fan of Sugar Ray Robinson, who nobody compares to him," said McDowell, who earned induction in the Maryland Boxing Hall of Fame in 1996 after

a career highlighted by victories at the 5th Regiment Armory in Baltimore over Darryl Cherry and at the Steelworkers Hall in Baltimore over Anthony Williams and Maurice Young.

Butler's career, which led to a Hall of Fame induction in 2004, included wins at the Civic Center over Joe Sprowell and Eddie Smith. He twice battled Qawi, once at the Civic Center and at Steel Pier Arena in Atlantic City, N.J.

"Back in the day, we were at the top of the line. If a guy wasn't in our weight class, we didn't worry about him but if he was in our weight class, we wanted to know who he was so that we could take care of him," McDowell said.



Joe Gans, the first African-American world boxing champion. He was known as the "Old Master."

Courtesy Photos

Official portraits of President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama unveiled

By Lauren Victoria Burke
NNPA Newswire Contributor

With buzz building for months, the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery recently unveiled the official portraits of President Barack Obama and former First Lady Michelle Obama in Washington D.C.

New York City-based artist Kehinde Wiley created the portrait of President Obama and Baltimore artist Amy Sherald was selected to paint Michelle Obama. Both Wiley and Sherald are a noteworthy change of pace from artists who typically are selected to paint presidential portraits that will hang at the Smithsonian or in the White House.

The artists were selected by the Obamas and commissioned by the Smithsonian after the former first couple reviewed dozens of portfolios.

Wiley, 41 and Sherald, 44, are both African American; their selection caused buzz and excitement and was a noted departure from the more literal and realistic portraiture style American leaders are typically depicted in.

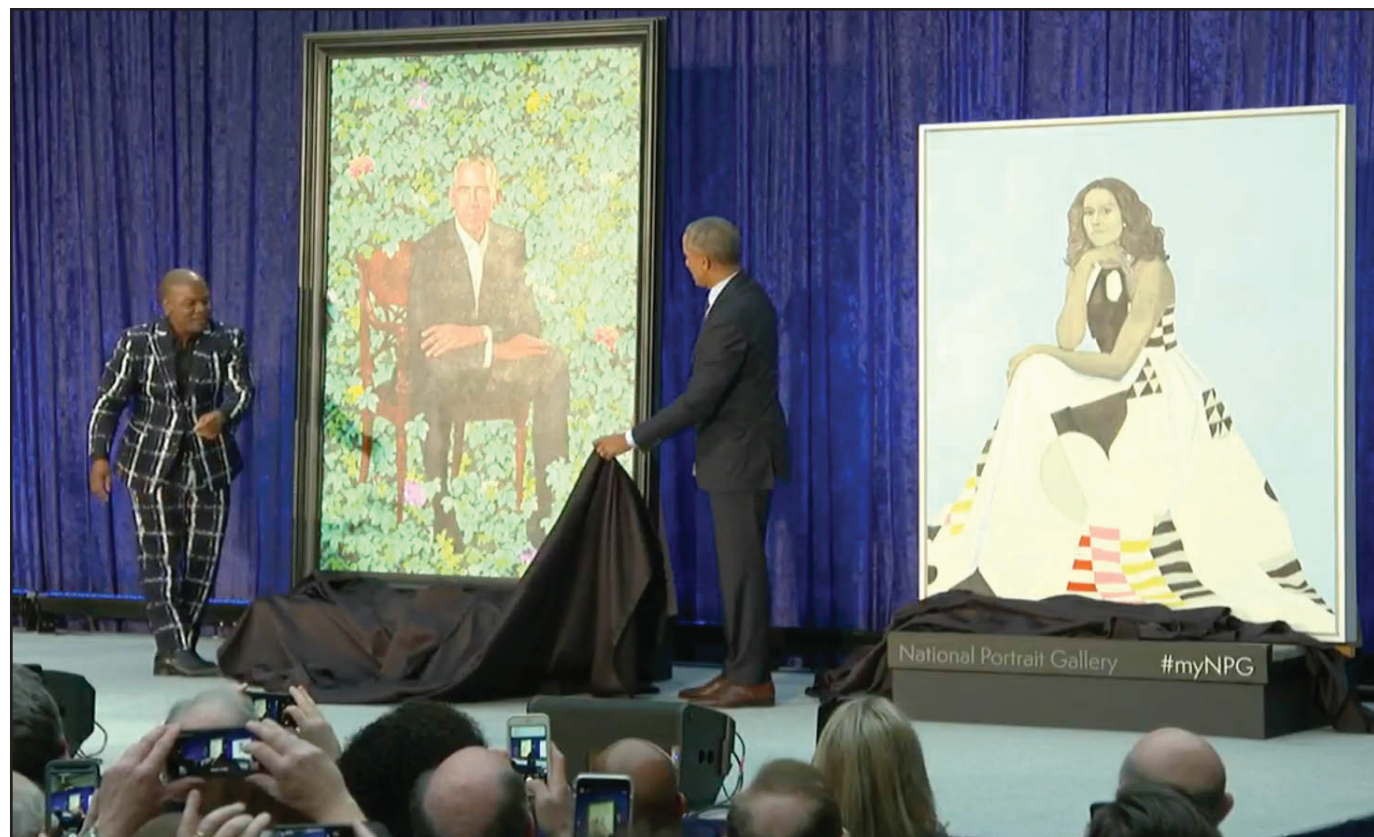
Wiley's portraits often feature African Americans in heroic poses and Sherald uses a bold and dramatic style of painting African American subjects with an artistically forward perspective. Those unique artistic statements are likely to set their portraits apart from many others in the gallery and at the White House.

Sherald depicted the former First Lady sitting confidently and looking the viewer in the eye wearing a large flowing white dress with black and white patterns.

"I see something bigger and more symbolic," Sherald stated as she spoke of her work, during the ceremony at the National Portrait Gallery.

Former First Lady Michelle Obama paused to take in the portrait before delivering her remarks to the audience assembled in the large courtyard at the gallery.

"I have so many thoughts and feelings inside me now. I am humbled. I am



President Barack Obama and New York City-based artist Kehinde Wiley unveil President Barack Obama's official portrait during a ceremony at the National Portrait Gallery. First Lady Michelle Obama's official portrait (right) created by Baltimore artist Amy Sherald was also unveiled. The artists were selected by the Obamas and commissioned by the Smithsonian after the former first couple reviewed dozens of portfolios.
Photo Credit: Lauren Burke/NNPA

proud...I am thankful for all of the people who came before me, before this journey," Michelle Obama said. "There aren't many people in my family who have had a portrait done, much less a portrait hanging in the National Portrait Gallery."

She then paid tribute to her parents in her speech and focused on her mother sitting in the front row of the audience. Sitting close by was former Vice President Joe Biden.

Artist Kehinde Wiley depicted President Obama seated in a dark suit on a background of vibrant green leaves and lush flowers.

"We miss you guys," President Obama said to the audience and many in the crowd responded in kind.

President Obama went on to thank Sherald for, "spectacularly capturing the grace and beauty and intelligence and

charm that hotness of the woman that I love."

President Obama also talked about the immediate connection that he shared with Wiley, noting that he and Wiley are both of African descent and had fathers who were absent from their lives.

"It's fair to say that Kehinde and I bonded," said President Obama. "Kehinde's art often takes ordinary people and elevates them, lifts them up and puts them in these fairly elaborate settings and so his initial impulse maybe, in the work, was to also elevate me and put me in these settings with partridges and scepters and thrones and chifforobes and mounting me on horses."

Obama continued: "I had to explain that I've got enough political problems without you making me look like Napoleon. We've got to bring it down just a touch and that's what he did."

Wiley also delivered brief remarks.

"The ability to be the first African-American painter to paint the first African-American president of the United States is absolutely overwhelming. It doesn't get any better than that," said Wiley. "I was humbled by this invitation, but I was also inspired by Barack Obama's personal story, that sense in which he and I both do have that echo of single parents, African fathers, that search for the father, that sense of twinning. There is kind of like this echo of he and I in that narrative."

Lauren Victoria Burke is a congressional correspondent for the NNPA Newswire. Lauren also works independently as a political analyst and communications strategist. You can reach Lauren by email at LBurke007@gmail.com and on Twitter at [@LVBurke](https://twitter.com/LVBurke).

"Only through art can we emerge from ourselves and know what another person sees." —Marcel Proust

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Events during last week of Black History Month in 2018

*Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Maryland F&A.M. presents the Thurgood Marshall Black History Month Celebration on Sunday, February 25 at 3 p.m. at Morgan State University in the Murphy Fine Arts Centers 2201 Argonne Drive. Free and open to the public. For more information, call 443-712-7296.

*Sunday, February 25 at 8 p.m. Chesapeake Shakespeare Company, 7 S. Calvert Street presents the play Red Velvet. For more information, call 410-244-8570.

*Saturday, February 24 from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. "Lexington Market ends Black History Month" with vendors and live entertainment featuring David Cole Blues Group. Open to the public.

*Sunday, February 25 the "Griots' Circle of Maryland Storytelling Program" with take place from 2-5 p.m. at the National Hampton Historic Site located at 535 Hampton Lane in Towson, Maryland. For more information, call 410-788-3553.

*The 32nd Consecutive Celebration of African American Patriots Day will be at the War Memorial Building on Fayette & Gay Street on Saturday, February 24 from 11 a.m.-12 p.m.

*Friday, February 23 at 7 p.m. Gospel Tabernacle Baptist Church presents a "Black History Month Fashion Show" from the 1920's, 1930's and 1940's at 3100 Walbrook Avenue. Pastor Bishop Reginald Kennedy and Rev. Daniel Kennedy Assist Pastor. For more information, call 410-944-3984. Do you remember Erma "Weezie" Locket, who is a barber and her husband Donald from the old days hanging out— well this is their thing.

*The Onus with special guest Todd Marcus, bass clarinetist will perform at the Motor House, 120 W. North Avenue on Saturday, February 24 at 8 p.m. For more information, call 410-637-8300.

*Lou Fields's "Frederick Douglass Book Fair" is Saturday, February 24 from 12 noon until 4 p.m. at the Douglass Myers Museum, 1417 Thames Street. It's open to the public.

Well, my dear friends, I am out of space. Enjoy the last week of Black History Month, and thanks for all the wonder years you have given me to write about. I want to thank the Baltimore Times and my boss, Joy Bramble for giving me the platform to keep music and all sorts of entertainment alive in Baltimore—I'm planning on doing it for another 30 years!

Keep me in prayers because I go into Mercy Hospital for a six-hour surgery on Monday, February 26 to remove a tumor from my stomach. 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.



The Avenue Market was jumping back in the day with a Jazz Concert, hundreds attended including Raymond Haysbert with, Biddy Wood and Tessa Hill-Aston who produce the shows.

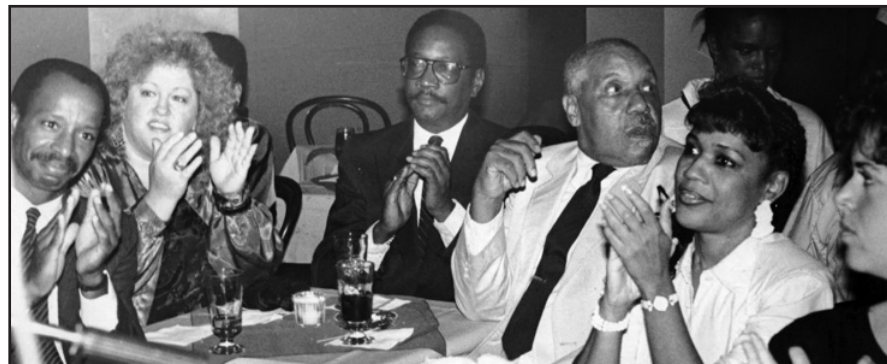
Do you remember?



Members of the Vanguard Justice Society, Patrons & friends at the Frankford Room back in 1990.



Friends hanging out at Arch Social Club with Jerry Owens, Big Jim, Sandi Malory and her sister Elsie Lockhart.



Left Band Jazz Society fans applauding the jazz combo on open nite at Ethel Ennis Baltimore Blues Alley on opening night. L/r John Fowley, Judy Webber, Fred Gant, Leon Manker and Velma Scott in 1982.



Friends and jazz lovers hanging out in 1984 are: Libby, Ann Vaughn, Dr. Elaine Simon, Biddy Wood and Dr. Louise Johnson.

Call for student applicants for summer internships

Students Living in Baltimore City encouraged to apply and gain work readiness skills through YouthWorks Program at UMMC

Baltimore—The University of Maryland Medical Center (UMMC) is offering young people ages 14 to 21 the opportunity to gain work readiness skills training through summer internships.

Through the YouthWorks program at UMMC's University and Midtown campuses, the interns will have the chance to participate in a summer experience that is a unique opportunity to begin to develop a career path to college or the workplace. Participating youth will develop workplace skills, learn how to meet employers' expectations, gain exposure to career opportunities in high-growth industries, and feel the pride of earning a paycheck.

The five-week internship program runs from June 25 through July 27, 2018. After orientation, each intern is assigned to an area on one of UMMC's two hospital campuses: UMMC University Campus and UMMC Midtown Campus. Each participant works five hours each day in one of more than 30 clinical and support areas. They also have two classroom hours on Fridays devoted to the



development of essential skills, technical skills, and interpersonal skills that they can use in school, jobs, and life. Students earn minimum wage for their work.

Eligible participants **MUST** be Baltimore City residents between the ages of 14 and 21.

Applications are being accepted through Friday, March 2, 2018. Apply online or learn more by visiting youthworks.oedworks.com.

The initiative is collaboration between YouthWorks, a summer jobs program sponsored by the Baltimore Mayor's Office of Employment Development and the UMMC Office of Community and Workforce Engagement, which coordinates several youth and adult job-training programs with government and private-sector organizations.

CCBC partners with Baltimore County Public Schools to host College Fair 2018

Baltimore County, Md. – Community College of Baltimore County in partnership with Baltimore County Public Schools is hosting College Fair 2018 at CCBC Catonsville and CCBC Essex during the month of March. Representatives from more than 100 universities, colleges, proprietary and military schools will be available to speak with students and parents.

Parking for this event is free. High school students and their parents are encouraged to attend. Times, locations and contact numbers are as follows:

CCBC Essex
Wellness and Athletics Center
Tuesday, March 6, 2018
6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

CCBC Catonsville
Jack Manley Wellness & Athletics Center
Wednesday, March 7, 2018
6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

AMFM announces Music Performance Scholarship

Annapolis—Annapolis Musicians Fund for Musicians, Inc. (AMFM), a nonprofit organization that supports professional Annapolis musicians, is now broadening the Tim King Scholarship Fund program and accepting applications for its newly established Music Performance Scholarship.

This \$5,000 scholarship will be awarded to a current high school senior who intends to pursue a bachelor's degree in either vocal or instrumental music performance. Candidates must meet the following basic criteria:

- Be a current high school student residing in Anne Arundel County, scheduled to graduate in May/June 2018
- Be a musician active in high school chorus, band, orchestra, jazz band, or other school-sponsored performance group
- Have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0
- Intend to pursue a bachelor's degree in music performance

Candidates will be evaluated using a points-based system that awards points for active membership in a school band, orchestra, choir, chorus or other school-sponsored musical performance group; volunteer music participation; participation in special school performances; selection to All County/All State/Regional performance groups; and participation in private music lessons. Candidates will also be required to submit a three-minute narrative video or a 500–750 word written essay to support their application. The narrative video or essay should address the question, "What role has music played in my life, and how will it shape and influence my future?" Candidates are encouraged to include one letter of recommendation from a music teacher, music coach, or music mentor. An optional performance video will also be accepted.

Scholarship applications will be accepted through April 15, 2018, and the scholarship recipient will be chosen on or about May 15, 2018. To apply and for specific details about the rating system, go to <https://www.am-fm.org/music-performance-scholarship/>.

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New loan, down payment assistance products added to Maryland Mortgage Program

New Carrollton, Md.— The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development recently announced new loan and down payment assistance products and debuted a redesigned website for the Maryland Mortgage Program before an audience of lenders, realtors, counselors, mortgage insurers and other program partners.

New Maryland Mortgage Program products include a mortgage loan developed for borrowers with mid-range credit scores, a down payment assistance grant designed to be used with specific Freddie Mac mortgages, and the expansion of one of the department's existing grant programs for down payment assistance to make it applicable to more types of mortgages. These new initiatives will expand access to the program for lower income homebuyers as well as those struggling with credit issues, down payment, or closing costs.

"Homeownership strengthens Maryland's communities, and home-buying strengthens Maryland's economy," said Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development Secretary Kenneth C. Holt. "The Maryland Mortgage Program provides homebuyers with competitive rates and the peace of mind of a loan backed by the State of Maryland. In particular, the program's down payment assistance options set our mortgage products apart from many other loans by helping to provide extra cash at settlement."

For down payment assistance, the department announced that the Maryland Mortgage Program's existing Maryland four percent Grant Assist can now be used for down payment assistance for Federal Housing Administration (FHA) loans as well as conventional, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), or United States Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) loans.



In an effort to increase access to homeownership for lower income homebuyers, the department also announced the creation of the Maryland six percent Opportunity Grant for use by income-selected homebuyers with down payment and closing costs associated with purchasing a home for Freddie Mac Housing Finance Agencies (HFA) Advantage mortgages only. The department also announced the new Maryland Credit 640 program, which was developed to assist homebuyers with FICO scores in the 640-659 range with purchasing a home in Maryland.

Along with these program enhancements, the department also highlighted its efforts to streamline processes for program lending partners and a new program website, <http://mmp.maryland.gov>, redesigned to be more user-friendly and responsive for customers.

The Maryland Mortgage Program has been the state's flagship homeownership program for more than 35 years, providing fixed-rate mortgages, primarily to first-time homebuyers, along with down payment and closing cost incentives.

For more information about the Maryland Mortgage program and the new initiatives, visit: <http://mmp.maryland.gov>.

Pianist Marianna Prjevalskaya Performs Debussy's Preludes March 4 at UUCA



Marianna Prjevalskaya
Courtesy Photo

Annapolis— Piano virtuoso Marianna Prjevalskaya honors composer Claude Debussy in the 100th anniversary year of his death with a performance of his complete preludes on Sunday, March 4, 2018 at 3 p.m., at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis (UUCA), 333 Dubois Road in Annapolis.

The program features Debussy's piano preludes Books I and II, composed between 1909 and 1913. Inspired by nature, poetry, decorative objects, and art, each prelude has a descriptive title that is placed at the end of the piece as an apparent afterthought, giving way to free imagination. Even though Debussy preferred to play them in groups of three or four, he took meticulous care in the ordering of these short pieces for publication, creating a strong tonal and architectural unity.

Both cycles are authentic gems in the piano repertoire that are rarely heard in their entirety. Prjevalskaya's performance, "Soundscape: Celebrating Debussy's Complete Preludes," is part of the UUCA monthly Arts in the Woods concert series. Tickets are \$15 at the door. Visit www.tinyurl.com/UUCA-concerts or call 410-266-8044 for more information.

Marianna Prjevalskaya, praised as a "virtuoso, impetuous, passionate and mature pianist of great musicality" (Diario Segre, Spain), is making her Annapolis debut. She has appeared with such major orchestras as the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, and the National Lithuanian Symphony Orchestra, and has performed as a recitalist at the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Accademia Santa Cecilia in Rome, Teatro Goldoni of Florence, Minato Mirai Hall in Yokohama, and Carnegie's Weill Hall in New York. Her most recent CD album dedicated to Rachmaninoff is receiving critical acclaim. She is a gold medalist of the 2014 New Orleans International Piano Competition, the 2013 World Piano Competition in Cincinnati and European Piano Competition in Normandy; she won the 2011 Jaén Prize in Spain and was top prize winner of the 2010 Sendai International Piano Competition and the 2007 Paderewski International Piano Competition, among many others.

Born to a musical family, Prjevalskaya grew up in Russia and Spain and began studying piano at age 6. She made her first solo debut with orchestra at age nine and won her first piano competition at age 14. She has degrees and/or artist diplomas from the Royal College of Music in London, Yale School of Music, and Indiana University. She is currently a doctoral candidate at Peabody Conservatory of Music, where she studies with Boris Slutsky.

The March 4 performance at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis is part of the monthly Arts in the Woods concert series. The next program in the series will be Sunday, April 15, 2018, at 3 p.m. and will feature Expressions Dance Company, Gospel Travelers, and other area musicians in the 2018 Black Lives Matter/Dismantling Racism Concert. For information, visit: www.tinyurl.com/UUCA-concerts or call 410-266-8044.

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