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# THE BALTIMORE TIMES

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Vol. 32 No. 33

June 15 - 21, 2018

A Baltimore Times/Times of Baltimore Publication

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## Artist Robert Lugo Discusses Walters Museum Collection, History



*The Walters Museum of Art in Baltimore commissioned Philadelphia-based ceramicist Robert Lugo to create works of art and to participate in programming for the re-opening of the historic Mount Vernon building located 1 West Mount Vernon Place. Roberto Lugo's handmade dishes and urns, which depict historical African-American figures such as Freddie Gray and Frederick Douglass, will be on display during the grand opening. His works are eye-catching, and when the museum opens on Saturday, June 16, the pieces are certain to draw a lot of conversation. Lugo's works combine the forms and traditions he previously observed in the Walters' collection with contemporary color and imagery. Lugo will be attending the free community opening celebration of 1 West on June 16. (See article on page 12)*

Courtesy Photo: The Walters Museum of Art

# Local historian to talk about All African American Unit part of Maryland National Guard

Baltimore— On Saturday, June 30, 2018, the Friends of Historical Cherry Hill AUMP, Inc., a non-profit 501©3 organization will have it's President and Local Historian/Author Louis S. Diggs make a presentation on the history of an all-African American unit, which has been part of the Maryland National Guard (MDG) since the 1880s.

Diggs served with this unit when they were the only Maryland National Guard unit ordered to active duty during the Korean War in August 1950. While conducting research for his last three books, Diggs discovered several African Americans from Baltimore County who participated some of the four wars this African American unit of the (MDG) played a part in.

Diggs, whose ancestors were slaves in the Piney Grove area of Baltimore County has written about the history of this unit when they were called "The

Monumental City Guards," "The Separate Company," "The First Separate Company," and finally the "231st Transportation Truck Battalion with three Truck Companies. The name of his book is: "Forgotten Road Warriors."

This free program will be presented at the "Diggs-Johnson Museum," located at 2426 Offutt Road, Granite, MD 21163 on Saturday, June 30, 2018, from 10:00am to 12:00pm. Because of the extremely limited parking at the museum, parking passes will be required. To request your ticket to the program and/or a parking pass at the Museum, please contact Louis Diggs at louisdiggs2@verizon.net.

Hopefully some veterans of the Korean War from Baltimore County, as well as veterans of the 231st Transportation Truck Battalion will be present at the presentation.



*On the right is PFC Louis S. Diggs, truck driver and Company Clerk with Sgt. Charles Gilmore, his Squad Leader. They were members of the 726th Transportation Truck Company in Korea in 1951. (From the book, *The Forgotten Road Warriors*, author Louis S. Diggs)*



*L-R: 1st Sgt. Brooks, SFC Lloyd Scott and SFC Bradford setting up defense for the 726th Transportation Truck Company. SFC Scott resided in Baltimore County and retired from the Maryland National Guard.*



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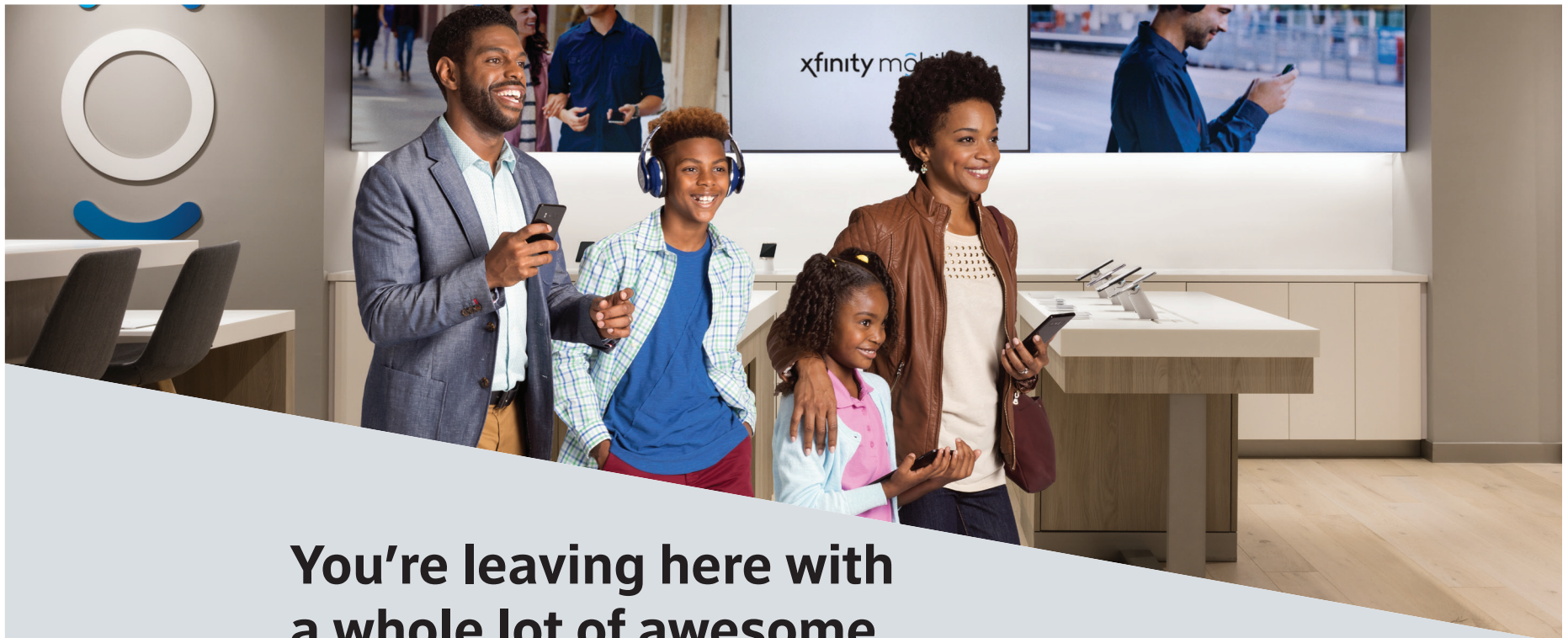
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## The Baltimore Times

(USPS 5840) is published every Friday by *The Baltimore Times*, 2513 N. Charles Street, Baltimore, MD 21218. Subscriptions by mail \$60 per year. Standard bulk postage paid at Baltimore, MD 21233. Postmaster send address changes to:

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# Guest Editorials/Commentary

## The Free Market Is Curing Blindness

By Sandip Shah

The FDA recently approved a revolutionary drug that could restore sight to 2,000 nearly-blind Americans.

Doctors inject the personalized "gene therapy," called Luxturna, directly into patients' eyes. The treatment overrides a rare genetic mutation that causes severe vision problems and ultimately leads to total blindness. In clinical trials, the treatment not only halted vision loss but also significantly improved many patients' sight.

However, the one-time therapy carries an eye-popping price tag: \$850,000. The price has sparked renewed debate about supposedly predatory pricing in the drug industry.

With very few exceptions, drug prices aren't predatory -- or even arbitrary. They reflect the value of the innovation which came at colossal risk and expense inherent to pharmaceutical innovation. Attempts to impose price controls would stifle research and prevent the creation of medical miracles.

Creating these miracles is time-consuming and expensive. For instance, it took nearly six years and \$400 million to develop Luxturna. And Luxturna is one of just a few success stories -- barely one in 10 drugs that enter human trials ever makes it to market.

Gene therapy is in its infancy, and so it's riskier to pursue this research than it is to pursue research for run-of-the-mill medications. But drug companies are diving in. They're developing therapies to treat high-need diseases like hemophilia and leukemia.

Because of this immense risk, drug makers have to be able to charge prices that provide a reasonable shot at recouping their huge expenses. Doing so is the only way to encourage researchers to investigate and develop brand new pharmaceuticals that target rare diseases, like Luxturna.

But if we don't give researchers the chance to recoup their investments, they might stop pursuing this new, risky research.

High prices don't last forever. Once a drug's patent expires, generic drug manufacturers can introduce cheap alternatives. About 90 percent of drugs dispensed in the United States are low-cost generics. Over the next five years, roughly \$100 billion in brand name sales will start facing generic competition, forcing brand-name manufacturers to cut their prices to remain competitive.

Such competition also occurs when multiple companies introduce unique medicines to treat the same disease.

Consider Sovaldi, a breakthrough hepatitis C cure that cost \$1,000 per pill when first introduced a few years ago. That price prompted a firestorm of condemnation. But it plummeted by half after competitor drugs hit the market -- and it's still falling.

Unfortunately, many politicians and pundits ignore how competition drives down prices over time. They instead fixate on the initial prices of drugs. And they've started calling for the government to regulate prices.

Such price controls would be hugely counterproductive. Price caps would shrink or eliminate companies' projected returns on drug development projects. So drug makers would stop investing in risky research. Many of the 7,000 medicines currently in development, over 500 of which are for rare diseases, would never reach pharmacy shelves -- or patients' medicine cabinets.

It'd be a tragedy to deprive patients of such transformative treatments.

Drug makers need to be able to sell breakthrough drugs at market prices to earn back their huge development costs and fund future research. Heavy-handed government interventions would drive away research capital and stomp out the next generation of new treatments.

*Sandip Shah is the founder and president of Market Access Solutions, a global market access consultancy, where he develops strategies to optimize patient access to life-changing therapies.*



## Letter to the Editor

**Editor:**

### **Wells Fargo to buy homes for black people**

It is amazing how many educated black people of today are so willing to accept handouts from white institutions.

In 1900, Booker T. Washington launched the National Negro Business League meeting for the first time in Boston, Massachusetts. One hundred and fifteen Delegates attended from 20 states in the South to promote black-owned businesses, to do the same thing that Wells Fargo, a white-owned institution wants to do for black people of today.

Washington believed that black people would succeed through industrial education, self help, and business ownership in our community— and it worked. However, the Urban League and the NAACP diverted the thinking of the black community to that of how white America thinks (brainwashing), which is a method to systematically change attitudes or altering beliefs from what Booker T. Washington had for Black America.

**Leo A. Williams,  
Baltimore**

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# Page Opposite/Commentaries

## Stop Crony Capitalism: Protect the Net!

By Rivera Sun

Pretty soon, we'll all be paying a whole lot more money for Internet service. A few days ago the FCC's repeal of Net Neutrality went into effect. If nothing is done, it's easy to see the handwriting on the wall. After a waiting period of no changes (intended to diffuse public outrage), it's expected that the telecom giants will broker deals with massive companies like Google and Amazon, giving them the virtual version of a bulk shipping discount while the rest of us pay premium rates to download, upload, and stream. It's a death knell for struggling small businesses.

There's still hope for the supporters of Net Neutrality, however, as a Congressional Review Act in the House could overturn the FCC's ruling. While the left has mobilized repeatedly to defend Net Neutrality, and many conservative citizens have spoken up in earlier phases of the campaign, Republican elected officials are dragging their feet.

It's hard to figure out why. The attack against Net Neutrality comes as a heavy-



handed act of good-ol'-boy crony capitalism that favors the profits of telecom giants over small businesses' (and everyone else's) need for fair Internet access and affordability. Conservative voters want Net Neutrality. Senate Republicans

Neutrality. The Democrats are lined up in a neat little row in defense of equal access to the Internet. The Republicans, on the other hand, seem strangely reluctant to walk their talk and fight back against crony capitalism that rewards Big Business at the

cess marketplace, both lovers of capitalism and the commons should know that ending Net Neutrality is just plain unfair business. The Internet is a vitally important aspect of contemporary economies, businesses, education, communication, arts and culture, politics and so much more. When fast and slow lanes (guess which one you'll pay more for) let concentrated wealth buy Internet privileges, the little guys (and that's the vast majority of us) are going to have a harder and harder time running our businesses, accessing information, and contributing to our society, culture, and economy. Telecom companies' greed shouldn't be allowed to aggravate the already horrific inequalities in our country, especially when doing so is flatly unjustified.

Conservatives, this one's on you. House Republicans are the ones that need to move into action to stop this act of crony capitalism. They've certainly campaigned enough on that theme to recognize it in action; now it's time to stop it. The Congressional Review Act is the mechanism by which they could act to ensure small businesses have a fair chance. ~~Whether you're on the~~ right or left of the political spectrum, take a moment to visit the Battle for the Net website and contact those representatives.

*Rivera Sun, syndicated by PeaceVoice, is the author of The Dandelion Insurrection, The Roots of Resistance, and other books, including a study guide to making change with nonviolent action. She is the cohost of Love (and Revolution) Radio, and a trainer in strategy for nonviolent movements.*

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***It's one of those awkward moments when the populace on the right and left shares a common protest chant: Don't Raise Our Rates!***

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have stepped up and helped the CRA move through the Senate. Hundreds of small to mid-size businesses across the political spectrum have demanded Net Neutrality.

One Net Neutrality advocate group is keeping track of officials' stances as people struggle to get the House of Representatives to use the Congressional Review Act to overturn the repeal of Net

expense of John Q. Citizen.

It's one of those awkward moments when the populace on the right and left shares a common protest chant: Don't Raise Our Rates! None of us need to pay more money for worse Internet service just to satisfy telecom companies' greed. And that's what this is all about.

Whether you think of the Internet as a commons-based resource or an equal-ac-

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# Paul Coates Celebrates 40 Years at Black Classic Press, BCP Digital Printing

By Stacy M. Brown

For 40 years, Paul Coates has lived the highs and the lows at the helm of Black Classic Press and BCP Digital Printing.

As usual, each day is viewed the same.

“It’s always a good day to print,” said Coates, who founded the press and printing operation in 1978 not long after his stint leading the Baltimore chapter of the Black Panther Party. “Even more so than the publishing company, one of the great accomplishments that comes out of this 40 years is the printing company,” he said.

“There are many publishing companies, but there’s still only one black book printing company in this country that I know of and that’s Black Classic Press,” he said, adding that, as a student of printing, he believes he would be aware if there were another black printing company.

Having any conversation with Coates, it’s hard not to pose at least one question about his son, Ta-Nehisi, the decorated journalist and author who has earned global acclaim for his work.

“I didn’t foresee it and I know he didn’t foresee himself having the success he’s had,” Coates said.

When reminded that he’s often referred to as “Ta-Nehisi’s dad” rather than Ta-Nehisi being referred to as his son, Coates laughed. “The moon has been eclipsed by the sun, but it’s all good,” he said.

Coates has a lot on his plate as he celebrates the 40th anniversary of his companies where books and other literature are available from such icons as W.E.B. DuBois, Carter G. Woodson and Walter Mosley. Literary lovers can also find such gems like “Fidel & Malcolm X: Memories of a Meeting,” where they can read the compelling account of the historic Harlem meeting between Fidel Castro and Malcolm X and the revolutionary movements they spawned.

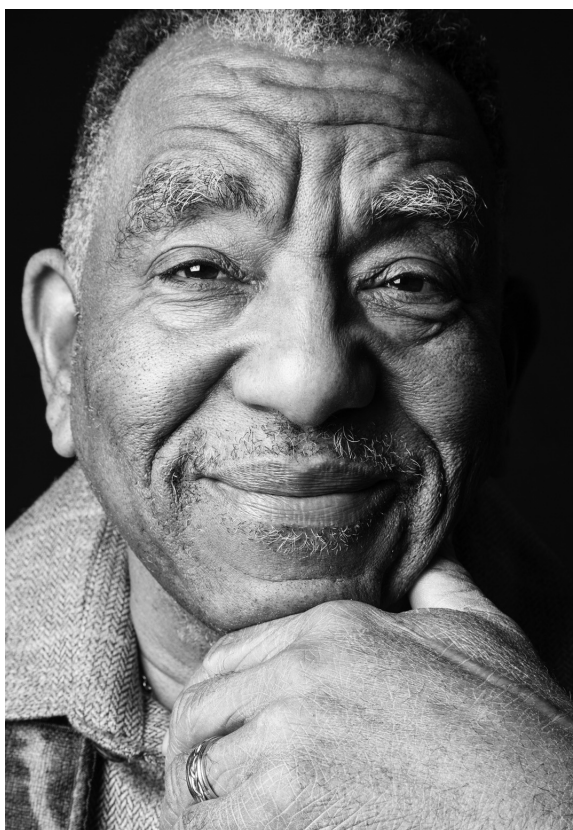
Coates’ company has been devoted to publishing obscure and significant works by and about individuals of African descent. Black Classic Press specializes in republishing works that are out of print.

“We began publishing because we wanted to extend the memory of what we believe are important books that have helped in meaningful ways to shape the black diasporic experience and our understanding of the world,” Coates said.

He owes his success to those who have “reached out and lent a hand along the way.” Those include the “three elders” who gave their support, John G. Jackson, John Henrik Clarke and Yosef ben-Jochannan, Coates said.

However, it was another man named Deaver Smith who Coates said may have inspired him more than others.

“Dozens of people stand out, but the one person that continues to really stand out for me is Deaver Smith,”



*Paul Coates, founder of Black Classic Press*

Photo: Gioncarlo Valentine

Coates said. In 1906, Smith opened Deaver Smith & Sons, a coffee, tea and spice shop along Pennsylvania Avenue in Baltimore. Coates became a regular customer.

“I used to pass by the shop all the time and get these wonderful aromas of coffee, spices, teas. The man who founded the company worked with his son and I went in there and asked whether it was black owned, and the son said yes.”

Coates continued: “He founded the company in 1906 and it looked like it. It was dark with bags of spices all over, the floors were wooden, the cash register was old, the phone was old and the man who ran it was old. But, the reason it became my biggest inspiration was because, here was this black-owned spice business on Pennsylvania Avenue and he’d been there for so long and he’d been successful right in the middle of a city that had one of the biggest spice companies in the

world— McCormick.

“He competed against McCormick in their own territory and he survived.”

Overcoming racism and oppression is as much a part of business as it is of everyday life, Coates said. “Pretty soon, you ignore it. I think you almost have to ignore it because you must be in a space of doing what you do,” he said.

“At the same time, it can serve as fuel for you; you know the conditions are not right, but I don’t know how much of it you can focus on because it would probably drive you crazy.”

Coates said he didn’t envision his own success, particularly in the publishing and printing business.

“I didn’t foresee it at all, although coming out of the Black Panther Party led to this because what I did do in the Black Panther Party was recognize the importance of education and recognized the importance of community being responsible for education,” he said.

“I recognized that we have the right to learn about ourselves, the right to write about ourselves and read about ourselves so it was a desire to continue that type of work,” Coates said.

His foray into publishing and printing began with working with imprisoned African-American men and women. It was an effort to educate them, he said.

Today, publishing, printing and the Black Press remains vital to the African-American community, Coates said. “It’s just like Deaver Smith. We still have to do our own thing and we should do our own thing,” he said.

“No matter how out-sized we are, we still have a responsibility to serve ourselves and we’ve got to figure out a model that works for us.”

“We can’t listen to people who say this is no longer relevant or whatever. Samuel Cornish said it was too long that others had spoken for us. It was outsized and impractical then. “The Black Press is still relevant, and we have to keep pushing. Classic Black Press and BCP Digital Printing were outsized and one of the smallest printing companies, but we’re still here.”

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## Wells Fargo launches \$60 billion plan to increase African American homeownership

After years of moving and renting, novelist Randy Camp, recently became a first-time homebuyer at age 55.

“It feels good,” said Camp, a resident advisor at a youth services agency in Des Moines, Iowa. “There’s this idea of ‘this place is yours, so now make sure you take care of it and enjoy it.’ I also did it for my children. As I get older, I realize the importance of leaving an asset for them.”

In an effort to make homeownership dreams a reality for others like Camp, Wells Fargo has

launched a 10-year diversity initiative to provide \$60 billion in home loans, supporting at least 250,000 African American homeowners by 2027. As part of the plan, the company also intends to significantly increase the diversity of its mortgage sales force.

Working with the National Urban League and the National Association of Real Estate Brokers, Wells Fargo announced the initiative Feb. 28 at the National Center for Civil and Human Rights in Atlanta.

The company aims to help reverse the

decreasing homeownership rate in the African American community, said Brad Blackwell, head of housing policy and homeownership growth strategies for Wells Fargo.

Blackwell added that the company also plans to invest \$15 million in a wide range of initiatives that promote financial education and counseling for African American homebuyers over the next 10 years. The company will also boost its recruiting, hiring, and retention of African American home mortgage officers, he said.

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## Year of transformation at Wells Fargo

In a letter published in the 2017 Wells Fargo Annual Report, CEO Tim Sloan had this to say about the past year:

“This was a year of transformation at Wells Fargo. We achieved a great deal in 2017 and look forward to building on our momentum in the months ahead. Our top priority remains rebuilding the trust of our customers, team members, communities, regulators, and shareholders. We have made foundational changes to identify and fix problems so they do not happen again and achieved significant progress in our commitment to make things right for our customers and build a better bank. Our transformation is grounded in our vision

of satisfying our customers’ financial needs and helping them succeed financially. While we have more work to do, I assure you that the Operating Committee and I are fully committed to building on our accomplishments. In addition, we take very seriously the consent order we entered into with the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System in February 2018, and we will work diligently, yet swiftly, to meet the requirements.

In response to feedback from our team, we introduced a streamlined Vision, Values & Goals of Wells Fargo in late 2017 — replacing what previously was a 37-page expression of our culture. Today the wallet-sized booklet focuses

exclusively on our guiding principles and goals, clearly expressing the beliefs that guide every team member as we work together to build the best Wells Fargo possible.

We have overcome challenges many times during our history. We have a solid foundation, exceptional businesses, and an outstanding team. Our more than 260,000 team members are dedicated, talented, and committed — and, without a doubt, they are our most important resource. Thank you for placing your trust in Wells Fargo and for your support. Our commitment to you is unwavering as we continue our transformation into a better, stronger company.

# Foster Dad Readies for Busy Father's Day

By Stacy M. Brown

Tommy Washington wasn't thinking of becoming an adoptive parent that day five years ago when his daughters moved out of his home and letters began crowding his mailbox about foster care.

But, when he finally opened one of those letters, Washington studied the two empty rooms in his home and thought he could help make a difference.

Now, 10 foster children and a half decade later, Washington is prepared to celebrate Father's Day by keeping his doors open for others who might need assistance.

"I just kept getting notifications, so I looked into it," he said. "I have enjoyed it and I'm glad that I have been able to help these children."

Washington became a foster parent with the help and guidance of the Woodbourne Center, which is located on the former estate of the Enoch Pratt and A.S. Abell Families.

The center opened more than 200 years ago with a focus on treating children with psychiatric and behavioral problems and later expanded its programming to include foster care treatment.

Center officials said they've been able to call on Washington in emergencies, too.

"It's not uncommon for Tommy to willingly go to pick up boys in the middle of night when Woodbourne has a need for an emergency placement," a spokesperson said.

"Many of the boys are with Tommy for an extended period of time – he even adopted one of his foster children."

Washington recently received a telephone call at 1:30 a.m. from Woodbourne officials who needed to place a young man into a home.

"It's never a problem. I just get up and answer the call," Washington said. "I just tell them to make sure and wake me up in the



Tommy Washington, foster dad  
Courtesy Photo

morning because I still have to go to work."

Like other foster parents, Washington said he can attest that it's not always easy.

"It's been some trying times considering you're taking in guys who haven't had a normal family," Washington said. "I tell them when they come in here, they're family and they're treated like family," he said.

However, the Woodbourne Center staff works hard to make the transition as smooth as possible, officials said.

The center provides psychiatric residential treatment for boys, ages 12-18, who have chronic mental health issues.

Specialized programming is offered for unhealthy sexual behaviors and treatment fos-

ter care services are provided to boys and girls, age birth to 21, and families in the Baltimore area.

The site utilizes a comprehensive, integrated system of care to meet the individual needs of each child.

"Every kid that I've had has come back with the exception of one or two," Washington said.

"Just recently, I had one who is now in the military, has a baby and is married. It made me feel good. He had been talking about getting himself together and I think he just needed the guidance of a man. I just remember when he was in high school and playing basketball."

Still, other heart-warming examples Washington noted were of one of his former foster children calling him recently for a haircut and another he said is simply doing well.

"It's been a pretty good experience," Washington said.

"It has its ups and downs and it's not an easy job because you have to recognize that you're dealing with someone else's troubles which are different from dealing with your own children or relatives. You just don't know what they've been through and you must take that into account."

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# Recreation Therapy keeps 82-year-old veteran, athlete, coach, mentor on his feet

WASHINGTON, DC – You may have seen him at the Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center, he is the one with an easy smile, a bounce in his step and multiple award medallions around his neck. Army Veteran Bernie Gibson, 82, is an athlete who has been competing in the National Veterans Golden Age Games (NVGAG) since they began in 1985.

The NVGAG are part of the medical center's Recreational Therapy program, an evidence-based program that helps injured Veterans improve their functional independence and quality of life.

According to the medical center's Recreation Therapy Supervisor Jon Palks, Recreation Therapy may look like all fun and games but it's actually very serious treatment. "Our therapists help Veterans enhance or maintain their motor, physical, social and cognitive skills. It's unconventional, but effective, especially for those who resist other types of treatment," Palks said.

For Veteran Bernie Gibson, Recreation



*Army Veteran Bernie Gibson*  
Courtesy Photo

Therapy helps give his life meaning. "I've competed all over the place, Maine, Hawaii, San Antonio, New York, you name it," he said. At the most recent games in Biloxi, Mississippi, he earned

a gold medal in table tennis, and silver medals in shot-put, discus and horse shoes. Table tennis is his favorite he says, he's been playing since he was 12. The games not only provide an athletic

venue but help him and other Veterans form strong friendship bonds. "I now have friends all over the nation, we keep in touch throughout the year and can't wait to meet up again and compete with each other," Gibson said.

Mr. Gibson is no ordinary competitor; he is also a coach and a mentor. "At the games, I often host a mini-camp to help Veterans hone their skills and to teach them how to stretch and prepare properly so they don't injure themselves," he said.

Jon Palks says one of the best aspects of his job is watching Veterans take what they learn in Recreation Therapy and applying it other aspects of their lives. For instance, Bernie Gibson is not only training for the next NVGAG to be held in New Mexico in August; but is putting together an exercise class for a senior citizen center in Washington, D.C.

For more information about the Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center's Recreation Therapy Program contact the Office of Public Affairs, 202-745-4037.



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# New Salon for Men A ‘Man Cave Nirvana’ in Owings Mills

By Stacy M. Brown

It’s nothing but a man thing at Hammer & Nails. At least, that’s what the owners of the grooming shop for men have created at the Owings Mills-based business that offers hand and foot care, haircuts and shaves in what’s billed as a man cave nirvana.

“Hammer & Nails is a shop for guys who love their man caves, so we felt that building an atmosphere where guys could feel like it was designed and built for them would be a successful shop,” co-owner Bart Butler said.

“Men for years have tired of going to female-centric shops to get hand and foot grooming. Where now we have our own shop designed and built just for us guys,” Butler said.

The shop’s founder, Michael Elliott, helped kick things in motion when he appeared on the hit CNBC show, Shark Tank.

He sought a \$200,000 investment for a 20 percent stake, but the sharks rejected him.

“The show was and is huge for us as we get a lot of name recognition because of it,” Butler said.

In a later profile by *Forbes Magazine*, it was noted that Elliott, who wrote screenplays for movies that include “Brown Sugar” and “Just Wright,” raised the money anyway.

The first Hammer & Nails shop opened in 2013 in Los Angeles.

From the time customers walk in the door, the custom-designed scented candles are said to give off great aromas and clients also are greeted by the unique design from the shop’s lighting to its car door light fixtures and televisions that are encased inside mirrors located in the barbering area.



Michael Elliott, founder of Hammer & Nails.  
Courtesy Photo (Hammer & Nails)

“We focus on service and our staff are trained to make this about an experience not just services being delivered,” Butler said.

An added attraction is the shop’s complimentary premium cocktails; and its hand and foot area where each guy has

his own 43 inch flat screen, Bose noise cancelling headphones and remote control in a low light atmosphere where they are attended to by an all-female staff.

The shop also has nail technicians who are trained in wellness so that they are able to routinely alert clients of any medical issues they should have looked at.

Butler said he had been looking at a similar business model and when his wife received an email about H&N, he began “completing her every sentence and we knew it was the one.”

“Within one day I was on the phone with the vice president of franchise development and within one week we had a conference call with [Elliott]. Two months after my visit we closed the deal to purchase development rights to develop 10

franchises in Maryland,” he said.

Butler said the name Hammer & Nails certainly has a meaning.

“Nails, that’s pretty obvious because we are the only male-centric shop that does hand and foot grooming for guys along with barbering services and old-fashioned straight razor shaves,” he said. Noting that on Tuesdays, they offer a public safety promotion which gives a 10 percent discount to veterans, teachers, police officers and medical and fire personnel.

“The Hammer signifies the tough as nails part which sets up the whole man cave nirvana,” Butler said. “There’s truly nothing like it in the region and our clients have raved about us so far.”



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# Artist Robert Lugo Discusses Walters Museum Collection, History

By Stacy M. Brown

Roberto Lugo isn't your ordinary artist.

He's a young professor of Puerto Rican descent who proudly wears a baseball cap — frontward, backward and to the side — while donning a slick dress jacket and a pair of baggy jeans.

The Philadelphia-based ceramicist who the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore commissioned to create works of art and participate in programming for the reopening of the historic Mount Vernon building, waxed poetic in his artist statement about his attire.

"I got my hat turned backwards because the sun don't shine here, loose jeans to fit all this baggage that I carry ... I am a potter, activist, culture-maker, rapper, poet, and educator," he said.

His works are eye-catching, and when the museum opens on Saturday, June 16, the pieces are certain to draw a lot of conversation. Lugo's works combine the forms and traditions he previously observed in the Walters' collection with contemporary color and imagery.

The elegant shapes of Sèvres porcelain are echoed in vases that also feature the "Fred Collection," with figures like Frederick Douglass and Freddie Gray, the Baltimore man who died in police custody in 2015.

"I think like most artists, you kind of have a fear of being exploited or someone offering you an opportunity just because you're a person of color," Lugo said.

"I wanted to be myself and say what was on my mind in an unfiltered way. What was great is that the Walters Museum had a scholar that worked with 19th century decorative art and we were sitting there one night looking at porcelain and it was like an underground hip-hop battle," he said.

Among the end results were the

"Fred Collection," and the "Seat at the Table," to honor Sybby Grant, the enslaved but proud cook who served at the very building, 1 West, during the 19th century.

The "Fred" includes Frederick Douglas, Freddie Gray, Fred Sanford and others.

"Fred Sanford of course being Red Foxx because that's how I knew Foxx, as Fred Sanford all of my life. I was trying to connect where we are today and when this house was built," Lugo said.

"I didn't want to participate if I couldn't talk about Freddie Gray and the part of Baltimore that wouldn't normally be included. I started to think about people named Fred and the folks that made a significant impact in our culture and those who carry one name and the amount of people who went through slavery and those who never had a chance to make an impact."

In his homage to Sybby Grant, Lugo created a set of plates with a monogram of her initials and visual references to the dishes in which she took pride.

At one time, porcelain was considered more expensive than gold and only the wealthy and those with prestige could own such items, Lugo said.

"But, people like Sybby Grant and the way she existed with grace, allowed me to go to college and to be able to make this work," he said. "We are owners of this museum.

This is our museum and not just the folks who literally do own it. Because of the work of Sybby Grant and Frederick Douglass and others, I'm now able to make a set of china with the little that I know about Sybby Grant who was proud of her craft in terms of her cooking and I was careful not to contrive anything or to speak on her behalf.

"The china represents her seat at the table and when I say her seat, I mean all of ours because this is a museum for all of us," Lugo said.



*Robert Lugo at work*

*Courtesy Photo: The Walters Art Museum*



*Right: Frederick Douglass and I*  
*Photo: The Baltimore Times*

*Left: Fred Sanford (Redd Foxx) / Freddie Gray Urn*  
*Photo: The Baltimore Times*

# Walters Art Museum 19th Century Mansion Ready for Visitors

By Stacy M. Brown

Visitors will now have a unique opportunity to explore the Walters Art Museum's stunning 19th century mansion at 1 West Mount Vernon Place, which opens with a free community celebration on Saturday, June 16.

Attendees will be able to learn of the of the untold stories of enslaved and paid laborers through an enormous collection of exhibits, vases, dishes, books, and other artifacts that adorn the mansion.

The work of talented artist Roberto Lugo is displayed as are those of the Walters collection that are clearly seen in the Greek revival mansion that was constructed as the home of John Hanson Thomas, the great-grandson of the President of the Continental Congress.

"There were probably a half-dozen enslaved people who lived in the house at first," said Eleanor Hughes, the museum's deputy director and project curator, as she pointed to a door that once led to the basement kitchen and quarters of the house's cook, Sybby Grant.

"The focus is to tell the stories of the people who lived and worked here," Hughes said.

Perhaps some of the most inspiring exhibits are those that depict the life of Sybby Grant, who cooked for the Thomas family.

On display is a letter to Dr. Thomas while he was imprisoned during the American Civil War. The letter is displayed in the dining area of the house where Lugo's "Seat at the Table" exhibit pays homage to Grant.

On Dec. 6, 1861, Grant wrote to Dr. Thomas. "My Friend," is how she addressed her slave master.

In part the letter read, "I miss you very much indeed. I hope the time will soon come when you will be restored to your family again for I will ever hold you as a friend of mine."

Historians noted that Grant was proud of her superior cooking abilities and noted it in the letter.

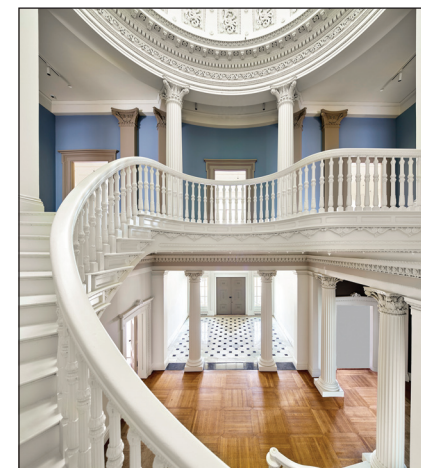
"Whenever I cook a good dinner I wish you was here to enjoy it," she wrote. "Those terrapins I cooked, I done them in style, for you know that no one can do them like I can."

Artist Robert Lugo said he was moved by Grant's story and decided to create a



**The Walters Art Museum opens 1 West Mount Vernon Place, an awe-inspiring 19th century mansion on Saturday, June 16, 2018 after a multi-year transformation.**

Photo: Courtesy of The Walters Art Museum/Jeffrey Totaro Photography



icons, richly illuminated Qur'ans and Gospel books, ancient roman sarcophagi, and serene images of the Buddha.

The history of the house is just as intriguing.

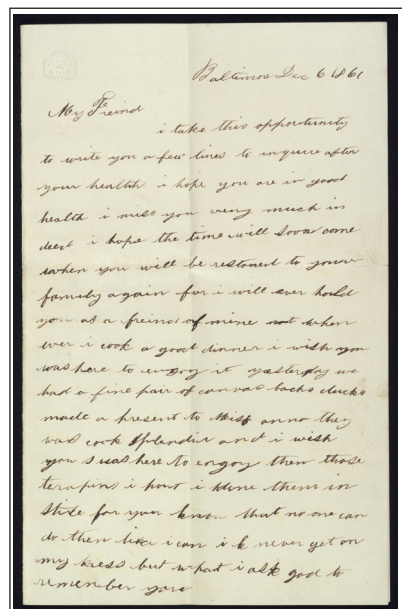
"The Thomas family built 1 West; the family of Francis Mankin Jencks lived here the longest; and in the 1960s and 1970s, Harry Gladding brought the house back to life," Hughes said, noting that the information is also available through a new app that museum has created to give visitors an interactive experience. The house was also known as the Hackerman House after Baltimore philanthropist Willard Hackerman bought it and donated it to the City of Baltimore

The app reveals that the Jencks family had five children, two of who were born at home in the northeast bedroom on the second floor. Several paid servants also lived in the house on the third floor and in an apartment above the Carriage House.

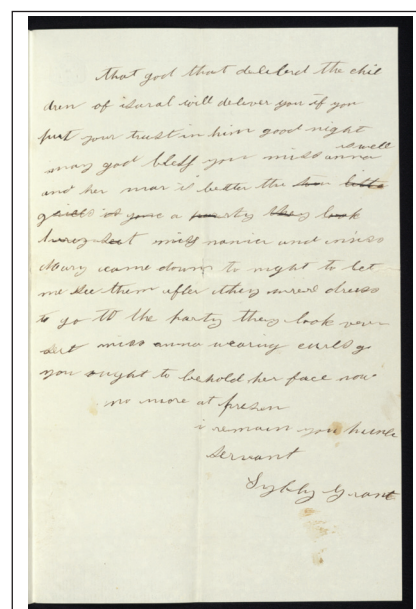
During the Civil War, Maryland played a key role as a border state between the North and South and slavery was legal in the state, dividing the population between those who supported the Union and those who were on the side of the Confederacy.

Dr. John Hanson Thomas was a representative in the Maryland Legislature and voted for secession of the Confederate states from the United States, while his wife wrote letters that revealed her political activities. She collected donations and clothing for both imprisoned Confederate soldiers and civilians and helped raise money to build a tomb for General Robert E. Lee.

The public is invited to visit the 1 Mount Vernon Place, restored to its former glory and interact with the exhibits in a un-museum like fashion. Admission is free.



**Sybby Grant's letter to Dr. John Hanson Thomas while he was in prison. Sybby was an enslaved cook of the Thomas family.** Photo: Walters Museum of Art



set of glazed fine china emblazoned with a black crest designed in her honor.

"This is Sybby Grant's seat at the table," Lugo said.

"It was students at the Baltimore School for the Arts who first mentioned Grant's name to us," Hughes said. "The students learned of this letter from Baltimore Heritage, which is a historical preservation group who included Grant's story in a tour they conducted," she said. Hughes said museum officials quickly moved to

obtain the letter, which they tracked to a book dealer in Philadelphia. The museum then began documenting Grant's life.

The museum's collection spans more than seven millennia, from 5,000 BCE to the 21st century, and encompasses 36,000 objects from around the world, museum officials said.

Visitors will encounter a stunning panorama of thousands of years of art, from romantic 19th-century images of French gardens to mesmerizing Ethiopian

# Grandfather Helped Write His Success Story

By Ursula V. Battle

*This is Part I of a two-part series on Ramsey L. Harris, and the native Baltimorean's ascension up the PNC corporate ladder.*

Ramsey L. Harris is Vice President and Territory CRA Business Advisor in the Retail Lending Distribution Management division at PNC Bank. Harris is responsible for overseeing and executing strategic plans that enable the bank to achieve specific Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) focused goals and measures of lending to businesses located within designated, inner-city/Low-to-Moderate Income (LMI) areas. These areas include Greater Maryland, and Greater Washington/D.C.

At just 36, Harris' many accomplishments read like a corporate success story. He credits his grandfather — the late Bishop Huey L. Harris, Sr. — with his success. Bishop Harris, Sr. was the founder and pastor of Abundant Life Worship Center in Elkton, Maryland. Harris believes that had it not been for his grandfather, his story might have played out much differently.

"I was born in West Baltimore," said Harris. "We then moved to East Baltimore, and then to Baltimore County. My father was a chemist. He worked for DuPont, but was relocated to Houston, Texas. My grandparents stepped in to help my mother. They wanted to make sure I was not another young man in Baltimore without guidance, or another statistic, or involved in a life of crime.."

He added, "I began getting in trouble and my grandfather stepped in. He had me with my mom throughout the week and with him in Delaware on the weekends. I accepted my call to ministry at the age of 14 at my grandfather's church. I graduated from Eastern Tech High School and really did well academically. I wanted to go to Morehouse College, but my grandfather refused to let me go to Morehouse."

Harris explained: "We agreed that if I went away for four or five years to Atlanta, I would miss his tutelage," said



**Ramsey L. Harris, Vice President and Territory CRA Business Advisor in the Retail Lending Distribution Management division at PNC Bank, and his grandfather, the late grandfather Bishop Huey L. Harris, Sr. Courtesy Photos**



**Bishop Harris holding his grandson Ramsey L. Harris.**

Harris. "I went to the University of Delaware, which allowed me to be close to him and active in his church. While I was at the University of Delaware, I did work study at Bank of America to make money while I was in school. I found that banking was applicable in ministry. I was working in the finance department at my grandfather's church as a trustee and assistant treasurer and was always around money. It was a natural fit."

He added, "I also majored in English at the University of Delaware because I wanted to have a good handle on communications. I also knew it would help me in ministry. I decided I wanted to get into banking because I heard there were good programs for college graduates to make money. I thought I would do this through Bank of America. But, a re-

cruiter from PNC reached out to me. She made sure I got into PNC's leadership program, and the rest is history."

Harris has over 18 years of management, consultation, small business banking and lending, community development, and financial services experience. Prior to joining PNC, Harris started his banking career as a Sales Consultant at Bank of America. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English with a concentration in Business & Technical Writing from the University of Delaware.

He is a third generation Pentecostal minister. For over 20 years, he served in ministry at the Abundant Life Worship Center, Inc., under Bishop Harris, Sr.

"My grandfather was my pastor, bishop, coach and cheerleader," said Harris. "Young men have to connect with mentors early in their lives. When my grandfather told me not to go to Morehouse, I did not like it. But I came to appreciate having a mentor that saw the bright future God had for me."

He added, "He wanted me to take advantage of the time he knew I couldn't get back if I went away. It helped me to understand the power of mentorship and having a strong father figure in my life."

Ramsey Harris also was his grandfather's "Ram in the bush"

"I was on his pastoral staff and interim pastor for his church when he was ill for two years," said Harris. "That on the job training would have never happened had I gone away to school. He had a grandson he had groomed all these years while he recovered. That put the stamp of approval on my pastoral calling and gave me a greater vision for what the next chapter in my life would look like."

He added, "I knew God had called me to Baltimore City. I know my calling is unique and specific to Baltimore City."

*Coming next week - Baltimore City: The setting for Harris' newest chapter with PNC Bank and the launch of a new church.*

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# Rambling Rose

*Father's Day Weekend  
brings jazz, blues, gospel*



*Rosa Pryor Trusty*

Hello everyone! Happy Father's Day to all my "Daddies" out there in the sound of my words! I am hoping that the ladies show off and give the guys the best day they have ever had. Their day is just as important as Mother's Day, ladies, so show them how it is done! I am going to give you a little help. I have a few ideas you can choose from. Depending on your man's taste, I have jazz shows; blues shows; gospel shows; crab feasts; and outdoor and indoor concerts.

This is one of my favorites: A "Father's Day Celebration" featuring Darrell McFadden & The Disciples; Willis Pittman & The Burden Lifters; Kenny Davis & The Melodyaires; Lil' David & The Bells of Joy; The Sheppard Voices; The New Ebony Gospel Singers. The emcee is Minister Robert Wilson and they are giving the "Best Dressed Man" \$100.00. This event will be Sunday June 17, at 4 p.m. at Brown's Memorial Baptist Church, 3215 W. Belvedere Avenue in Baltimore and it is handicap accessible. They will have food on sale. For ticket information, call 358-9661 or 443-610-7583, I will see you there.

Now if you like some down-home blues, then this is a perfect show to take that guy in your live to. The "Bluesman" Reggie Wayne Morris and his band will be performing at the Baltimore Wine Fest at the Canton Waterfront Park, 3001 Boston Street in Baltimore on Saturday, June 16, 1 p.m.

How about a little jazz? Well check this out! The Brotherhood of St. Andrew of Historic St. James' Episcopal Church, 1020 W. Lafayette Avenue will have a "Jazz Vespers Concert" featuring Baltimore's own, international recording artist, Cyrus Chestnut on keyboards and his trio on Sunday, June 17 from 5-7 p.m.

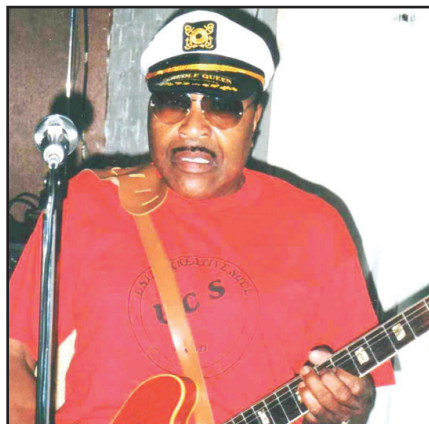
Okay, if you just want to dress casual,

get-down comfortable, then I believe "Richard Callaway's Annual Father's Day Crab Feast" on Sunday, June 17 from 5-9 p.m. at the Personality Hall, 2014 Harford Road. There will be an open buffet, music, BYOB, free set-ups and lots of crabs. For ticket information, call 410-366-3342.

Oh, I am not done yet! My dear friend, renowned drummer, music educator and bandleader, Dr. Phill Butts invites you to a "Porgy and Bess" Concert featuring his Big Band and vocalist Larzine Talley, Raynard Simms on Saturday, June 16 starting at 5 p.m. at the Wiley H. Bates Heritage Park, 1101 Smithville Street in Annapolis, Maryland. All are welcome; open to the public and it is free!

As many of you know, or don't know, I have been an Eastern Star and a Daughter of the Elks for the past 30 plus years and sometimes my Sisters and Brothers of the Masons give events that you come to. I will be giving you a list of those events coming up this summer in my next column.

Well my dear friends, it is about that time for the "Fat Lady" to sing, I am out of space and time. Remember, if you need me, call me at 410-833-9474 or email me at; rosapryor@aol.com. UNTIL THEN, I'M MUSICALLY YOURS.



*"Bluesman" Reggie Wayne Morris, renowned Blues guitarist will be performing with his band at the Baltimore Wine Fest, Canton Waterfront Park, 3001 Boston Street in Baltimore on Saturday, June 16 at 1 p.m*



*Cyrus Chestnut Trio will be performing at the Brotherhood of St. Andrew of Historic St. James' Episcopal Church located at 1020 W. Lafayette Avenue with a "Jazz Vespers Concert on Sunday, June 17m from 5-9 p.m. For more information, call 410-523-4588.*



*Willis Pittman & The Burden Lifters is just one of many gospel acts performing for "Lonnie Parker's Big Father's Day Celebration" on Sunday, June 17, 4 p.m. at Brown's Memorial Baptist Church, 3215 W. Belvedere Avenue in Baltimore.*

*Richard Callaway, renowned R&B guitarist and vocalist and owner of the Personality Hall located 2014 Harford Road will present his "Annual Father's Day Crab Feast" on Sunday, June 17 from 5-9 p.m. Free set-ups, BYOB. For more information call 410-366-3342.*





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# UMB's Live Near Your Work Program hits home as more employees buy houses

The University of Maryland, Baltimore's (UMB) Live Near Your Work Program received a cash infusion this year — \$1.5 million to be exact — in an effort to get more employees to buy homes in seven neighborhoods that border the campus. University President Jay A. Perman, MD, said he expected the money to be a “game-changer” in spurring UMB employees to take the plunge into homeownership and help revitalize the Southwest Baltimore community. Perman's prediction was on the mark.

In five short months, the game has changed in a major way — and more than a half-dozen UMB employees have used the University's \$16,000 subsidy, coupled with a \$2,500 grant from the city of Baltimore, to help buy homes amid the seven targeted neighborhoods of Barre Circle, Franklin Square, Hollins Market, Mount Clare, Pigtown/Washington Village, Poppleton, and Union Square.

Even better, there is a steady stream of prospects in the home-purchasing pipeline.

“This is a great program, and it propelled me from thinking about purchasing a home to actually doing it,” said Vonetta Edwards, PhD, a postdoctoral fellow at the Institute for Genome Sciences at the University of Maryland School of Medicine. She used the grant to move out of an apartment in Mount Vernon and buy a home in Hollins Market. “Especially for first-time homebuyers, the amount that covers both closing costs and the down payment is almost too good to leave on the table.”

Edwards joins C. Steven Douglas, MA, MLS, head of collection strategies and management at UMB's Health Sciences and Human Services Library, and Robin Boston, a UMB disbursements accountant, as Hollins Market residents. Douglas, who had been renting in Hollins Market, used the grant to help buy a house in the neighborhood. “Its proximity to campus, downtown, and the harbor first attracted me,” he said. Boston, who moved from Reservoir Hill, near Druid Lake, said, “I take pride in owning my own home.”



*Shea Lawson proudly poses in her new rowhouse, which was purchased with the help of UMB's Live Near Your Work Program.*

Photo: University of Maryland, Baltimore

That trio followed Shea Lawson, research project coordinator at the Brain and Tissue Bank at the School of Medicine. She was the first UMB employee to take advantage of the improved grant, buying a rowhouse in Pigtown this spring. The employees all touted the benefits of living near their workplace, with Lawson happy to cut down on her commute from Charles Village and Edwards pleased to continue without car expenses.

To ease and demystify the homebuying process, the program incorporates community partners such as Live Baltimore, the Southwest Partnership, and GO Northwest Housing Center to facilitate neighborhood tours, housing fairs, workshops, and counseling sessions. Homebuyers offered kudos to these partners and the city's Homeownership Office.

All are working toward the goal of community revitalization by placing more UMB employees in the University's surrounding neighborhoods.

“I hope that these grants will help many of our employees who are first-time homebuyers and I hope it will make a difference in the community,” Perman said in January. “It is a vibrant, shared community where there are multiple stakeholders. My dream is to see many of you walking to and from work

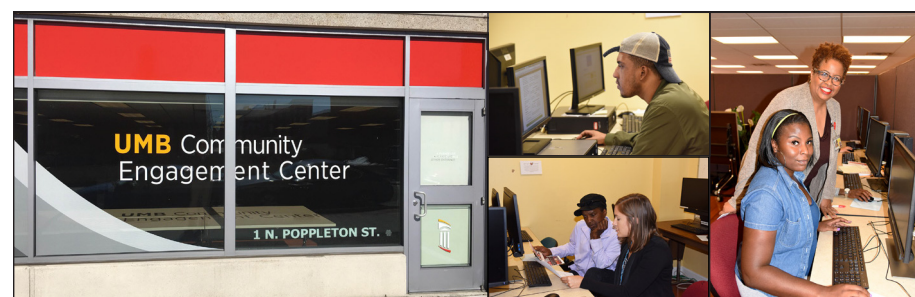
and to see you out at local restaurants and local shops.”

Dawn Rhodes, MBA, the University's chief business and finance officer and vice president, is thrilled with the pro-

gram's results nearly a half-year in. “We are very pleased with the progress of the improved Live Near Your Work [LNYW] Program,” she said. “It is helping very deserving individuals become homeowners.”

Emily Kordish, UMB benefits manager and coordinator of the LNYW Program, has been helping guide employees through the process. She's equally thrilled.

“I'm extremely excited and honored to be a part of a program that has been making such a big impact in our employees' lives,” Kordish said. “Employees have been contacting me not only to take advantage of this benefit, but to also take the steps so they can be ready to buy. This has truly been a rewarding experience.”



## UMB HELPS THE COMMUNITY GET JOBS

The **Community Engagement Center (CEC)** at the **University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB)** works hard to offer our neighbors in West Baltimore the tools they need to get jobs — especially jobs at UMB and the University of Maryland Medical Center. Those efforts include:

### UMB Recruitment Open Houses at the CEC

Open houses with employers are held for specific jobs such as public safety and housekeeping.

### Workforce Wednesdays

One-on-one job readiness counseling is offered every Wednesday from 2 to 5 p.m.

### Career Training Programs

The CEC connects area residents to various job training programs throughout the city.

### YouthWorks and HireOne

UMB, through the Mayor's Office of Employment Development, offers a five-week summer employment program for youth.

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## Legal Notice

CITY OF BALTIMORE  
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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 **FAP NO. NHPP-83-1(179)E; SHA NO. BC420006; BALTIMORE CITY NO. TR13301R; INSTALLATION OF I-83 MEDIAN GATE NORTH OF COLD SPRING LANE AND BRIDGE JOINT REPAIRS** will be received at the Office of the Comptroller, Room 204 City Hall, Baltimore, Maryland until 11:00 A.M. **August 8, 2018**. 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 the Department of Public Works Service Center located on the first floor of the Abel Wolman Municipal Building, 200 N. Holliday Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21202 as of **June 15, 2018** and copies may be purchased for a non-refundable cost of **\$300.00**. **Conditions and requirements of the Bid are found in the bid package**. All contractors bidding on this Contract must first be prequalified by the City of Baltimore Contractors Qualification Committee. Interested parties should call (410) 396-6883 or contact the Committee at 4 South Frederick Street, 4th Floor, Baltimore, Maryland 21202. **If a bid is submitted by a joint venture ("JV"), then in that event, the document that established the JV shall be submitted with the bid for verification purposes. The BCDOT in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 252, 42 U.S.C. 2000d to 2000d-4) and the Regulations, hereby notifies all bidders that it will affirmatively ensure that any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, disadvantage or minority business enterprises will be afforded full and fair opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in consideration for an award.** The Prequalification Category required for bidding on this project are C03300 (Concrete Construction) and C05100 (Structural Steel Erection). Cost Qualification Range for this work shall be **\$4,000,000.00 to \$6,000,000.00**. A "Pre-Bidding Information" session will be conducted at **10:00 A.M. on June 22, 2018** at 417 E. Fayette Street, Charles L. Benton Building, 724. Principal Items of work for this project are Type II Deck Repair – 10,000 SF, Replace Exist. Joint Extrusions – 1,000 LF, and Reset Exist. Joint Extrusions – 1,000 LF. The DBE goal is **16%**.

APPROVED: Bernice H. Taylor, Clerk  
Board of Estimates

*Happy Fathers Day!!*

*A good father is one of the most unsung, unpraised, unnoticed, and yet one of the most valuable assets in our society.*

*Billy Graham*

## Hosanna School Museum Hosts Second Annual Juneteenth Celebration

Darlington, Md.— Hosanna School Museum will hold its second annual Juneteenth celebration festival on Saturday, June 23, 2018 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the museum, 2424 Castleton Road in Darlington. The festival is open to the public, free of charge, and takes place rain or shine.

Juneteenth is a nationally recognized day that commemorates the ending of slavery in the United States and celebrates African American history and culture.

This year's celebration features Buffalo Soldiers in addition to living history presentations featuring re-enactors portraying Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass and Edmonia Highgate, the first teacher at Hosanna School; lectures and book signings; African dancers and drummers with audience participation; liturgical dancers; a variety of musical performances; craft vendors; displays from community organizations and more.

Special activities for children includes griots (storytellers); visits from Ferrous and Ripcord from the Aberdeen IronBirds and Miss Juneteenth of Delaware; horse rides and photos with the Buffalo Soldiers; and crafts organized by Jerusalem Mill.

The day will also feature a variety of food trucks. Hosanna AME Church's famous fish dinners will also be available.

Other special features at the celebration include a money tree raffle and silent auction (including an overnight hotel stay and dinner package at Courtyard Aberdeen at Ripken Stadium). All proceeds go toward educational and interpretive programming and continued preservation of the historic buildings owned by Hosanna School Museum, including McComas Institute and Mt. Zion Church in Joppa.

Hosanna is partnering on the celebration with the Harford County Alumni Council, Hosanna AME Church and Havre de Grace Rotary Club. Sponsors of Juneteenth, include Harford County Government and the Office of Community and Economic Development.

"Last year's Juneteenth exceeded our expectations," said Dr. Iris Leigh Barnes, executive director of Hosanna School Museum. "This year we have included more performers and activities for youth.



Photo: Donna Lewis

We want to see whole families celebrating with us."

At the Juneteenth celebration, living history re-enactor Brittany Martin will portray Edmonia Highgate, the first teacher at Darlington School, later called Hosanna School. Highgate is a historical figure who worked alongside nationally recognized abolitionists such as Frederick Douglass, Jermain Loguen and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper. While preparing for this living history presentation, historians and volunteers at Hosanna have discovered new information about Highgate and her role at Hosanna.

"Education, culture and achievement are just as important today as it was when Hosanna School was first built more than 150 years ago," added Roxann Redd-Walace, education coordinator and Juneteenth committee chair. "We welcome everyone on June 23 to help us celebrate—in grand festival style—the anniversary of the ending of slavery and to honor our ancestors while maintaining a legacy for future generations."

Businesses and individuals interested in sponsorship of the Juneteenth celebration or in donating an item for the silent auction should contact Roxann Redd-Walace at 410-457-4161.

Hosanna School Museum was the first of three Freedmen's Bureau schoolhouses erected in Harford County. Also known as the Darlington School or Berkley School, Hosanna was built on land owned by James Paca, the son of Cupid Paca, a free African American who bought 50 acres of land from Berkley to Darlington.

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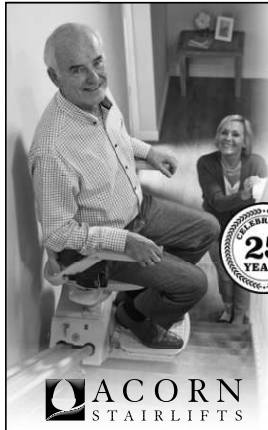
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