

The Miami Times

Tempora Mutantur Et Nos Mutamur In Illis

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50 CENTS

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School board orders audit of \$1.2B bond

Move comes at middle of nine-year spending plan

By Andrea Robinson

arobinson@miamitimesonline.com

The school board has voted for Miami-Dade Public Schools to conduct a comprehensive independent audit of the \$1.2 billion general obligation bond and to also publish regular updates about expenditures until all the money is spent.

The decisions by the board members come as they and community members continue

to ask questions about how the funds have been spent.

The nine-member School Board voted for two separate items that call for giving a closer look at how the money has been spent. The directives come from the two newest board members, Mari Tere Rojas of District Six and Steve Gallon III of District One. The items were approved at the Nov. 15 regular school board meeting.

Rojas' proposal, which passed by a vote of 6-3, requires the district to order an independent mid-point audit of the bond, which was approved by voters in 2012.

Gallon's item, which passed unanimously, goes deeper. It requires the district to put in place a mechanism for quarterly reporting of GOB expenditures to the school board by each cost category and related project, as well as

provide an expenditure report for all GOB expenditures to date by each category, school board voting district, and school name, and provide same to Board on a quarterly basis.

Under Gallon's approved item, administrators also would have to establish a process and system to report all GOB expenditures by each category and related projects for public access.

Rojas said her proposal Please turn to **AUDIT 4A**



STEVE GALLON III



MARI TERE ROJAS



—AP Photo/J. Pat Carter

Felon Leroy Jones joins other demonstrators outside court in Miami, Wednesday, April 9, 2003, where the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals is hearing arguments on whether the state is doing enough to help ex-felons restore their voting rights. Jones finished his sentence 10 years ago.

HE COUNTS — AT LAST

Miami man regains his voting rights after a two decade fight for them

By Nyamekye Daniel

ndaniel@miamitimesonline.com

As activists and civil liberties groups work on rights restoration for former felons, Leroy Jones is already celebrating. He received his rights last month after going before the state Clemency Board.

Jones, a community activist, founder of the inner-city business coalition, Neighbors and

More than

1.6

Million Floridians

Stalled by the voting restriction, the highest number in the country, according to the American Civil Liberties Union. More than 43 percent of those felons are Black.

Neighbors Association and the community advocacy group, Brothers of the Same Mind, got his voting rights restored on Oct. 7 after an 18-year-battle for clemency.

Jones is an exception rather than the rule in a state that has one of the toughest processes for regaining voting rights. Florida is one of three states where felons permanently lose the right to vote. More than 1.6 million Floridians are stalled by the voting restriction, the highest number in the country, according to the American Civil Liberties Union. More than 43 percent of those felons are Black.

Activists and civil liberties groups want to Please turn to **FELONS 6A**

Afro Queen

Miss Jamaica was robbed of the title, internet says

By Jacqueline Laureen Yates

Yahoo Lifestyle

Miss South Africa Demi-Leigh Nel-Peters won the crown at this year's Miss Universe pageant, and while the 22-year-old is being celebrated worldwide, there are many people who feel Miss Jamaica, Davina Bennett, really deserved the title.

Seeing women of color compete in pageants while rocking their natural hair is an empowering deviation from seeing the blown-out, straighter hairstyles contestants traditionally wear. Bennett, the second runner-up for Miss Universe, not only showed off her crowning Afro glory, but did so with grace, intelligence, and confidence — and people are beyond here for it.

One Twitter user shared, "Davina represented not only #Jamaica in the #MissUniverse but the black race. I wish she's the one who should have won. She displayed her Afro with pride redefining the competition. Young black girls out there can feel confidence in their natural hair without whitening it." The post has since gotten more than 1,000 hearts and more than 300 retweets, with one person going so far as to comment, "Miss Jamaica was robbed."

Davina represented not only #Jamaica in the #MissUniverse but the black race. I wish she's the one who should have won. She displayed her Afro with pride Please turn to **ROBBED 4A**



Suarez talks strong mayor, inclusion

He's reaching out to Black neighborhoods

By Andrea Robinson

arobinson@miamitimesonline.com

Now in his second full week as Miami's top elected official, Francis Suarez is now making a case with voters for the city to have a strong mayor.

In an interview Tuesday, Suarez, 40, said he wants a referendum so

voters can decide whether or not to put executive power in the hands of one person. That person also would be subject to recall, another change that would be required.

Under the city's charter, the mayoral position is largely ceremonial and is not subject to recall. The mayor technically is chairman of the city commission but does not



SUAREZ

have a vote. Under his predecessor, Tomas Regalado, the chairman duties were given to one of the five commissioners.

Suarez was elected by nearly 86 percent of the voters, so he enjoys goodwill among residents, especially those in Overtown and Liberty City.

Nathaniel Wilcox, executive director of People United to Lead the Struggle Against Equality, or PULSE, said Suarez is good for the city.

"He's a new man with new, fresh ideas to run the city. He's pulling in people from all segments of the community," Wilcox said. "Haitians, African Americans have the ability to have a conversation with him. You don't have to wait for days

to have a conversation. He's accessible."

Suarez said the mayor is the only constitutional official elected by all residents. "They expect you to be able to do things," Suarez said. "In the current government, the mayor is not very empowered. It's a convoluted situation."

But the real power rests with the city manager. That position is Please turn to **MAYOR 6A**



Editorial

#MeToo — a hashtag for change

The #MeToo movement has forced the United States to finally take a hard look at the age-old problem of sexual harassment and assault in this country. The phrase — reportedly created 10 years ago by Black blogger Tarana Burke — went viral last month, as female entertainers called attention to the problems they had with men in positions of power — movie producers, directors and studio chiefs.

More recently, the hashtag has infiltrated the political realm. Allegations of assault are front and center in the Alabama U.S. Senate race, where several women say they were approached by the leading GOP candidate more than 30 years ago while they were teenagers and he was in his 30s.

And this social media phenomenon has snared a revered Black congressman who now is in his 80s, along with the revelation of taxpayer funds that were set aside to pay victims.

We in Miami should not get on our high horses and proclaim this as a problem of the Washington Beltway or the entertainment capitals of Los Angeles and New York. Chances are that #MeToo will show up in sunny South Florida. The time is over for victim-blaming. Culprits should make peace with their past and prepare to face consequences.

There is a time and place for everything. This scourge hopefully is coming to a head. We must be prepared to examine the causes and prevent these things from happening again. People in positions of power can no longer run roughshod over those under their watch. If you see something, say something.

#MeToo is a much-needed hashtag for change.

CARTOON CORNER



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BY EUGENE ROBINSON, The Washington Post

Here's how Roy Moore can be defeated

Can the descent of American political culture into ugly tribalism be halted? Alabama voters will decide whether they send Roy Moore to the U.S. Senate.

Moore, 70, has built a long, disgraceful career out of smarmy religiosity spiked with tribal grievance. Having posed for years as the most pious of Christians, he now stands accused by nine women of shockingly un-Christian behavior: They claim convincingly that Moore, when he was in his 30s, aggressively pursued romantic or sexual relationships, including with teens barely half his age.

One woman says Moore molested her when she was 14. Another says Moore called her at her high school — during trigonometry class, she recalls — to plead with her to go out with him. Residents of Gadsden, Ala., where Moore was working at the time, say he was well-known for lurking

around places where teenagers hung out, such as the local mall, and approaching young girls.

Moore denies everything — but without specifically denying much of anything. In one interview, he said that while in his 30s he did not “generally” date teenage girls. He added that he cannot “remem-

ber” dating any girl without the permission of her mother.” How weaselly does all of this sound? How creepy?

But Moore has been as strident in his attacks against the establishment wing of the Republican Party as against the Democrats. He has been a grandstanding maverick for decades, and there is no reason to believe he will change. Having Moore in the Senate would probably mean more

Moore uses his angry Christianity as a tool of self-aggrandizement. He uses the trust and passion of the Alabamians he defrauds to sully the reputations of women who bravely testify to his allegedly vile and creepy behavior. He rages about filing lawsuits, but don't hold your breath. Lawyers for potential defendants can't wait to see what the discovery process might unearth.

Alabama's three major newspapers ran rare front-page editorials Sunday imploring voters not to send this unworthy man to Washington. It is a sad sign of the times that I am not sure whether that hurt Moore's prospects or helped them. The “mainstream media” is an enemy whose disapproval Moore cultivates to make his supporters love him more.

Moore is not invincible. He can be defeated — but only if Alabamians decide that honor, integrity and morality are more important than bribery.



BY CHARLES M. BLOW, The New York Times

Thankfully recommitting to resistance

Last Thanksgiving I wrote a column titled, “No, Trump, We Can't Just Get Along,” in which I committed myself to resisting this travesty of a man, proclaiming, “I have not only an ethical and professional duty to call out how obscene your very existence is at the top of American government; I have a moral obligation to do so.” I made this promise: “As long as there are ink and pixels, you will be the focus of my withering gaze.”

I have kept that promise, not because it was a personal challenge, but because this is a national crisis.

Donald Trump, I thought that your presidency would be a disaster. It's worse than a disaster. I wasn't sure that resistance to your weakening of the republic, your coarsening of the culture, your assault on truth and honesty, your erosion of our protocols, would feel as urgent today as it felt last year. But if anything, that resistance now feels more urgent.

Nothing about you has changed for the better. You are still a sexist, bigoted, bullying, self-important simpleton. But now all of the

worst of you has the force of the American presidency.

The legitimacy of your presidency is in question. The corruption of your administration is not. You are a national stain and an international embarrassment.

Donald Trump, I thought that your presidency would be a disaster. It's worse than a disaster. I wasn't sure that resistance to your weakening of the republic, your coarsening of the culture, your assault on truth and honesty, your erosion of our protocols, would feel as urgent today as it felt last year.

You are anti-intellectual and promiscuous. The same fingers with which you compulsively tweet are dangerously close to the nuclear codes. You are historically unpopular and history will not be kind to you. But what irks me most is your targeted attacks on historically marginalized populations as a political ploy to secure the support of the racists, misogynists and homophobes.

Your hostility toward minorities and your courting and coddling of the people who hate them has become a standard practice of your presidency.

We see that in your continued

attempts to institute a Muslim ban and your continued insistence on building your wall of hate.

We see it in the way that you attack N.F.L. players protesting police violence, while you encourage

police officers to be more violent. We see this in the way that your Justice Department is moving to return to rigid, racially skewed drug policies that helped to fuel our unconscionable level of mass incarceration, a phenomenon Michelle Alexander calls “the new Jim Crow,” while also returning to a reliance on private prisons.

Trump is clearly, blatantly, virulently hostile to people who are not white and non-Christian. That is not a statement of opinion, but a statement of demonstrated fact.

Anyone who had been at all aware of Trump or had access to

a search engine knew that was a lie. But then, as real-time proof, the “Access Hollywood” tape was released on which Trump bragged about sexually assaulting women. To add insult to injury, Trump the Groper has just thrown the weight and word of the presidency behind Roy Moore the Alleged Pedophile, choosing the claim of a single horrible man, even aside from the allegations, over nine women who seem to have nothing to gain by coming forward.

Trump not only doesn't respect women, he doesn't even hear women. This man is a pathological liar. He is inherently a patriarchal white supremacist and it seeps out in all sorts of ways, but it is most pronounced in the way that he attacks people who are not white and male.

When you accept those truths, everything else makes sense. Trump is unacceptable in every possible way, and must continue to be met at every turn with the strong arm of defiance.

That is why today I recommit myself to resistance, and so should you.



BY ROCHELLE RILEY, Detroit Free Press

Zero tolerance should be the only option

The allegations are coming so fast now, it's like a wall tumbling down — a wall that existed between painful silence and righteous declaration.

But with each new allegation of sexual assault or harassment now comes an attitude that can only be described as stupid: That a person's guilt should somehow be based on his or her political party.

The new parlor game is to compare the latest accused harasser with sexual predator Roy Moore, who not only should be subject to criminal investigation but who should be joined in court by all of the officials, law enforcement officers and mothers in Alabama who thought it was all right for him to date children.

Women and men have decided to #Tell. Women and men have cried out #MeToo.

So the question we face now is:

What's next?

What should come next is an attitude of zero tolerance as victims stop calling news conferences and head straight to police stations and lawyer's offices.

We must move from #Tell to #Act.

It's time to stop looking for excuses for sexual harassers based on political party. We must push

What should come next is an attitude of zero tolerance as victims stop calling news conferences and head straight to police stations and lawyer's offices.

for zero tolerance, whether the offense seems prankish or is criminal.

The need for action comes as the worst charges besides those against Harvey Weinstein, whose scandal started the avalanche, and Moore, who is just going to hell, are that newscaster Charlie Rose has admitted harassing women

and U.S. Rep. John Conyers has admitted settling a sexual harassment claim.

Conyers said he did it “with an express denial of liability — in order to save all involved from the rigors of protracted litigation,” according to a statement released Tuesday.

That does not matter. It does not matter that Minneso-

ta Sen. Al Franken was only joking when he allowed himself to be photographed with his hands above a sleeping woman's breasts. It does not matter that Louis C.K. apologized.

None of these actions or alleged actions can be treated as minor incidents. None should be treated in comparison to others. And no one

should be looking at partisan politics or whispering about charges against Democrats while screaming about charges against Republicans. When the Franken news broke, my Twitter feed was filled with people seeking leniency for Franken, an outspoken critic of the GOP and darling of the left, saying he wasn't as bad as Roy Moore.

Zero tolerance should mean zero tolerance. No woman, or man, should feel unsafe, whether they work on a sound stage like the actor Terry Crews or for an auto company as did U.S. Rep. Debbie Dingell.

There should be zero tolerance of sexual assault and harassment whether it's at the White House or the White House — or on Capitol Hill.

Every allegation of sexual misconduct — whether leveled against a Democrat or a Republican — must be thoroughly investigated.



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– HEBRU BRANTLEY, ARTIST



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Bessie Legrant, beloved teacher retires from Miami Central High after 44 years

By Gregory W. Wright
g.w.wright@hotmail.com

A beloved educator who taught at Miami Central High School has retired after four decades.

Bessie Legrant, who retired on Oct. 6, 2017, as the Student Activities Director.

Through those years, Legrant said there have been changes in education as a profession. "When we started, teachers had autonomy," she said. "Once you went into your classroom and closed the door, you took care of business. Teachers today, don't have that luxury anymore."

Originally from an area north of Vidalia, Georgia, and a graduate of the now Ft. Valley State University, Legrant began her career in education as an English teacher at Miami Central in October 1973.

Through the years, Legrant has worn many hats while at the school. After years as an English teacher, she became a reading teacher before moving on to head the Language Arts department. Legrant spent her last years 25 years as a student



Bessie Legrant

activities director.

In the latter role, Legrant said she was at the school at nights and on the weekend.

"On Saturdays, on Sundays, you didn't go home until 9:00 at night, there were all kinds of events, and balls, and games," she said. "But it did work on your business skills. You had to set up and prepare, make arrangements and do contracts." Legrant said that the role needs to be passed on to someone younger.

"You need the energy, and you have to be able to relate to

the students in terms of their music and their language," she said.

Each generation has been different over years and the education system has also evolved, Legrant said.

According to Legrant, classes were accelerated to five-week grading periods which enabled some students to graduate at 16 years old. Now grading periods are nine weeks long, but students can speed through with virtual and Advance Placement courses.

The longtime educator said she thought about retiring before, but her love for the students kept her going.

It is uncommon for a teacher to stay at the same school for such a long period of time, said Miami Central principal, Gregory Bethune. But her longevity only "serves as testament to how valuable she has been to both school and students," he said.

"When I got here, Ms. Legrant laid out the law for me. She set the tone. She told me the 'do's and don'ts,' and how to do things in the Central way," Bethune said. "Through her guid-

ance and leadership, she has made these a monumental six years for me."

The staff at Miami Central gave Legrant a send-off celebration on her last day. But even that was done with some hesitancy, as the unassuming educator simply wanted to leave with little fanfare.

Legrant was also able to receive her accolades while still taught at the school. When Central was remodeled, the school's library was named the Bessie Legrant Media Center.

The Miami Central Alumni Association is also planning a larger recognition event in 2018.

Legrant had modest plans for her retirement. "The Miami Central retirees meet once a month for lunch, so I attended my first retiree lunch," she said with a laugh. "There is always something to do at the house—L.A. Fitness. I try to get there every day."

She has also treated herself to a trip to Dubai in Saudi Arabia.

"I had a great time. I went to Dubai, made a side trip to Abu Dhabi, saw the Grand Mosque, we had to wear a hijab," Legrant said.

NEWS BRIEFS



Miami Youth Garden receives donation

Miami Youth Garden (MyG) in Liberty City recently hosted a garden clean up. They were accompanied by Marquis Bak employees, who gave them a \$1,000 check to support the MyG leadership development program. The Rev. Dr. Joaquin Willis who heads the program, received the donation on behalf of the program.

The MyG, in its fourth successful year, uses a community garden as a live classroom for children in third through 11th grades. Operated by Church of the Open Door Miami, where Willis is pastor, the program's proven "Seed-to-Harvest" curriculum is designed to nurture inner-city youth and prepare them to seek and find their purpose and calling. The MyG achieves this through creative exposure to employability skills training and leadership principles.

North Miami hosts snow fest, safety parade

The City of North Miami Beach will host a Snow Fest and Community Safety Day Parade on from 6 to 11 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 9. The entire family can enjoy a snow mountain, rock climbing walls, music, rides, carnival games, bounce houses, pictures with Santa and more. For more information, please call North Miami Beach Parks & R.E.C. Dept. at 305-948-2957.

Local Preference Office holds Resume Day

The SoLe Mia Local Preference Office (LPO) invites all City of North Miami residents to schedule an appointment to obtain assistance in building or updating their resume.

Resume Day is the first Thursday of every month. All appointments should be scheduled one to two weeks in advance. Please bring the following documents: work history, education history, skills list and certifications. Also, qualified residents will have the opportunity to interview for free scholarships offered by the LPO in various construction trades. SoLe Mia is located on 12540 NE 8th Avenue, North Miami, 33161. For more information, contact the SoLe Mia office at 786-801-1366 or e-mail solemiapo@garthsolutions.com.

County Commission: Require FPL to bury power lines

The Miami-Dade County Commission unanimously passed a resolution urging the Florida Legislature and the Florida Public Service Commission to require Florida Power & Light and other electrical utilities to bury their existing overhead power lines underground. The measure sponsored by County Commissioner Daniella Levine Cava was one of many recommendations she outlined in her recent report following Hurricane Irma investigations.

"Nearly everyone in Miami-Dade lost power for many days after Hurricane Irma," said Cava. "Those places that never lost power and those that got power back the quickest seemed to be communities with underground power lines. I think putting the lines underground is fair to all ratepayers and will make FPL customers even more resilient to the next big storm."

The billion dollar question for the School Board

AUDIT continued from 1A

stemmed from questions she received from constituents about the bond. She said the audit by an independent body also would show how the district fared with promises made to the voters.

"This is to assure the citizens that their vote meant something," Rojas said. "I want to ensure there has been a positive impact to the local economy. That's how we sold the bond."

"The audit will reveal whether everything is up to par or if there are areas we could address and the corrective action we should take if necessary," she said.

Gallon said the two items will add a layer of oversight that was missing.

"Obviously, someone thought it was okay to spend over \$500 million of taxpayers dollars without an audit. Last week my colleagues on the board unanimously voted that it wasn't."

M-DCPS administrators say the bond has made it possible to ensure that students experience academic enrichment and innovative instruction in safe, modernized school buildings.

"The bond is helping to meet the district's long-term capital needs, which include expanding schools' student capacity, upgrading infrastructure, as well as enhancing facility safety and security measures," said Daisy

Gonzalez-Diego, the school district's chief spokeswoman. She said M-DCPS has made every effort to ensure the transparency and veracity of bond-related work. She said recent independent reviews had been conducted, but did not give specifics.

"We welcome future reviews, including audits, which provide objective assessments of bond finances and business practices," Gonzalez-Diego said. "And while not the sole measure of the bond's success, a fair share of employment and economic development opportunities has been created for local, certified businesses and their employees as a result of its implementation."

Ironically, the school board vote came as district administrators hailed the fifth year anniversary of the approval of the massive bond.

Voters, with heavy support in Black communities, decided by nearly 70 percent to approve the bond and begin modernizing and constructing school buildings throughout the district over nine years.

Since then, school officials say, more than 150 projects have been completed and dozens more are under construction or in the planning stages. About \$516 million has already been invested in our community's schools with another \$86 million under

contract. Over the next 18 months, projects totaling \$660 million of GOB funds will be launched.

Yet, during discussion at the Nov. 15 board meeting, Gallon said several or all board members had spoken about the bond. He repeated earlier remarks by board member Lubby Navarro, who said she felt discomfort that she couldn't answer constituents' questions.

"Ms. Hantman has inquired about the level of accountability within the office of OEO," he said, referring to the Office of Economic Opportunity, the department that is supposed to monitor the awards to subcontractors that are certified within the district's minority business enterprise program.

"That program last month fell under scrutiny in an investigation by the county Office of Inspector General."

"There was a promise to provide ... the highest level of accountability, transparency and inclusion in the implementation of the bond," Gallon said.

Ron Frazier, an architect and frequent critic of MDCPS procurement practices, said he supported both measures. He spoke up at the Nov. 15 meeting.

"I am in total support of this board item and would like to

commend board member Rojas for proposing it. As all of you are aware, I have been stating to the board that the public has a right to know about the GOB expenditures and how these public funds have been spent over the last four and a half years," Frazier said. "An independent audit is exactly what the doctor ordered to begin curing some of the ailments of this GOB program. This Board item will begin to bring by the public confidence in transparency, accountability and integrity in the GOB implementation process."

Miss Jamaica should be our universal queen

ROBBED continued from 1A

redefining the competition. Young Black girls out there can feel confidence in their natural hair without whitening it.

Was asked, "What quality in yourself are you most proud of and how will you apply that quality to your time as Miss Universe?" Bennett responded, "The quality I am most proud of is my drive, my determination. I am the founder of a foundation that spreads awareness for the deaf community, and this platform is such a great platform to just let persons know that these persons need opportunities and need equal opportunities and goals in our society. So Miss Universe competition will be the platform for me to use this foundation to spread awareness for all the deaf people around."

After the competition, the 23-year-old took to Instagram to express gratitude for all the support she received. "I did not win but I got what I was seeking. I won the hearts of many. I got to highlight Deaf awareness, I stand as the first afro queen to have made it thus far, I represented my little island and I received all the love one could possible wish for."

Among her many fans is Beyoncé's go-to hairstylist, Neal Farinah, who also rooted for

Bennett. After sharing his admiration for the beauty queen in a series of Instagram stories, he wrote a final post that read, "Such a shame @missuniverse Dark skin women will continue to work harder to prove themselves. Miss Jamaica, u are truly a miss universe."

While many are still in awe of Bennett's bold choice to wear her signature afro, natural hair has been having a major

moment in the pageant world lately. Back in May, Miss USA Kara McCullough received an outpouring of love for sporting a full head of voluminous curls, and prior to that, 2016's Miss USA, Deshauna Barber, made waves for competing with beautiful, tightly coiled hair.

People are taking notice, and it's apparent there is a need for more of this kind of strand showmanship.

This offer requires a new relationship to be opened. HSBC Premier relationship program will apply on HSBC Promotional Premier Savings account from October 16, 2017 through and including December 31, 2017 with the stated Annual Percentage Yield (APY) effective through September 4, 2018. Changes and fees may reduce earnings. *New Money is defined as deposits and investments not previously held by any member of the HSBC Group in the U.S. HSBC Premier is a relationship-based program that requires a Premier checking account. *Monthly maintenance fee will be waived if minimum balance requirement is not maintained for your account relationship. Premier relationship requires the maintenance of a \$25,000 U.S. personal deposit investment balance to avoid a monthly maintenance fee of \$25. Investment and certain insurance products, including annuities, are offered by HSBC Securities (USA) Inc. (FIRCL member NYSE/FINRA/SIPC). HSBC is an affiliate of HSBC Bank USA, N.A. HSBC reserves the right to change or terminate this offer in its sole discretion. *Deposit products are offered in the U.S. by HSBC Bank USA, N.A. Member FDIC. © 2017 HSBC Bank USA, N.A.

Conyers states office settled harassment case

By Corey Williams
Associated Press

DETROIT — John Conyers has dealt with various ethics investigations and a public corruption case that landed his wife in prison during a U.S. House career spanning more than five decades — longer than any other current member.

Allegations that the 88-year-old Michigan Democrat sexually harassed female staff members may be the toughest opponent yet for the party's top member on the House Judiciary Committee.

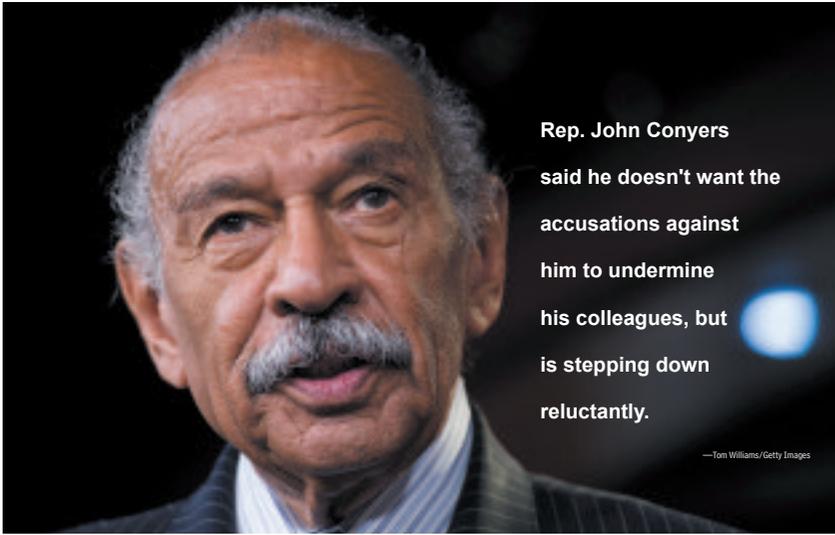
"He's not as sharp as he used to be," said Adolph Mongo, a longtime follower of Detroit politics who has worked on mayoral campaigns. "This is a young person's game now. You hate to see somebody who has put in 50 years ... go out like this."

Leaders of the House Ethics Committee announced Tuesday that the panel had begun an investigation into Conyers after receiving allegations of sexual harassment and age discrimination involving staff members as well as using "official resources for impermissible personal purposes."

News website BuzzFeed reported Monday night that Conyers' office paid a woman more than \$27,000 under a confidentiality agreement to settle a complaint in 2015 that she was fired from his Washington staff because she rejected his sexual advances.

BuzzFeed also published affidavits from former staff members who said they had witnessed Conyers touching female staffers inappropriately — rubbing their legs and backs — or requesting sexual favors. One former staffer said one of her duties was "to keep a list of women that I assumed he was having affairs with and call them at his request and, if necessary, have them flown in using Congressional resources."

When questioned at his home Tuesday morning by The Associated Press, Conyers denied settling any harassment complaint and other allegations of inappropriate touching of staffers. The reporter repeated to Conyers the claims made in



Rep. John Conyers said he doesn't want the accusations against him to undermine his colleagues, but is stepping down reluctantly.

—Tom Williams/Getty Images

the BuzzFeed report.

Conyers' office said in a statement that he was under the impression the AP reporter was speaking of "recent allegations of which he was unaware of and denied."

"In this case, I expressly and vehemently denied the allegations made against me, and continue to do so," Conyers said later Tuesday in his statement about the settlement. "My office resolved the allegations — with an express denial of liability — in order to save all involved from the rigors of protracted litigation."

Since Conyers arrived in Congress in 1965, he has easily won re-election bids, usually with more than 80 percent of the vote.

In 2006, the House Ethics Committee closed an investigation after three former aides said Conyers used them as baby sitters and personal servants while they were supposed to be working in his Michigan offices. The aides also said Conyers had them pay restaurant and motel bills. Conyers agreed to clarify work

rules with his staff to ensure his office was in compliance with ethics regulations.

He emerged unscathed after his wife, Monica Conyers, pleaded guilty in 2009 to conspiracy to commit bribery as a member of the Detroit City Council. She admitted to taking bribes in exchange for her vote on a \$47 million sludge hauling contract. She entered prison in 2010 and was released to a Detroit halfway house in January 2012.

In August, the ethics committee said it was extending an investigation into John Conyers over payments to his former chief of staff. A report submitted by the independent Office of Congressional Ethics said there was substantial reason to believe that Conyers paid his former chief of staff for work she did not perform.

Joe Lanier, owner of hair stylist shop Terry's Place in Detroit, said he hates to hear about the allegations against Conyers "because he's been a force in the community for many, many years."

The government has paid

more than \$17 million in taxpayer money over the last 20 years to resolve claims of sexual harassment, overtime pay disputes and other workplace violations filed by employees of Congress.

The Office of Compliance released the numbers amid a wave of revelations of sexual misconduct in the worlds of entertainment, business and politics that made its way to Capitol Hill last week.

Two female lawmakers described incidents of sexual harassment, one in explicit detail, and Minnesota Sen. Al Franken apologized to a woman who said he forcibly kissed her and groped her during a 2006 USO tour.

Conyers has earned the benefit of the doubt, said the Rev. Horace Sheffield, who lost to him in the 2014 Democratic primary.

"I don't condone the conduct if it's true," Sheffield said, also noting the increasing numbers of claims of harassment, sexual misconduct and even rape being made against politicians, Hollywood elites and others.

"We're at a point, too, where we have to look at the nature of these allegations," said Sheffield, pastor of New Destiny church in Detroit. "Some stuff may be considered flirtations as opposed to things that are predatory."

If Conyers makes it through the current scandal, he likely will retain his seat in Congress if he seeks re-election again, Sheffield added.

"I think Conyers will be there until the day he dies," Sheffield said. "The voters have proven that."

AP reporters Juliet Linderman in Washington and Mike Householder in Detroit contributed to this report.

Amid scandal congressman leaves long-term post on judiciary panel

By Jessica Estepa

WASHINGTON — Rep. John Conyers is stepping down from his top spot on the House Judiciary Committee as a congressional ethics panel probes sexual harassment allegations against the Michigan Democrat.

Conyers again denied the harassment allegations in a statement released Sunday but said he has requested to step down as the Judiciary Committee's ranking member.

"To be clear, I would like very much to remain as ranking

member," he said in a statement. "There is still much work to be done on core concerns like securing civil rights, enacting meaningful criminal justice reforms, and protecting access to the ballot box. ... But I have come to believe that my presence as ranking member on the committee would not serve these efforts while the ethics committee investigation is pending."

"We must ensure the Congress has a climate of dignity and respect with zero tolerance for sexual harassment," said the California Democrat said

in a statement.

Conyers has long served on the powerful panel, including a stint as its chairman from 2007 to 2011.

Rep. Jerrold Nadler of New York, the second most senior Democrat on the committee, said his party's work on the panel must move forward.

"I will do everything in my power to continue to press on the important issues facing our committee, including criminal justice reform, workplace equality and holding the Trump administration accountable," Nadler said in a statement.

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Activists, civil groups fight for rights restoration

FELONS
continued from 1A

break open those roadblocks with a constitutional amendment to automatically restore voting rights to people like Jones after they have served their prison and parole time, and paid any court-ordered fees.

Currently, the only way that Florida felons can regain their voting rights is through approval from the Clemency Board, which consists of the states top elected officers: governor, attorney general, chief financial officer, and commissioner of agriculture and consumer services.

Applicants must wait five to seven years after the completion of their sentence before they can apply for restoration, according to the Florida clemency application. Nonviolent felons must wait five years and other offenders must wait for seven, said Desmond Meade, the executive director of Friends of the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition, an organization

dedicated to the rights restoration.

Meade said the state is not fully equipped to fly through the thousands of clemency applications that they receive. The main issues, he said were a lack of staff and funding to do the investigative work that it takes.

Despite the long wait, Jones said the process was not a complicated one.

"I can tell one thing, the time period is almost unbearable, but the process was not difficult at all," said Jones.

Jones, 55, has dedicated the last 22 years to the enrichment of the Liberty City and Overtown neighborhoods. But before that, he spent 13 years through a revolving door of incarcerations for a variety of crimes.

He turned his life around in the early 1990s.

In 1995, Jones started NANA, and he has been championing for Black business owners and residents since. He was honored for his work with the association by the Miami-Dade County

Commissioner with the proclamation of "Leroy Jones Day" on Feb. 21, 2012, yet every vote he tried to cast was followed by a rejection letter.

Jones said before he left prison over 20 years ago, he applied for his voting rights to be restored and just assumed the process was complete.

Years after he was released, Jones said he applied for his voter's registration card and was approved twice. But after voting for President Barack Obama in the 2008 election, he received an ineligibility letter.

"I didn't understand how you could have a voter's registration card, but not the right to vote," said Jones.

Undeterred, he applied again.

When a person applies to the Office of Executive Clemency, staff members screen the application, then forward it for an investigation and further review. The results are sent to the Clemency Board in Tallahassee for a

decision. Jones said the Office of Executive Clemency did not recommend his application for approval. But he still was eligible to go to the state capital for a hearing.

En route to Tallahassee, Jones said he was nervous about what to expect. When he arrived, however, the process was smoother.

"Each person that went before the Board got to speak as long as they wanted without any interruption," said Jones. "I didn't expect them to listen to our side, but each person got a chance to explain themselves and clarify any questions that the board had."

The Clemency Board approved his application. Now Jones is able to vote on the issues in his neighborhood that he has advocated for the last two decades.

Meade, who is also an attorney and reformed felon, said the task is not always as easy. As the director of FRRC, he has had a front seat to several clemency hearings

and said the task can be a daunting one.

"You are talking about waiting 10 years just to get a hearing, and then when you get a hearing, you may not get your rights restored," said Meade.

It is a process that also has discouraged Meade from applying to regain his own rights.

Instead, he's leading the campaign along with FRRC, the NAACP, the ACLU of Florida, League of Women Voters, churches and other civic groups for automatic rights restoration.

The organizations have joined together to push a petition campaign, Second Chances, to get a constitutional amendment on the 2018 ballot that would automatically restore voting rights for all nonviolent felons who have served their sentences.

In order for the measure, the Voter Restoration Amendment, to appear on the November 2018 ballot, the Second Chance campaign must secure over 700,000 signatures by February 2018.

As of July, the grassroots campaign has gathered 850,000 petition signatures, but they are trying to gather 150,000 more, according to Meade.

Meade said that he is confident that they will gather the 1 million signatures for the cause based on the positive response from the public to the outreach teams.

"One of the beautiful things about it is seeing people from all walks of life supporting this cause," he said. "They are leaving all the politics and racial bias behind, and they are rallying around common decency."



New mayor promotes recall, strong mayor

MAYOR
continued from 1A

appointed by the mayor, with the approval of the commissioners. The person in that position must navigate landmines to please five different commissioners, which poses additional issues.

Suarez believes having a strong mayor would lessen any contention.

Current City Manager Daniel Alfonso survived at least two attempts by commissioners to oust him. With Suarez's election, Alfonso is expected to depart. Suarez said that will happen soon.

"We've had five managers in eight years," Suarez said. "How do you keep everybody happy?"

Suarez pointed to the situation in 2016 after Alfonso fired Sandy Dorsainvil, the manager of the Little Haiti Cultural Center. Although an administrative manager, the decision triggered heavy protests by Haitian-American, Black activists and residents at City Hall. The furor triggered an unsuccessful attempt by Commissioner Keon Hardemon to fire the manager.

"The manager is in an unelected position. They're not sensitive to the community. You had someone who had great community support. It wasn't handled well," Suarez said.

Suarez said he supports giving voters the right to recall the mayor.

"I have a responsibility to serve my residents. If I fail, they should have the right to recall me," he said. "That's accountability."

Suarez said that he would continue his pledge to be mayor to all of the people and to be a bridge for racial

and ethnic groups.

"You have to walk the walk by promoting diversity, making sure city is diverse," he said. "That's something I'm going to be focusing on."

But Suarez also has to deal with the aftermath of the dismissal of several city of Miami Fire Rescue officers for insensitive and "lewd" behavior toward a Black fire lieutenant. The Miami-Dade NAACP has called for an investigation into the incident.

Suarez said he supported those demands.

"We need to look at how something like this can happen. I have a zero tolerance policy for that kind of behavior," he said. "The city is very diverse and inclusive. We have to hold people accountable and communicate to employees that that behavior is unacceptable."

Karen Cartwright of Overtown said she's ready to give Suarez a chance and has

told him so. She said she hopes her neighborhood will get more attention from City Hall.

Cartwright said she already invited Suarez to a walking tour.

"The new mayor will have to hit the ground running. He's just gotten sworn in, and he has to get staff around him," she said. "When he's ready to do the walkthrough, he'll get back to me."

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Black haircare giant to be honored at Girl Power Gospel Brunch

Co-founder of Miss Jessie's will take home a big award

By Janiah Adams
jadams@miamitimesonline.com

A natural hair care trailblazer will receive the Girl Power Rocks award at Girl Power's annual Gospel Brunch Explosion.

Miko Branch, the co-founder and CEO of Miss Jessie's will be honored with an award given to women and girls who the Miami-

based Girl Power organization deems to be bold and courageous.

Thema Campbell, the president of Girl Power Rocks, said Branch's products empower the Black experience.

"This is an award that is being really awarded to a woman who has made some real headway in the community as far as serving women and girls, and we think that her line of haircare products is a good testament to that," said Campbell.

The brunch also will showcase the musical talents of the Girl's Please turn to **BRANCH 10B**

Pictures from the 2016 Girl Power Gospel Brunch. This year, Miko Branch, the co-founder of Miss Jessie's (pictured) will be honored at the event.



History: The legacy of the Negro National Anthem

By Brent Staples
Editorial Observer

The lawyer and amateur poet Francis Scott Key embraced the pop cultural tastes of his day when he wrote "The Star-Spangled Banner" to commemorate an American victory over the British at Baltimore during the War of 1812. He gave his composition broad appeal with a melody derived

from a popular British music club anthem that celebrated the virtues of love and wine.

Satirists pounced, lampooning the song with lyrics that depicted a man who staggers home drunk and sleeps well past "the dawn's early light" — that light through which Key had seen an American flag still flying above the fort that had repulsed the British invasion. Abolitionists during Key's

lifetime viewed "The Star-Spangled Banner" as they viewed the nation as a whole — through the lens of the injustice perpetuated by slavery. They argued that Key should have described America as the "land of the free and home of the oppressed."

The professional football player Colin Kaepernick appealed to that same sense of injustice last year when he

kneled during "The Star-Spangled Banner" to protest police violence against African-Americans. By doing so, he tapped into a feeling of alienation from the anthem in the black community that dates back to the days of racial terrorism and lynching in the South.

Congress declared "The Star-Spangled Banner" the national anthem in 1931. Well before then, however, black

communities across the Jim Crow South were instead embracing the soaring, aspirational lyrics of "Lift Every Voice and Sing" — otherwise known as the Negro National Anthem — which was sung in churches, at civic events and even in schools, where substituting the song for "The Star-Spangled Banner" was a quiet act of rebellion against the racist status quo.

By the late 1960s, many of us who had grown up black in an era when African-Americans were locked into Northern ghettos and murdered in the South for seeking the right to vote registered our grievances by refusing to stand for the anthem at sporting events.

"Lift Every Voice and Sing" became what the Princeton University scholar Imani Perry Please turn to **ANTHEM 10B**

Pastor Richard Dunn II leads, ministers

A candid talk about leadership

By Gregory W. Wright
g.wright@hotmail.com

When ministering to a congregation, often times a Pastor comes into contact with many different personalities, and emotions, and troubling concerns.

But what does a Pastor do when sometimes it just seem like the troubles they take on just seem so over-

whelming, and though a pastor of a church, he/she just can't find a simple answer to fix a complex problem, or his/her own?

Pastor Richard Dunn, of Faith Community Baptist Church, has ordained and licensed and ministered to several pastors in the Miami-Dade area and beyond.

"I didn't map it out or plan it that way," said Pas-



tor Dunn, "I guess from a spiritual perspective, a divine perspective, God sent people to me. I believe, it's a pastor, as part of his duty is to mentor and train, and before I realized it, guys that I had started training, doors were opening up for them to get other churches." In other words, Dunn's spiritual sons, and daughters, were becoming pastors.

Pastor Dunn compares his ministering to pastors he has Please turn to **DUNN 10B**

Pastor of the Week

Pastor Richard Dunn II

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Miracles made daily.

Officials rule nursing home deaths a homicide

Official ruling covers 12 patients who died in sweltering heat after Irma

By Tonya Alanez, Erika Pesantes
Sun Sentinel

The deaths of 12 people in a sweltering Hollywood nursing home after Hurricane Irma have been ruled to be homicides, officials said Wednesday.

Police say it's possible someone could be charged with killing them.

"Who gets charged is part of the continuing investigation," said Miranda Grossman, a spokeswoman for the Hollywood Police Department. "We don't have a timeline of when there would be charges at this point."

The Rehabilitation Center at Hollywood Hills was evacuated Sept. 13 when eight elderly residents died in quick succession after the home lost power to its central air conditioning and overheated. Another six died in subsequent weeks.

Erika Navarro, the granddaughter of Cecilia Franco, 90, and Miguel Antonio Franco, 92, said the medical examiner's ruling confirms what she already

knew — that they were meant to live longer.

And on the eve of Thanksgiving, she learned through a reporter that her grandparents did in fact die from heat exposure.

"The next steps are the more important ones: Who is going to be held accountable? Are they going to go to jail? Are they just going to get a free pass and not just pay money, and nothing else happens?" she said. "To me, that's more important, that people are held accountable and they actually go to jail."

In addition to the Francos, homicide due to heat exposure is now the official cause of death for the following Hollywood Hills residents:

- Dolores Biamonte, 57
- Carlos Canal, 93
- Carolyn Eatherly, 78
- Estella Hendricks, 71
- Betty Hibbard, 84
- Manuel Mario Mendieta, 96
- Martha Murray, 94
- Gail Nova, 70
- Bobby Owens, 84
- Albertina Vega, 99



The Rehabilitation Center at Hollywood Hills is seen in Hollywood, north of Miami, on Sept. 13.

VA didn't report 90 percent of its problematic providers

Recent findings confirms USA Today probe in concealing medical reports

By Donovan Slack
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs failed to report 90 percent of potentially dangerous medical providers in recent years to a national database designed to prevent them from crossing state lines and endangering patients elsewhere, according to the Government Accountability Office.

The watchdog's conclusions in the report to be released Monday confirm findings of a recent USA TODAY investigation that found the VA has for years concealed medical mistakes and misconduct by health care workers. In response to that story published in October, the VA vowed to overhaul its policies for reporting clinicians to authorities.

The GAO also found that VA officials didn't report any of



April Wood shows a photo of her leg after one of the ankle surgeries that the VA later determined was botched

the problem clinicians to state medical boards that could have yanked their licenses.

The findings are based on a sampling of five VA hospitals, where only nine health care workers warranted reporting since 2014. But if those findings hold true across all of the VA's roughly 150 hospitals, potentially hundreds of medical providers weren't reported.

In one case examined by the GAO, a VA hospital director failed to report a clinician who went on to work at a private sector hospital, which revoked the worker's privileges two

years later, suggesting patients were endangered.

In response to the GAO report, VA officials reiterated that pledge, concurred with its findings and said they planned to increase oversight of reporting by regional officials. In the past, reporting decisions have been left mainly to local hospital directors.

USA TODAY had found oversight was so lax, the VA had no idea how many medical workers had been reported or if they had been reported at all. Rep. Phil Roe, R-Tenn., Please turn to **REPORT 12B**

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Lifting voices for our heritage

ANTHEM
continued from 8B

describes as a tale "of endurance, lament and supplication" that acknowledges the cruelties of racism while also pointing toward transcendence. "Lift every voice and sing/Till earth and heaven ring/Ring with the harmonies of Liberty/Let our rejoicing rise/High as the listening skies." As Ms. Perry writes in "May We Forever Stand" — her forthcoming history of the song — it spread rapidly through black America in the early 1900s, reflecting a growing sense that the promise of full citizenship in the nation's canonical texts simply did not apply to African-Americans.

The provenance of "The Star-Spangled Banner" is itself deeply suspect. Key, who owned human beings, penned his celebration of freedom during a war in which the British had promised that very thing to enslaved African-Americans who agreed to fight on their side. The third stanza of the song — which ceased to be sung once warm relations were re-established with England — can be read as a reflection

of Key's anger at Britain's overtures to the people he himself owned. The passage reads in part: "No refuge could save the hireling and slave/From the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave/And the Star-Spangled Banner in triumph doth wave/O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave." Contemporary thinkers disagree on whether the word "slave" was used as a generic insult that could be applied to people of any race or as a direct reference to African-Americans who joined the British side in the War of 1812. But imagine yourself an enslaved person serving refreshments to your masters and their guests as they all retire to the piano room to sing Key's song as he had written it. There can be little doubt about what the passage referring to a "slave" would mean to you.

The histories of the white and black anthems are strikingly different. James Weldon Johnson and his brother, J. Rosamond Johnson, wrote "Lift Every Voice and Sing" in 1900 to celebrate Abraham Lincoln's birthday at a time when the government seemed to have aban-

doned altogether the promise of Reconstruction. Four years earlier, the Supreme Court, in Plessy v. Ferguson, had validated the doctrine of "separate but equal." As the historian Cecilia Elizabeth O'Leary writes in "To Die For: The Paradox of American Patriotism," the door had been opened for racists and nativist groups like the Ku Klux Klan to appoint themselves custodians of what it meant to be an American. "The Star-Spangled Banner" began as an ordinary song that competed with other songs for space in the American imagination. It was not until the early 20th century that it acquired the stature of a sacred writ and became, in effect, a loyalty test and an excuse for people who called themselves patriots to harass and beat people who dissented from the song's message.

The truth is that the maxims about freedom implied in the song describe a condition the country has yet to achieve. People who confront that reality by kneeling prayerfully on the football field are often more determinedly patriotic than those who reflexively stand.

Pastor Richard Dunn leads the way

DUNN
continued from 8B

trained as to former Indianapolis Colts Head Football Coach Tony Dungy. Several of the assistant coaches on Dungy's staff later went on to become head football coaches on other NFL teams.

Born and raised in Miami, Pastor Richard Dunn II is the grandson of a pastor. His father, was an Elder in the Presbyterian Church. From his early years at Holy Redeemer Catholic School in Liberty City, to the now phased out Robert E. Lee Junior High School to Miami Northwestern Senior High, Dunn understood the importance of Education. But at the age of eleven, young Richard Dunn started having, as he describes, "Epiphanies that I wanted to preach. But at the age of 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, that wasn't a popular thing, especially at 'The West', trying to play football and all that. So I kind of put it on the back burner. During his freshman year at Central State University, he finally acknowledged his calling to minister. He received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Management, and later his Master of Divinity from Morehouse School of Divinity in Atlanta. It was his grandfather who licensed and ordained Pastor Dunn into the Baptist Church.

But from there, Pastor Dunn roles out a list of local pastors whom he either licensed, ordained or mentors to: Pastor Dwayne Richardson, Pastor Fred Cromedy, Pastor Dennis Jackson was ordained him, Pastor Lorenzo Johnson asked

Dunn to provide his covering, an advisor or mentor. Dunn encouraged Pastor Ricky Petyre to seek the ministry. Pastor Diane Owens also was a member of Dunn's ministry before leaving to start her own ministry.

Outside of the church, Pastor Richard Dunn has made a name for himself in political and community service. Dunn was known as a radio host on the talk show Issue for Today, on WMBM 1490 AM. "Ironically," Dunn says, "it revolved around police shootings. We would go around City Hall and County Hall to protest. One thing lead to another, a lawsuit against the City [of Miami] lead to single member districting. I filed a lawsuit against the School Board for single member districts. That's how we increased from one [Black] board member to two [Black] board members."

With the new notoriety from his community activism, Dunn was later summoned and appointed to serve out the term of former Miami City Commissioner Miller Dawkins, and then later again for Miami Commissioner Michelle Spence-Jones. He also was elected to the commission district seat as well.

Whether in ministry or politics, Pastor Dunn said the similar thing between the two are, "They are both time consuming. There is an incredible pull on your time," Dunn said. According to Pastor Dunn, for a pastor to minister a church and go into politics, it can be done only if the church has a well run administration that can carry on in the pastor's absence.

As Pastor of Faith Community Baptist Church, Pastor Dunn says church community outreach includes their Overcomers Ministry which helps those with substance abuse issues, working with the ladies from the Jefferson Reeves Rehabilitation Center and the Miami Rescue Mission. The church offers group meetings and ministry. Pastor Dunn himself picks up those in need in the church van. The Men's Ministry stresses issues such as how to become a better father, better husbands, better men in the church, in the community. Dunn also serves as Chair of the NAACP program called Pastors With a Passion, the brainchild of Miami-Dade NAACP President Dr. Shirley Johnson, which reaches out to young men and women mentoring them on escaping gun violence.

Today, at the age of fifty-seven, Dunn has Pastor Richard Dunn II still has his plate full, even after ministering now for over thirty-nine years, nine of those years as Pastor of Faith Community Baptist Church. Home life with his wife Daphne, two sons, Brandon and Richard III. Richard III is the Pastor of a church in Prince George County, Maryland, licensed and ordained by his father, of course. Then there are the pressures of the church, and of community affairs. Sometimes the weight of the church and of life does seem to get a little heavy, even for a pastor to bare. And in those occasions, sometimes, even a Pastor needs someone to talk to. Even pastors can need a big brother.

CHURCH LISTINGS

AFRICAN ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL
St. Peter's African Orthodox Cathedral
Bishop George W. Sands
4841 NW 2nd Avenue • 786-360-3302

CATHOLIC
Holy Redeemer Catholic Church
Rev. Alexander Ekechukwu, CSSP
1301 NW 71 Street • 305-691-1701

BAPTIST
New Philadelphia Baptist Church
Pastor Rickie K. Robinson Sr.
1113 NW 79th Street • 305-505-0400

Greater Harvest Baptist Church
Rev. Kenneth McGee
2310 NW 58th Street • 786-717-5818

MISSIONARY BAPTIST
New Christ Tabernacle Church
Rev. Harold Harsh
1305 NW 54th Street • 305-835-2578

Walking in Christ M.B. Church
Rev. Larry Robbins, Sr.
3530 NW 214th Street • 305-430-0443

New Mount Calvary M.B. Church
Rev. Bernard E. Lang, Pastor/Teacher
7103 NW 22nd Avenue • 305-691-8015

New Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church
Elder William Walker
5895 NW 23rd Avenue • 305-635-3866

New Christ Tabernacle M.B. Church
Rev. Harold Marsh
1305 NW 54th Street • 305-835-2578

Valley Grove Missionary Baptist Church
Elder Johnnie Robinson
1395 NW 69th Street • 305-835-8316

Pilgrim Rest Missionary Baptist Church
Rev. Van Gaskins, Jr., Pastor/Teacher
7510 NW 15th Avenue • 305-418-0012

True Faith Missionary Baptist Church
Pastor John M. Fair
1890 NW 47th Terrace • 786-262-6841

AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL
Metropolitan A.M.E. Church
Rev. Michael H. Clark, Jr., Senior Pastor
1778 NW 69th Street • 305-696-4201

New Resurrection Community Church
Rev. Dr. Anthony A. Tate
2167 NW 64th Street • 305-342-7426

PENTECOSTAL
New Faith Deliverance Center COGIC
Pastor Dr. Willie Gaines
3257 NW 7th Avenue Circle • 305-335-4389

NON DENOMINATIONAL
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Minister Job Israel
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New Life Christian Center
Rev. Bruce Payne
5726 Washington Street • 786-536-9039

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New Hope Moravian Church
Pastor Gregorio Moody
6001 SW 127th Avenue • 305-273-4047

CHURCH OF CHRIST
Church of Christ at Coconut Grove
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Jessie's hair empowerment award

BRANCH
continued from 8B

Choir of Miami, GCOM is comprised of girls, ages 10 to 18 from all ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. The Girl Power organization uses music as a platform to build confidence as well as develop discipline, grace and talent.

"We want to show off the talent of our girls choir," said Campbell. "It is the only local girls choir in Miami. They've been working together since 2012. It's to help raise funds for our prevention and intervention programs. The other part is to bring the community together around the celebration of food, music and just good friends."

Branch, the first honoree of the branch, founded Miss Jessie's with her sister Titi Branch in 2004. The product line is named after the Branch sisters' paternal grandmother, Jessie Mae Branch, who passed away in 2001. Since launching the company, the products have been raved about in magazines, blogs and YouTube videos and have received awards from magazines such as Essence and Allure.

However, things took an unfortunate turn when Titi Branch was driven to suicide through her relationship with her boyfriend in 2014.

Miko Branch said she's accepting the award on behalf of herself and her sister.

"Any award I'm receiving, if my sister can also be acknowledged, that would be great, but it would also be deserving," Branch said. "There would be no Miko Branch without the development, care, love, [and] tutelage that I received from my sister."

The sisters started Miss Jessie's out of necessity by experiencing failure in another business and was looking out for the next opportunity.

"It was bath time with my son where I realized I couldn't wear my hair in its straight style," Branch said. "I decided it was time for me and my sister to be experts at curly, kinky and wavy hair. We created products from scratch like

we learned from our grandmother."

"The sisters took to the drawing board to start their business and ran it together up until Titi's death. Since then, running the business has had its challenges for Miko.

"For the aspect of the business we did know together, I'm able to carry on," Branch said. "There's so much for me to learn. Am I learning them on my own, absolutely. Do I have a wonderful company to work with, yes. Would I still have wanted Titi to be here to understand the different aspects of it, yes. But she's still here in spirit and at the end of the day I still believe she's with me, helping me and guiding me."

"Through everything, Branch believes her and her sister have been able to make an impact on the Black haircare market.

"My sister and I are trailblazers," Branch said. "We are innovators, pioneers when it comes to haircare."

Branch, who has lived in Miami for the past nine months, will be able to share her knowledge with Girl Power Rocks by working together to organize a workshop that will teach girls how to care for and embrace their natural hair. Campbell said the girls she encounters don't know how to properly care for their hair.

"If we have done anything wrong to girls, we have taught them to put weave in their hair, and they don't know how to take care of their hair," Campbell said. "They don't learn how to comb, brush and plait it and how to maintain it. [To them] maintaining it means getting a weave or getting braids, but they haven't been taught and it's really unfortunate."

Campbell says other problems girls face nowadays has to do with social media.

"I don't think we did a good job as a society in teaching them the dos and don'ts [of social media]," Campbell said. "So we've come in contact with a lot of girls who have posted stuff on social media, leads to fights and things that's detrimental to them."

Girl Power Rocks has an after-school program, post-arrest diversion program and alternative to suspension program that helps girls stay on the right track. They also have a mentoring program that provides girls with support and self-esteem.

"The inequality and the fact that girls are not supported and we don't place a lot of emphasis on protecting them and nurturing them and it's a big problem in society when they don't feel like their voices are being heard and we're not giving them the tools they need to be successful," Campbell said.

The girls who participate in Girl Power will have the opportunity to learn from Branch.

"My sister and I not only share our ultimate success, but we are also very transparent. And we shine the light on the failures, and we wanted to share our story in a realistic sense, so people could understand what it meant to be your own bosses," Branch said. "As we say in our business memoir, if we can do it, you can do it too."

Branch has used their business memoir's book tour, "Miss Jessie's: Creating a Successful Business from Scratch - Naturally" to talk about mental health. She's also created a scholarship with the Urban League of New York, their hometown, in Titi Branch's name. The Titi Branch/Miss Jessie's Scholarship Award for Excellence is awarded to students who have decided to pursue mental health as their career. Winners receive \$2,500. Branch said they have done three so far.

"Mental illness is a disease," Branch said. "What I can say for this disease and illness, being able to talk about it, identify the symptoms, being able to tell someone within your circle how you're feeling so someone can get a first aid kit out for it. My sister suffered alone for the most part and my family was ignorant of that disease. And I believe if other people were able to tell someone how they were feeling, I believe many lives would be saved."

Faith CALENDAR

Compiled by The Miami Times staff | editoria@miamitimesonline.com

■ **The Alpha Gamma Chapter of Eta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.** invites the public to their 50th Annual Candlelight Vesper Service, Sunday, Dec. 10 at 5 p.m. at Mt. Tabor Baptist Church.

■ **Greater New Bethel Baptist Annex Bldg.** in Miami Gardens provides behavioral health, intervention and treatment services for Black men at risk for HIV or substance abuse disorders. Call 305-627-0396.

■ **Sistah to Sistah Connection** Women's Empowerment meetings are held every second and fourth Saturdays from 10 a.m. to noon at Parkway Professional Building in Miramar. Women only. No children allowed. Free breakfast. Call 954-260-9348.

■ **The Elks Historical Business and Conference Center**

invites you every Sunday from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. for Gospel Kick-back entertainment and fine dining. Call 305-224-1890.

■ **Metropolitan A.M.E. Church** hosts a food and clothing giveaway every third Saturday. Call 786-277-4150.

■ **Zion Hope Missionary Baptist Church** has a food and clothing distribution every Wednesday at 4 p.m. Call 786-541-3687.

■ **First Haitian Church of God** hosts a food drive every Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Call 786-362-1804.

■ **New Day N Christ Deliverance Ministry** holds fire mind, body and soul self-improvement and Zumba fitness classes. Call 305-691-0018.

■ **New Miami Super Choir**

invites interested persons to audition. Call Dr. Tony Siders, 786-530-2825.

■ **Florida Independent Restoration Ministries (FIRM)** offers family assistance with drugs and alcohol. Call 800-208-2924 ext. 102 or prayer line, ext. 104.

■ **A Mission with a New Beginning Church Women's Department** provides community feedings. Call 786-371-3779.

■ **Bethany Seventh Day Adventist Church** holds bereavement sharing groups every second Sunday from 3 to 4 p.m. Call 305-634-2993.

■ **Street Outreach Ministries** conducts free courses on evangelizing without fear. Call 786-508-6167.

■ **MEC Ministries** holds healing services every fourth Friday at 7:30 p.m. Call 305-693-1534.

The deadline for the Faith Calendar is on or before 2 p.m. Mondays.

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Concussions in youth football

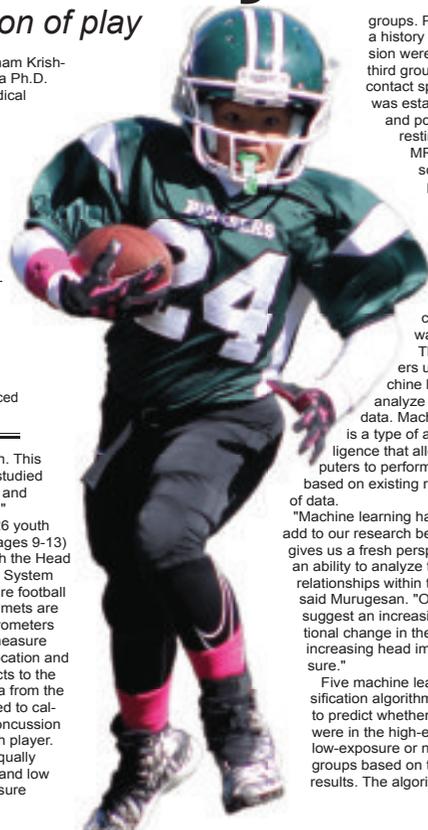
Brain changes after one season of play

sciencedaily.com

School-age football players with a history of concussion and high impact exposure undergo brain changes after one season of play, according to two new studies conducted at UT Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas and Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem and presented today at the annual meeting of the Radiological Society of North America (RSNA).

Both studies analyzed the default mode network (DMN), a network of brain regions

," said Gowtham Krishnan Murugesan, a Ph.D. student in biomedical engineering and member of the ANSIR lab. "This work adds to a growing body of literature indicating that subconcussive head impacts can have an



groups. Players with a history of concussion were excluded. A third group of 13 non-contact sport controls was established. Pre- and post-season resting functional MRI (fMRI) scans were performed on all players and controls, and connectivity within the DMN sub-components was analyzed. The researchers used machine learning to analyze the fMRI data. Machine learning is a type of artificial intelligence that allows computers to perform analyses based on existing relationships of data.

"Machine learning has a lot to add to our research because it gives us a fresh perspective and an ability to analyze the complex relationships within the data," said Murugesan. "Our results suggest an increasing functional change in the brain with increasing head impact exposure."

Five machine learning classification algorithms were used to predict whether players were in the high-exposure, low-exposure or non-contact groups based on the fMRI results. The algorithm dis-

criminated between high-impact exposure and non-contact with 82 percent accuracy, and low-impact exposure and non-contact with 70 percent accuracy. The results suggest an increasing functional change with increasing head-impact exposure.

"The brains of these youth and adolescent athletes are undergoing rapid maturation in this age range. This study demonstrates that playing a season of contact sports at the youth level can produce neuroimaging brain changes, particularly for the DMN," Murugesan said.

In the second study, 20 high school football players (median age 16.9) wore helmets outfitted with HITS for a season. Of the 20 players, five had experienced at least one concussion, and 15 had no history of concussion.

Before and following the season, the players underwent an eight-minute magnetoencephalography (MEG) scan, which records and analyzes the magnetic fields produced by brain activity. Researchers then analyzed the MEG power associated with the eight brain regions of the DMN.

Post-season, the five players with a history of concussion had significantly lower connectivity between DMN regions. Players with no history of concussion had, on average, an increase in DMN connectivity.

The results demonstrate that concussions from previous years can influence the changes occurring in the brain during the current season, suggesting that there are longitudinal effects of concussion that affect brain function.

"The brain's default mode network changes differently as a result of previous concussion," Dr. Davenport said. "Previous concussion seems to prime the brain for additional changes. Concussion history may be affecting the brain's ability to compensate for subconcussive impacts."

Both researchers said larger data sets, longitudinal studies that follow young football players and research that combines both MEG and fMRI are needed to better understand the complex factors involved in concussions.

"Previous concussion seems to prime the brain for additional changes. Concussion history may be affecting the brain's ability to compensate for subconcussive impacts."

Elizabeth M. Davenport, Ph.D., a postdoctoral researcher in the Advanced Neuroscience Imaging Research (ANSIR) lab

that is active during wakeful rest. Changes in the DMN are observed in patients with mental disorders. Decreased connectivity within the network is also associated with traumatic brain injury.

"The DMN exists in the deep gray matter areas of the brain," explained Elizabeth M. Davenport, Ph.D., a postdoctoral researcher in the Advanced Neuroscience Imaging Research (ANSIR) lab at UT Southwestern's O'Donnell Brain Institute. "It includes structures that activate when we are awake and engaging in introspection or processing emotions, which are activities that are important for brain health."

In the first study, researchers studied youth football players without history of concussion to identify the effect of repeated subconcussive impacts on the DMN.

"Over a season of football, players are exposed to numerous head impacts. The vast majority of these do not result in concus-

effect on the brain. This is a highly understudied area at the youth and high school level."

For the study, 26 youth football players (ages 9-13) were outfitted with the Head Impact Telemetry System (HITS) for an entire football season. HITS helmets are lined with accelerometers or sensors that measure the magnitude, location and direction of impacts to the head. Impact data from the helmets were used to calculate a risk of concussion exposure for each player.

Players were equally divided into high and low concussion exposure

HEALTH COMMENTARY

Unlocking the brain key to curing Alzheimers

Dr. David Fitzpatrick
sunsentinel.com

With nearly 50 million people suffering from Alzheimer's disease worldwide, it is more important than ever that we find new treatments and hopefully a cure for this devastating illness. With that goal in mind, nearly 2,000 clinical trials related to Alzheimer's disease have been registered on clinicaltrials.gov, yet there are only five FDA-approved drugs available to patients, and none can halt or reverse the disease.



Fitzpatrick

What are we missing? We are missing a clear understanding of how memory functions normally. We are developing drugs that we hope will restore natural, functional memory to patients without a fundamental understanding of the biological mechanisms that enable the brain to store and



retrieve memories. By analogy, imagine you are given the task of fixing a computer that no longer stores information without knowing the basics of how computers work. How likely are you to find a solution?

Understanding how our brains form and store memories is a crucial question for basic science — science that may not immediately generate a cure, but

illuminates how natural biological processes work and provides an invaluable knowledge base that sparks new ideas for diagnostics and treatments. This is the type of research that scientists have been conducting at the Max Planck Florida Institute for Neuroscience (MPFI) for the past five years.

Inside each of our brains, there are 100 billion neurons. Each of

these neurons can connect to up to 10,000 other neurons, making trillions of points of contact throughout the brain. These microscopic points of contact, called synapses, can grow, change shape, and even shrink as we learn new things, strengthen some memories, and forget others. But how?

Ryohei Yasuda, Scientific Director at MPFI, has focused his laboratory's work on understanding the molecular players in the formation of memories. There are many ways in which synapses can grow and change in response to different types of stimulation. These changes often involve hundreds of steps in a chain of molecular interactions. Yasuda's team develops tools that give researchers the power to actually visualize these interactions in a portion of a single brain cell so small that it's invisible even under some microscopes. They are using those tools to understand the rules that guide how these chemicals behave and allow two cells to communicate with one another to

encode information.

But functional memory is more than just molecules in a single synapse between two neurons. Our brains coordinate information from all over our brains, recruiting hundreds and thousands of cells into organized networks to encode complex information on a much larger scale. These larger networks are what Yingxue Wang, a new researcher leader joining MPFI in February 2018, hopes to understand. She will lead a team of researchers using a combination of computational, physical, and biological methods to understand how large circuits of neurons encode detailed episodic, or story-like, memories.

MPFI is poised to contribute more meaningful research than ever to support efforts to treat and cure devastating diseases of the brain — including Alzheimer's. MPFI is uniquely positioned to help bring these insights to life with both local and worldwide collaborations. Not only is MPFI forging science collaborations with its Palm Beach neighbors,

the Scripps Research Institute and Florida Atlantic University's Brain Institute, but at the end of this month, the institute is hosting the Max Planck Society Neuroscience retreat, "Building Bridges" in Palm Beach County, bringing together directors and group leaders from over 20 Max Planck institutes worldwide studying neuroscience.

Equipped with a better understanding of memory across small and large scales — from the individual molecules to the large circuits made up of many cells — scientists will be better able to tackle diseases plaguing human memory, such as Alzheimer's disease. With National Alzheimer's Awareness Month coming to a close, there is hope on the horizon for the nearly 5.4 million people with this disease.

For more information about how to get involved and support basic research in our community this Alzheimer's awareness month, go to MPFI.org.

Dr. David Fitzpatrick is CEO of the Max Planck Florida Institute for Neuroscience.

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Obamacare signups pop after Thanksgiving

A 2018 enrollment deadline of Dec. 15 means time to choose a plan is six weeks shorter than last year

By Naseem S. Miller
Orlando Sentinel

It's open enrollment season for Obamacare, and Florida Blue staffers have coined a term for the Monday after Thanksgiving: Marketplace Monday.

"We've always noticed that right after the Thanksgiving holiday, a lot of people want to come in," said Melissa Kincaid, manager of the three Florida Blue Centers in Central Florida. "It's been like that every year, and this year, with a shorter period, it's even more serious. We're fully booked on Monday as of a week ago."

Kincaid wasn't sure what's been driving this surge, but one thing is for sure: Consumers who want to have health coverage in January need to sign up for a plan by Dec. 15, which is when the open enrollment period ends this year. The Trump administration shortened the time frame by six weeks this year.

It's also important for consumers who are re-enrolling to look at their options this year. Their premiums could have

changed significantly, since the Trump administration ended cost-sharing reduction payments to insurers this year.

In anticipation of the cut, insurance companies raised their rates. As a result, higher-income consumers, particularly those in a silver plan, may suddenly see their premiums rise by more than 20 percent.

Meanwhile, consumers with income between \$12,000 and \$47,000 a year are likely to see their premiums go down because under the Affordable Care Act, they qualify for tax credits — or subsidies — that are tied to the price of premiums.

Anne Packham, director of the marketplace navigator project at Primary Care Access Network in Orange County, added that the renewal notices from insurance companies may not include consumers' full tax credit for 2018, and that's another reason to review your options.

An analysis by Avalere Health shows that 98 percent of U.S. counties with federal

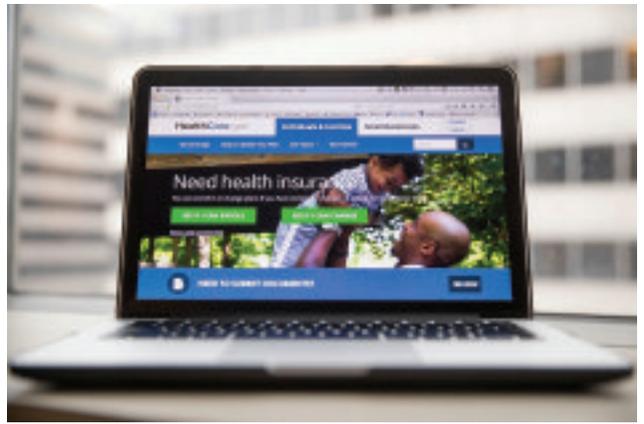
exchanges have free bronze plan options during the enrollment period for a hypothetical 50-year-old consumer who earns \$18,000 a year. That consumer will have access to more than 10 such plans in Orange, Osceola, Seminole and Lake counties.

According to the latest data provided by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, nearly 1.5 million Americans selected a plan between Nov. 1-11 this year, compared with 1 million people who did so last year during the same period.

But it's too soon to say if more people will sign up for an Obamacare plan this year because the enrollment period is shorter than 2016 and there's no presidential election to distract consumers.

State and local numbers won't be available until early next year.

"The main thing we're trying to push is this year's earlier deadline," said Christie Hyde DeNave, a spokeswoman for Florida Blue, which is the largest health insurer in Florida, offering at least one plan in every county. "There are people who waited until after the new year to sign up in previous years, but that's just not an option this year. Get covered and get it done before Dec. 15."



According to the latest data provided by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, nearly 1.5 million Americans selected a plan between Nov. 1-11 this year, compared with 1 million people who did so last year during the same period.

Also, the penalties are still in effect. Individuals who can afford health insurance but choose not to buy it may face a tax penalty. In 2016, the penalty was \$695 or 2.5 percent of annual income for an

individual. Going forward, the amount will rise with inflation. To make appointments with a local navigator, call 877-564-5031, or visit coveringfl.net. You can also contact your insurer or insurance agent.

VA vows to overhaul their reporting policies within one year

REPORT
continued from 9B

chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, asked GAO to investigate and is chairing a hearing on the findings Wednesday.

Under VA policies, hospitals are supposed to report to the national database doctors and dentists who leave while under investigation for medical

mistakes or when their clinical credentials are curtailed or revoked because of poor care. They are also supposed to report medical providers to state licensing authorities if they "raise reasonable concern for the safety of patients."

But at the five unidentified hospitals examined by GAO, providers weren't reported as required because VA officials were generally not familiar

In all, a total of 148 providers required clinical reviews after concerns were raised about their care between October 2013 and March 2017. But in nearly half those cases, the hospitals could not provide documentation that the reviews occurred.

with or misinterpreted" the policies.

"At one facility, we found that officials failed to report six providers to the (national database) because the officials were unaware that they had been delegated responsibility for... reporting," the GAO said.

The office also found VA hospitals did not adequately document investigations of medical care that can lead to reports.

In all, a total of 148 providers required clinical reviews after concerns were raised about their care between October 2013 and March 2017. But in nearly half those cases, the hospitals could not provide documentation that the reviews occurred.

"We found that all five (hospitals) lacked at least some documentation of the reviews they conducted, and in

some cases, the required reviews were not conducted at all," investigators concluded.

The GAO recommended the VA ensure reviews are documented, that they are conducted more quickly and that they are overseen by regional officials, who can ensure problem medical workers are reported. The VA said it would have those fixes in place within a year.

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City of North Miami hosted the 43rd Annual International Parade

North Miami's Winternational Parade took place last Thursday, with guests enjoying music, floats and family fun. The 2017 theme was "Celebrating Community and Culture" with the Honorable Carrie P. Meek the parade's grand marshal. Hosts included TV personality Constance Jones, radio personality Rodney Baltimore, along with DJ Hercules and DJ Lumoney. The City of North Miami debuted its #Get2NoMi float, which showcased all of the city's information sharing platforms. Also, the Tropical Nights of North Miami float appeared during the parade, featuring live rolling concert performances by popular Haitian Kompa band Kai and Mikaben.

—Miami Times photos/Gregory Reed



The Miami Times Church Directory

Apostolic Revival Center
6702 N.W. 15th Avenue
305-836-1724

Order of Services
Wed. Interspersed Prayer 9 a.m.-12 p.m.
Morning Service 11 a.m.
Sun. Evn. Worship 7:30 p.m.
Tue. Prayer Meeting 7:30 p.m.
Fri. Bible Study 7:30 p.m.

Dr. & Mrs G. S. Smith

Liberty City Church of Christ
1263 N.W. 67th Street
305-897-7224

Order of Services
Sunday Morning 8 a.m.
Sunday School 10 a.m.
Sunday Evening 5 p.m.
Tue. Bible Class 6:30 p.m.
Thurs. Fellowship 10 a.m.

Evangelist Eric W. Doss

New Vision For Christ Ministries
13650 N.E. 10th Avenue
305-899-7224

Order of Services
Early Sunday Worship 7:30 a.m.
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship 11 a.m.
Sunday Evening Service ... 6 p.m.
Tuesday Prayer Meeting 7:30 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study 7:30 p.m.

Rev. Michael D. Screen

Brownsville Church of Christ
4561 N.W. 33rd Court
305-634-4850 / Fax & Messages 305-634-6604

Order of Services
Lord Day Sunday School 9:45am
Sunday Morning Worship 11 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship 5 p.m.
Tuesday Night Bible Study 7:30pm
Thurs. Morn. Bible Class 10 a.m.

Min. Harrell L. Henton

93rd Street Community Missionary Baptist Church
2330 N.W. 93rd Street
305-536-0942

Order of Services
7:30 a.m. Early Morning Worship
11 a.m. Morning Worship
Evening Worship
1st & 3rd Sunday 6 a.m.
Tuesday Bible Study 7 p.m.
website: cmbc.org

Pastor Rev. Carl Johnson

St. Mark Missionary Baptist Church
1470 N.W. 87th Street
305-691-8861

Order of Services
Sunday 7:30 and 11 a.m.
Sunday Service
9:30 a.m. Sunday School
Tuesday 7 p.m. Bible Study
6:30 p.m. Prayer Meeting

Rev. Dr. C.A. Ivery, Pastor

Jordan Grove Missionary Baptist Church
5946 N.W. 12th Avenue
305/911-9328

Order of Services
Early Worship 7 a.m.
Sunday School 9 a.m.
10:45 a.m.
Worship 11 a.m. Worship 4 p.m.
Mission and Bible Class Sunday 6:30 p.m.

Pastor Douglas Cook, Sr.

New Birth Baptist Church, The Cathedral of Faith International
2300 N.W. 135th Street

Order of Services
Sunday Worship 7 a.m., 11 a.m., 7 p.m.
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Tuesday (Bible Study) 6:45p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study 10:45 a.m.

1 (800) 254-NBCC
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Bishop Victor T. Curry, D.Min., D.D., Senior Pastor/Teacher

Pembroke Park Church of Christ
3707 S.W. 56th Avenue • Hollywood, FL 33023
(Office) 954-962-9327

Order of Services
SUNDAY Bible Study 9 a.m.
Morning Worship... 10 a.m.
Evening Worship ... 6 p.m.
www.pembrokeparkchurchofchrist.com

TUESDAY Bible Study 10 a.m.
WEDNESDAY Bible Study 7:30 p.m.

Minister Kevin D. Jones, Sr

Hosanna Community Baptist Church
2171 N.W. 56th Street
305-657-4404 • FAX 305-657-4474

Order of Services
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Worship 11 a.m.
Bible Study, Thursday 7:30 p.m.
Youth Ministry
Mon. Wed. 6 p.m.

Rev. Charles Lee Dinkins

IN MEMORIAM • HAPPY BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCES • DEATH NOTICES • OBITUARIES • CARD OF THANKS

Hadley Davis Miami Gardens

CLAUDI JEAN POIX, 67, retired, died November 20. Service 10 a.m., Friday at Eden Seventh Day Adventist Church.



JOHNNY LEE WHITE, 79, retired, died November 26 at North Shore Hospital. Viewing 1-6 p.m., Tuesday, December 5. Service 10 a.m., Wednesday, December 6 at New Hope Missionary Baptist Church.



YVONNE DEBREUS, 95, retired, died November 18 at Kindred Hospital. Service 9:30 a.m., Saturday at Cathedral of St. Mary.



CLAUDIA BROWN GRAY, 76, retired, died November 19 at home. Service 11 a.m., Saturday at New Covenant Presbyterian Church.



YOLANDA ALISHIA GAY, 47, baker, died November 14 at Jackson North Hospital. Service 2 p.m., Saturday in the chapel.



SAMUEL LEE ABIA OKON, 69, retired, died November 19 at Palmetto Hospital. Service 12 p.m., today in the chapel.



CARMEN SORAYA ANDUJAR, 53, homemaker, died November 23 at North Shore Hospital. Service 2 p.m., Friday in the chapel.



Richardson

SUNYA STAFFORD-ROLLE, 43, legal clerk, died November 25 at North Shore Medical Center. Service 11 a.m., Saturday at 93rd Street Community Baptist Church.



ELLIOTT J. JIEZE JR., 34, entrepreneur, died November 26 at Jackson Memorial Hospital. Service 1 p.m., Saturday at Opa-locka United Methodist Church.



EDWARD LEWIS, JR., "BIG LOU", 81, St. Arthur's Lodge No. 488, retired from Eastern Airlines, died November 24 in Pineland, South Carolina. Service 11 a.m., Tuesday, December 5 at New Birth Baptist Church Cathedral of Faith International Church.



Manker

LC ROSS, 86, entrepreneur, died November 23 at Hialeah Medical Center. Service 11 a.m., Friday at Friendship Missionary Baptist Church.

Hadley Davis MLK

TAVARIS LEGGETT, 37, environmental service, died November 6. Service 12 p.m., Saturday in the chapel.



ROBERT LEE KIRKLAND, 62, retired, died November 19 at Jackson Hospital. Service 1 p.m., Saturday at Jordan Grove Missionary Baptist Church.



DARREN BRIAN HENRY, 49, maintenance worker, died November 12 at Sister Emanuel Mercy Hospital. Service 2 p.m., Saturday in the chapel.



TERRANCE SHA'RON SHINE SR., 47, construction worker, died November 13 at home. Service 4 p.m., Saturday in the chapel.



RITA MAE HAYES, 79, retired nurse assistant, died November 19 at Hialeah Hospital. Service 2 p.m., Saturday at Day Spring Missionary Baptist Church.



ELDIN DAMES, 100, environmental specialist, died November 26 at North Shore Hospital. Service 11 a.m., Saturday at Saint Matthews Missionary Baptist Church.



ALMETA "BIG AL" FAIN, 65, retired, died November 13 at home. She will be remembered for her strength, courage, wisdom and no nonsense stance. Service 10 a.m., Saturday in the chapel.



Eric S. George

JOSEPH SAMUEL SMITH, II, 37, died November 17. Service 11:30 a.m., Saturday at Freewill Christian Center.



WILFORD ALEXANDER, 71, died November 25. Service 11 a.m., Saturday in the chapel.

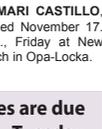


Wright and Young

MARTHA FRAZIER, 80, nurse, died November 25. Service 2 p.m., Saturday at Peaceful Zion Missionary Baptist Church.



MASTER CAMARI CASTILLO, one year old, died November 17. Service 12 p.m., Friday at New Jerusalem Church in Opa-Locka.



Paradise

EARTHA JOHNSON, 84, died November 19. Service 10 a.m., Saturday at Bethel Baptist Church.



MAGGIE LEE WOOLFOLK, 93, died November 24 at University of Miami Hospital. Service 11 a.m., Saturday in the chapel.



JEROME ROMEO GARDNER, 14, died November 22. Service 11 a.m., Saturday at Mt. Olive Baptist Church.



Trinity

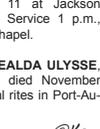
BILLIE DENSON, 67, roofer, died November 21 at home. Service 11 a.m., Saturday at Mt. Aaron Missionary Baptist Church.



LASHAWN LOWERY, 47, singer, died November 25 at University of Miami Hospital. Service 1 p.m., Saturday at God's Resurrection Ministry.



DERRELL COLEBROOK, 55, died November 11 at Jackson Health Systems. Service 1 p.m., Saturday in the chapel.



THERESE CLEALDA ULYSSE, 96, homemaker, died November 17 at home. Final rites in Port-Au-Prince, Haiti.



Grace

JOHNNIE MAE STEVENS, 78, homemaker, died November 22. Service 11 a.m., Saturday at St. Marks Missionary Baptist Church.



KIMBERLY HAYNES, 46, bus driver, died November 20. Service 12 p.m., Saturday in the chapel.



Royal

ROSS THOMPSON, JR., 89, retired cook, died November 24 at University of Miami Hospital. Service 3:30 p.m., Saturday in the chapel.

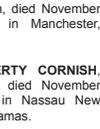


DAVITA HOPKINS, 39, died November 19. Viewing 4-9 p.m., Friday at Royal Funeral, 17475 NW 27 Ave., Miami. Service 1:30 p.m., Saturday in the chapel.



Range

GEORGE WALTER JONES, 75, retired electrician, died November 14. Final rites in Manchester, Jamaica.



INFANT LIBERTY CORNISH, 10 months old, died November 19. Final rites in Nassau New Providence, Bahamas.

Covenant

JACQUELYN REDDINGS, 64, retired security officer, died November 23 at North Shore Hospital. Service 10:30 a.m., Saturday at Thompson Temple FBH Church.

Death Notice



ARNOLD ARLINGTON DAVIS, 84, security officer, died November 25 at home. Service 11 a.m., Friday at Mount Calvary Missionary Baptist Church. Arrangements entrusted to Richardson Funeral Home.

Death Notice



REVEREND GEORGE WILLIAMS SR., 86, minister, died November 24 in Bartow. Service 11 a.m., Saturday at Beulah Missionary Baptist Church in Port Meade, Florida. Arrangements entrusted to Richardson Funeral Home.

Death Notice



VENUS RANDOLPH, 66, bank cashier, died November 10. Service 10 a.m., Saturday at Peaceful Zion Missionary Baptist Church. Arrangements entrusted to Eternal Rest Mortuary.

Death Notice

JACQUELYN LEANDRA REDDINGS, 64, security officer, died November 23 at North Shore Medical Center. Service 3 p.m., Saturday in the chapel. Arrangements entrusted to Richardson Funeral Home.

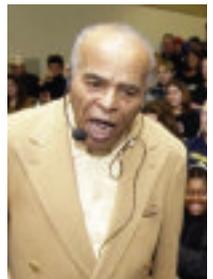
Death Notice

KELVIN SPEARMAN, 52, laborer, died November 23. Service 11 a.m., Thursday in the chapel. Arrangements entrusted to Richardson Funeral Home.

Pioneering jazz singer Hendricks dies at 96

Associated Press

TOLEDO, OHIO — Jon Hendricks, the pioneering jazz singer and lyricist who, with the trio Lambert, Hendricks & Ross, popularized the "vocalese" singing style in which words were added to instrumental songs, has died. He was 96.



Jon Hendricks

His daughter, Aria Hendricks, confirmed his death to The New York Times. She said he died Wednesday at a New York City hospital.

Hendricks found fame in the 1950s and '60s teaming with Dave Lambert and Annie Ross. Their interracial trio became one of the most celebrated jazz vocal groups ever, and among the latter-day stars they influenced were Joni Mitchell and Manhattan Transfer.

The trio's first album, Sing a Song of Basie, won acclaim for its use of vocalese, in which the voices mimic the instrumental parts. Hendricks wrote the lyrics to existing Basie songs, and the three recorded their own voices in layers instead of using backup singers.

Others experimented with vocalese before Hendricks, but he is widely regarded as the father of the spirited singing style for popularizing it. In the 1980s, he collaborated with Manhattan Transfer on an album called Vocalese that won three Grammys, one for Hendricks himself.

He first teamed up with Lambert, a bebop singer he admired, in the mid-1950s; the duo had hits with Four Brothers and Cloudburst. The two became a trio with the addition of Ross in 1957. The English-born Ross was already known for her own vocalese lyrics to Wardell Gray's music in the classic Twisted.

In a 1997 Associated Press interview, Hendricks recalled that Lambert said, "Let's do something artistic so that the Earth will at least know we were here. Why don't you lyricize 10 Count Basie things and we'll see if we can redo."

After trying out by recording a large group of singers, Hendricks recalled, they decided to instead create the harmonies by multitracking as a trio with Ross.

SON OF A PREACHER

Hendricks got his start in amateur shows and at age 14 sang in Toledo nightclubs for two years with another future jazz great from his hometown, pianist Art Tatum, who gave him music lessons after school.

"I learned what I know from him," Hendricks told The Associated Press in a 2004 interview.

Yet, he was on his way to becoming a lawyer in 1950, singing in small clubs at night, when his wife asked if Hendricks could sing with bebop pioneer and saxophonist Charlie "Bird" Parker at a concert in town.

Parker was impressed, telling Hendricks, "You ain't no lawyer. You're a jazz singer. You got to come to New York." Hendricks did, two years later.

Following years of performing worldwide and living in New York, Hendricks returned to his hometown in 2000 to teach jazz history and vocal jazz at the University of Toledo.

A performer even as a teacher, he was known for his unending enthusiasm. On the first day of class he sang students the story of jazz, backed up by bass, drums and piano. Students gave him ovations by the dozen.



JOHNNIE SMITH MOORE 01/29/1920 - 11/14/2007

It's been 10 years and we are still missing you. LOL Eugene Smith and Ruby Morton-Thomas and families.

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In Memoriam



SANDRA DENISE NORMAN 11/30/1964 - 12/01/2016

It is very hard to believe that it has been a year since you've gone on to Heaven. We have managed to cope by remembering your lessons and lifestyle. We will always cherish the time we were able to spend with you, as it always touched us in a very special way. Love your family.

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A mermaid cake designed and made for a birthday party by Chef Myriam "Chef Mimi" Charles.

—Photos courtesy of Myriam Charles

MEET THE FEMALE PASTRY CHEF

MYRIAM 'MIMI' CHARLES

MYRIAM CHARLES BAKES HER WAY ON 'CAKE HUNTERS'

By Nyamekye Daniel
 ndaniel@miamitimesonline.com

Cakes are the centerpiece of American celebrations. Whether it be a birthday, graduation, wedding, retirement or baby shower, the sweet treat is the icing for any joyous occasion.

Miami native, Myriam "Chef Mimi" Charles has proven that she is an expert on cakes after she appeared on the Miami episode of the Cooking Channel's "Cake Hunters."

But Charles, a self-taught baker, never thought when she left South Florida for a "change of scenery" over 10 years ago that she would come back to find success in the kitchen.

Shortly, after starting her higher education at Broward College, Charles found herself being hooked on Miami's nightlife, so she decided to move to Atlanta. There, while working as a server in the restaurant industry, Charles started her love affair with food, she said.

"I started off working at Oliver Garden, but I would always poke my head in the kitchen and ask the chefs questions," said Charles.

Her infatuation with cooking got stronger when Please turn to **CHARLES 6C**



A wedding designed and made by Chef Myriam "Chef Mimi" Charles.

2017 BET Soul Train Awards was a spectacle to behold

30th anniversary was celebrated honoring the best in Black music

By Marl Elbert
 billboard

Since 1987 the Soul Train Awards has been celebrating and honoring the best in Black music and entertainment. Countless musicians and figures in the music industry have been awarded for their outstanding achievements in soul, R&B, gospel, jazz and hip-hop. Sunday night's (Nov. 26) edition celebrated the 30th anniversary of the high-profile event and it was a spectacle to behold, with Bruno Mars topping all winners with five awards, including best R&B/soul male artist, video of the year and album/mixtape of the year, among others.

The show has been one of the premier awards programs on television, so expectations were high this year. Erykah Badu took on hosting duties for the third time in a row on the BET telecast, providing the audience and viewers at home with a fun-filled, exciting evening. Some of the performers included Tamar Braxton, 112, Tank, Kirk Franklin, and more. SWV received the Soul Train Lady of

Toni Braxton
 Lady of Soul Award

Soul Award and Toni Braxton was honored with the most prestigious award of the night, the Soul Train Legend Award for her work in R&B/Soul.

Solange Knowles was the artist to beat at the star-studded award show with seven nominations and Mars trailing behind her with six. SZA took home two awards, Solange one, as Mars ruled the night with his five trophies. As everyone tuned in,

BET and the producers of the legendary Soul Train put on one great show. Here are the top five highlights Please turn to **AWARDS 6C**



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xfinity
the future of awesome

THE Social WHIRL

By Venneda-Rei Gibson VennedaL43@gmail.com



Continuing to share events during the Florida Classic Weekend with you, readers as I mentioned that ladies initiated in the fall of 57' into Gamma Tau Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority at Bethune Cookman celebrated their 60th anniversary. During the same time in Orlando, ladies initiated into Beta Alpha Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority at FAMU, dubbed the **Modnificent 22'**, celebrated their 50th anniversary. Beyond affiliations of Greekdom, college friends and their family truly enjoyed a weekend of memories with each other amidst a sea of maroon and gold and the orange and the green. And, as I am fond of saying, "Tain't nothing like an HBCU Classic weekend." Celebrating their 50th reunion in Orlando were: **Cecilia Lawrence Hunter, Mary Alice Beasley, Juanita Davis Reed, Carolyn Richardson Frazier** (host) **C. Elaine Dawsey, Helen Johnson Tally, Gwen Gibson, Thekina Nolan, Sharon Moore Hill**, along with their 1967 Dean of Pledges, **Mona Bethel Jackson**. The ladies made the Orlando Hilton their headquarters and members from the **Modnificent 22'** had a great and momentous time. Others on the scene were **Helen Wade, Gwethlyn Jones,**



Bernard and Shirley Kinsey

Clayola Oliver Brown, Silvia Hawkins, Vernita Mathis and Betty Muse. They also shared some Rattler pride with **Terolyn Hunter Fields** as she beamed about the showstepping and stopping moves of her son **Nehemia Fields** who is one of the talented tuba players in the 'Marching 100.' If you, like I, love the pagantry of HBCU halftime shows, you would have enjoyed the show. FAMU's band proudly displayed their brand new uniforms with thanks to **Bernard and Shirley Kinsey.** Kinsey was a member of the 'Marching 100.' The National Underground Railroad Free-



Modnificent 22

dom Center in Cincinnati, Ohio where the Kinsey African American Art and History Collection opened on November 4 and will be on display through March 4, 2018. The exhibit has been on tour since 2007.

Kinsey received his bachelor's degree from Florida A&M University and is an ardent supporter of his undergraduate alma mater, where he has raised millions of dollars in support of scholarships and the alumni association at FAMU, as well as grants for African-American mid-career artists. **Bernard and Shirley Kinsey** are extensive travelers and consider themselves students of world history and culture.

The Kinsey Collection is unique in that it is where art and history intersect, telling the often-untold stories of African American achievement and contribution through primary source historical objects start-

ing from 1595, as well as 2 and 3 dimensional artworks from the 19th, 20th, and 21st century. The collection has been cited in 3 national awards, including the President's National Award for Museum and Library Services. **Kinsey** was born and raised in West Palm Beach where his father **U.B. Kinsey** was one of the first Black principals in Palm Beach County.

The Wildcats of Bethune Cookman were also in full form as they displayed their outstanding talent. It was an awesome halftime show from both bands. It was a time before Thanksgiving that found everyone in the mood for friends and family. So many familiar faces, so much fun and smiles.

The Rev. Canon **Nelson Pinder** and wife **Marion**, both **BCU** grads, entertained friends and family following the football game. All of the favorite good-



Gamma Tau 60th Reunion

ies were available to guests. Of course with the **Humes sisters, Darlene and Edith**, you know everything was delicious from conch fritters to peas n' rice. Guests included **Jasmine Shirley, Sharon Anderson, Donna Turner, Eddrea Goodmond, Marc O'Farrell, Rev. Richard and Virla Barry, Rev. Simeon Newbold, Carolyn Mond.**

It truly was another memorable weekend where reunions, friendship, families and more were celebrated. **Winnie Cox Beacham** came to celebrate with **Ruth Dunsmore Williams** and her extended family. I missed seeing her. One of my former students, **Carla Knight** saw me in the crowd. I was elated to see **Carla.** Travelers met also on the train. **Gigi Rolle Holloway** and **Jerome Holloway** traveled to The African American Museum of History and Culture in D.C. and returned Tuesday. I met

them on the trip to and from Orlando where **Gigi** shared with me news about the **Sistah to Sistah** Connection Empowerment, organization and their community involvement. **Sistah to Sistah** is a ministry for the whole woman and they meet monthly and operate a prayer line that is available every Sunday.

The late poet and writer Margaret Walker wrote these words: *"Friends and good manners will carry you where money won't go. When I was about eight, I decided that the most wonderful, next to a human being, was a good book. The poetry of a people comes from deep recesses of the unconscious, the irrational and collective body of our ancestral memories."*

And so true these words are as we Live, Love, Pray, Sing, Dance and Laugh in the Whirl. I am grateful. Blessings to all.

Is marriage a boon or a burden? Book gives answers

Writer explores marriage in the Black and LGBTQ communities

By Terri Schlichenmeyer
bookwormsez@yahoo.com

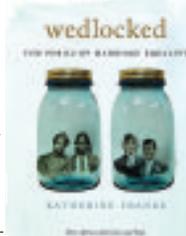
You're not in any hurry. The ring is on your finger, the engagement was just announced, and you both feel like you've got plenty of time. Now is your chance to enjoy the process of getting married. Here's your opportunity to plan the future.

But "Wedlocked: The Perils of Marriage Equality" by Katherine Franke asks the question: Why marry at all? When President George Washington died, his will stipulated that his slaves be given their freedom when his wife, Martha, who inherited them, would die.

This, says Katherine Franke, accidentally "put a price on" Martha's head but moreover, it was an acknowledgment on Washington's



part that shows one complexity of slavery: marriage between the Washington slaves meant that freeing his without freeing hers could break up families. This issue, and others before and after the Civil War, illustrates how "many of the experiences of



African-Americans held out a message to the same-sex marriage movement today." Throughout American history, Franke says, the "rules" of marriage for non-

gay or gay individuals hit a double-edged sword. A sword of enhanced rights and enforced matrimonial laws complicated by pre-Emancipation fluidity of relationships and looser definitions of "marriage" within African-American communities. Also there is a lack of awareness in the LGBTQ community complicated by different state laws now.

The bottom line that's often not emphasized: when a couple marries, the state suddenly "acquires a legal interest in your relationship." Now, as then, marriage may also be legally "forced" on a couple: in the case of former slaves, to gain benefits in wartime; for LGBTQ couples, in the continuation of health benefits. Even after all that, marriage, as Franke reminds readers,

has never offered a guarantee from discrimination.

Is it possible, Franke asks, that "the inability to marry creates a kind of freedom from the 'bonds' of marriage?" At a time when the rates of marriage in the Black community are low and LGBTQ parents are demanding new legal definitions of "family," will marriage become antiquated? Or is the "freedom" to marry just another way for society to meddle in the lives of marginalized individuals?

Surely, few readers would consider "Wedlocked" a fun weekend read. It's not exactly what you'd take to the beach with you. Fun, no. Interesting, absolutely.

It's also quite thought-provoking. Author Katherine Franke is, in part, director of the Center for Gender and

Sexuality Law at Columbia University, and in this book, she asks hard questions between jaw-dropping history lessons and proof that marriage is both burden and boon to anyone who's not white and straight. That's not to say that the institution is dead; instead, Franke wonders if, of all rights denied former slaves and gay individuals, marriage may've been the oddest choice for legal battles.

But which other right would've been better? The answer to that seems to be left open for discussion; indeed, readers are given much to ponder from this heavy-duty, scholarly book. Just beware that time is the key to opening "Wedlocked."

Enjoy and contemplate but don't be in any hurry.

A marching band celebrates its political roots in Harlem

To commemorate rich history of marching bands, project *Marching On* inaugurated with an exhibition

By Elisa Wouk Almino
The New York Times

Marching bands are joyous sights to behold, whether while watching them process down a football field or a decked-out street during Mardi Gras. The historical roots of these

bands, however, are less cheerfully traced to military training and combat. Lesser known still is how the Black community used marching bands as a means of political expression in the 19th century.

The exhibition *Marching On: The Politics of Perfor-*

mance, opening next year at the Storefront for Art and Architecture, posits that marching bands were "historically used to acknowledge military service in Black communities and the absence of civil rights despite sacrifices to defend the nation."

The exhibition will delve into the history of the predominantly Black Regiment known as the Harlem Hellfighters and the 1917 Silent March, when 10,000 Blacks processed through New York's streets in silence, protesting violence and lynching.

To commemorate the rich history of marching bands, *Marching On* inaugurated last weekend with a series of performances that were also officially a part of Performa 17's programming.

Organized by Bryony Roberts and Mabel O. Wilson

(both professors at Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation), the marching band performances proudly featured the Harlem-based *Marching Cobras* of New York, an after-school drum line and dance team.



"We Know How To Order" by Bryony Roberts and the South Shore Drill Team (2015), Chicago Architecture Biennial.

—Photo by Andrew Bruah

For Denzel and 'Roman' it's about 'doing' the work

By Patrick Ryan
USA TODAY

NEW YORK — Despite the Internet's insistence, Denzel Washington's Roman J. Israel, Esq. wasn't inspired by Questlove.

"All I had to do was look at my own pictures from the '70s — long before Questlove was born, probably," teases Washington, whose Afroed, bespectacled legal savant bears an uncanny resemblance to The Roots drummer.

But it's hard to imagine the two-time Oscar winner ever looking quite as ungainly as his encyclopedic character in Roman J. Israel, Esq. (in theaters now in New York and Los Angeles, goes nationwide Wednesday), who plods about in an oversized three-piece suit, toting a bulky briefcase and a click-wheel iPod loaded with jazz standards.

They were all hyperspecific details that Washington, 62, personally devised for his character: an inconspicuous attorney who's hinted to be on the autism spectrum and doggedly fights for justice in present-day Los Angeles. When Roman's law partner dies, he's forced to take a job at a high-profile firm run by a legal shark (Colin Farrell), where he finds his values tested when the chance

to earn a sizable sum of money would also mean betraying his client's confidence.

Reading writer/director Dan Gilroy's script, "I was like, why has this guy been in the backroom for 30 years?" Washington says. "Most big firms have guys like that, who do the legwork and know the law verbatim."

Gilroy (Nightcrawler) wrote Roman with Washington in mind, intrigued by the idea of "What would someone be like if they never left the 1960s?" he says. "The character is a person who believes in something bigger than himself, and Denzel is like that in his personal life."

Washington, by his own admission, never aspired to be an activist. After choosing not to follow in his preacher father's footsteps, the New York native enrolled at Fordham University in the Bronx, where he tried his hand at pre-med, pre-law and journalism.

He discovered acting during his third year of college, performing in Eugene O'Neill's The Emperor Jones, which he'll bring full circle next spring starring in the playwright's The Iceman Cometh — his third time on Broadway this decade, after A Raisin in the Sun and Fences.

Denzel Washington stars as a legal savant in 'Roman J. Israel, Esq.' The film details a turbulent series of events that leads him on a path questioning his character.



He directed the latter's film adaptation last year, which earned a best supporting actress Oscar for Viola Davis, and nominations for best picture and actor (Washington).

Despite mixed reviews for Roman (57% positive on aggregate site Rotten Tomatoes), critics have praised Washington's performance, with some prognosticators on awards site Gold Derby predicting he could earn his eighth Oscar nod as an actor.

Although there are concerns this year's race could be another #OscarsSoWhite, Washington is optimistic about strides being made in diversity in Hollywood.

"I've been at the awards show when I've been the only (person of color) there," Washington says. "Not lately, so that's a good thing."

He's writing a script that he hopes to direct, but "that's years away." In the meantime, he'd like to continue choosing his projects selectively, pointing to the five-year gap Daniel Day-Lewis took between Lincoln and next month's Phantom Thread.

"You don't have to be everywhere," Washington says. "It's not how many 'likes' you've got — it's about the work. Do the work, let the work speak for you, and disappear."

REVIEW

Washington's activist lawyer finds himself in a major jam

By Michael Phillips
Chicago Tribune

By the time a movie star of verifiable acting ability has been around for a few decades, you start seeing interviews like the one, recently, in which George Clooney mentioned quitting acting at least until something like Paul Newman's role in "The Verdict" comes along. That film has become an industry veteran touchstone. Legal dramas featuring a flawed but nobly wily protagonist: These are catnip for maturing male beauties eager to remind audiences they can A) carry a character-driven project, and B) quit coasting on their charm, or their ability to pretend to kill people, for a couple of hours.

In his 40s, Clooney took on such a role in writer-director Tony Gilroy's "Michael Clayton." Now, Denzel Washington has done the same, as the consciously unsmooth operator in nearly every shot of the flamboyant performance showcase "Roman J. Israel, Esq.," written and directed by Dan Gilroy, Tony's brother.

Gilroy wrote the part for Washington. A "bit of a savant" is how one character describes Roman's personality and compulsive behavior. For 26 years, this brilliant but socially maladroit activist has



Denzel Washington plays the title character, a brilliant but socially awkward lawyer, in "Roman J. Israel, Esq."

worked in the LA law office of a well-known criminal defense attorney. His boss's death pushes Roman into the public light, and it's clear this throwback in the ill-fitting suit and retro Afro has no taste or tolerance for the grinding compromises of the criminal justice system.

In a descending spirit of pity, Roman's hired on by hotshot attorney George Pierce, played by Colin Farrell. The instigating conflict in "Roman J. Israel, Esq.," comes from Roman's unsanctioned handling of a case involving a young man wrongly accused of murder. Without giving it away — there's a genuinely effective twist involving the identity of a new client — Ro-

man breaks the law, comes into some money and spends the rest of the film reckoning with that decision. We're set up for all this in an early throwaway line of Roman's, inspired by real-life Equal Justice Initiative founder Bryan Stevenson: "Each one of us is greater than the worst thing we've ever done."

As a writer, Gilroy hits about .500 for individual scenes, a believable one followed by an artificial construct. Early on, Roman explains the "esquire" designation to signify a standing "slightly above 'gentleman,' below 'knight.'" This is on-the-nose stuff. Roman meets a valiant civil rights activist, (Carmen Ejogo, of "Selma"), who invites him to

a meeting of protesters, and with Roman getting unbraided by two young women for his old-school manners. It's not a short scene, but it peaks just when it gets interesting. The movie lacks key progressions and transitions, especially in its middle section. "Roman J. Israel, Esq." is a morality tale primarily about a good,

sympathetic mess of a Don Quixote who screws up. Secondly, it's about the Farrell character's change of heart, brought about by the idealist in his midst. The two men's crosscutting transformations never quite convince.

It's frustrating, because the actors are all excellent and the movie's actually trying to speak to the audience's better

instincts about what makes a grown-up movie protagonist worthwhile. Clearly with his star's input, Gilroy invents a flurry of character ties and eccentricities. Still, you stick with it, or a lot of it. Even when the movie loses its way narratively, Washington's in there, slugging, building a living, breathing character out of Gilroy's knight-errant.

Philo to stream for \$16 a month

But if you're looking for sports, search elsewhere

By Mike Snider
USA TODAY

The Walking Dead and Property Brothers have another streaming video home.

A&E, AMC, BET, Comedy Central, Discovery Channel, HGTV, OWN and another 30 channels are part of a new subscription streaming service called Philo, launching Tuesday for \$16 a month.

Not in the lineup: ESPN and any of its other channels or competing offerings from Fox Sports and regional sports networks.

In that way, Philo differs from some of the biggest names among the more than 200 TV services you can currently subscribe to, and have delivered by broadband, in the U.S., according to research firm Parks Associates.

Most of the live TV services such as DirecTV Now, Sling TV, Hulu, Sony's PlayStation Vue and YouTube TV have sports within the channels they offer. But not all consumers want sports or live TV

news says, Philo CEO Andrew McCollum.

Over the past two years, McCollum and his team at Philo, which is based in Cambridge, Mass., have taken what they have learned from operating a college-based next-generation TV system to develop a streaming video service.

In feedback, students have said they wished they could take the broadband-delivered service with them when they graduate, McCollum says.

On campuses at dozens of universities including Harvard, Yale, the University of Alabama and the University of Washington, Philo supplanted standard cable TV packages with wireless TV viewable on mobile devices and computers. (That Philo Edu offering continues after the streaming service's launch.)

"As a group they are less interested in live sports than older groups ... and less interested in live TV news," said McCollum, during a video chat and demonstration of the service recently.

Another interest is cost. Many consumers transitioning from college into the workplace don't want an expensive pay TV package. Having a channel like ESPN and its sister channels can add \$10 to \$15 to a monthly programming package, McCollum says.

"That's the first thing that led us to this entertainment-focused package. Looking out in the marketplace, it doesn't really exist," he said. "If you care about entertainment content and it's not just sports there's no way you can get that content without paying the huge cost of sports."

Spending on subscription video on demand is expected to reach \$9.6 billion this year, according to consulting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers, and approach \$11 billion in 2018.

Also interested in an entertainment-focused service are the content providers themselves. Five major programmers — A+E, AMC, Discovery, Scripps and Viacom — invested \$25 million in Philo and their channels make up the channels offered.

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Lifestyle HAPPENINGS

Compiled by The Miami Times staff editorial@miamitimesonline.com

■ **The Miami Northwestern Class of 1968** meets every 4th Saturday at 2 p.m. at The African Heritage Cultural Arts Center. Call 305-218-6171.

■ **The Miami Northwestern Class of 1973** meets every 3rd Sunday at 4 p.m. Call 786-877-1176 or email msoguns@aol.com.

■ **Liberty Square Project Friends and Family Reunion Inc.** will host their 4th Annual Banquet/Dance on Sat. Dec. 2 from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. Call 696-1819 or 305-333-8539

■ **Miami Jackson General Class of 1970** present a 'Christmas Party' on Friday, December 22 from 8 p.m. until 2a.m. Call 305-733-4674 or 305-546-3770.

■ **The Miami-Dade Chapter of**

Bethune-Cookman University, meets the second Thursday of each month, 6:30 p.m. at the Omega Center.

■ **Tennessee State Alumni Association/ Miami-Dade Chapter**, meets every 3rd Saturday, 9 a.m. at The African American Cultural Arts Center. Call 305-336-4287.

■ **The Morris Brown College Miami Dade/ Broward Alumni Association** monthly meetings are held at North Shore Medical Center, Room C each 3rd Saturday from 9:30-11 a.m. Call 786-356-4412

■ **The Miami Jackson Class of 1968** meets every second Monday at the VFW located at 11911 West Dixie Highway and is planning for their 50th Reunion June 14-18, 2018. Call 305-336-7663.

■ **The Miami Carol City Class of 1968** meets every 4th Sunday at 4 p.m. Call 305-494-6265.

■ **The George Washington Carver High School Class 1966** meets the 2nd Saturday each month at 1234 N.W. 79th St. at 12 p.m. Call 305-300-7630.

■ **The Miami Carol City Class of 1968** meets every 4th Sunday at 4 p.m. We are planning our 50th Reunion for September 14-16, 2018. Call 305-494-6265.

■ **The Gold Coast Chapter of Florida A & M University** offers free computer classes for women. Call 786-477-8548.

■ **Women in Transition of South Florida** offers free computer classes for women. Call 786-477-8548.

■ **The date for the Adult West African Senegal Slave Departure Tour** will be June 10-22, 2018. Call 305-332-6365.

■ **The Surviving Twin Network** welcomes the support of twins or siblings, who have experienced such loss, to share with others, as a source of comfort. Call 305-504-4936.

■ **The Northwestern Class of 1962** meets every 2nd Saturday at 3 p.m. at The African Heritage Cultural Arts Center. Call 305-681-3330.

■ **Florida A & M University (FAMU) National Alumni Association (NAA) South Dade Chapter** invites you to join them the 4th Wednesday of each month at Community Health Center of South Florida at 6 p.m.

■ **Booker T Washington Class of 1967** meets every third Saturday from 4-6 p.m. at the African Heritage Cultural Arts Center East Portable #1. Call 305-333-7128.

■ **Inner City Children's Tooting Dance** will have free Introductory Classical Ballet Workshops for girls ages 6-8 and 9-12 on Monday and Wednesday

evenings. Call 305-758-1577 or visit www.childrendance.net.

■ **Karate Classes** at Range Park on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 6-8 p.m. Call 305-757-7961.

■ **Top Ladies of Distinction, Inc.** meets 10 a.m. every second Saturday at the African Heritage Cultural Arts Center. Call 305-439-5426.

■ **The Miami Central High Alumni Association** meets every second and fourth Wednesday in Miami Central High library at 7 p.m. Call 305-370-4825.

■ **Northwestern Alumni Class of 61** meets at YET Center every second Tuesday 12 p.m. Call 305-696-1154.

■ **The South Florida Alumni Chapter of North Carolina Central University** meets 11 a.m. every second Saturday at Denny's in Miami Gardens.

■ **The Miami Jackson Class of 1971** meets 3 p.m. every first

Saturday at Gwen Cherry Park NFL / YET (meeting area). Call 305-305-0290.

■ **Unspoken Dance Company** is now recruiting dancers ages 5 and up. To register call 305-409-7490 or email unspokendanceco@gmail.com.

■ **The Northwestern Class of 1959** meets every third Saturday from 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the African Heritage Cultural Arts Center. Call 786-897-2646.

■ **Division of Blind Services Vocational Rehabilitation Program** provides services to the visually impaired. Call 305-377-5339.

■ **The North Dade/ Miami Carol City H.S., Class of 1967** invites you to join them aboard the Carnival Conquest Sept. 24-30, as they celebrate their 50th Class Reunion. Call 305-336-6293 or 305-333-7613.

The deadline for the Lifestyle Calendar is on or before 2 p.m. Fridays.

Toni Braxton honored with Soul Train Legend Award on BET Sunday

AWARDS continued from 1C

from the night.

BADU PROVES WHY SHE'S THE MOVIE TO HOST

In her third year hosting, Badu added on to what was an already great night. She flexed her comedy muscles, keeping the audience rolling all night with her clever banter. She took hilarious shots at disgraced former Weinstein Company co-founder Harvey Weinstein, news outlets, and showed the dance moves Donald Trump would perform if he found himself on a Soul Train line. But one moment in particular stood out from the rest. After a stellar opening performance by SWV, Erykah opened the show with an incredible, moving sign of solidarity.

Arriving on the stage in purple sweat suit, Badu told the crowd, "I know I usually do a big elaborate musical number, but right here I feel I need to this," before taking a knee. The gesture was a sign of support towards GO's citizen of the year, former NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick who has yet to receive a new contract this year from a team. "This is for Kap," Erykah announced as members of the audience raised their fists high in solidarity with the player who spanned the movement of taking a knee during the National Anthem. "Kap we appreciate you, for giving up your life, your dream, for your belief in us," Erykah said.

SWV WINS FIRST EVER AWARD SWV kicked off the 30th anniversary of the Soul Train Awards

with a riveting performance of their classic hits "Weak," "Right Here" and "Rain." Cheryl "Coko" Clemons, Tamara "Taj" Johnson-George, and Leanne "Lelee" Lyons took the audience and those watching at home back to the 90s, showing why they are in a category of their own. The set ended with a lively performance of "Anything" with surprise appearances by U-God and Method Man.

"The night didn't end there as the Sisters With Voices were honored with the Soul Train Lady of Soul award, the first award they ever received in their 25-year career. A video reel covering different moments in their 25-year career played on the big screen before the historical moment took place. "In the past we were nominated and we lost every single time. But

how many know that God's delay is never denial," said Clemons. "No one can understand the ups and downs, the victories and losses that we've had to endure over the last 25 years. But I can honestly say that every last minute was worth it," Johnson-George added.

TONI BRAXTON RECEIVES THE SOUL TRAIN LEGEND AWARD

For over two decades, Toni Braxton was a force to be reckoned with. The legendary singer's voice is incomparable and her storied catalog has enchanted listeners for all these years. Sunday night was a special moment for her as Toni was honored with the Soul Train Legend Award. Ro James, Jessie J, and Luke James gave a touching tribute to the singer

performing her hit records "Seven Whole Days," "You Mean The World To Me" and "Un-Break My Heart."

The true moment of the night went to the woman herself as Toni took the stage to perform more of her classic hits. Draped in a Black shiny dress, Toni performed a medley of "He Wasn't Man Enough for Me," "You're Making Me High," and "Love Shoulda Brought You Home". Toni's beauty radiated throughout the venue as the audience wowed at how amazing she looks at age 50. During her acceptance speech, Toni had some advice for the new singers coming up, "That's the fuel, when you're feeling low. All the new artists, when you're feeling low and you need that little bit of energy to get you through, the negative and po-

sitive energy is all a part of the journey."

TAMAR BRAXTON, TANK, KIRK FRANKLIN AND MORE STEAL THE SPOTLIGHT

The show featured so many excellent performances, each raising the bar to new heights as the audience couldn't get enough of it. Keyshia Cole delivered an exceptional performance of "Incapable" while 112 hit the stage and showed they still had the moves with a medley of some of their greatest hits. Tank, fresh off the release of his No. 1 album Savage, got very steamy with his performance Sunday night. While going into his next song "When We," Tank mentioned to the crowd "I say we get a little comfortable," before taking off his button-down shirt.

Miami native is a cake chef expert

CHARLES continued from 1C

Charles started working at a fine dining restaurant where she realized there was opulence in being a chef.

With the goal of being a French-trained culinary chef in mind, Charles enrolled in the Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts in Atlanta in 2004.

Five years later, Charles became the first Black woman to graduate from the Greenbrier Culinary Apprenticeship Program in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia.

The Greenbrier program has a rich culinary history dating back to 1957. The Greenbrier teams have won numerous awards and international culinary medals and an Obama served as the executive chef in the White House for President Bill Clinton, but the program had very few people of color, said Charles.

"While we were celebrating our graduation at a bar. This man sat next to me and said 'Hey, do you think they will let you graduate because you're a Black chef, and you're a woman,'" said Charles.

Almost 70 percent of chefs or culinary professionals in 2016 were male, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Only an estimated nine percent of Black female students at the most common culinary institutions received a degree in 2015, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

Charles' dream was to open up her own fine dining restaurant after graduating from Greenbrier. But then her dreams came to a halt.

Charles was diagnosed with a case of carpal tunnel syndrome in both hands — numbness or tingling caused by a pinched nerve. The condition was so severe she couldn't work in a kitchen.

"My hand would be stuck so tight around the handle of the knife that I had to peel it off finger by finger," said Charles.

She had no choice but to have two corrective surgeries. In the process of recovering from her first surgery, Charles' grandmother died, and she returned to Miami. After her second surgery, she decided to put down her chef hat and pick up a full-time job at FedEx. It was not where Charles



—Photo courtesy of The Cooking Channel

Chef Myriam "Chef Mimi" Charles is a self-taught pastry chef. She appeared on Cooking Channel's "Cake Hunters" episode "Basketball or Bach?"

said she expected to end up.

While at Greenbrier, Charles said she cooked for the likes of the Bushes, the Obamas and Condoleezza Rice but found herself back at home shipping and tracking packages for customers.

Not until after Charles' cousin asked her to bake a cake for a baby shower did she find herself back in the kitchen.

Outside of helping her mother bake as a child, the French-culinary trained chef said she no experience making cakes.

None-the-less, with the help of YouTube, Charles said she was not only able to perfect her cousin's cake, but she also went on to make cakes for other celebrations and started an online bake shop, Lux Cakery.

Charles said that she would bake cakes during the day and work at FedEx at night. She invested in her craft by taking cake designing classes and workshops learning ruffling and floral techniques, but she was afraid to fully commit and lose her financial stability.

The classes paid off for Charles, in 2013, she baked NBA player Amar'e Stoudemire's wedding cake which ended up being featured on Essence.com, Blackbride.com and in US Weekly magazine.

It skyrocketed her baking career. But Charles did not leave her full-time job until the end of 2015.

That same year, Charles was on the billboard for the Miami Gardens Wine & Food Experience where she worked with local celebrity and personal chef, Troy Tingling.

"What amazed me so much was

seeing a Black pastry chef," said Tingling, who was also a private chef for the Stoudemires when he met Charles. "There isn't a lot of Black talented chefs out there. There is a trend. You get noticed if you do the same as the other Black chefs who got noticed, but she chooses to stand out."

Charles stood out on "Cake Hunters," when a 12-year-old boy went on a hunt for the best bakery to make a cake for his bar mitzvah celebration.

Lux Cakery was able to earn a spot on the show through Charles' good reputation with several Miami vendors and event coordinators.

With all that it has accomplished, Lux Cakery only has a staff of two; Myriam Charles and her mom Ginette Charles, reversing the roles from her childhood days. Myriam Charles sometimes rents a commercial kitchen and meets clients at a small office in Hollywood but said, she hopes to open a commercial bakery soon.

Ginette Charles said she believes her daughter will keep breaking through barriers. "I always tell her those are the fingers of the Lord giving her direction. What I see her doing, I never thought I could see her doing," Ginette Charles said. "She works at the level of perfection. I believe she will get where she wants to go."

The Miami episode of "Cake Hunters" will air on Friday, Dec. 8 at 4 p.m. on the Cooking Channel.

NORTH MIAMI

Mayor Joseph talks past, present, future

North Miami mayor says the city has shown its strength through disaster

By Nyamekye Daniel
 ndaniel@miamitimesonline.com

North Miami Mayor Smith Joseph touted the city's strength in his annual State of City address on Wednesday, Nov. 15.

The mayor spoke in front of dozens of city employees and stakeholders at Florida International University's Roz and Cal Kovens Conference Center about the city's past, present and projected accomplishments.

Over the last decade, North Miami has not only recovered from the financial crisis of 2007-2008 but has cut unemployment in half and increased general revenue up to \$65 million, Joseph said. He bragged that North Miami was the first city in Miami-Dade County to create a strategy to address sea-level and climate change concerns even as state government has shown little interest in global warming initiatives.

But not without obstacles. The mayor separated the city's issues into two categories: shocks and stresses.

Shocks are uncontrollable events such as the recession, hurricanes and shootings, according to Joseph. While, the stresses are poverty, crime, unemployment and climate change.

"We have been working very

hard to overcome the shocks and stresses," said Joseph. "In the last year, we have been building a more connected community."

The community was in disarray last year after one of the city's biggest shocks: the police-involved shooting of a Black man.

The victim, Charles Kinsey, a behavioral therapist accompanied his adult autistic patient after he wandered away from a care facility when Kinsey was shot by a North Miami police officer.

Since then, funds have been funneled into restoring community relations with the police department, according to the mayor.

After the shooting, North Miami officials created a community council to address concerns about the incident and officers received training on the appropriate response techniques for autistic individuals and are now required to wear body cameras.

"We are very proud of how we handled it. We have had other organizations, other people that came to us and gave us a pat on the back," said Joseph. "Of all the shootings that happened in the entire country, they think the way we handle ours is probably one of the best ways that a police department could handle such a big disaster."

Please turn to **JOSEPH 8D**

North Miami Mayor, Dr. Smith Joseph gave his annual State of the City address at the Florida International University's Roz and Cal Kovens Conference Center on Nov.15.



—Miami Times photos/Nyamekye Daniel

Shortage of workers weighs on rebuilding

It could take years before many repairs in Texas, Florida are done

By Paul Davidson
 USA TODAY

Contractors told Mindy Gronauer that repairs on her four-bedroom Houston house — whose main floor was destroyed by flooding from Hurricane Harvey — should be completed in about four months.

"That's not going to happen," says the 64-year-old retiree. She figures it will take more like a year, noting that all 159 homes in her neighborhood sustained similar damage and worker crews are scarce.

Gronauer, while grateful to be staying with her daughter's family in the meantime, still finds the whole situation very unsettling.

"I used to have what I want and need," she says. "I miss everything." Most disconcerting, she says, is not knowing when she can return to her home. "It's the uncertainty ... I have to live with it."

A construction worker

shortage is slowing rebuilding efforts in Texas and Florida, which got underway a few weeks ago after many houses dried out and many claims for insurance and government assistance were filed. Builders and their trade groups say it likely will be several years before all the repairs are done.

"There was a significant labor shortage in the construction sector before the hurricanes," says Jerry Howard, CEO of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB). The storms, he adds, compounded the crunch. "This will leave people in a very tough position for a much longer time."

Although rebuilding began in Texas and Florida last month, the Labor Department recently said the construction industry added just 11,000 jobs in October, below its average monthly pace of 14,700 so far this year. The limited hiring partly reflects worker shortages, says

Please turn to **WORKERS 8D**



Not all homes damaged by hurricanes in Texas and Florida will be restored. The vast majority were not covered by flood insurance, and some people who can't afford the repairs will simply walk away.

Homeownership for Blacks is truly a 'dream deferred'

By Charlene Crowell
 Center for Responsible Lending

The late Langston Hughes created a masterful body of poetry in the 20th Century that spoke about and to Black America's unique experiences. Also an author and playwright, his words in all media pricked our consciousness to wonder and ponder how we somehow remained so different from others after living more than 200 years in this land.

One of my favorite Hughes poems asks the question, "What happens to a dream deferred?" Today, that one question is as timeless as it is timely.

Why is it that in 2017 Black homeownership is still deferred for so many?

Every year, the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA) report provides an update on mortgage lending over the past year. It is the only national report that examines lending by race and in-

comes. In 2016, an analysis of mortgage lending by the Center for Responsible Lending (CRL) underscores how once again dreams of homeownership are still being deferred nationwide:

- Blacks had the highest denial rate in mortgage applications of any ethnic group, and was double the denial rate experienced by Whites;



CROWELL

- Black consumers received just 3.1 percent or 65,451 of the 2,123,000 conventional mortgage purchase loans made in 2016;
- When Black and Latino conventional mortgage purchase loans were combined, the percentage increased to only 9 percent for the year; and
- FHA purchase mortgages performed a bit better

for Black consumers at 10.6 percent — 142,329 out of 866,000.

"It is troubling to see the continued trend of mortgage lenders abdicating their responsibility to serve the full universe of credit-worthy borrowers," said Nikitra Bailey, a CRL Executive Vice President.

Bailey continued: "During the financial crisis, taxpayers of all colors together paid for the bailout of banks. Now and years later to see that

African-Americans and Latinos remain overly dependent upon FHA to access mortgages is a sign of unfair treatment. Whites continue to unfairly receive more favorable access to affordable loans, despite our nation's fair lending laws."

For decades, Black consumers were given a litany of excuses as to why they did not qualify for the most affordable mortgages: not enough income, not enough

Please turn to **CROWELL 8D**

COMMENTARY

Five steps to cutting your cable TV bill

By Brett Molina
USA TODAY

USA TODAY is launching a weekly series on how to lower your monthly bills and cut your costs so you can put your money to work for you. Each week, we will look at one of your monthly bills and offer tips on how to cut that bill down to size and save you money. In this week's installment of Taming your budget-busting bills we look at how to cut your cable bill.

There's perhaps no bill capable of generating peak frustration more than the one for cable TV. Cable television companies report average spending per subscriber of about \$85 a month, while the average among satellite TV providers tops \$100 a month, according to Leichtman Research Group. But there's hope. If you think your cable TV bill is too high, there are several ways to counter.

"Most people think, like a utility bill, if it comes in the mail at \$200, that's your bill, end of story," said Phillip Swann, publisher of the television industry site TVPredictions.com. "It is not the end of the story."

Here are five things you can do to lower that cable bill:

1. Assess what you watch: Get rid of extras, downsize your plan

Review your current cable plan and what channels you get. Cutting premium channels and sports packages is an easy way to cut your bill and rack up savings.

There's a good chance you can drop down to a smaller, less expensive cable package and still get most of the channels you need.

2. Examine those extra fees

Some of the fees and taxes are required but some could be cut back.

If you package your cable with

Internet, consider buying a compatible modem instead of paying the monthly rental fee. When buying make sure to confirm with your operator that it works for your provider and is certified for the speeds you want.

3. Skip the two-year contracts

Yes, the pricing can be very attractive. However, you're better off staying with a month-to-month commitment, says Swann. "When you do, you are bound to that company," he said. "You have no leverage during that two-year period."

Swann said consumers will usually pay as much or more compared to a plan without contracts. Also, if your service is poor enough you want out, most cable companies will require you pay an early termination fee.

4. Call your cable company and negotiate

Contact a customer service representative at your cable provider. Check out the latest deals that they are offering to new subscribers and compare them to what you're currently paying.

"Knocking down the price is as simple as taking the time to call and ask — politely," says personal finance writer Andrea Woroch.

If there's a competitor, threaten to cancel your service and switch. Cable providers will usually find a way to strike a deal if it means you stay put.

5. Consider a leap to streaming services

Sling TV, DirecTV Now, PlayStation Vue, Hulu, and YouTube all offer skinny bundles with a solid core channel lineup that could save you extra cash. The cheapest option available among the group is Sling TV's Orange plan for \$20 a month, and features channels including ESPN, CNN, Disney and Food Network.

North Miami mayor boasts city's resiliency

JOSEPH
continued from 7D

The mayor said the city's plans are to continue to nurture the relationship between residents and law enforcement through weekly community bike rides, a string of meet and greets with police officers, called Coffee with a Cop and mentorship through the Police Athletic League.

Every response to the police campaign has not been positive.

Resident Jim Garrett said in an earlier interview he thought the police officers were "showboats" focusing on public relation photo opportunities instead of "progressive policing."

Then on Nov. 2, an unidentified driver reportedly tried to run over officers during a bike ride.

Still, Joseph said North Miami is "a city on the move."

North Miami has resuscitated its economic landscape by investing in its city's infrastructure, cultural and social resources and fostering sustainable homeownership.

"When we say that we are 'a city on the move,' we are not saying it just to say it," said the mayor. "We talk the talk, but we walk the walk as well."

Joseph became the city's mayor, a ceremonial position, in 2014 and with the help of what he referred to as "professional, ethical and experienced leadership," the council has accomplished some strides toward the growth of the city including:



—Miami Times photos/Nyamekye Daniel
North Miami Mayor, Dr. Smith Joseph and his wife, Patricia Saintvil-Joseph

- The revival of the Community Redevelopment Agency which issued \$800,000 in grants in 2015 for new businesses and projects to refurbish the city's facade.

- Cultivating arts and culture in the city by investing in a film and entertainment hub.

- Launching the North Miami Brewfest, a brewing and culinary festival that bought about 800 festivalgoers and 30 breweries to the city last year. Two of the breweries now plan to open shop in North Miami.

- Approving plans to build the Chinatown Cultural Arts and Innovation District which promises to bring more business and social growth.

- Securing short-term and long-term jobs through construction for a \$4 billion residential and commercial mega development, SoLe Mia.

Although the status of the financial market offers a leg up for growth in comparison to 10 years ago, North Miami officials are doing what they can to keep moving in the right direction, said Sam Blatt, the city's economic development manager.

In addition to the CRA and film initiatives, Blatt said the council has approved a Community Development Block Grant Program for 2016 to 2017 that makes available a scholarship for residents in need of job, vocational or skills training.

"I think we are definitely on our way," said Blatt. "When you are talking about fostering the process of growth in a city, it takes years and not just months."

Part of the mayor's vision for the future is taking advantage of the county's newly approved general obligation bond and supporting transit-oriented development to move North Miami to the next level of progress.

North Miami resident Mary Estimé-Irvin said she is proud of the progress in the city and that she believes the development will be profitable to the city's income.

Estimé-Irvin, who sits on a selection of city boards, said she wants to make sure each investment will be in the best interest of residents.

"I must admit that I would like to understand the bond initiative in more detail and the total impact on residents overall," she said. "I understand why we need the bond initiative. But I just want to make sure it's done in a responsible way — that it doesn't affect the residents and the tax payers."

The city's biggest challenge in the future, Joseph said, will be the continued stress of climate change.

But Joseph said he believes North Miami has proven its endurance and the council will leave a legacy of strength.

"As a city, we will not bend. We will not falter. We will not fail. We will not fall," he said. "But we will stay relevant. We will stay strong."

Why can't Blacks gain access to mortgages?

CROWELL
continued from 7D

of an employment record, too many bills, and more.

But it was just last year that Nielsen released a report that found "a decade of economic and educational prosperity" from 2004 to 2014. During these years, Nielsen found that Blacks had a collective \$162 billion in buying power. By 2020, that purchasing power was projected to rise to \$1.4 trillion, thanks in part, to the number of Blacks earning \$100,000 or more. Over the decade reviewed, Black earnings in this income range grew 95 percent, compared to the rest of the nation. Even solid middle class incomes of \$50,000 to \$75,000 grew at a rate of 18 percent.

So, if Black America is better educated and earnings are growing—what is the problem with gaining access to mortgage loans?

And if America is a land of laws, why is financial justice so elusive for Black America?

"As we move beyond the sub-prime crisis, we continue to see the housing and credit market systematically either deny or send less attractive products to the Black and Latino community," noted John A. Powell, an internationally acclaimed Professor of Law and Professor of African American Studies and Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Berkeley.

"This problem which is both historical, structural and interpersonal will not be addressed unless we face and make affirmative interventions," continued Powell. "As useful as the data is, it is not enough. The nature of structures is to reproduce the current condition. We can and must do better than that."

"The fact that borrowers of color face higher interest

rates and are less likely to be granted conventional loans is directly responsible for the wealth gap that continues to plague our nation, as well as the wide gap between the percentage of African Americans who own their homes (42 percent) and the percentage of whites who do (73 percent), said Dr. Julianne Malveaux, a noted economist, author and President Emerita of Bennett College for Women.

"It is imperative that bankers cease these unfair and discriminatory lending practices, and that activists target this lending discrimination."

For Lisa Rice, the executive vice president of the National Fair Housing Alliance, the 2016 data do not reflect a changing America. "These stark racial and ethnic divisions in mortgage lending, said Rice, "come at a time when our nation's demographics are in transformation. By 2025 will

be even more diverse with households of color representing nearly half of all first-time homebuyers."

"The private market has a duty to serve everyone fairly," she continued. "The average family deserves the opportunity to pursue their own American Dream."

But as Hughes eloquently wrote so many years ago in another poem entitled, "I, Too, Sing America:

"I, too, sing America. I am the darker brother. They send me to eat in the kitchen

When company comes, But I laugh,

And eat well,

And grow strong.

Tomorrow,

I'll be at the table

When company comes.

No body'll dare

Say to me,

'Eat in the kitchen,'

Then."

In 2017, is it time for Black America to eat at the table, yet?

**CITY OF MIAMI
ADVERTISEMENT FOR QUALIFICATIONS**

Sealed proposals will be received by the City of Miami City Clerk's office located at City Hall, 3500 Pan American Drive, Miami, FL 33133 for the following:

RFQ NO. 762383 TO ADD MEMBERS TO GENERAL APPRAISAL SERVICES POOL

CLOSING DATE/TIME: 2:00 PM, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2018

(Deadline to Request additional information/clarification: Wednesday, December 6, 2017 at 9:00 AM)

Detailed specifications for this RFQ is available at the City of Miami, Department of Procurement, website www.miamigov.com/procurement or email Sr. Procurement Contact Officer Richard McLaren at rmclaren@miamigov.com

THIS SOLICITATION IS SUBJECT TO THE "CONE OF SILENCE" IN ACCORDANCE WITH CITY OF MIAMI CODE SECTION 18-74 ORDINANCE NO.12271.

AD NO. 26758

Daniel J. Alfonso
City Manager




Advertisement of Overall ACDBE Three-Year Goal For Car Rental and Non-Car Rental Concession Contracts of MIA Department of Transportation 49 CFR Part 23

ESTABLISHMENT OF OVERALL ACDBE THREE-YEAR GOAL FOR MAD'S AIRPORT CONCESSION PROGRAM FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018 THROUGH 2020

The Miami-Bade Aviation Department (MBAD) is preparing to establish an overall goal for participation by Airport Concession Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (ACDBE) in MAD airport concession contracts for Fiscal Year 2018 through 2020 (October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2020). MAD invites comments from local, national and foreign businesses, general contractors, groups, community organizations, and other officials or organizations which may have information concerning the availability of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged businesses, the effects of discrimination on opportunities for ACDBEs, and what might constitute a "level playing field" for participation of ACDBEs in MBAD airport concession contracts. A "level playing field" is defined as the amount of participation ACDBE firms available from MBAD airport concession contracts if there were no discrimination against them.

MBAD is preparing an overall ACDBE three-year goal of 1.8% for car rental concession and 25.0% for non-car rental concession for participation by Airport Concession Disadvantaged Business Enterprises in MBAD airport concession contracts for fiscal year 2018 through 2020, based on information currently available. The estimate for the goal and supporting information will be available for public inspection for 30 days from the publication of this notice of MAD's Minority Affairs Office located at 4300 R.W. 70th Street, Building 5-A, 3rd Floor, Miami, Florida 33122. Monday through Friday from 9:00 A.M. until 5:00 P.M.

MBAD and the U.S. Department of Transportation will accept comments on the overall ACDBE three-year goal for 35 days from the date of this advertisement. The ACDBE Program will be reviewed at MBAD's Minority Affairs Office at the address above and a copy of the overall ACDBE three-year goal may be obtained by calling (305) 876-7322.

*For help, visit www.fly.com

A bump in the road for hurricane recovery

WORKERS
continued from 7D

NAHB Chief Economist Robert Dietz.

Hurricane Harvey hit Texas in late August and Irma lashed Florida in early September. About 135,000 homes out of about 2.4 million in the Houston area were damaged or destroyed, according to the Greater Houston Builders Association and the Texas Association of Builders. In regions that were affected across the state of Texas, as many as 1 million houses out of 2.8 million suffered at least some damage.

Not all of them will be restored. The vast majority were not covered by flood insurance, and some people who can't afford the repairs will simply walk away, says Don Klein, incoming president of the Houston Builders group.

In Florida, insurance or government assistance claims have been filed for some 800,000 structures, 75 percent of which are residential, says Greg Matovina, incoming president of the Florida Home Builders Association.

While much of the damage in Texas was flood-related, wind was a chief culprit in many parts of Florida.

The repairs come on top of a pickup in housing construction in two of the nation's largest states and hottest home-building markets. Permits for new single-family homes are up 7 percent so far this year in Texas, in line with the national average, and 12 percent in Florida, NAHB says.

Workers are far less prevalent. During and after the housing crash, the number of U.S. residential construction jobs plunged by 1.5 million, and only about half have come back, NAHB says. Many workers left the industry for oil, trucking and manufacturing jobs, says Ken Simonson, chief economist of Associated General Contractors, a trade group. During the downturn, the construction labor force plunged by 25 percent to 8.9 million people. Despite the partial rebound, the labor force in 2016 was still 1.6 million workers short of the 2007 peak of 11.9 million, Labor figures show.

Part of the problem is that

thousands of Baby Boomer construction workers are retiring each year. And few young people are taking their spots, which can pay upwards of \$20 an hour, opting instead for a college education and less physically demanding jobs.

At the same time, the Trump Administration's crackdown on illegal immigrants is reducing the number of foreign workers available. Nearly 30 percent of construction trade workers were foreign-born in 2015, according to NAHB, but the share was higher in states like Texas and Florida.

"A large percentage of (foreign workers) have decided not to come or have gone back to their countries because they are afraid," says Matovina, of the Florida builders group.

In an NAHB/Wells Fargo survey in July, about 65 percent of home builders reported labor shortages, up from about 60 percent a year earlier. The additional squeeze following the hurricanes has pushed up construction wages by an average of

more than 30 percent in Texas and about 25 percent in Florida, the states' builders groups say.

Contractors in both states must wait for subcontractors in sheet rock, insulation, cabinets and other specialties to arrive from their job sites. Once they do, projects often take longer than normal because crews are thin. Many workers are job-hopping for higher pay.

Dan Bowden, head of Legal Eagle Contractors in Houston, says average repair jobs he would typically complete in six to eight months could take more than a year because of the volume of jobs and the worker deficit. "It's going to go nuts," he says.

Joel Dantzer, head of the Dantzer Group, a remodeling company in Jacksonville, Fla., has a backlog of 50 projects instead of his normal 10 or so. He says it will take about two months just to start a job, up from a typical two to three weeks. Building officials in both Texas and Florida say working through their entire backlogs could take two to five years.

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Costly storms will push rates up for homeowners

Home insurance experts expect modest increases

By Zlati Meyer
USA TODAY

You may not live in one of the areas hit by hurricanes Harvey and Irma, but that doesn't mean your insurance rates will go unscathed.

Motorists and homeowners throughout Texas and Florida as well as those who live anywhere from Alabama to Wyoming could see their premiums rise, as insurance companies pay out billions of dollars to customers whose properties were destroyed or damaged. For example, hurricane winds could damage your roof or flip over your car.

The estimated U.S. insured losses, excluding any National Flood Insurance Program claims, are \$20 billion to \$25 billion

for an extreme future weather that could harm their customers.

"There's an increased perception of risk. There's less capital supporting the insurance industry, and there's equal demand," says David Havens, managing director of investment bank Imperial Capital. "The way insurers respond to that is to raise prices, because they need to replenish."

People living in the areas slammed by the hurricanes are most at risk for auto and homeowners rate increases. But because insurance is handled by each state individually, people elsewhere in Texas and Florida can also see a bump, too. Drivers in states adjacent to those Harvey and Irma hammered also may face rate



long, low-interest environment which has limited the returns on their investments, CFRA insurance equity analyst Cathy Seifert explained.

Because of Harvey and Irma, she anticipates reinsurance rates rising, prompting insurance companies to pass along those costs to ordinary Americans.

The American Insurance Association, the trade group for the property-casualty insurance industry, said it's too early to know if rates will rise. Actuaries will rely on meteorological models and probability predictions to calculate how much it'll be to cover losses.

"It's not a recoupment mechanism; it's not about setting premiums to offset last year's policies," says Mike O'Malley, senior vice president of public policy for the association.



from Harvey and \$40 billion to \$60 billion from Irma, according to JLT Re, a global reinsurance brokerage and consulting firm.

Experts say insurers are looking to stay flush as they cover their reinsurance policies — which keep them insured and able to mitigate risk — while trying to prepare

hikes, because some insurers calculate car insurance rates regionally.

Insurers can't jack up premiums in random states to make up for large payouts to Harvey and Irma victims. But a ripple effect can happen.

"They can't go to Nevada and say, 'We need to raise rates here be-

cause of money in Texas.' They could say, 'We've lost so much in Texas that we don't want to write as much business in Nevada,'" Havens says.

There's \$1.3 trillion in capital ready to support these losses, according to Havens.

It's too early to know how much Harvey and Irma could raise rates.

But an analysis of average insurance premiums in states hit by some of the costliest hurricanes in U.S. history shows what could happen. For example:

New Jersey homeowner: \$926 in 2011, the year before Hurricane Sandy, \$1,068 in 2013, the year after.

New York motorist:

\$1,108.64 in 2011. \$1,181.86 in 2013.

Mississippi homeowner: \$860.66 in 2004, the year before Hurricane Katrina. \$969 in 2006, the year after.

Louisiana motorist: \$1,228.10 in 2004. \$1,254.66 in 2006.

When Kyle Parry returned to his home in Lumberton, Texas, after Hurricane Harvey hit, it was a complete loss. Everything was under water, except one very special thing. Wochit

The higher dollar amounts can't be blamed solely on extreme weather; insurance premiums can go up for a variety of reasons, experts say. Replacement costs of destroyed homes may be larger because of elevated construction and labor costs, for instance, and distracted-driving across the United States contributes to auto insurance premium hikes.

Insurance companies' concerns over their own cash flows also stem from the

Invitation to Bid
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W. G. Yates & Sons Construction Company and Jackson Health Systems cordially invite subcontractors to complete and submit their bids by Tuesday November 21, 2017 no later than 2pm for the following project:

**Jackson Health System
JHS West Medical Campus**

The Invitation to Bid includes the following packages:

- Site Conditions of the Contract and Specifications – Issued for Construction – May 5, 2017
- Civil Drawings – July 29, 2017
- Small Business Enterprise (SBE) & Responsible Wages – Attached Form A-6, A-14 & A-16

Bid requirements and bid forms, specifications, drawings and other construction documents will be available through www.ISQFT.com. Respond to Jessica Miller at jmiller@wguyates.com to get access to bid documents. All bids must be delivered in a sealed envelope to Jackson Memorial Hospital Facilities, Design and Construction Department trailer located at the corner of NW12th Ave. and NW 19th St. Complete address is listed below:

Jackson Memorial Hospital – FD&C Command Center Trailer 1
Attn: Mike Posey
1811 NW 12th Ave.
Miami FL 33136

There is a pre-bid walk-through scheduled for November 9, 2017 at 9am at the project site at 7800 NW 29th St. Doral FL 33122.

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All questions can be directed to Mike Posey at mposey@wguyates.com.

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