



The Sojourner's Truth

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Four Habits of Dysfunctional Leadership

By Rev. Donald L. Perryman, D.Min.
The Truth Contributor



It is better to be prepared for an opportunity and not have one than to have an opportunity and not be prepared. - Whitney Young

The body language betrayed the insincerity of the verbal commitment to find the common ground to work together with other pastors and community based organizations to find joint solutions to the community's problems. The inconsistent response also revealed what may be the greatest challenge to the African-American community other than poverty itself - the dysfunction of those who would lead it.

Want to know about the failures of the black church? Wondering what's wrong with today's young people? Trying to understand why black folks won't support black businesses or trust black contractors?

No problem. A line of eager critics will form long enough to keep you awake all day and into the middle of the night.

My observation is that our grassroots leaders, including clergy, clearly find it more desirable to criticize than to cooperate. Why is it that we so easily evaluate one another negatively, but find it impossible to see each other as equals, work together as a team or build partnerships based on trust and healthy respect for each others' skills and talents.

Habit #1: Leadership centered around criticism and complaining rather than collaboration and cooperation.

Also, despite the numerous painful and pitiful supplications for material resources and emotional support coming from the "least, lost and left behind," it seems that much community and church work is done for the purpose of achievement, recognition or salary rather than service. We often focus on who gets the credit rather than on those who are being helped and that will always insert confusion into the equation even where unity previously existed. Thus:

Habit #2: Leadership which emerges from wrong motives or selfishness rather than sacrifice.

Wallace Stegner (2002), an historian writing about western U.S. history, declared that there were two kinds of people who moved West: the "boomers" and "stickers." The boomers moved West to get paid - extracting whatever they could - gold, silver, oil, water - and then moved on not caring how they obtained it or about the wreckage they left behind.

The stickers were those who moved in to stay, building towns, culture, schools, churches and a society. They were there for the long haul. The stickers are like the healthy leadership of those community leaders who build for longevity and do not trip over who's in charge or miss the significance of what's really happening on a larger scale.

Habit #3: Leadership which is all about the money without caring how it is obtained or what wreckage is left behind.

These observations are relevant as summer rapidly approaches, bringing with it challenges to the community, no longer your grandparents' inner city.

Then, with school out, we were told to go outside, play and stay out of trouble. We rode our bikes, and skated rather than sit around playing video games. And we spent the entire summer running and racing friends to the corner store, playing hide-n-seek, red light/green light, freeze tag or baseball while regularly chasing down the ice cream man for a dreamsicle, bomb pop or ice cream sandwich.

But that's not the case today. Then, corners were for singing doo-wop and not for selling drugs or doing drive-bys. The contemporary streets are much more mean and much too dangerous but many of our community centers have closed.

What also has changed is that public investment by federal, state, and local government totaling tens of millions of dollars are reportedly targeted locally for infrastructure rebuilding, innovation, green investments and education. Hopefully, the public investment will provide a spark to the economy and to the job market, but one final observation is:

Habit #4: Leadership excessively loyal to its mission so that it can't see or hear what others are trying to tell them.

Sometimes we are so stuck on the ways we have always done things so that we are unable to take cues from other organizations that are currently successful. This attitude suggests an arrogance which, in the words of Finkelstein (2003), claims that "we know what our collaborators or funders want better than they do, and because we know what's best for them, eventually they'll see it too."

The reality is that these changes have provided an opportunity for the community to take responsibility for addressing its own issues.

Whether grassroots leadership can overcome its dysfunction and adapt to the requirements dictated by changes in both the funding arena and in the needs of the community remain the unanswered questions.

Contact Rev. Donald Perryman, D.Min, at
drdperryman@centerofhopebaptist.org

Community Calendar

April 24

"Preserving Our Neighborhood" Community Forum with Councilman Tyrone Riley: Bethlehem Baptist Church; 6 to 8 pm: 419-245-1361

April 25

Benefit for Friendly Center: Genoa Civic Theatre; 6 pm; Benefit performance and silent auction: 419-243-1289 or agibbon@friendly-center.org

April 26

Self Improvement Workshop Series: Padua Center @ Kwanzaa Park; 6 to 8 pm; Presenters Ben Hester and Washington Muhammad; Topic of expungement: 419-322-5107 or 419-283-1017 or 419-973-0248

April 27-29

Calvary Baptist Church Women's Ministry Spring Retreat: 419-787-9635

April 28

NAOMI 3rd Annual Health Awareness Program: "Lunch, Learn and Be Well;" Friendship Baptist Church; 11 am: 419-304-2733 or 419-343-1726

Chess Tournament: K-6th grade; Main Library - Huntington Meeting Room; 9 am to 3 pm: 419-259-5231

"Diamond in the Rough" Armorbearer Training: Ramada Hotel Secor; 10 am to noon: 419-322-4462

Phillips Temple CME Brains, Body & Business Girlfriend Luncheon: 1 pm; Vendors will be present; Pre-Women's Day Event: 419-242-7906

April 29

Beulah Baptist Church 6th Pastoral Anniversary: 11 am Guest preacher Elder Steve Allen; 4 pm Guest Church Calvary MBC and Rev. Floyd Smith, Jr

Family Baptist Church 33rd Anniversary: 10:30 a.m.; Guest Rev. Floyd Rose
Youth Day at Bethesda Christian Center Cathedral: 11 am; Speaker Prophet Clinton Chambers from Washington, D.C.: 419-944-0984

May 1-2

St. Paul's Episcopal Church Rummage Sale: Tuesday - p am to 7 pm; Wednesday - 9 am to 1 pm

May 2-4

Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance Revival: "Reclaiming our Community through Proclamation;" Warren AME; Workshops at 5 pm nightly; Worship services at 7 pm; May 2 - Music ministry by Derrick Roberts, Preacher - Pastor Sandra Riley of Chicago; May 3 - Homiletics by Fredrick Wright of Payne Theological, Preacher - Fredrick Wright; May 4 - Community Resources and Information, Preacher - Pastor Tellis Chapman of Detroit

May 5

Friendly Center Community Day: 10:30 am to 1:30 pm; Fun, free food, prizes; Photo booth, prizes: 419-243-1289

Southern MBC: Rainbow Tea Bazaar and Craft Show; 8 am to 3 pm
Village50 2nd Annual Kentucky Derby Gala: 4 to 11 pm; Our Brothers Place: 419-902-7731

May 6

New Prospect MBC Installation Services: Rev. Casey Diggins, Sr.; 6 pm

June 16

2nd Annual Fatherhood Walk: Central Catholic High School; 10 am to 2 pm; Free food, fun, inspirational music; Guest speaker James McDonald: 419-377-1488

The Sojourner's Truth

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Conversations You May Never Hear ...

By Lafe Tolliver, Esq
Guest Column



Do you have times in your life when you just look around your environment and wonder out loud about what should have taken place but did not or why something is amiss and you wonder why it is not being fixed?

Do you observe situations and people and wonder why a circumstance or a plight or a difficulty cannot be eliminated or neutralized, and why it cannot be accomplished by the very folks or community who are the most affected by it?

Do you ever discern what is really the motivating or driving force behind those who could make a difference but don't and why they don't?

Well, dear reader, you have reached the end of your senses and, at last, you have come to me, The Swami!

I will take those concerns and show you the conversations that should have or should be taking place and by whom and let you make the decision as to why that conversation or decision is not being made.

Now, you may not like how I characterize the conversation but look not at the words but rather at the problem that is being addressed and see if you do not agree.

Again, The Swami, knows all and tells all!

Note: I use the capitalized "The" to indicate that there is only one Swami so, do not be gullible and led astray by local carnival barkers or those who would dupe you by political gibberish done for their own benefit, amusement or financial gain.

So, here we go and in no particular order. Just remember as you read, that The Swami knows all and tells all.

CONVERSATION ONE: The central city (a/k/a: media term indicating where black folks congregate) of Toledo is somewhat akin to the carpet-bombing that devastated Dresden during WWII. Deserted houses. Burned-out houses. Vacant lots. Some people wandering around as if in a mental fog.

Now, add on: Kids birthing kids. Kids killing kids. Viable commercial enterprises all but nonexistent.

And yet, the biggest source of wealth and concentration of people on a weekly basis is found in the myriad of local black churches.

Too many of the local black churches and many of its reticent pastors are hiding out in stained-glass-encased buildings hoping that no one calls their names to come out and engage in meaningful contact ministry.

With the pastors having the ear of thousands of people weekly and the black church being able to amass considerable wealth via the weekly deposits known as tithes and offerings, you would think that the pastors would be more progressive in economic and political development. Wrong!

Sharing such wealth between and amongst the black churches for community development and stability is

apparently a radical and befuddling concept. Go figure!

CONVERSATION TWO: Some teens are walking the streets mad, angry, scared and bitter. No jobs. No hope. Family support system is fragile. Incarceration and jail time looms in their future like a F-5 tornado bearing down on a village sitting on the open Kansas plains.

Jack & Jill, NAACP, Urban League, Boule, Cotillion, Omegas, Alphas, (yes, I am an Alpha!) Deltas, AKA's, Zetas, Sigmas and Kappas give each other secret handshakes and talk mumbo-jumbo but in tomorrow's newspaper there will be another report of another "central city" shooting.

The social frats, sororities and others turn their collars up and go their way and plan their next, "by invitation only" toney bar-be-que.

Their expertise and money stays in house. What's going on?

CONVERSATION THREE: Budding black businesses are strapped for cash. They cannot sell their goods and services and much less employ minorities and thus increase the local tax base. Everyone "owns" us but us.

The Interdenominational Ministerial Association, National Association of Negro Business and Prof. Women's Club, The Perry Burroughs Democratic Club, Daughters of Isis and the apron-wearing Masons and Elks, et. al., yawn and pass out hundred dollar scholarships as if they were blue chip ten thousand dollar renewable grants. No boat rockers need apply!

Practically no real dollar collective investment and support systems for the com-

munity from whence they draw their sustenance and memberships. Duh!

CONVERSATION FOUR: Too many teenage girls walking around with their bellies ballooning out and about to give birth to another generation of kids who could have a tough time making it, with their personhood intact, to adulthood.

Too many teenage boys walk around with their pants hanging down below their butts as if they have a fresh load in them and they think it is stylish and hip and cool (Note: prisoners tell us that the wearing of pants in that fashion indicates you are either gay or you are looking for a gay experience).

Church "mothers" (with their collective wisdom and wit) by the hundreds are not being sent out from their churches in teams of two with

a mandate to intercede with these kids; and to walk the streets to tell this potentially-lost generation that there is hope instead of early pregnancy, despair and prison.

Well readers, there you have it. The Swami saw it and then told on it. What will it take for the above conversations to take place and make a difference.

What group or groups are willing to take on those issues and not back away because of the enormity of the situation?

The above conversations will only be solved by us and for us. Don't look for "The Man" to swoop in and save us from us.

We have met the enemy and dey' is us!

Contact Lafe Tolliver at tolliver@juno.com

Lucas County Children Services Recognizes May as Foster Care Month Agency Needs Families to Become Foster Caregivers

Special to The Truth

Lucas County Children Services (LCCS) joins child welfare agencies nationwide in recognizing May 2012 as National Foster Care Month, and is appealing for more adults and families to become foster caregivers in Lucas County.

LCCS currently has 257 care-giving families providing temporary care for Lucas County children who have suffered abuse or neglect. The total number of agency foster homes has declined by nearly 25 percent since 2009. "Many caregivers who may have

wanted to become foster parents have been affected by the recent economic downturn. They're either helping their own extended families or, due to the economy, are unable to meet the income requirements that the State of Ohio requires," explains Robin Reese, LCCS Placements Manager, who oversees the agency's foster care program.

LCCS foster families care for children whose parents need time to work out the problems that prevent their kids from being safe at home. Foster parents also support birth

families by providing guidance and support so families have a better chance of reunifying successfully.

Right now, LCCS needs more families to become foster caregivers. The need is particularly acute for families in the 43604, 43605, 43608, 43609 and 43611 zip codes. The agency needs caregivers for babies, children with special needs, as well as for families who are able to care for groups of three or more brothers and sisters. "We continue to be committed to keeping groups of brothers and sisters

together, whenever possible," says Dean Sparks, executive director of Lucas County Children Services.

Adults interested in learning more about becoming foster parents call 419-213-3336 for information, and are invited to attend free training sessions June 18 - 23 from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. at LCCS offices at 705 Adams Street, in downtown Toledo. Additional training sessions are scheduled later in the year; schedules are available at www.lucaskids.net.

With an estimated 12 million foster care alumni and

424,000 children and youth currently in out-of-home care, it is hard to ignore the impact of child abuse and neglect on our nation's next generation. Every year, approximately 30,000 young people leave the foster care system at age 18 without lifelong connections to support them. These young adults navigate a weakened economy offering fewer jobs and less support for vital services. They need, and deserve, caring adults who love and support them because their own families are in crisis and unable to care for them.

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Letters from the Heart

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Kim, 1996

For 30 years, families have been writing to Hospice of Northwest Ohio to express their thanks. Yet they often also say, "We wish we would have started hospice care sooner." The earlier you seek our expertise and support, the more we can do to help.

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Greater Toledo Urban League on Comeback Trail

By Kevin Milliken
Sojourner's Truth Reporter

The Greater Toledo Urban League (GTUL) has seen its share of victories and pitfalls over the last few years as it struggled to survive the economic downturn...

"We're no different from any other not-for-profit organization out there that tries to provide social-type programs for the community," said GTUL board Chairman Jim Murray...

Murray explained a "trickle-down effect" from federal government budget cuts in programs that were offered by the Urban League. Those cuts affect, in turn, state and local funding for service providers who offer education-related and job training programs.

Rev. John Jones, the outgoing Greater Toledo Urban League president/CEO, described it as an organization "in transition," explaining the old model for non-profits isn't working anymore.

"We're really trying to find where we are, the shift or flux in what we need to do," he said. "We're trying to make sure what we do, from a programmatic perspective, is what's relevant for the community and has ties to where we want to go where we want to go in the future."

"The basic question we have to ask the community is 'Does Toledo need an Urban League?' That's the question," Murray said. "I think the community is telling us an Urban League is viable to Toledo and to the greater Toledo area. The Urban League is worth trying to save. We should go forward and get healthy as an organization and find a new leader."

As part of its transformation plan, GTUL's board of directors has a three-pronged focus over the next few months: return to the organization's core mission of education and job training,



John Jones

pay off its debt and return to financial solvency, and recruit and hire a new president/CEO.

Long-time leader John Jones is leaving the organization to take a job with ProMedica, after working for some time without a salary to help the Urban League stay afloat. He will continue to help the board transition the organization and maintain a volunteer role.

"We hate to see that happen, but it's a sign of the times," said Murray of the departure. "Let's face it: the guy has to take care of his family. He has to do that where he has a steady income."

While Murray would like to conduct a national search for a new leader, he acknowledged the organization's fragile financial situation likely will be a roadblock.

"We may not be afforded that opportunity this time," he said. "We may have to stay state-wide or surrounding states. We can't fly someone in here from California for a couple interviews."

GTUL also is strapped for cash flow, at one time nearly \$300,000 in debt and no longer able to pay employees who ended up laid off or left on their own. Jones stated the organization has been able to negotiate that debt nearly in half with its creditors. Some vendors have put the non-profit on a payment plan, while others have forgiven what is owed.

"Gone are the days when you have governmental entities saying 'Here, go do this,' or getting an earmark," Jones said. "Those things are just difficult to come by these days. So you have to find another way to do what you do, generate revenue—yet use a different model that does not have high

administrative overhead."

Jones stated the mission of the Urban League has always been to help the under-served, in particular, minority populations. That won't change. But the range of services will be limited.

"We're also seeing a shift, based on the economy over the last three or four years. The picture of poverty looks different, the picture of disadvantage looks different," he said.

"We look at two areas where we hone our mission—education and employment," Jones added. "We will still refer, because people will walk through our doors with a lot of issues. We can't feed you, we can't house you. That's not what we've historically done best. Job training, basic skills, education—that's what we've done best and where we need to hone our skills."

Education and employment were the two initial focal points of the national organization when the Urban League first formed decades ago.

"We're going to go back to our roots," said Ricci Gardner, former Economic Development director with the City of Toledo and now a consultant hired to help write the organization's transition plan. "Amazingly, those things that were issues in the 1900's are still issues today and very prevalent in the Toledo area."

Murray, a retired regional president of First Energy, stated the organization "is putting the finishing touches on its recovery plan" and recently shared it with national Urban League leaders when they were in town. He called the three prongs of that plan a "parallel path" that must proceed simultaneously. Murray also stated the tough situation provides an opportunity to redefine the organization's future.

"We continue to have problems (in our community) getting children educated. I think the Urban League needs to take more of a stance there," Murray said. "Our position should be 'What's the right thing to do for the children?' and stay out of this whole political realm and do what's right for the children."

(Continued on Page 5)



Comeback Trail

(Continued from Page 4)

The Greater Toledo Urban League has hired Gardner to research alternatives, interview community leaders and interface with the board to develop the plan's details. Murray referred to him as the organization's "turnaround guy."

The Toledo Community Foundation is funding a grant to pay for the consultant's services, but Gardner, in turn, is donating a lot of his time to the effort.

"We're putting some of the critical pieces together, such as deciding what we're going to be as we move forward, how we're going to raise resources as we move forward, and ways to measure our value to the community," he said. "We're defining what that means right now and I think we're pretty close to at least having a general understanding of the direction we're going to go."

Gardner stated he is donating some of his services because he received help from an organization like the Urban League growing up in "some of the roughest sections of Nashville, Tennessee." The consultant believes GTUL can come back and help other young men like he was helped.

"I know what an opportunity can do given at the right time," he said. "I could have very easily been like a lot of the friends that I have—either in prison or dead. But through some of the programs that were in place as a young man—a youth jobs program and a free lunch program—I know how significant help can be. I think I should donate, because I'm asking others to donate."

"He's definitely not charging us hour-for-hour," noted Murray. "I think that's important for the public to know. He's doing a great job for us, out there identifying all of our needs."

"It's going to be very tough," admitted Gardner. "The toughness is going to be paying off some of the legacy debt that we have accrued,

things that have been carried forward year-to-year. Second is finding a place to open shop. We're looking for a more centralized location. Frankly, we're probably going to open up downtown, to be more centralized to the constituents, folks who need help in the Toledo area. It's not just going to be about African-Americans. It's going to be about people who need help of all shades."

Jones noted a lack of basic job skills in Toledo's younger workforce, even those with a college degree, that still need to be addressed. He stated time management skills need to be taught and a work ethic modeled for young people.

"People need to be able to write a resume or search for a job," Jones said. "Those types of things are just lacking. Many times we see the critical thinking or analytical skills that are needed for any job are lacking as well. You talk with any business leader in this community, that's what they're going to say. This is what we're going to provide—and to those who ordinarily don't have access to it."

"The Urban League is going through a rebirth," said Gardner. "We're stepping back to refocus our energies and stick with our core. We can't serve everybody. This is going to be a new organization."

Gardner joked the only things that will remain the same with GTUL is its federal tax-ID number and its non-profit status.

"Everything else we're going to turn upside down and shake to make sure we're doing the right thing," he said. "We plan to hire the best people that we can find to staff the positions even though we will be a small group of individuals: four to six people when we're done. It is going to be the best talent we can find."

Jones described the organization as "giving a hand-up, not a hand-out" to the clients he hopes will one day move from being "tax consumers to

tax producers."

"Our role is to show you should be and can be responsible for the space you sit in," he said.

But a leaner Urban League will exist to deliver those services—and either fund or refer clients to other groups to provide what it can't.

"It is going to be a very strong, very focused, collaborative Urban League," added Gardner.

"One of the things we plan to do is form partnerships with those agencies which are consistent with the mission of the Urban League. We are going to be an organization that helps those who help others," he said. "If there are no programs that we think are necessary to serve those under-served communities, we're going to contract those services to ensure they wind up where they're needed. We're going to be an organization that measures performance and holds folks accountable."

One of the first collaborative efforts the Urban League will engage is the recently announced Toledo Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (TCIRV). Toledo Police Chief Derrick Diggs and a number of partner agencies announced the "zero tolerance" effort against gun violence and gang-related activity last week.

"If an officer is zipping up a body bag, if a mother is crying in the street over her son that just got killed, if a church is grieving over the loss of a young person, a pastor is comforting a family—there is a line that is drawn through each of those that brings about a community thread that we must not see broken, that we must see strengthened," said Jones at the press conference introducing TCIRV. "The violence must stop. But it must not be a message that is hard-core. It must be a message laced in love."

While the effort may sound harsh on its face, Jones stated there will be plenty of compassion offered through com-

munity support services. Known gang members will be given an opportunity to leave that lifestyle and receive education and job training as an alternative to prison. The Urban League will be one of the agencies to offer such services.

"There are individuals and groups and organizations that are prepared to provide a pathway," said Jones. "We will not hand-hold, but provide a pathway for you to change the lifestyle that you are currently in."

Jones stated his belief that there are plenty of young men "who want jobs, who want to be positive, who want to engage and be productive citizens." But he bluntly reminded that anyone who chooses the gang lifestyle will be subject to "the necessary things to remove them from that situation" and put them in a place "where they can hopefully rehabilitate."

GTUL officials credit the national organization with providing assistance in what has been a painful transition process—both lending support and helping refocus their efforts. The non-profit's leaders quickly realized the local affiliate unsuccessfully was trying to be all things to all people—a bit of "mission creep."

"Mission creep is probably being kind," admitted Jones. "Sometimes you end up chasing the dollar. Here's some grant monies available—let's go get it and we can make it fit what we do. Throw it up on the wall and see if it sticks."

"It's sort of like going to your cupboards and seeing your cupboards are bare," Gardner added.

"You've taken what little resources you had and tried to take care of everybody in the neighborhood," he explained. "What you find yourself doing is you're not taking care of anybody well and you lose



Ricci Gardner

your mission by trying to address everything. It's not tough: we know we can't be there to solve everything and be there for everyone. That was a very easy lesson to learn and we're going to significantly change that going forward."

Instead, the Greater Toledo Urban League will place a greater emphasis on community-wide support. But Jones stated the key to success will be sustainable financial support going forward.

"Getting someone to support us today, for a year, that's great, we'll take it," he said. "But we need to ensure there's an engendering of support across this community that's going to last decades. Because that's what this community needs. There is a vital need for an Urban League in this town."

Jones hopes the organization will reemerge from its hiatus by July 1, which is the start of a new fiscal year. Many community funders follow a similar time frame—including

state government.

"Without question, we're going to need that kind of (financial) support and get back in the game, because it will be about six months by the end of June since I have transitioned out," he said. "If we go much beyond that, I think we'll be in a real tight spot."

"I think we're going to be asking a lot of our board going forward," said Murray. "Our board will have a different look, I think, when we come out of this. We'll have some new members. A few of the members are going to just retire off the board. Bless them for their service—they were there for us. We'll welcome new board members who can offer some new skill levels for us."

"If we're successful, and I think we will be, we will create an organization that will help support other organizations trying to help those in need and we will be an organization Toledo will be proud of," Gardner said.

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Vallie Bowman-English: Upping the Stakes for an Epic Battle at the Ballot Box

July 23, 2003



Although Vallie Bowman-English has held only one job since she was admitted to the bar in 1996, her plans for her next job could impact your life. In what could easily become the most-watched campaign on November's ballot, endorsed Democrat Bowman-English is pitted against Republican veteran Theresa Gabriel in the race for Toledo Municipal Clerk of Court. The position was vacated when Maggie Thurber was elected

to the Lucas County Board of Commissioners and Gabriel was named to succeed her. Gabriel became the first African-American to hold the clerk of court job, and now another African-American female is challenging her. The campaign is reminiscent of last year's race for the Ohio

Lieutenant Governor's office in which two African-American women vied for that post. But this campaign has yet another dramatic element, the twin issues of age and experience. After endorsing her as their candidate, one wonders whether Paula Ross and the Lucas County Democratic hierarchy ever stopped to consider How Green Was My Vallie? With apologies to Richard Llewellyn, the simple fact that Bowman-English's official campaign biography is only five short paragraphs in length only serves to fuel that thought. But what Bowman-English may lack in a track record is more than made up for by her enthusiastic plans to reform the office of Municipal Clerk of Court if the voters elect her in November. "One of the things I want to do is change the attitude of the employees there," said Bowman-English of the clerk of court office. "They have good people [working] there, but they just need the proper leadership. And I am hoping they can learn by example," she said. Bowman-English promised that if elected, she would bring about a major overhaul of the department, which serves the judges in the municipal court system and the public. "I would like to bring the technology up to date," she explained, noting that the Toledo

Municipal Clerk of Court's office is one of the only such offices in the area still not providing real time recording.

"Another benefit would be that law enforcement agencies would be able to keep violent offenders from getting guns. As the system is now set up, someone can leave the court and go buy a gun before their conviction is actually posted," said Bowman-English. "I have a passion for the system, and if I am elected, the public can count upon me to do my job effectively," said Bowman-English. "As a prosecutor, I rely upon the records that are provided by that office, and they need to be up-to-date and accurate. There have been too many instances where criminals have been allowed to walk away because the records weren't right. "This isn't just the court for the municipality of Toledo, it is also the hub of the justice system for areas like Ottawa Hills. And for too long, it has been occupied by political hacks who bide their time there until they can run for another office or retire. But I really care about the criminal justice system. I want the office to better serve the public. I want to clean it up, and I will devote my time to doing that," she said.

Education Is the Key Issue for Karyn McConnell Hancock

November 2, 2005



Karyn McConnell Hancock is a 33-year old native of Toledo. A graduate of Notre Dame Academy, McConnell Hancock earned her bachelor's degree in psychology from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio and her law degree from Case Western University.

After graduation, she returned to Toledo and entered practice in her father's former law firm of McConnell and Taylor. Within a few years, she was the sole proprietor of the firm.

And following in her father's—Judge C. Allen McConnell—political footsteps as

well, McConnell Hancock was appointed to Toledo City Council in March 2003 and was elected on her own merits in November 2003.

When it comes to endorsing mayoral candidates, McConnell Hancock is solidly behind Mayor Jack Ford. "He has done a lot for the city and a lot for the minority community. He's brought progressive ideas and has done out of the box thinking that has helped us move further along than what was done in the previous administration. I'd hate to see that progress stunted because he's not back in office," McConnell Hancock says.

She is also in support of his push to ensure that minority contractors receive an opportunity to bid on the \$3 billion public works projects that are arriving in Toledo over the next few years. Although McConnell thinks that the minority contracting program at the University of Toledo has been a help, she also believes there is even more that can be done. "Making sure folks have access to that money is key. It's been a good old boys' network for far too long and I think that people need to understand that minority participation is imperative. It shows diversity. It shows that we are willing to level the playing field and that's something for any city that's progressively growing," she says.

....

Phil Copeland: Still Conquering the Odds

November 02, 2005



Phil Copeland, running for election to an at-large Toledo City Council seat, is what you would call a true Toledo native. Growing up in one of Toledo's housing projects, he feels that he conquered the odds he faced living in the inner city.

Copeland attended Robinson Junior High and Scott High Schools, where he developed the skills needed to become a laborer and a member of the Local 500 in 1966. He has been secretary/treasurer of Local 500 for the past 20 years.

After many years in the political background, working on others' campaigns—particularly those of his uncle, the late Bill Copeland, Phil Copeland found the spotlight directed at him when he was appointed to city council in January of this year.

Campaigning on the same slate as Mayor Jack Ford and the Adams Street Democrats, Copeland's platform consists of jobs, safety and seniors.

"Back when I was working in 1966, jobs were plentiful. In Toledo you had all types of manufacturing jobs. Toledo was booming," Copeland says.

He keeps his focus on jobs because Copeland feels that everything ties back into that issue. "A person like me who came out of the projects knows one thing about having a job and creating jobs for people would take care of a lot of the social ills," Copeland says. According to him, most social ills come from people who have low self esteem. "If you give them a job, that will bring their self esteem up.

"Having a job also gives young people something to look forward to. Without something to look forward to and with nothing to do day in and day out, inner-city youth feel they have no future, which correlates with crime rates.

"When I went to work after an eight-hour day, I was tired, but I had something coming. I knew I had a paycheck coming after that. When you've been working a whole week and I got that paycheck, I knew it was mine."

Copeland is dedicated to ensuring that everyone has a job in Toledo. "Let's get out there and create jobs. One person without a job is one person too many," he says.

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Mayor John Marshall Ford: His Business Was Knocking Down Barriers

December 21, 2005



In January 2002, on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, The Sojourner's Truth sat down with then newly-elected-Mayor Jack Ford in his office. That interview occurred just two weeks after Toledo's first African-American mayor took his oath of office.

Over these last four years we have had numerous other occasions to sit down with the mayor and we did so again last week. It may very well be the last time we have such an opportunity to do so with this mayor in that office on the 22nd Floor of Government

Center.

If our chat this time was a great deal more far ranging than it was four years ago, it was also far more poignant. Ford lost his recent re-election bid by a landslide – the first election he has ever lost – and the devastating rejection by Toledo voters had obviously taken its toll. But if the mayor is clearly disappointed by the results of the last election, he just as clearly expressed no regrets about his record as mayor or as a candidate.

Bloodied, maybe, but certainly unbowed.

"Our biggest challenge was to make the city a little more entrepreneurial in how it handles its budget ... how the money comes in, how the money goes out," said Ford in response to a question asking him to discuss the successes of his four-year term. He outlined a half dozen measures his administration had undertaken to improve the lives or financial well being of Toledoans.

"We invested in a tow lot which will bring in millions ... we cut some longstanding practices such as unquestioned sick leave abuse ... we tackled health care for the uninsured and there are now a little over 7,500 who are in CareNet or who have been placed into other existing programs ... we tried to change things with respect to the longstanding insider network that tended to preclude a level playing field for minorities in city contracts ... we listened to the citizens who indicated they wanted civility on the 22nd Floor and we attempted to do that and, finally, we made great strides in working with the disabled community – curb repair, housing, ordinance on visibility, the first wheelchair accessible playground in northwest Ohio," Ford ticked off before realizing that this list was not complete.

"We repaired more roads than any other mayor has and built more new homes as well," he added.

But considering his loss for re-election, we asked him if he felt he had paid a political price for any of the things he detailed as major accomplishments.

"There was the smoking ban," he said. "But we knew that going in."

Would you do it again, we asked? "I would definitely do it again. I believe there will be people alive in 25 years that otherwise wouldn't be."

Does Ford have any fears about which accomplishments might not survive after he leaves office?

"I think the CareNet initiative will stay in place. The road repairs ... we rebuilt some from the ground up to last a good 10 to 15 years. Dorr Street is a good example. I do think there will be a diminution on our diversity initiatives."

Any regrets about what you did or did not do during these four years in office?

"No. The only regret I have is not having another four years to expand on things. The steam plant will happen, Southwyck will happen under [Larry] Dillon."

We asked the mayor to reflect back on his four years in office and try to put into perspective the forces that motivated him to take on such issues that he described earlier – health care, minority participation, protections and accessibility for the disabled.

"What kind of society do we want to have?" he replied. His administration focused on "strong diversity issues," he said, because his long-term concern is "who will have a choice, especially in an era of unparalleled growth. We should take steps to ensure that someone who has the skills should also have the opportunity to go forward. We need to be in the business of knocking down barriers.

"Being in politics has been good for me because it has allowed me to go after obstacles that prevent people from being self determining and being what they want to be."

What's next for the man who has spent the last two decades as an elected official? Is another campaign in the offing?

"I don't think so," he told us. "If [the election] had been close, I might have thought of that. But it was so large a gap ... people didn't particularly like my initiatives. I'm not going to spend any time trying to plot a political comeback."

The timing, Ford said, is not auspicious for another try at political office now that he is approaching 60. Moreover, there are limits to his enthusiasm for serving in certain positions. He liked what he was able to do in the state legislature, "but because I was one of the leaders not just another backbencher." And he dismissed any idea of running for City Council after having been in the mayor's office.

He raised the idea that, after he has had time for a little rest and relaxation, he might like to offer his services to a few non-profit organizations – his first career. "I can probably help them straighten out their finances." Not all of them, he noted, know how to operate as a business.

So there is a lot of life to low forward to after a term in the chief executive's suite. There's more time now for family, friends, different types of public service and, of course, much more reading.

"There are a lot of books out there to read," he said offering the slightest hint of a smile.

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Michael Ashford Assumes the Presidency of City Council

August 29, 2007



Toledo City Councilman Michael Ashford assumed the presidency of Toledo City Council last Tuesday by a seven-to-four margin in a vote that, with one exception, fell along party lines. Only Democrat Mark Sobczak declined to heed a call for party unity from state and local party leaders. And while many Democrats played a part in finally placing one of their own at the head of a legislative body

that has been an embarrassment to the state Democratic Party for these last 18 months, a large measure of credit was due to recently-elected Lucas County Democratic Party Chairman Ron Rothenbuhler and his counterpart on the state level, Representative Chris Redfern of Catawba Island.

On Tuesday morning at 8 a.m., hours before the City Council vote, Rothenbuhler and Redfern called together the eight Democratic councilmen and urged them to renew their efforts to unify the local party. Just the fact that Rothenbuhler and Redfern were united in that mission surprised and impressed several at the gathering.

But just a few weeks before the vote that elevated him to the top council post, Ashford had predicted that no Democrat would become president in the foreseeable future. So Tuesday's outcome was as much of a surprise to him as it was to anyone who had observed city council over the past 18 months.

During the early morning meeting, Redfern and

Rothenbuhler urged the council members to avoid public acrimony amongst themselves and with other Party members. They spoke of the upcoming 2008 presidential election and the need for a unified front. And while the council presidency was not discussed during the meeting, Redfern did make mention of how grateful the governor was for Ashford's help early on in his campaign and that Strickland would support Ashford's re-election effort.

After that meeting, the Democrats tried once again to pull themselves together to unseat Ludeman.

Sobczak was approached but he declined to assist in the maneuvers against the council president. He told his fellow Democrats that he would continue to support Mayor Carty Finkbeiner's pro-business approach and that the only Democrat Mark Sobczak would support for the post was ... Mark Sobczak.

Without Sobczak, the key now would be Joe McNamara who had previously declined to participate in bringing about regime change. If McNamara were inclined to support anyone, other than himself, it would be Ellen Grachek who is not running for re-election.

McNamara spent part of the remaining day exploring his own chances of obtaining the top post. His inquiries did not bear fruit, he could not manufacture a majority. But in the end, as the 4:00 p.m. meeting time approached, few of the Democrats knew in advance what McNamara would do. The results of the vote were still a mystery to all involved.

In the event, the vote proved to be an anticlimax to the preceding 18 months of infighting, back biting and jockeying for individual honors.

A motion to bring the matter to a vote was introduced by Szollosi and seven Democrats voted for that measure and then for Ashford for president - Ashford, Wilma Brown, Phil Copeland, Mike Craig, Grachek, McNamara, Szollosi. Sobczak and Republicans Joe Birmingham, Ludeman and George Sarantou voted for Ludeman. Republican Betty Shultz was absent.

Ashford and Ludeman exchanged seats, name plates were switched and the business of City Council proceeded almost before anyone understood what had happened.

And yet, in spite of that triumph, Lucas County

Democratic Party unity was on display just briefly on Tuesday. Finkbeiner immediately issued a statement decrying the results and refraining from extending any sort of congratulatory message towards Ashford.

"I am saddened by the partisanship that Toledo City Council displayed today. Councilman Rob Ludeman served as Council President honorably and treated all councilmembers with respect. To replace him for no reason whatsoever, with but four months left in his term, underscores the pettiness, bitter partisanship, and on-going political gamesmanship of this council," said the mayor.

Ashford, for his part, ignored the mayor's sniping and promised to work with the chief executive. He has sought a meeting with Finkbeiner but his overtures have so far been rebuffed.

The new burden of leadership was summed up by Szollosi the next morning.

"We have a greater collective responsibility," said Szollosi.

It remains to be seen whether the Democratic leadership - the new council president, council members, party leaders and, above all, the mayor - will answer that call to work collectively.

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Jack Ford: "Why Wouldn't I Do This?"

October 31, 2007

The first question we put to Jack Ford, of course, is the same one he gets all over town as he pursues his quest to return to public life after what has already been a lifetime of public service. Why run for the school board?

Why, after all, would the former city councilman, the former president of city council, the former state representative, the former minority leader of the state House of Representatives and the former mayor of a city of the size of Toledo want to take on the seemingly thankless job of being on the Toledo Board of Education?

"I was thinking 'why wouldn't I do this?'" replies Ford as he sat down with The Truth last week. "Why not give back and continue to give back?"

"I've been in a variety of public roles for 38 years," he continues. "At the end of the mayor's job, I thought I had done my thing in public life, but why wouldn't I do this?"

As Ford explains his transition from public life to the private sector - he is now on the faculty of Bowling Green State University - he notes that it would be impossible not to follow events he had been a part of for so many years.

"I started seeing the impotence of the school board and realized 'no wonder we are in this mess,'" he says. "There are two or three things I can help with. First, I personally handled a \$350 million budget when I was mayor and no one here has that type of experience. Second, I know how to put together campaigns and levy campaigns. Third, I have the experience and know what the big picture looks like." That experience, he says, comes from having been involved at the state level with so many issues that the school district is still coping with these days.

"I was part and parcel of all of the certification fights, the school rebuilding program, the discussions on core competencies - no one else in the [candidates] field has that kind of knowledge," says Ford. "In addition, I'm not concerned with the unions and their support nor the party and its support.".....

As before, Ford calls for a campaign to instill a sense of pride in learning.

"Whoever gets on the school board, I hope they focus on getting kids to understand that it's okay, and the objective is, to do well. Again, we will need to have rewards in place."

When Ford was in the legislature, he says, he was one of those who wanted to have a moratorium on granting permits for new charter schools. "Now I have a different view," he says.....

And with that, Ford is off and running, having already conducted more campaigns than all of his six opponents combined. But this will undoubtedly not be the last such race. He has promised to not only serve out his full four years ... if he wins, but also to run again in 2011 for another four-year term.

Why wouldn't he do that?

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This Strikes Us ...

A Sojourner's Truth Editorial

January 21, 2009



By the way, our president is black. President Barack Obama is a black man. In fact, the 44th president of the United States is our first African-American president.

Now we know it's fashionable for some to insist that they don't really see a black man as our president, that what they see instead is a president who happens to be a black man.

That's just total nonsense. It's also a total denial of one of the most important dynamics of American life for the last several centuries.

Here we are in America, having just sworn in, as the rest of the world saw this week, a man of African descent to lead the most powerful nation in the history of this planet, and some of us are blasé enough about this most historic event to proclaim that we don't see him as a black man. Good luck with that.

Here we are in America, the country that virtually invented the modern concept of racism, and some of us are pretending that the election of a man with darker skin than that of most Americans is a totally unremarkable event.

Two years ago, Tony Dungy became the first African-American coach to win a Super Bowl and the country was all twitter over that and now some would have us believe that the first black president is ... excuse us, the first president who happens to be black is one of those occurrences of little note.

Stop it, people! This is a black man leading the country.

Now that President Obama is finally tucked away in the Oval Office – after what seems to have been the longest transition in recent history, now that the inaugural hangovers have subsided, now that reality has set in that we have a new president, a new administration and a new attitude towards so many of the issues that have plagued this country and this world for the last eight years, we can open up the paper, go online, turn on the TV and see what we are going to be seeing for the next four to eight years ... a black man in charge.

For the next four to eight years we are going to see an African-American First Lady undertake projects dear to her heart and we are going to see her do that just about every day as we examine what she wears, how she styles her hair and when she hugs and encourages those who have been visited by calamity or bad fortune.

For the next four to eight years we are going to watch two little African-American girls blossom into beautiful teenagers.

Everything is different now. Let's not pretend otherwise. The nation has changed, the world has changed because, in large measure, America has a black president. The very fact that our president is black sends a number of messages to a number of constituents.

The fact that a president of African heritage now leads America re-affirms the American dream around the world. For more than two centuries, citizens of the world have viewed America as a land of possibilities. Events such as this one reinforce the idea of those possibilities.

The fact that America now has a black president changes the perspective that so many white Americans have of African-Americans. Even for those dwelling in red America, even for those inhabitants of states such as Wyoming and Oklahoma which voted overwhelmingly for Obama's opponent, comes the realization that they can be led and are being led by a black man.

For some of those living in the Deep South, with that region's long tradition of open racial animosity, what happened this week may be the culmination of a nightmare realized. For many, however, acceptance of that stark reality will dawn during the next four years.

And for so many African-Americans – those who grew up in an era when the sight of a black person on television was a distinct anomaly and those who have come of age in an era in which black heroes tend to either dribble balls or spew rhymes – the frequent sightings of a black president carry a different message.

A black president carries hope for so many African-Americans. That message is not that the brother is going to reach down into your neighborhood and personally empower you. The message is that black folks don't have to feel helpless; African-Americans don't have to perpetually see themselves as victims because of the color of their skin; they don't have to wallow in failure and feel that it is their lot in life.

So why would anyone look at our black president and try to pretend that he is just another commander-in-chief ... who happens to be

black? In some distant future, when this country has elected its second, third or fourth black person to the presi-

dency, then we can afford to shrug our shoulders. Now is the time to relish the latest chapter in ever-evolving American dream.

Mike Bell Sworn in As Toledo's Mayor –

January 6, 2010

"Today is about unity and about all of us working together to move this city forward," said Mayor Mike Bell in his opening remarks after being sworn in as Toledo's mayor – the third person to hold the position of mayor since Toledo switched to a strong mayor form of government in 1994.

Bell, who took his oath of office at the Navy Bistro Courtyard at The Docks on Monday afternoon at 3:00 p.m. succeeded his former boss, Mayor Carty Finkbeiner, whose third term in office was marked by contentiousness along with a dwindling job and revenue base.

"There is no need to place blame, let's move on," said Bell as he emphasized his eagerness to work with a wide variety of Toledoans to cure the city's ills. "We've got to quit looking at our past."

Joining Bell on the podium were several familiar faces – father Norman Bell, a notary, who administered the oath of office; mother Ora Bell and brothers Keith and Norman, Jr. Also present were a number of nephews and nieces and Bell's long-time friend, Karen Jarosz – his "fiancee" as she was referred to by the mayor's mother – much to the apparent surprise of both Jarosz and Mike Bell during a moment of considerable delight and levity for the audience.

The Bells arrived in Toledo from Louisiana when the mayor was five years old. Bell graduated from Woodward High School and went on to The University of Toledo where he played football and was named student of the year in his senior year.

He joined the Toledo Fire Department in 1980 and, in 1990, became the first African-American fire chief in Toledo's history. He served in that position for over 16 years, a record tenure.

After retiring in 2007, Bell was appointed Ohio Fire Marshal by Gov. Ted Strickland. He resigned that position in the spring of 2009 to return to Toledo and make his first run for political office as an independent, defeating his former Woodward classmate and long-time friend Keith Wilkowski, the endorsed Democrat.

Bell enters office faced with a budget deficit that has recently climbed into the \$40 million range. During his campaign, he promised to appoint a citizens' review board to examine the budget and to work within the city revenues available to his administration. He has already appointed the review board.

Monday, however, was a day for celebration before the hard work of governance begins. The Courtyard overflowed with hundreds of friends, campaign supporters, family, elected officials, past mayors and soon-to-be co-workers as Bell repeatedly told those in attendance that he would seek collaboration.

"It cannot be about egos," said the mayor. "It's got to be about us. If we do it right, your children will have a place to call home and their children will have a place to call home."

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Councilwoman Wilma Brown Elected President of City Council ... Finally

January 6, 2010



The third time proved a charm for Toledo City Councilwoman Wilma Brown when she was elected president of City Council by her colleagues in a 12-0 vote on this past Monday, January 4.

The reversal of fortune for the veteran member of Council, who is in her third and final term, came about despite her unwillingness to actively campaign for the post.

"I didn't seek the job," she told The Truth later in the evening after the Council session that also saw the swearing-in of the six at-large council members who won election in November. Among that number were first-time candidate for elective office, Democrat Adam Martinez, and a returnee, Republican Rob Ludeman,

who served as the District 2 representative for 14 years before being term-limited out of office two years ago. Democrats Phil Copeland, Steve Steel, Joe McNamara and Republican George Sarantou also took their oaths of office.

"I was asked to take the position by both Republicans and Democrats who thought I could work across party lines," said Brown of the hands-off approach she took during the process. During the nominations, Democrat Mike Craig, an early candidate for president, withdrew from consideration and asked that those considering voting for him to support Brown.

Brown's victory stood in stark contrast to the results of previous attempts to elevate her to the top council job.

Always a reluctant candidate, she sought the presidency in 2006 but could not gather more than five votes. Ludeman ultimately edged her out during a contentious session that saw key Democratic councilmen defect to the GOP and Ludeman.

One year later, Brown again joined with supporters in order to re-organize council and gain the presidency. That attempt failed as well leaving Brown embittered and humiliated. "They tried to embarrass me and they tried to discredit me," she said at that time of several Democratic colleagues on council. At that time she made a decision never to enter the fray again.

This time the decision to elect Brown was a veritable love-fest as other council members – Republican, Democrat and independent – maneuvered behind the scenes to bring a sense of unity to council chambers.

"My biggest challenge is to get all of them to understand the need to put aside egos," said Brown of her immediate tasks during the upcoming term. "Then to finish the audit of the budget."

Brown noted that the closing the budget gap – estimated in the \$40 million

range – should first be attempted by eliminating waste in various department and then going after outstanding tax revenues owed the city.

Although the incoming council president supported the incoming mayor's opponent in the fall elections, Brown relishes the opportunity to work with Mayor Mike Bell. As the long-time chairman of the Council Public Safety Committee, Brown worked closely with the former fire chief for years. "We'll have a good working

relationship," she said. "I have that commitment from both the mayor and Steve Herwat [deputy mayor for internal affairs]"

Indeed the mayor expressed his own commitment to working with City Council by joining them after the vote and the swearing-in ceremonies. He promised to join Council often, in stark contrast to his predecessor, Carty Finkbeiner,

"It is a privilege to sit here with this council," said Bell. "I'm reaching out an olive

branch and I would like to work with you, I will seek your counsel."

Although Monday's love-fest continued, there was one issue that Brown felt she would have to take up with the new mayor.

"I'm happy to be sitting next to you," she told the avid motorcyclist. "But we have to talk about your helmet."

"Here we go," said the mayor in a stage whisper above the laughter.

Local Minority Women Lead Lucas County Democratic Charge

November 10, 2010



Anita Lopez

Even as Ohio and the rest of the country succumbed to a Republican onslaught on Election Day 2010, here in Lucas County, which is as always a Democratic stronghold, two local minority female candidates held off their GOP opponents in grand style.

State Representative Edna Brown, term-limited from seeking another two-year stint in the House of Representatives, moved to the upper chamber with a solid defeat of Republican Tom Waniewski, a member of the Toledo City Council. Brown earned her state senate seat on Election Day with a 59 to 41 percent thumping of her well-known rival.

In the Lucas County Auditor's race, incumbent Democrat Anita Lopez won a second term by defeating her Republican

opponent, Gina Marie Kaczala by a margin of 68 to 32 percent, turning an ugly, bitter contest into a rout.

Brown's victory completed what some observers might have thought would be a totally unexpected journey to another elected office. In the spring primary, the state representative upset her Democratic rival, Councilman Joe McNamara, for the honor of moving on to the general election. McNamara was much better funded, had won a city-wide council race just months before topping a field of a dozen candidates and had served as president of City Council.

Brown campaign experience in an area outside the central city was virtually non-existent and, adding to her obstacles, her access to state party funds was limited because she was running in such a Democratic stronghold.

Lopez was facing the widow of her predecessor whom she had beaten four years ago.

The auditor's campaign was marked with personal attacks on work habits and hiring practices. Kaczala accused her opponent of cronyism and incompetence while the Democrats unearthed work records showing that Kaczala's attention to attendance was slipshod at best....



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Paula Hicks-Hudson: A Heart for the City and Years of Public Service

November 2, 2011



Toledo Councilwoman Paula Hicks-Hudson, Democratic candidate for election, has represented District 4 since January 2011. She was appointed to former Councilman Michael Ashford's seat after he won election to the Ohio House of Representatives.

Hicks-Hudson, who earned her law degree from the University of Iowa, arrived in Toledo in 1982 to work for the Toledo Legal Aid Society. Among her public service stints are one as legislative director for Toledo City Council and more recently, four years as chief counsel in the State of Ohio Office of Budget and Management during former Gov. Ted Strickland's term in office.

Paula Hicks-Hudson

The Truth asked Hicks-Hudson for some input on her top three priorities in

office. She replied that her top concerns all fell under the same umbrella—improving the quality of life for residents of District 4 and, additionally for those who work in the area. And under that umbrella are the matters of safety, public services and creating a climate for economic and community development.

"Safety is more than just hiring police and firefighters," said Hicks-Hudson. "It's also when people feel they are safe in their environments."

Citing the turnaround in violent crime statistics in New York City years ago when Mayor Rudy Giuliani was in office, Hicks-Hudson cited a phrase that became popular at that time in describing the philosophy of the police department - "a broken window is the beginning of [a neighborhood's] decline."

"Can we get the police to

be the eyes and ears of the neighborhood," she said. "And move from the idea of occupation to cooperation."

The spirit of cooperation within a neighborhood extends, said Hicks-Hudson, to the concept of a properly managed block watch operation that can work with police forces to foster a feeling among residents of care, concern and safety.

Safety is, of course, but one part of the overall issue of public services, she noted.

After her four years in Columbus, Hicks-Hudson was driving along Nebraska Avenue one day and was stunned.

"I could not believe all the abandoned houses," she recalled. "'Oh my God,' I thought. 'What happened?'"

That appearance, especially in large parts of the central city, she said, speaks of a lack of responsiveness on the part of the city.

"In central city neighborhoods, the perception is that suburbs [and other parts of town] get better services," said the councilwoman.

"We need to come up with new ways to handle public services," she said, noting specifically that potholes, abandoned homes, cluttered and dirty streets and alleyways, un-mowed city-owned lawns are far too common in District 4.

"The role of the city government and council is to create a climate where business can flourish," she said of council's role in economic and community development. "Remove the barriers that make it difficult..."

Tyrone Riley Announces Candidacy for District One

June 22, 2011



Attorney Tyrone Riley tossed his hat in the ring for the soon-to-be-vacated District 1 Toledo City Council seat on Wednesday, June 15, with a news conference at One Government Center.

Surrounded by friends, family and supporter - including the out-going District 1 representative, City Council President Wilma Brown - Riley, a Democrat and an attorney for over 25 years, said that he

will use the same "drive and ambition" that has enabled him to overcome obstacles in life.

Riley is a life-long resident of the district he now seeks to represent. "I have lived in the district most of my entire life," said Riley during his announcement. "I worked in the Ohio House of Representatives as a legislative aide for years for former representative Casey Jones ... my responsibility was to handle constituent issues and concerns."

Riley said that he will focus on neighborhood development issues during his campaign and his term in office if elected.

"There are too many abandoned houses and it takes the city too long to demolish the houses," said Riley. "The longer they are vacant, they attract crime and I will encourage the city to re-invest in neighborhoods and strengthen Black Watch organizations that are the eyes and ears of neighborhoods."

Riley was one of two candidates who formally announced on June 15 their intent to run for the District 1 seat. Jason Schreiner, also a Democrat and a teacher at Whitmer High School, stepped into the fray as well. The two join previously-announced candidates, Brandon Tucker and Aji Green, both Democrats. At least one other candidate, Democrat Delbra Blackshear, is expected to announce her candidacy.

Brown is prevented from running again due to the city charter's limits on the number of terms elected officials can hold the same office.

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May 11, 2012: Eviction Ball, Meet the Show, Meet the Party, 8:00pm - 6:00pm, SeaGate Centre

May 10, 2012: Pre Party, 5:00pm - 8:00pm, 519 N. Reynolds Road, Toledo, OH

May 12, 2012: Sunday Evens Party

The One: The Life and Music of James Brown by RJ Smith

c.2012, Gotham Books

\$27.50 / \$29.00 Canada

464 pages

By Terri Schlichenmeyer
The Truth Contributor

No matter what you do, you couldn't seem to sit still.

First, your foot started bouncing and your head joined it. Wasn't long before your shoulders were wiggling like they weren't attached to your spine and then you were on your feet, shaking your back-end in time with the music.

The tunes you grew up with can do that to you. But you can blame it on the beat, as you'll see in the new book *The One: The Life and Music of James Brown* by RJ Smith.

James Brown was never supposed to live.

For most of his life, he bragged that when he entered the world in May, 1933, he was born dead but his Aunt Minnie blew into

his lungs and brought him back to life. That, and the abandonment of his mother, were two of his most-repeated stories—although the latter was only partially true.

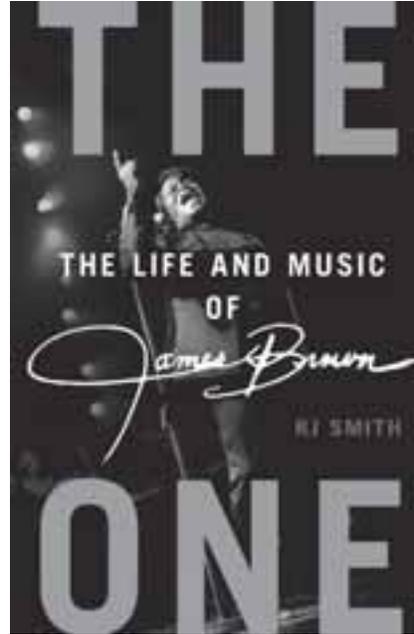
Though he was born in North Carolina, Brown's father moved the family to Augusta, Georgia, in the late 1930s, in search of a better life. They settled in The Terry, which was shorthand for "The Negro Territory," where black-owned businesses thrived. One of the businesses was a cathouse run by Brown's "Aunt Honey." She gave the boy a roof over his head, but she beat him regularly, too.

Violence was, in fact, a way of life for James Brown. His parents fought often and, growing up, Brown considered himself a thug. He was known for his fearlessness

and fast fists (he was briefly a boxer), and for his love of firearms. In later years, Rev. Al Sharpton recalled that Brown often carried a gun.

Despite his tough streak, though, Brown was known to be gracious and people loved him. He was a savvy womanizer who knew how to play an audience, whether it was one or 100,000. He knew that theater was what people wanted and he gave it to them - but there was more to James Brown than capes and curls.

He was very politically active, and counted presidents among his friends. He worked hard on matters of civil rights, and once "saved" a city from being ruined by riots. Generous even in his last days, he was helping charity organizations when he died in De-



ember, 2006.

How much more than music is there to a man? *The One* (so-titled for James Brown's beat-count) tells us, and it's a good story.

Author RJ Smith brings his readers a sweeping and grand biography of the Godfather of Soul, and he lets us see the good and the bad in that life. Though this book can be a little longish at times, I really liked the behind-the-scenes tales of the James Brown that younger fans might not know. Smith shows that there was a deeper Brown than what's seen on old video clips, and that made me smile.

If you're up for a bio that will make you hum along, then *The One* is the one you want. Read this book and you'll feel good!

Health, Wealth & Stealth Tour

Sojourner's Truth Staff

The Mark-EtPlace brought author, entrepreneur, lecturer and teacher Michael Noak (a/k/a Brother Polight) of the Health, Wealth and Stealth Tour to Toledo on Saturday, April 20, to The Truth Art Gallery. The tour featured a dynamic lecture from Brother Polight on "Black Economics" designed specifically for urban audiences.

Brother Polight is an entrepreneur who has authored 70 books, owns two bookstores, an alkaline restaurant and is the founder of the Golden Ankh Global Foundation, Inc.

For five hours on Saturday, Brother Polight held his audience's attention by addressing what he feels are the opportunities in investing, real estate and various other economic ventures.

A former gang leader, Brother Polight has taken the lecturing community by storm with his ability to articulate the unparalleled depth of information he has gathered over the years.



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New Artist Interview: Bran Man

By Michael Hayes
Minister of Culture

Okay, Toledo, I'm getting back on the grind of introducing you to hot new talent right here in your own city. I never slacked off, I just got sick of dealing with artists who came at me wrong or lacked the professionalism and polish. Well, here's a dude that has the right approach.

Along with his manager and her company, I respect the music and mindset of this artist.

If I keep coming across more talent like this, I'll gladly keep turning my readers on to who they are.

Glass City, get to know... Bran Man in eight questions.

Here we go:

Michael Hayes: How did you first begin rapping and what is your overall goal as a recording artist??

Bran Man: I started rapping early, I've always loved music. I was part of a group called PNC but things happen and we decided to do our solo things. My overall goal as a recording artist is to be successful by making good music that fans will support now and in the long run.

MH: What do you feel is the hardest part about creating a name for yourself in Toledo's music scene?

BM: Toledo's music scene is just like everywhere



else. Make your music better than the competition and the music that people want to hear. Everything about the music industry and scene is hard but hard work pays off and I'm willing to put in the work. I got people behind me that make stuff a lot easier. My management, Twelve20 Entertainment, do a lot of networking on my behalf so that makes things easier.

3MH: Some rap artists have a negative opinion of 360 deals even though labels are relying on that structure for deals more often. What are your thoughts on 360 deals when it comes to signing with a major?

BM: The game has changed a lot and everybody want to make money. Record sales are down because people are downloading stuff and indie artists and

labels can do some of the same stuff major labels can do now. The MAJOR difference is that major labels have a lot of money and a lot of the times the one thing holding people back from being successful is that they don't have the funding to do what they feel like they need and want to do in order to get their music out there. Personally, I don't see a problem with any deal as long as the deal is fair and they ain't trying to get over.

MH: A lot of signed artists still don't have budgets for their projects as the majors depend more on artists to do more leg work themselves. What do you think it takes to create and sustain demand for a project?

BM: You have to be unique and be able to stand out. No one wants more of the same thing that they are already hearing. I think the most important thing is to make music that people can relate to. Music that is gimmicky will be hot for a minute but the buzz fizzles. When people can relate to the music you create, that's what creates the demand.

MH: What five artists are on your play list lately?

BM: Pandora shuffle. I never know what they are going to play until they play it. MH: Tell our readers about the upcoming Twelve20 Takeover on June 1... BM: The STL Takeover is coming to the Omni June 1. Shout out to Huey and Jibbs, they coming to perform with me and I got a couple features too. I'm looking forward to it. Another shout out to my manager Crystal of Twelve20 for putting it together.

MH: What can your fans expect from your upcoming shows and projects?

BM: It's been a lot of networking going on behind the scenes so we finally putting it all together. We plan on hitting Toledo with a few more shows leading up to something big later this year. I can't really speak on it in detail right now that'll be something you would have to contact Twelve20 for but I can tell you that the way it looks now, this summer is gone be one to remember.

MH: What else does this year hold in store for you?

BM: This year is all about bringing everything that's been going on together and making the most of it. I got a mix tape coming summer 2012 and we got a few more events planned. I stay writing music so that's a given. The rest you'll just have to wait and see.

There you have it, Toledo.

Make sure you are at the Omni June 1 for the Twelve20 Takeover featuring St. Louis artists Jibbs and Huey and reppin for the 419 will be the homie Bran Man and more.

Thanks for reading, see y'all next week.

To contact me: ugemusic@gmail.com



Advertisement for 93.1 FM Jam Packed Magazine Radio Show. Text includes: 'Welcome to Toledo's Hottest Urban Alternative', 'Always Broadcasting on Location Live!', 'Now Broadcasting Tuesday - Saturday from the Central City 6pm - 10pm Tune in!', 'Listen Online @ www.speaker.com', and 'Just type in Jam Packed Magazine Radio Show on the search'.

Advertisement for Gamesavvyonline.com. Text includes: 'GAMESAVVYONLINE.COM STOP BEING SO SURPRISED!', 'WATCH GAMESAVVY LATERNIGHT', and 'EVERYONE IS WELCOME'.

Large advertisement for Bank On Toledo. Text includes: 'I SHOWED MY FAMILY HOW A BANK CAN GIVE THEM A SECOND CHANCE.', 'Don't let check cashers take your money. Get your own bank account. To find out how, simply dial United Way 2-1-1 and we'll connect you. From your cell phone, call: 1-800-650-HELP.', 'www.bankontoledo.org', and 'EVERYONE IS WELCOME'.

Senate Bill 271 Could Cause Higher Telephone Prices

By State Representative Michael Ashford



The Ohio General Assembly is considering Senate Bill 271 (SB 271), which would allow telephone companies to charge higher rates to consumers. If enacted, this legislation would greatly affect seniors, rural consumers, and lower income families who rely on their landline phones. Under current law, Ohio telephone companies are required to provide consumers access to affordable and reliable basic local telephone service.

SB 271 would permit a telephone company to withdraw basic local telephone services and be exempt from service quality standards if the company can show that two other competitive telecommunications services are available in a given geographical area. These services can be any other phone services such as, wireless, cable, or VOIP. SB 271 has passed the Ohio Senate and is now under consideration in the Ohio House of Representatives.

The office of the Ohio Consumer's Council (OCC) is concerned about the impact SB 271 could have on Ohio's telephone customers. Allowing telephone companies to withdraw their basic telephone service could:

- Leave many Ohioans without access to affordable telephone options
- Force customers who want only basic service to switch to other services that are more expensive
- Jeopardize customers' access to 911 emergency services by forcing them to depend on telecommunications services that may not work when power is lost

If SB 271 becomes law, telephone companies currently meeting the state competitive test could withdraw their telephone services from an area even though some customers may be left without viable telephone options.

Artist applications for Art on the Mall 2012 due April 30

Special to The Truth



Artists who are looking for publicity need to look no further than the 20th annual Art on the Mall at The University of Toledo.

Each year more than 100 artists use the opportunity to display their works in acrylic, glass, jewelry, mixed media, oil, pen and ink, photography, pottery, textiles, fibers and many other forms of artwork.

"Art on the Mall is a great way for artists to showcase their work to the more than 10,000 art lovers who attend each year," said Ansley Abrams-Frederick, director of alumni programming with UT's Office of Alumni Relations. "The publicity that artists can gain from this event is invaluable."

Applications for artists to participate in the 2012 event, which will be held July 29, are due to the UT Office of Alumni Relations by April 30. Click [here](#) to download the application.

Contact the UT Office of Alumni Relations at 419.530.2586 for more information.

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CLASSIFIEDS

April 25, 2012

Page 15

Commissioner of Transportation Advertisement

The City of Toledo is seeking qualified candidates for the position of Commissioner of Transportation in the Department of Public Services. The Commissioner will perform work of considerable difficulty in providing administrative, technical, and supervisory direction and assistance in transportation systems. The commissioner is responsible for establishing divisional goals, objectives, policies, procedures, rules and regulations; directs divisional administrative, fiscal and personnel operations; develops, controls and administers the divisional budget; makes recommendations to the Director, Mayor and City Council on divisional issues and acts as liaison for the City on these issues to outside entities. Qualified candidates shall have graduated from an accredited college or university with a Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering and have five (5) years of administrative experience in the transportation field with two (2) years of supervisory experience. Must be a registered Professional Engineer in the State of Ohio.

The City of Toledo is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Minorities, females and individuals with disabilities are encouraged to apply.

Interested candidates should forward a resume to:

Edward Moore - Director - Department of Public Service
110 North Westwood Avenue
Toledo, Ohio 43607

Notice to Bidders: Inquiry # FY12-122, (Project # 5004-12-1676) for Switchgear Cleaning for the University of Toledo Health Science Campus. Sealed bids for this project must be clearly marked with the project number on all inner and outer envelopes and/or shipping containers. Bids must be addressed and delivered to the University of Toledo, Main Campus, Facilities and Construction, Plant Operations Room 1100, 2925 E. Rocket Drive, MS 216, Toledo, Ohio 43606 before 2:00 p.m., Wednesday, May 16, 2012. Bids will be publicly opened that same day at 2:05 p.m. in the Plant Operations Building, Room 1260. Copies of Plans, Specifications, and Bid Forms may be obtained from Becker Impressions, 4646 Angola Road, Toledo, Ohio 43615. Call 419-385-5303 for an appointment to pick up bid package. A cost of \$40.00 will be charged per set. Any further information may be obtained from Roger Debelly of JDRM Engineering at 419-824-2400. One Pre-Bid Conference will be held on Wednesday, May 9, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. in the Health Education Building, Room 105, at the University of Toledo, Health Science Campus, 3000 Arlington Avenue, Toledo, Ohio 43614. Total Bid Guaranty and Contract Bond are required per section 153.54 of the Ohio Revised Code. EDGE Participation Goal: 10%. Project Estimate: \$200,000.00; Breakdown: Electrical: \$200,000.00.

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1 REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR DESIGN/BUILD SERVICES RELATING TO THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW SECURITY ENTRANCE COMPLEX

The Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority ("TLCPA") is requesting qualification statements from design/build ("D/B") firms to provide design and construction in connection with the subject project. The project involves building a new security entrance complex at Facility One of the general cargo docks. The TLCPA will select and retain a design/build firm for the design and construction phase of an approximate \$900,000 project. The project will need to be on a fast track with all work completed by July 31, 2012 unless a grant extension is awarded.

Description of Proposed Security Entrance Projects:

- New guard entrance building to be equipped with offices, restroom and associated work;
- New parking lot, truck staging lanes, scale and other site improvements as shown on the attached layout.

This notice shall serve as a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) from qualified firms to oversee the design and construction of this project in accordance with the Grant Agreement with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (FEMA) funding assistance regulations. The A/E firm selected will be responsible for completing review of the programming requirements, preliminary design, design, preparing bid documents that meet Davis Bacon wage rate requirements, preparing any applicable addenda, and reviewing bids and recommending contract award. Responses to this RFQ will be used to select a qualified firm to perform this work for the TLCPA.

The entire RFQ may be viewed at <http://www.toledoportauthority.org/publicnotices>.

"Calling All Members from Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. 2013"

We are Calling all Sorors home to Delta to join us in celebrating 100 years of service. We miss you and we welcome you back! We need you to help us to continue the mission of *Transforming Lives and Impacting Communities*. Please visit the Toledo Alumnae Chapter website at www.dsttoledo.org/membership

Notice to Bidders: Inquiry # FY12-121, (Project # 5004-12-1683) for University Medical Center Roofing Improvements for the University of Toledo Health Science Campus. Sealed bids for this project must be clearly marked with the project number on all inner and outer envelopes and/or shipping containers. Bids must be addressed and delivered to the University of Toledo, Main Campus, Facilities and Construction, Plant Operations Room 1100, 2925 E. Rocket Drive, MS 216, Toledo, Ohio 43606 before 3:00 p.m., Tuesday, May 15, 2012. Bids will be publicly opened that same day at 3:05 p.m. in the Plant Operations Building, Room 1000. Copies of Plans, Specifications, and Bid Forms may be obtained from Stough and Stough Architects, 6377 River Crossing - Suite 1, Sylvania, Ohio 43560. Call 419-885-3583 for an appointment to pick up bid package. A cost of \$40.00 will be charged per set. Any further information may be obtained from Craig A. Stough of Stough and Stough Architects at 419-885-3583. One Pre-Bid Conference will be held on Tuesday, May 8, 2012 at 11:00 a.m. in the Health Education Building, Room 105, at the University of Toledo, Health Science Campus, 3000 Arlington Avenue, Toledo, Ohio 43614. Total Bid Guaranty and Contract Bond are required per section 153.54 of the Ohio Revised Code. EDGE Participation Goal: 10%. Project Estimate: \$372,000.00; Breakdown: General Const: \$372,000.00.

Notice to Bidders: Inquiry # FY12-115, (Project # 5004-12-1684) for University Medical Center Waterproofing for the University of Toledo Health Science Campus. Sealed bids for this project must be clearly marked with the project number on all inner and outer envelopes and/or shipping containers. Bids must be addressed and delivered to the University of Toledo, Main Campus, Facilities and Construction, Plant Operations Room 1100, 2925 E. Rocket Drive, MS 216, Toledo, Ohio 43606 before 2:00 p.m., Tuesday, May 15, 2012. Bids will be publicly opened that same day at 2:05 p.m. in the Plant Operations Building, Room 1000. Copies of Plans, Specifications, and Bid Forms may be obtained from Rossi & Associates, 970 S. Byrne Road, Toledo, Ohio 43609. Call 419-385-6633 for an appointment to pick up bid package. A cost of \$25.00 will be charged per set. Any further information may be obtained from Brad Rossi of Rossi & Associates at 419-385-6633. One Pre-Bid Conference will be held on Tuesday, May 8, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. in the Health Education Building, Room 105, at the University of Toledo, Health Science Campus, 3000 Arlington Avenue, Toledo, Ohio 43614. Total Bid Guaranty and Contract Bond are required per section 153.54 of the Ohio Revised Code. EDGE Participation Goal: 10%. Project Estimate: \$400,890.00; Breakdown: General Const: \$400,890.00.

Notice to Bidders: Inquiry # FY12-120, (Project # 0003-12-787) for Snyder Memorial Hall 2nd Floor Classroom Renovation for the University of Toledo. Sealed bids for this project must be clearly marked with the project number on all inner and outer envelopes and/or shipping containers. Bids must be addressed and delivered to the University of Toledo, Facilities and Construction, Plant Operations, Room 1100, 2925 E. Rocket Drive, MS 216, Toledo, Ohio 43606 before 1:00 p.m., Tuesday, May 15, 2012. Bids will be publicly opened that same day at 1:05 p.m. in the Plant Operations Building, Room 1000. Copies of Plans, Specifications, and Bid Forms may be obtained from Apex Micrographics, 5973 Telegraph Road, Toledo, Ohio 43612. Call 419-476-6535 for an appointment to pick up bid package. A cost of \$50.00 will be charged per set. Any further information may be obtained from Dave Serra of The Collaborative Inc at 419-242-7405. One Pre-Bid Conference will be held on Tuesday, May 8, 2012 at 9:00 a.m. in the Plant Operations Building, Room 1000, at the University of Toledo, 2925 E. Rocket Drive, Toledo, OH 43606. Total Bid Guaranty and Contract Bond are required per section 153.54 of the Ohio Revised Code. EDGE Participation Goal: 10%. Project Estimate: \$140,000.00; Breakdown: General Const: \$84,000.00 and Electrical: \$56,000.00.

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“Fun Through Fitness” Jack & Jill’s National Day of Fitness

Sojourner's Truth Staff



The local chapter of Jack & Jill of America, Inc. joined forces with the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Toledo to host “Fun through Fitness” - a fun and exciting fitness event - on Saturday, April 21.

Approximately 150 youth of all ages convened at the Bots and Girls Club on N. Detroit Avenue to celebrate fitness and health.

Games, exercise sessions, kids Olympics, youth nutrition and a preparation of healthy snacks engaged the participants within the sprawling edifice.

Dr. Mark Watkins, MD, a pediatric endocrinologist with the Endocrine and Diabetic Care Center, addressed the youth in attendance about healthy eating just before the snack presentation.



Martin Tucker: The Black Swamp Tomahawk

By Monique Ward
Special to The Truth



This weekend I was able to catch up with Martin Tucker, a professional boxer, who happens to have been born and reared right here in the Glass City. With a new career and a big fight coming up real soon at the Huntington Center, I had a few questions for the 32-year old fighter before he gets any busier.

Monique Ward: For those who are unfamiliar with you Mr. Tucker, how long have you been boxing?

Martin Tucker: I started in 1998, 2 weeks after I turned 18 went straight to the gym.

MW: What or who was inspiration to start boxing?

MT: As a kid I watched Bruce Lee movies on Channel 36. I wanted to join a martial arts class and my mom wouldn't let me. I was kind of small when I was a kid and I got picked on by other kids.

I would often get kicked out of grade school for fighting.

MW: What is your record right now?

MT: I'm 7-10 so I'm on the losing end right now but that doesn't mean anything to me because from the beginning I was thrown in with the big dogs. Never really had a chance to develop and I managed to swim with the sharks for awhile but eventually they figured me out.

MW: Would you not have taken those fights if you had known better?

MT: Well it's been seven years since I've fought in my hometown. I've been on the road and got offered a lot of money to fight undefeated prospects. Knowing what I know now, I would have waited and chosen my fights a bit better. Now I have a new trainer, new manager and a whole new perspective on the

game.

MW: What can your fans and those who don't know you expect to see at your next fight?

MT: People should expect to see a more diverse and well-packaged fighter vs a beast in the ring. For me this is homecoming and I'm here to make a statement. All those losses on the road were just flukes. I'm a reborn fighter who is on his way to the top! Glass City will get to meet the new and improved Martin Tucker a/k/a The Black Swamp Tomahawk!

Martin Tucker's homecoming fight will be at the Huntington Center, April 28, 2012 in Toledo, Ohio. Tickets can be purchased at the Huntington Center box office in advance or on the day of the fight.



NOTICES FROM TOLEDO URBAN FEDERAL CREDIT UNION REGARDING THE UPCOMING 8TH ANNUAL AFRICAN AMERICAN FESTIVAL

Parade:
African American Festival Committee is now accepting participants for the 8th annual parade.
The parade will take place on Saturday, July 14th at 10:00a.
For more information, please contact Toledo Urban FCU at 419-235-8876. For an application or email us agan@tufcu.com.
Deadline for entry is Friday, June 1, 2012.

Vendors:
Vendors are now being accepted for the 8th Annual African American Festival. The festival will be held at the University of Toledo, Scott Park Campus July 13- 15th.
For More information, please contact Toledo Urban FCU at 419- 235-8876. Or email svovortin@tufcu.com.

