



Volume 62, No. 8

"And Ye Shall Know The Truth..."

July 29, 2020



CSRN Members Ruth Leonard, Julian Mack and Washington Muhammad

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The Case for Police and Criminal Justice Reform

By Rev. Donald L. Perryman, Ph.D.

The Truth Contributor

We are wedded to our systems as they exist. A huge hurdle is just getting people to think differently than we have.

- RaShya Gee



Americans, provoked by recent police-involved killings of George Perry Floyd, Jr., Breonna Taylor, and others, have declared a war against racism. The fight, significantly, has shifted from calling out individual bias to reforming entire systems of bias and bigotry. The demand for fairness and equity in the criminal justice system lies at the center of the current conflict.

In this article, I spoke with local attorney RaShya Gee, who brings an activist, academic, and legal praxis perspective on solutions needed for institutional change. Gee teaches Race and American Law at the University of Toledo Law School and heads RaShya Law, focusing on family law and criminal defense.

Perryman: I'm appreciative that you took some time to speak with us. Please tell our readers a little bit about you.

Ghee: I'm born and raised here in Toledo, Ohio. I went to Central Catholic and then to the University of Toledo for a bachelor's degree in political science and an MBA in finance. Then I went to the University of Minnesota for law school. I have been in private practice and always been interested in race and racism, particularly how it interacts with the law - what the law does to combat it, how the law doesn't do enough, and what the law has historically done to protect racism. That's been my work for at least 10 years now.

For a long time outside of academic and activism pockets, this work wasn't talked about or being done outside of the people who were doing it or interested in it intellectually. What we've been saying for all this time, everyone else is starting to see. So now, people say, "Oh, the stuff you've been saying all along, can you come tell us more so we can fix it?" So that's my background in a nutshell.

Perryman: How prevalent is police misconduct in Toledo?

Ghee: I don't know if I can give you statistics because how would we know? That's part of the work that's being done. We need mechanisms in place that can accurately record these incidents because people are significantly less likely to report police brutality, in part, because of how our system is structured. My guess is that whatever the numbers are, they're severely underreported.

Perryman: Why are people hesitant?

Ghee: One, you have to go to the police to complain about the police, so that's intimidating. Second, if you've been in trouble or have contact with the law, you are worried about police retaliating against you. Third, you worry about not being believed, especially if you have a record. Also, police departments, as a whole, work not to make the information publicly accessible.

Perryman: What are some inequities in the entire criminal justice system that should be of concern to us as a community?

Ghee: Even locally, we found that black folks were significantly more likely to be charged with offenses like disorderly conduct, possession of drugs, or obstructing official business, these kinds of subjective offenses. African Americans are significantly more likely to have charges, be charged, or prosecuted. Blacks are significantly more likely to receive confinement as a punishment and receive longer sentences. And, they are less likely to be referred to diversion programs, or have their judicial release request granted. Almost every turn in the criminal justice system from their interactions with law enforcement to the charges that prosecutors decide to bring, to the way they're sentenced, we're just more likely in all the wrong ways and less likely in all the right ones.

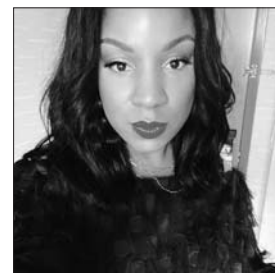
Perryman: Looking at the role of the public defender's office, would you say that there is a crisis in defense of the poor and indigent?

Ghee: Yes, but I will not say that that exists because of the quality of public defender. I know people who've been public defenders who I believe are incredibly competent and incredibly passionate. What I tell people is, it doesn't matter how skilled you are as a carpenter. If I give you a broken hammer and a dull screwdriver, what you can accomplish is limited. The crisis isn't because public defenders aren't competent so much as because they are overburdened and under-resourced.

Perryman: What are some policy change recommendations necessary to bring fairness and equity in the criminal justice system?

Ghee: There are four major areas that I think where reforms are neces-

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RaShya Gee

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Community Calendar

Churches Reopening

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Eastern Star MBC - Open Now

New Psalmist - Open Now

Corinth Baptist - Open Now

Faithway Church - Open Now

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St Paul MBC - Open Now

Garden of Prayer - Open Now

Mt. Nebo Baptist - Open Now

United Baptist - Open Now

Mt. Ararat Baptist - Open Now

Jerusalem Baptist - Open Now

True Vine Baptist - Open Now

Warren AME - Fourth Sunday in July

How to Set up a Successful Bribery Scheme

By Lafe Tolliver, Esq

Guest Column

You know...the plumber has his wrenches, the baker has his pans, the gardener has his wheelbarrow and the janitor has his slop bucket and brushes.

But yet, you must wonder what does the accomplished person who purportedly receives bribes as a public official, what does she or he have in the kit bag that is utilized to pull off a successful heist?

For one, we've got to establish the proper names or terms for those who engage in any such nefarious conduct. Let us for purposes of this article, label the person who gives the alleged bribe (money or goods and services or influences), the "Briber" and the person who accepts the bribe, the "Bribee."

Simple enough, yes? And then, let us call what they do, a "scheme". Now, we need to label what happens when a Briber and a Bribee meet in a scheme.

The first thing is, "what is the pitch?" That is, what is being offered in exchange for a favor, muscle, influence or, sometimes, just a diversion so that others are not wise to what is really going on.

Now, you gotta understand the makeup of a Briber and it is usually defined in the following categories:

(1) Swagger: How a Bribee acts when he thinks that he can con you into giving him something of worth or value. Oh, he smiles and cajoles you and lets you believe that he's got lightning in a bottle and for the price of \$\$\$, it can be yours!

The Bribee must convince you that he or she is an authoritative figure and that your submission to that power is critical if the Bribee is to pull off this caper. At times, tough talk is needed to convince you that no bridge is too far for him to cross if that is what it takes to convince you that he can pull off the scam.

He talks in convincing tones of knowing what is what and he conflates his importance as if he were the only person that you need to speak with.

(2) Settings: The Bribee needs to impress you with his wealth or status, so he normally wines and dines you to create the impression that he has it all together and you too can share in part of the illusion that you are dealing with the top dog who can make things happen!

(3) Smokescreens: In their arsenal of deceit and deception, some Bribes go to great lengths to project the aura that they are the real McCoy's and if that takes fake luxurious settings or fabulous meals at high class restaurants, so be it. The plan is to have you breathe in their spiels that they are able to produce or deliver the votes or the goods!

(4) Now, for the Briber, it is important that he believes the "game" or at least lies and plays the part of doing small steps to show that he is willing to go all the way and consummate the deal.

Once the Bribee sees that the Briber is gullible to take the bait and be reeled in, the Bribee knows that the "ask" or what he or she wants from the Briber, is almost a guarantee!

(5) The Bribee must give the Briber the feeling that his confidence in the Bribee is not mistaken and that the Bribee can deliver and deliver on time. Of course, the Bribee will convince the Briber that all is well and what is being conducted is not illegal but rather, "this is how business is done, and no one will know".

Now the Bribee knows that there are rules of the trade for this scheming game and he must be a perfectionist in executing those rules or the Briber will smell the offal and will quickly back out.

Rule One: When exchanging money, do not use napkins or magazines or newspapers! When you meet for the all-important money exchange, look bored and weary and use a box of chocolates as your cover. Laugh out loud when you make the exchange so anyone nearby will record it as a friendly cordial meeting and not a bribe happening under their nose!

Rule Two: When at a restaurant, sit in a dark corner and arrive before the Briber so that you can control the seating arrangements which means that you sit facing the front door so you can make sure that the Briber arrives by himself or herself.

If someone is with the Briber whom you do not recognize, cough as if you have something stuck in your throat and go to the restroom, gagging as you go...and then promptly find an exit!

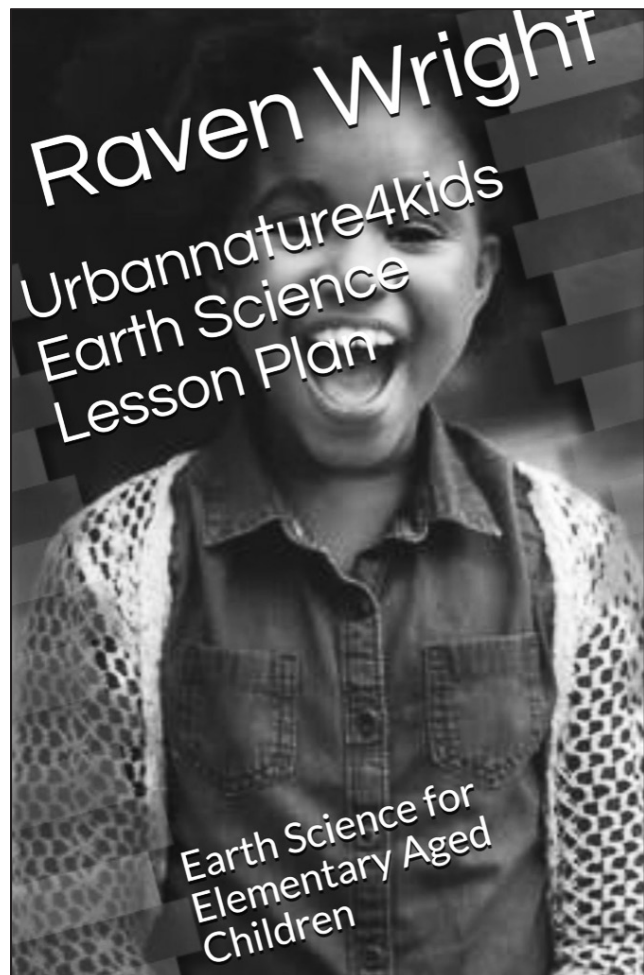
Rule Three: If the Briber offers cash, do not reach for it"! Rather ask him to wire the funds to the special account you set up and look away while the Briber places the cash back in his vest pocket. Breathe a sigh of relief and only then order the shrimp cocktail with a glass of Pinot Grigio.

Rule Four: If all else fails and you are busted by the authorities, play calm and repeatedly tell the FEDS that you had no idea that the Briber was a corrupt person and that you are outraged that anyone would think that you would engage in such reprehensible conduct!

Rule Five: If that ploy does not work and you are indicted for conduct unbecoming your position of public trust or authority, simply call me and I can arrange for you to wire me, as attorney fees, the titles to your cars, your house, the balance in your 401k plan and what savings you have and also a signed promissory note that I will fill in!

Is this a deal or what!

Contact Lafe Tolliver at tolliver@juno.com



Urbannature4kids Earth Science Lesson Plan ebook for children in grades K-4 available on Amazon. The book is authored and created by the Founder and CEO, Raven Wright
UrbanNature4Kids.com

Anti-Racism Teach-Ins: Safe Spaces to Tackle White Supremacy

By Lynne Hamer, Ph.D.,

Special to The Truth

A series of teach-ins open to the community hosted via Zoom and especially intended for teachers will explore white supremacy. Rooted in the 1950s and '60s civil rights and Vietnam war protests, a *teach-in* is simply an activity intended to share knowledge and generate energy toward confronting an important political issue.

That political issue is white supremacy. As the event flyer notes, "Formal education represents and reproduces the white supremacy that is inherent to the material taught, the discipline dispensed, and the teaching and administrative faculty hired and fired." Yet, the organizers find, formal educational institutions—that is, P-12 schools, colleges and universities—find it risky even to voice the words "white supremacy."

That is why this series is not sponsored by a school or university, but is instead led by individuals who teach and study at the University of Toledo. Following the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, faculty and students came together in weekly Zoom meetings and crafted a plan with a purpose: "The purpose of this ongoing series of teach-ins is to collaborate with teachers in P-12, higher education and community settings to name, describe, and undo the white supremacy that structurally constitutes and culturally informs the organizations in which we work."

The series is not limited to UToledo leadership. The group hopes that the teach-ins will gather momentum and be ongoing. Teach-ins typically recognize a wide variety of types of expertise and sources of knowledge—street knowledge, life knowledge, ancestral knowledge, and book knowledge. At each teach-in, participants will think about what further information and knowledge they would like to pursue.

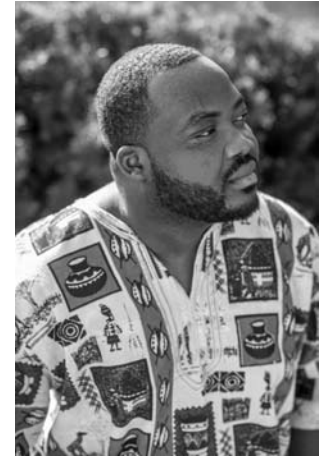
Shingi Mavima, PhD, assistant professor in the UToledo history department, kicks off the series on Monday, August 3 at 5 pm on the topic, *Why Afrocentricity? The Importance of an African-Centered Approach*. Mavima emphasizes that "pluriversalism is the answer—not white supremacy nor black supremacy, which seems to be the fear. Marginalized kids need to see themselves in positive positions of power, but mainstream white kids also need to see marginalized kids in positions of power."

As Mavima indicates, talking about white supremacy and figuring out how it affects teaching in our schools and universities does not have to feel dangerous. As stated on the teach-in flyer, "We need to work through the problem of white supremacy at all levels of education and these teach-ins are safe spaces to do that—offering tools to use, knowledge we haven't had, and the opportunity to practice discussion in a skillfully facilitated space."

Dale Snauwaert, PhD, professor and co-coordinator of peace studies at UToledo, will present the second teach-in on Wednesday, August 5 at 5 pm. With the title *Pedagogy of Reflective Inquiry: Racist Policy and Anti-Racist Teaching*, Snauwaert describes, "The purpose of this session is to engage participants in a pedagogy of ethical, critical, and contemplative reflective inquiry concerning the nature of Racial Inequity, Racist Policy, and Racism." Snauwaert will draw on the work of Ibram X. Kendi, whose book *How to be an Anti-Racist* has become very popular in the past few months and whose ideas provide a framework for the teach-in series. Snauwaert's session will offer participants an opportunity to engage in a form of Anti-Racist teaching.

The series continues with a range of topics, all addressing white supremacy from different angles. Political science professor Renee Heberle, PhD, emphasizes, "We must not be naïve about how white supremacy produces and reproduces itself through channels of economic, social and political power. Understanding how it works through the institutions and practices of teaching is one critical piece of coming to terms with how to end it." Heberle will address *Teaching About White Violence in Black Communities* in a teach-in ses-

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Shingi Mavima

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University of Toledo Hosts Panel to Discuss COVID-19 impact

By Tricia Hall

Sojourner's Truth Reporter

The University of Toledo's Office of Diversity and Inclusion and Brothers on the Rise organized a virtual panel that discussed how COVID-19 has impacted the African-American and Hispanic communities on July 23.

The discussion was moderated by Sammy Spann, PhD, the associate vice president and dean of Students at UT. The panel participants were: Gwen Gregory, Toledo-Lucas County Health Department Director of Nursing and Health Services; Louis Guardiola, University of Toledo College of Health and Human Services associate lecturer and assistant dean for Diversity and Inclusion; Gabriel Lomeli, University of Toledo assistant director of Undergraduate Admission; and Jason Wanamaker, University of Toledo fourth-year medical student.

Immediately following opening comments, the panel discussed how current living conditions of African Americans and Hispanics elevated the COVID impact.



Louis Guardiola

"COVID amplified existing economic disparities. People are already dealing with risks factors like using public transportation, living in cramped living conditions, and working jobs that don't provide a living wage," explained Wanamaker.

"People take for granted that individuals have to take the bus and can only travel to certain areas and certain grocery stores. When the bus is your only form of transportation, you can't jump from bus to bus when searching for supplies like you can with a vehicle," added Gregory.

In addition to discussing existing risk factors, the panel also talked about how COVID has impacted families and cultural traditions.

"I'm from a small town and very close to my family, we're no different than other Latino families. It was difficult hearing about family members that were sick and we couldn't visit or even check on them. That's when you miss the human touch, deal with isolation, and realize that you shouldn't take your family for granted," said Lomeli.



Sammy Spann

"Culture is important, family and personal contact is important, even church and spirituality are important. We had to deal with large crowds and celebrations being taken away because of COVID-19, that impacted our culture, and I'm sure other cultures too. Our culture brings us strength," added Guardiola.

The panel provided insight into how the news and media sources are accepted by younger generations, especially since health and age may change the medical outcome for patients that test positive for COVID-19.

"There are people in their twenties and younger who aren't interested in facts and feel invincible because they may not have existing health conditions. However, it shows their selfishness when they don't practice social distancing and aren't wearing masks. I hope more of us can do that now," explained Wanamaker.

"Yes people in late twenties to early thirties don't trust the news and believe rumors that say that COVID-19 isn't real. But I also feel that African Americans don't trust the news either. It's important for everyone to gain the trust of the communities that don't trust the truth about this pandemic. We won't win them all, but we need to follow the regulations to stop and slow the spread. I see a huge lack of trust from the community, and they don't feel the need to protect themselves or others. In the same conversation I will say that we need to call out disparities, we're either a part of the problem or solution. We need to stop the issues in the health care system that has been happening for years," added Gregory.

"I want to thank each of you so much for sharing your knowledge with us. We have to talk about us and care about us. Let's take care of the masses but also take care of each other," said Spann during closing remarks.

Brothers on the Rise was formed in 2011 to address the retention rate of African American and Latino students at the University of Toledo and Sammy Spann is the founder. The July 23 discussion was the fourth in a series called Dialogues on Diversity, which have followed the George Floyd murder by law enforcement officials in Minnesota.



Gabriel Lomeli

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Fair Housing Rules Upended by Trump Administration

By Fletcher Word

Sojourner's Truth Editor

With November's presidential election just over three months away and the incumbent sinking in the polls, particularly among groups such as white suburbanites, Trump made a move last week to court that voting bloc and officially dismantled an Obama rule that had attempted to lessen the impact of decades of racial segregation in this nation's neighborhoods.

HUD Secretary Ben Carson announced that his department is replacing the rule – the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) – with one to lessen the standard for fair housing as access to an affordable and safe residence.

In a statement Carson said “We found it to be unworkable and ultimately a waste of time for localities to comply with, too often resulting in funds being steered away from communities that need them most.”

Carson's move was not likely to have much practical immediate impact because HUD had already suspended enforcement of the AFFH rule in 2018, but it is clearly a tactic to appeal to conservative suburban voters.

Trump had laid the groundwork for the HUD announcement when he assailed former Vice President Joe Biden, likely Democratic nominee for president, for wanting to “abolish” the suburbs and bring “who knows who into your suburbs so your communities will be unsafe and your housing values will go down.”

The Obama rule had required local governments to make plans to correct housing discrimination in order to receive certain federal funds. The rule was implemented to address racial segregation that has persisted in spite of the enactment of the Fair Housing Act of 1968.

Home ownership is considered to be the bedrock of American family household wealth. According to statistics compiled by the Brookings Institute, the average net worth of the typical white American family is \$171,000 compared to the average wealth of a Black family of \$17,150. The difference is in home ownership rates and values and is the result of decades of government policy that began in 1934 during the New Deal when banks, in order to receive federal insurance to avoid failure, were instructed to restrict lending to Black borrowers.

Under the AFFH, localities receiving federal assistance were required to

take meaningful actions to undo decades of federal, state and local discriminatory policies that resulted in the creation of segregated, under-resourced communities. They must also ensure that neighborhoods have equal access to high quality schools, healthy food, clean air and water, reliable transportation, quality healthcare facilities and other community resources and amenities.

The Fair Housing Center reacted immediately with a statement condemning the relaxed provisions enacted by HUD.

Marie Flannery, president and CEO of The Fair Housing Center issued the following statement:

“For decades, redlining systematically blocked people of color from homeownership and contributed to disinvestment in racially diverse neighborhoods, the effect of which can still be seen today. We cannot create communities that are truly inclusive without recognizing and correcting the discriminatory practices that led to racially exclusive neighborhoods. It's unconscionable that HUD – the entity charged with enforcing the Fair Housing Act – would allow communities to maintain policies that restrict equal access to housing.

“HUD's new rule gutting AFFH regulations amounts to government-sanctioned segregation. The Fair Housing Center joins fair housing and civil rights advocates across the country in condemning this policy change that will further perpetuate longstanding racial inequities.

“This decision is a devastating step backward in the civil rights movement and contradicts the basic principle that the American Dream should be accessible to all.”

Odette Williamson, staff attorney and director of the Racial Justice and Equal Economic Opportunity Project at the National Consumer Law Center said: “The Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing provision of the long-standing Fair Housing Act is needed to dismantle decades of government-sponsored discrimination that led to segregation and disinvestment in healthcare, housing, education and other essential services in Black communities and other communities of color. The disparate impact on highly segregated Black communities that were historically redlined still plays out today as Black families bore the brunt of early infections and death due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This unacceptable action is yet another attempt by the Trump administration to roll back hard-won civil rights protections that provide housing opportunities to people who have been excluded from highly resourced communities.”

Statement from the Ohio Democratic Party on Householder Charges

Larry Householder's Dirty Money Propped Up Ohio GOP

In the summer of 2017, the Akron Beacon Journal editorial board questioned the legality of Larry Householder's “attempt at political money-laundering” of contributions from Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow founder Bill Lager through the Ohio Republican Party -- a deal so shady that the Ohio GOP almost immediately decided to give back the cash.


However, that didn't stop the Ohio Republican Party from taking more Householder campaign cash in the following years -- \$50,000 in September 2018, \$180,000 in October 2018 and \$47,000 in January 2019 into the party's state candidate fund, and \$5,000 in October 2019 into their state account.

“It's as if there was an enormous flashing warning light that Larry Householder was back to his old tricks of funneling cash through various groups to evade campaign finance laws -- and yet the Ohio Republican Party said, sure,

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The Truth

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“Black Lives Matter” Billboard Raised at Corner of Detroit and Bancroft

By Fletcher Word

Sojourner's Truth Editor

The Community Response Solidarity Network unveiled its “Black Lives Matter” billboard at the corner of Detroit and Bancroft on Tuesday, July 21, during a ceremony featuring reflections from key members of the group – Washington Muhammad, Julian Mack and Ruth Leonard.

The morning's event focused on the recent incidents of police killings of African Americans, such as George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, that have sparked protests around the US and the world.

“Police brutality has to end,” said Mack, the keynote speaker. “We are using various tactic to give voice to the voiceless,” he said. “We want justice, equal justice under the law and for all lives to matter, black lives must matter.”

“This is not the work of one individual but the work of collective that has brought us to this point ... the work we do today is on the shoulders of giants, we must keep that perspective,” he added.

In addition to the billboard, the CSRN will be distributing yard signs with the “Black Lives Matter” text as well as those urging authorities to “defund the police.”

The Community Solidarity Response Network of Toledo was formed on November 25, 2014, the day after it was announced that the killer (a Ferguson, Missouri police officer) of Michael Brown (an unarmed teenager) would not be indicted.

The organization's mission is to “bring awareness to the injustices experienced by Black men, women and children who are disproportionately murdered, attacked, provoked and harassed by law enforcement.”

“This is what our revolution looks like,” said Mack. “We are just getting started and we will not stop until the social contract of life, liberty and pursuit of happiness is achieved for each and every one of us.”

Leonard spoke about the need to defund the police. “We don't need more rubber bullets and SWAT teams she said. “We need the opportunity for ourselves to be better in our community ... when you take away our resources, don't be surprised if we rise up against you.”

“Rising up” was a theme that Muhammad echoed. “It is our duty to fight for our freedom ... it is out duty to win.”

Muhammad also addressed the fact that CSRN will be urging people to vote for issues in the fall that will address the ways to defund and reform the police.

To assist with the organization's mission of keeping the billboard going, getting the yard signs made and distributed and getting their message to voters, contributions can be made through PayPal at [PayPal.me/psn419](https://www.paypal.com/psn419) or through CashApp at [\\$CSRN419](https://www.cashapp.com/cash/$CSRN419).



Washington Muhammad



Ruth Leonard, Julian Mack, Washington Muhammad

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Naturalistas... continued from page 16

bol that resounds Power to the People and now Black Lives Matter. When asked what head wrapping means to her, Jones replied "It means protection: protection of the lineage, protection of my essence and most importantly, protection of my culture that is exuded through my hair."

Face Masks are an Ohio government-mandated practice that affects all residents, so seeing people in them isn't anything to write home about. But Black women are innovative trend setters who blaze new trails in fashion no matter what the circumstances are. Head coverings are already a practical form of Personal Protec-

tive Equipment (PPE) that health professionals wear and are a part of the fight against the spread of the novel Coronavirus. So creating head wraps that match face masks is a pandemic need while also creating a new niche for entrepreneurs and seamstresses.

Toledoan Jeanette Martin is a leader, mentor and inspiring creative who provided a handmade purple and gold matching headwrap, mask and earring ensemble, featured in the photo shoot. Her creation took the theme to another level and was worn as a symbol of pride and royalty, receiving admiration from all the Naturalistas in attendance.

Local Travel Blogger, Lastisha Williams, also known as The Frugalicious Diva, wore all black with Cheetah Print accessories. She said: "Headwrapping gives me a sense of freedom and pride. Pride in my heritage. Pride in my beauty. Pride in my Blackness" A woman who is unapologetically Black, she travels the world, locating Black-owned businesses and sharing her findings with her followers and subscribers.

Shari Thompson echoed this sentiment stating "headwrapping means

a freedom of expression and self-identity, and embracing our unique culture and heritage."

Culturally and personally, head wrapping signifies something different for each person who chooses to wear one. Nigerian brides and their families often don Geles, which is a paper-like fabric that is folded and fanned into a structure that may be round, feathered or intricate. South

African women often use the Afrikaans word doek while Ghanaian women call theirs dukus.

Depending on how they are styled, they may represent a tribe or ethnicity, wealth, marital status, or even mourning. "It is my belief that Headwrap represents certain cultures and a reflection of yourselves as exhibiting a style of expression. Also, Head wrapping can be a

non-verbal way to communicate his or her journey in life," said Donnetta Carter, The Social Butterfly, who is a local entrepreneur and hosts and promotes many businesses in the Toledo metropolitan area.

In America today, head wrapping is often a part of a Naturalista's "uniform," as many Black women can be seen regularly donning colorful wraps that bend, twist and curve to whatever mood she is in or as an accent to her outfit for the day. But for some who attended the photo shoot, they weren't

used to wearing head wraps and needed some assistance in wrapping.

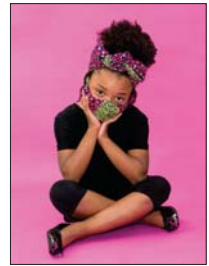
Fanell Williams, author, just began her lock-



Larisa Burton



Oleen Clinton



Naomi Jones



Latisha Williams



Megan Davis



Teanna Jones



Shari Thompson



Toni Battle - Gaines

... continued on page 12

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Changing for the Better: Meet Dennis Byndom

By Mariah Hicks, Brothers United Coach

Special to The Truth

"My life was a little bit like a spider's web. I wasn't focused on short or long goal terms. I was angry because things weren't going my way. I didn't know how to communicate with people."

Dennis Byndom was about 23 years old when he had his first son. Though he had a great relationship with his child and interacted with him often, his relationship with his co-parent wasn't the best.

"I was demanding and didn't care what she had to say. She didn't have a voice."

Dennis heard about Brothers United from a former participant who started working for the program.

"I saw how much good it did for him and felt like if it can change him, it can change me."

After hearing more about the program, Dennis scheduled an appointment and joined the Brotherhood.

While in the program, Brothers United truly changed Dennis' life for the better. He learned better communication skills and realized he could ask for help without being scared or feeling ashamed.

"BU helped me have a better life with my wife. I

learned how to not be selfish within my relationship with my wife and learned how to be a better co-parent. I also learned how to think before I act and be more well-rounded. At first, I wasn't confident, but I started to share more everyday. You can't just worry about yourself in the relationship. You have to think about others. Now I understand how to talk things out with my co-parent/wife. I am not so quick to be demanding. I learned to compromise in my relationship to help resolve conflict."

Dennis also learned how to be a better parent and keep his kids as a priority in his life.

"It's not a reset button and there's no manual to it. I pretty much went with the flow to do the best that I can and not give up. I got a lot of advice from my dad, which helped me out a lot."

Life after Brothers United has been good for Mr. Byndom. He expressed that he learned a lot from the program that he still applies to his life. From the visits with his Coach, he was able to realize what was best for him and his family. He understood that he



Dennis Byndom

...continued on page 11

BU Strong: Meet Stanquez Hill

By Mariah Hicks, Brothers United Coach

Special to The Truth

"Before BU, I was pretty much out here living without a care. I was selling drugs and had just caught a drug case. I was living life dangerously and with no regards to my kids or myself. I was living the fast life and it was spinning out of control."

Stanquez Hill had his first child at the age of 23. He soon realized that he no longer came first and life wasn't just about him anymore.

"The love was different than anything I had

ever felt before. I was now responsible for someone else and had a chance to show them things I didn't learn and things I did learn."

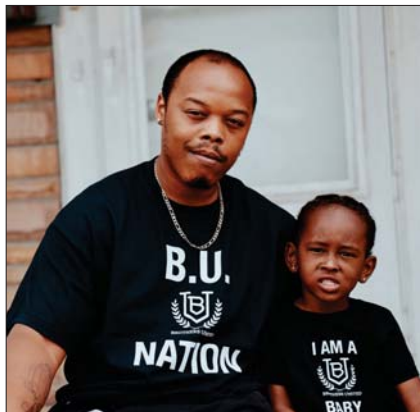
Stanquez wasn't even home from county jail for 30 minutes before he first learned about Brothers United. He saw some people walking through his neighborhood and saw the phrase on the back of their shirts "The Only Hood I Claim

is FATHERhood."

In that moment, he realized he was worried about the wrong things. BU staff took down his information and he decided to join.

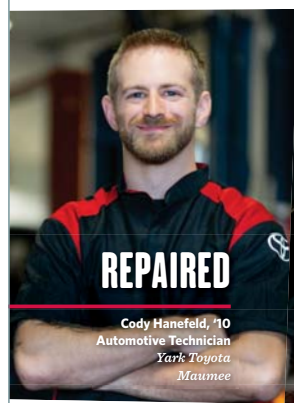
"I had kids and they were my priority, and I knew that motto should be something I lived by and stood for."

...continued on page 11

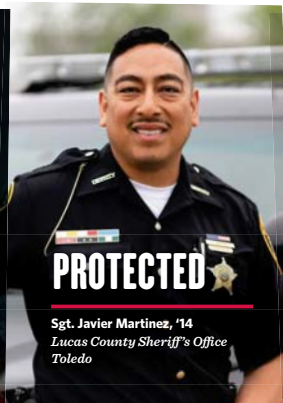


Stanquez Hill

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Automotive Technician
Yark Togota
Maumee



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Officers Disciplined for May 30 Riot Actions

The Internal Affairs (IA) investigations revolving around officer actions from Toledo's May 30 riots have been completed. Officer Melvin Russell, Officer Jeffery Breeze and Officer Cristopher Guanilo received departmental discipline for their actions on May 30, 2020.

Officer Russell was investigated through Toledo Police's IA Section for violating department rules: Unnecessary Use of Physical Control Techniques, Reporting Use of Physical Control Techniques, and Discourteous Treatment of the Public. Through investigation, IA found the charges "Sustained," meaning the investigation established sufficient evidence to clearly show that the wrongful act alleged in the complaint did occur.

Officer Russell received a 75-day suspension and also signed a Last Chance Agreement. This means that if the officer has another sustained complaint regarding Unnecessary Use of Physical Control Techniques, he can be terminated. The Last Chance Agreement is in effect for five years.

Officer Breeze was investigated for two separate cases stemming from the unrest on May 30th. The first case, he was investigated for violating department rules: Unnecessary Use of Physical Control Techniques, Reporting Use of Physical Control Techniques, and Discourteous Treatment of the Public.

In an additional IA case, Officer Breeze was also investigated for Unnecessary Use of Physical Control Techniques, Reporting Use of Physical Control Techniques, and Body-Worn Video Camera System.

For both IA cases, the charges were "Sustained," meaning the investigation established sufficient evidence to clearly show that the wrongful act alleged in the complaint did occur.

Officer Breeze received a 120-day suspension. Officer Breeze has also signed a Last Chance Agreement meaning that if the officer has another sustained complaint regarding Unnecessary Use of Force, he can be terminated. The Last Chance Agreement is in effect for five years.

Officer Cristopher Guanilo was investigated for Unnecessary Use of Force Techniques and Reporting Use of Force Techniques. Both charges were "Sustained," meaning the investigation established sufficient evidence to clearly show that the wrongful act alleged in the complaint did occur. Officer Guanilo received a Written Reprimand for the sustained complaint of Unnecessary Use of Force Techniques and he received a Counseling for the sustained complaint of Reporting Use of Force Techniques.

Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz said that this discipline concludes the review that Safety Director Karen Poore has led during the past seven weeks to investigate the events that took place on May 30th. He also thanked citizens for sending photos, videos and statements to the email address he established.

"The input we received from the public was invaluable in arriving at the discipline that was announced today," Mayor Kapszukiewicz said. "We are fortunate to have an excellent police department in Toledo, but we know that we can be even better. The unprecedented system we created to investigate what happened on May 30th - a system led by Safety Director Poore and fueled by input from everyday citizens of our community - will help make TPD better, which is a goal we all share."

Chief Kral stated "Police legitimacy cannot improve if departments fail at policing their own. I will ensure that officers are held accountable when their actions are found to violate department policies, and I will always support the hundreds of officers that positively represent Toledo Police."

Ohio Democratic Party... continued from page 6

we'll take your money, but we're not going to ask too many questions," said Ohio Democratic Party Chairman David Pepper. "The criminal complaint alleges that Householder was taking contributions and running them through a web of interconnected entities that he personally controlled and from which he enriched himself. It appears that one of the beneficiaries of Householder's activities was the Ohio Republican Party."

"The Ohio GOP should not be permitted to fund candidates and campaigns with proceeds from a criminal enterprise. Therefore, we are asking the courts and law enforcement to take appropriate action to freeze any accounts associated with Larry Householder and his co-conspirators and prevent further corruption of our political process here in Ohio. In addition, the Ohio Republican Party should also voluntarily freeze these tainted funds, or give them back as they did in 2017, pending the investigation."

In addition to the charges detailed in last week's criminal complaint, Householder and his political action committee, Friends of Larry Householder, have been referred to the Ohio Elections Commission for campaign finance violations.

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*** The gift offer is good for first time responders who provide a valid email address. Responders will be sent an email to confirm the gift. All responders in IL, IN, MI and PA who do not provide an email address are still eligible to receive the gift. The gift offer is not available in CA, HI, MD, ME or PA, but residents may still request a quote. The gift is available only as a limited time offer. Please allow 4-7 weeks for delivery. Gifts not included: 1. If you are age 50 or older, since you're insured through this Program for at least 60 days, you cannot be refunded renewal as long as applicable premiums are paid when due. Also, you and other customary drivers of your vehicles must retain valid licenses, remain physically and mentally capable of operating an automobile that applies in MI, have no convictions for driving while intoxicated and must not have obtained your policy through national representation. Benefit currently not available in HI, MI, NE, NC and TX.
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Suspension Proceedings Move Forward for Indicted Toledo City Council Members

Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost last week announced the filing of a Request to Commence Suspension Proceedings for four members of the Toledo City Council charged with bribery and extortion.

Until allegations of public corruption are resolved in court, a suspension is the proper remedy to balance the accused's right of a presumption of innocence with the public's interest to have a functioning city council, Yost said.

The request, filed in the Supreme Court of Ohio, states that Larry Sykes, Yvonne Harper, Garrick Gary Johnson and Tyrone Riley are charged with felonies stemming from alleged criminal activity that occurred in public office and cannot continue their duties as city council members while facing charges of bribery and extortion.

In response, three of the four city council members voluntarily signed a consent judgement entry, agreeing to the suspension pending the resolution of the felony charges in federal court. Johnson has yet to sign a judgement entry at this time.

A consent agreement is voluntary on the part of the accused, said Shelly Kennedy, managing attorney of the Ohio Attorney Generals regional office in Toledo. The parties in this case will present the agreements to the Supreme Court, who in turn, may approve the suspensions.

Toledo Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz and City Council President Matt Cherry requested that Yost initiate proceedings under Ohio Revised Code 3.16 to suspend the accused city council members from office.

Stanquez Hill... continued from page 9

Once in the program, Stanquez began to feel and think differently. BU helped him slow down and put things into perspective. He realized his importance as a father and as a man, and learned parenting skills and healthy relationship skills.

While fighting his drug case during the program, Avis Files went with Mr. Hill to court and advocated for him. She told them how he had changed while in the program and that he put in the work to become a better father and man.

"I was looking at a lot of time, and I walked out of that courtroom with another chance. To this day, I carry the things they taught me in the way I

move. I put my kids first and do everything I need to do to make sure they are good. I carry the Brotherhood that I became a part of while in BU. So when I see a young father that I feel could use some help, I tell them my story and send them to BU. I owe that to them and especially Mrs. Files."

Mr. Hill expressed that he is forever grateful for BU and how they've shown up in his life with support.

"Life today wouldn't be possible if I hadn't allowed BU to mold and shape me into the man I am today; stronger, more focused, and BU Strong for life."

If you are interested in joining The Brothers United Program or have someone you want to refer : Call us at (419) 279-6297 or www.pathway-toledo.org

Perryman... continued from page 2

sary. First is policing, second is our courts, third is our jails and prisons and our laws is fourth. Each area has its own areas of concern.

Perryman: Let's start with policing.

Ghee: We keep creating police without any rhyme or reason. We don't know why we need more police. No science that says you need two police officers for every block in the city or whatever. No one's asking that question. How many do we have, why isn't this enough? How do we know this isn't too much? I think we need to take a serious look at whether our public safety model presently exists in our society's best interest when you have entire subsets of the population saying that it's not.

We know what causes violent crime. We know unemployment causes violent crime. We know lack of education increases the likelihood that you'll be engaged in criminal conduct, even if not violent, in other forms of criminal behavior. And so, we have answers. People need jobs and quality education. Why are we not investing more in those spaces instead of putting more money into the police? So, one of the first reforms that I would advocate for is - people hear 'defund the police,' and they think it means abolish the police. It does not. It means to scale back this kind of punitive public safety model and think differently about public safety. Think

about how we can do preventative issues instead of reactive because that's what the police is. So, I think communities need to consider how they allocate their resources and compare budgets and think about other ways they can utilize the money for other things that communities need.

I also think we need to demilitarize our police. There's no reason that police need tanks and bazookas and military-grade equipment for civilians. We need to ban warrior-style training, which terrifies officers and makes them believe that every encounter is likely to result in their death, that's not healthy. Also, police officers should have to carry their own liability insurance in the same way that lawyers, doctors, and most other professionals do. If they are found to have been misbehaving outside of protocols, the taxpayer should not have to pay for those payouts that they have to give to citizens, and right now, we do.

Also, police need to reform reporting mechanisms. How officer misconduct is reported by citizens and is kept in records by the police, all of that needs to be more transparent and folks should be able to access it and figure out how many complaints of misconduct that a particular officer has and of what nature and from what neighborhoods. Civilian review boards, we need it. Who's policing the police? The idea that they are policing themselves, we know just isn't true. Police departments operate like fraternities - like

a closed, exclusive club that protects itself with a code of silence. We need an independent body that has oversight to review claims of misconduct and recommend punishment.

Perryman: How about the courts.

Ghee: Judge's discretion in terms of sentencing is problematic. We know that there are sentencing disparities. Judges do and say all kinds of crazy inappropriate stuff, some of it on the record, some of it not. There's no real judicial oversight for that. Even when judges are found

...continued on page 12

Dennis Byndom... continued from page 9

needed to be more thoughtful about his kids and be a provider for his family.

"I always think about the whole thing. Brothers United was like a mentor for me. I still keep in touch with many of the guys that were in my group. Take care of your responsibilities, mean what you say and do what you mean. Keep a job and hold your family down no matter what."

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Perryman... continued from page 11

to have been misbehaving, the cases are just remanded, the cases are just reversed, but the judge doesn't get any punishment. That's a problem.

They also need to increase pipeline programs that support a diverse judiciary. We need more people from poor backgrounds, we need more people of color on the bench.

Perryman: Talk about jails and prisons, which keep elderly and sick confined after they are no longer a threat to society. Include how unaddressed violence in prisons affects people who come out and are never physically or mentally the same.

Ghee: You're right; everything you said. If you were saying it, I'd be behind you going "what he said." Jails and prisons are overcrowded and don't have adequate medical care. They don't have adequate resources for inmate enrichment. I think the other thing I want people to think about is how connected all these systems are. I can't tell you how many times

Naturalistas... continued from page 8

ing journey and this photo shoot was her first time wearing a head wrap, which was made by Eden Couture's CEO, Nicholas Harper. She went to The Kitchen Salon, located on a lower level of the Davis Building, to have her head wrapped for the photo shoot.

"I don't think I've ever thought of what head wrapping means to me, however I know the energy that it exudes especially when I see a beautiful black sista wearing one. I automatically envision a Black Woman standing tall in her beauty, head held high knowing her worth, and her identity. A radiant, royal glow with skin kissed by the sun. Head wrapping is a work of art skillfully designed to accentuate the crown of a royal daughter," said Williams.

Teena Jones and Daughter Naomi shared that "Head wrapping means protection of my identity and heritage; A sense of pride that black women share around the world."

As the evening came to a close, the final photos were captured. Darlene Moye-Whitehead posed as if the bright runway was her microphone. Poetic affirmations flowed from her as she described what head wrapping means to her: "I am a natural woman: grounded, resilient, beautiful, fabulous, bold, a queen, kind, fearless, and phenomenal!"

If there had to be a vote taking place during this photoshoot, the women in attendance would have all won! There wouldn't have been an opportunity for critiques or debates. The facts are the proof in the pudding, or pictures, as they are published in The Sojourner's Truth newspaper.

"My favorite part of the shoot is the positive energy and sense of sisterhood. These women and young girls who participate never cease to amaze me in how they support and encourage one another. I also look forward to seeing the unique styles and expressions of the current theme and dress code that each lady will bring to the shoot and every year I'm blown away." - Carla Thomas, lead photographer and visionary for the annual Naturalistas Photo Shoot.



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I've filed judicial releases that I felt should have been granted. The person served the majority of their time, they've done all these great things while they were in, there's no research that additional time will make this person less likely to re-offend and the court just says no. No rhyme or reason for not letting that person out. It's a problem.

And then laws; We pass more stringent laws, Ohio particularly. Everywhere else in the country is passing more aggressive reform laws, and we are passing stricter, harsher laws that are designed to keep people in prison for longer. We're one of the few states that haven't decriminalized marijuana. I can talk for hours about all the things we need to do; it's a lot.

Perryman: What is your perspective on community policing and its value?

Ghee: I think that the idea of community policing is worthwhile. Certainly, other scholars have advocated for this. Police are less likely to abuse or react punitively to a neighbor or someone they know. So, the idea is good, but I think that we start so many of these ideas from a place of neutrality, believing that we can move into the space with unacknowledging some of the kind of historical tensions that will make implementation difficult.

The reality is that a majority of police departments are white or majority

...continued on page 13

Anti-Racism... continued from page 4

sion. She explains, "While discourse and language don't themselves change the world, shifting how we remember and describe white violence, the topic of my workshop, can help expose the ways white supremacy hides and reproduces itself in discourse and language."

Chelsea Griffis, PhD, assistant professor in the UToledo history department, will address *Exposing and Challenging White Privilege* as her teach-in. Griffis plans to provide "actionable tools to begin or facilitate classroom discussions, while recognizing the myriad other identities also embodied by communities and people of color." Griffis' commitment to a practical approach to challenging topics is shared among the presenters of the ten sessions.

UToledo art education professor Jason Cox, PhD, an organizer of the series, quotes artist-teacher Alyssa Liles-Amponsah as saying, "Acknowledgement is the first step to change." Cox feels that "for education to meet its promise, it requires critical reflection on and confrontation of the part we educators have played in perpetuating systems that fail to provide the equity we claim to believe in. Once our flaws have been seen and acknowledged, we can begin to act and become the institutions our students need instead of the ones they have been given."

Appropriately, Cox's session later in the month will be entitled, *Crap, my curriculum is racist? What do I do?* He will share strategies for identifying how inherited racist practices infiltrate curriculum even when a teacher, like himself, does not want to be racist. Cox says, "Don't panic when you find everything you're doing is racist"; instead, just start taking little steps to make everything anti-racist.

The 10 faculty and students who have banded together to organize the *Anti-Racism Teach-Ins* as a safe space in which all participants—including themselves—can begin or continue to take small but substantial steps. White supremacy won't be cracked in ten sessions, and none of the presenters imagine that they know all the answers. The organizers hope that other presenters and topics will emerge as the teach-ins progress and the work will be ongoing.

The author is one of the organizers *Anti-Racism Teach-Ins*. She is professor of educational theory and social foundations and will be contributing *Knowing the Past Makes Sense of the Present: White Violence and School Segregation in Toledo* later in the series. The teach-ins are open to the public with a special invitation to teachers who want a safe space to work together to learn about, challenge and change white supremacy in schools.

Join in Zoom meetings, 5-6 pm Mondays and Wednesdays, August 3 until Labor Day, at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87347454267>, meeting ID: 873 4745 4267. On Facebook, follow *Anti-Racism Teach-Ins* at <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100053978557767> for the schedule and links to materials shared in teach-ins. When the coronavirus is under control and limitations on gatherings are lifted, sessions will take place at the Mott Branch Library and continue to be accessible via Zoom. The *Anti-Racism Teach-Ins* are supported by *The Sojourner's Truth*, which will make resources from the sessions available on its website.

White Too Long: The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity by Robert P. Jones

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

The Truth Contributor

Sundays just don't seem to last.

You get up, attend church, attend fellowship, rush home for dinner, maybe more church in the evening. And before you know it, Sunday's over and you're left trying to remember what you learned, to get you through the week. But maybe, says **Robert P. Jones** in *White Too Long*, it's time to examine what you learned that you don't remember.

Nearly 180 years ago, at a convention of members of the Baptist church, the issue was raised about whether there was room in Christianity for slaveholding. In the days following the gathering, Reverend Basil Manly, former pastor of the First Baptist Church of Charleston, sent out a letter demanding confirmation that indeed, a Godly man could have slaves. When his group received a swift denial, Manley and other church leaders split and formed their own organization, a move that ultimately led to the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), the country's largest Christian denomination.

And until about 40 years ago, says Jones, this pro-slavery stance and the white supremacist roots went largely unexamined by white Baptists. Politics were not always mentioned with these issues then – at least, not like they are now.

Lest we point fingers unfairly, however, Jones says that racism is not just a Southern Baptist Convention notion: the same issues crop up in Catholicism and other denominations, as well as other areas of the U.S.

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320 pages

Overall, he states that white Christianity has been the biggest, 'til-now-unchallenged reason for the propagation of white power and dominance.

So what can be done?

Rather than merely removing or destroying statues honoring white supremacists, many cities are also placing markers honoring integration and Black leaders. We can pay attention to our histories and recognize our own most complex truths. And, he says, time will also help – it has to, because our nation's souls are at risk.

The first – perhaps only – thing you'll need to know about *White Too Long* is that it's deep. Bottom-of-the-ocean deep. Like, all-13-verses-of-*"Amazing-Grace"* deep. It's not even close to what you might consider to be a casual read.

As the founder of Public Religion Research Institute and a man who grew up in the Southern Baptist church, author Robert P. Jones bases his material here on his own solid studies, as well as theology and personal background. That's all good, but the depth of the content and meaning of this information also results in ideas that circle back and back again, and that can make the mind reel in befuddlement. You may have to read a sentence (or a paragraph) two or three times to get the full impact of it, or to understand what's before or after it. This can feel like a very long sermon on a very sleepy Sunday morning.

Beware that there's controversy all over this book but in today's world, it's an absolute must-read – as long as you give yourself time for thought. If you are a theologian especially, or are fighting racism, *White Too Long* might not be long enough.

Perryman... continued from page 12

white, and there is a historical racial tension with the minority communities. I've said on multiple platforms that police have never been on the side of the black freedom struggle, from the time of slavery to Jim Crow to the Civil Rights Era to the Black Power Movement to mass incarceration. They have always been on the opposite side of black folks' freedom struggle. With that reality, and without addressing the underlying tension, I'm not sure it's possible. Can you have an authentic cross-racial relationship without any authentic engagement about racial tensions? I don't know if that's possible.

Perryman: Thank you.

Contact Rev. Donald Perryman, PhD, at drdperryman@centerofhope-baptist.org



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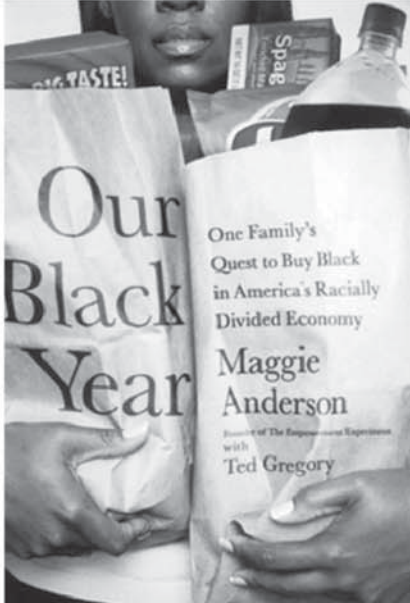
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910 Woodville Rd.
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Bishop Joseph Marshall Jr., Pastor
Emmanuel Lukebo Marshall, First Lady

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CLASSIFIEDS

July 29, 2020

Page 15

ADDITIONAL CONTRACTORS FOR UPCOMING PROJECTS

Lucas Metropolitan Housing (LMHA) and its non-profit affiliate Lucas Housing Services Corporation (LHSC) are actively seeking new Contractors for all trades to increase its pool of contractors. Projects include home renovations, general maintenance work, 24-hour emergency response, snow removal for approximately 45 lots, and other trade related work such as boiler replacements.

Minority and woman-owned businesses and Section 3 businesses are encouraged to apply. For more information and for a reservation at an upcoming informational meeting about how to do business with LMHA and LHSC, please contact Sherry at 419-259-9446 or stobin@lucasmha.org



THE TOLEDO-LUCAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT IS HIRING!

Current openings:

Nurse Practitioner- Reproductive Health & Wellness Clinic

The Toledo-Lucas County Health Department is an Equal Opportunity Employer. The Department operates in accordance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

For job descriptions and information on how to apply, please visit our website:

<https://www.lucascountyhealth.com/about/career-opportunities/>

INTERIM CITY COUNCIL POSITIONS

For those interesting in applying for the interim positions for Toledo City Council, send Judge Puffenberger a letter of interest and a resume by August 21, 2020. Please specify which position you are applying for; District 1, District 4, or At-Large. Applicants can submit their letter and resume via email (judgepuff@lucas-co-probate-ct.org) fax (419-213-4764,) postal mail (ATTN: Judge Jack R. Puffenberger, Lucas County Probate Court, 700 Adams St. Ste 200, Toledo, OH 43604,) or by dropping it off at the Lucas County Probate Court in the drop box provided. This information is also posted on the Lucas County Probate Court website: www.lucas-co-probate-ct.org.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS TRANSITION AGE YOUTH SUPPORTIVE SERVICES RFP20-LHSC015

Lucas Housing Services Corporation (LHSC) will receive proposals for Transition Age Youth Supportive Services. Received in accordance with law until August 18, 2020 at 3:00 PM ET. See documents: www.lucasmha.org; 201 Belmont Ave., Toledo, OH 43604; or 419-259-9446 (TRS: Dial 711). Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity requirements (Executive Order #11246). This contract opportunity is a Section 3 Covered Contract and any Section 3 Business Concerns are encouraged to apply.



CLINICAL DIRECTOR

Status: Independent Contractor

Date: May 28, 2020

ABOUT US:

Center of Hope Family Services, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation founded in 1997. Our mission is to improve the life outcomes of adults, children, and families in urban settings.

SUMMARY:

The Clinical Director is an independent contractor who will collaborate with the Executive Director, the Management Team and the Clinical Services Team. The Clinical Director is responsible for designing and implementing client services that address Center of Hope Family Services' mission and are provided in a manner consistent with Agency vision and values.

ESSENTIAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Recommends a system of clinical programming for achieving budget goals and assuring quality of care by adhering to relevant best practices and State mandated requirements.
2. Ensures that clinical decisions are made in the best interest of the client.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS:

1. The Clinical Director must have a master's degree from an accredited college or university in social work, psychology, or other closely related human service field.
2. Must be licensed to practice in the State of Ohio in psychology, social work or professional counseling.
3. Must have demonstrated extensive experience in the treatment and care of individuals who have mental health, substance abuse or trauma related issues and/or children who have experienced these issues or child abuse / neglect.
4. They must have prior supervisory experience.

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Area Office on Aging
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Toledo, Ohio 43609**

This description is intended to indicate the kind of tasks and level of work difficulty required of the position. The title of this job shall not be construed as declaring the specific duties and responsibilities of the position. This position description and/or job vacancy notice is not intended to limit or in any way modify the rights of any supervisor to assign, direct, and control the work of employees under supervision. The use of this particular expression or illustration describing duties shall not be held to exclude other duties not mentioned.

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Covered and Crowned: The 6th Annual Naturalista Photo Shoot

Naturalistas Don Headwraps and Face Masks for COVID 19

By Megan Davis

Soulcial Scene Contributor

Last Saturday, the sidewalk on N. Michigan Avenue in front of the The Davis Building became a red carpet runway for Naturalistas who were parking and making their way to the third floor community room for the 6th Annual Naturalistas Photo Shoot.

Located in the heart of downtown Toledo, the meeting room was transformed from a dated space with unmatched furnishings into a vibrant stage, fashioned in an array of colorful backdrops.

It was nearing sunset as the corridor filled



Carolyn Rankin

Thomas, CEO of CYT Images, had a vision that began six years ago; bringing African-American women, who have natural hair, together for a time to connect and create beautiful photos that showcase the beauty and versatility of natural hair.

"As you know, each year we have a different theme and color scheme for our Naturalistas' shoot. This year's theme is totally inspired by COVID 19. Talented seamstresses have already



Donnetta Carter

swiftly amidst the uncertainties that COVID 19, a broken government, rapid climate change and Black Lives Matter has imposed upon them.

Coko Afri, an Ohio business woman with Toledo roots, has been a seamstress for a few years now, specializing in Ankara apparel. Her business has flourished the more since COVID 19 as she pivoted from creating custom AfroCentric clothing to face masks and has added matching headwraps.

"Headwraps are just another way of accentuating the beauty of our natural hair and the matching face masks add another level of style,"

with beautiful brown-skinned women of all ages, donning all black with touches of denim, catching up and chatting about current events. You could see their smiles through their face coverings because their eyes curved upward and their voices were as a sing-a-long of soulful hits of yesterday and today- almost forgetting that they were in the midst of a global pandemic known as COVID 19.

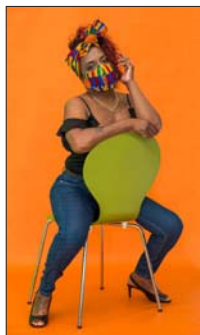
Soulful jazz was the perfect accompaniment to the event that was held from 7-9 PM. Photographer Carla

Thomas, CEO of CYT Images, had a vision that began six years ago; bringing African-American women, who have natural hair, together for a time to connect and create beautiful photos that showcase the beauty and versatility of natural hair. "As you know, each year we have a different theme and color scheme for our Naturalistas' shoot. This year's theme is totally inspired by COVID 19. Talented seamstresses have already began sewing, selling and wearing matching headwraps and why not incorporate them into our Naturalista shoot?" said Carla.

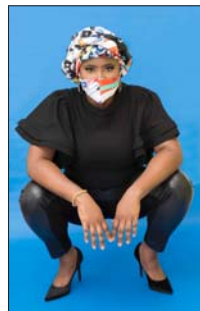
Sewing and selling indeed. If this pandemic has shown us anything, it has proven that furloughed jobs and being sheltered in isn't a burden or hurdle for everyone. Instead, it has brought forth creative artistry in music, film, fashion, literature and has birthed a new and broad brand of small, Black-owned businesses that is growing



Brittany Jones



Darlene Whitehead

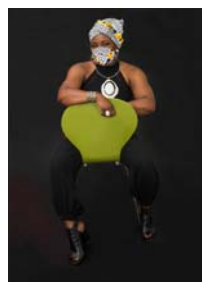


Fanell Williams



India Springs

women are discussing more now than ever before. The idea that women had to be covered from head to toe, whether a Hijab or a Holiness Doily or Chapel Veil was a Biblical, Islamic, spiritual/religious practice that male leaders spoke often about and required of women, their



Jacqueline Y. Springs

parishioners and especially of their spouses. This is something that people would not immediately consider "control" because it doesn't seem as overt as a couple living next door where the wife and children never leave the house because they aren't allowed to. While women's rights have advanced throughout the generations, many still hold covering the head as a sacred practice and carry personal convictions by religious doctrine more so than

the preference of their husbands. So although they may not do it for the male leaders in their religion or their spouses, they do it because of its presumed innocence, chastity, humility and modesty.

In more modern history, it was known that enslaved Black women were ordered to wear coverings on their heads because their natural aesthetic was considered dreadful to the masters who owned them. This was due to the long, uncomfortable transport in slave ships, coupled

with a lack of hair tools or elements to care for their highly textured hair. Those conditioned lead to matted, filthy tufts of hair that was unpleasant to view, touch or smell.

Many enslaved people shaved their heads completely by the time they touched American land. Yet there were some benefits to the head coverings; during slavery, head scarves were most often white and made of cotton or linen and they protected the hair and scalp from the beaming sun, rain and other climate elements that could damage their hair.

For some, head wrapping has also represented a form of covering and protection from things that may cause harm both physically and mentally, almost like a Super Power. Brittany Jones,

said Carla Thomas about the vivid fabrics that enfold natural curls within it.

Headwraps aren't new to the Black community. Their significance dates back pre-enslavement and has evolved over time from across the seas to America where the perception and interpretation of headwraps is as vast as the land is wide.

"When I think of headwraps, I think of control," said one Naturalista. "What kind of control?" asked another. "Patriarchal..." she replied.

Patriarchal control is most certainly a part of history that many

women are discussing more now than ever before. The idea that women had to be covered from head to toe, whether a Hijab or a Holiness Doily or Chapel Veil was a Biblical, Islamic, spiritual/religious practice that male leaders spoke often about and required of women, their

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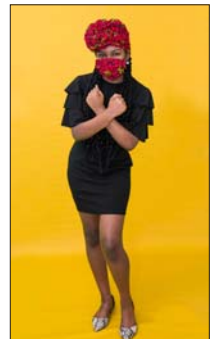
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For some, head wrapping has also represented a form of covering and protection from things that may cause harm both physically and mentally, almost like a Super Power. Brittany Jones,

who rocked all-black everything, posed with her right fist in the air-a sym-



Janice Fletcher



Laila Fitzpatrick

...continued on page 8