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Volume 65 No. 7

“And Ye Shall Know The Truth...”

March 3, 2021



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# The Jazz of Black Art

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

The Truth Contributor

*You could remove the white elements... and the music would still recognizably be jazz. But if you removed the black elements – the emphasis on improvisation, the complex rhythms, not to mention the all-important attitude that music was part of daily life – the remainder would not be jazz.*

- Laurence Bergreen



In the mid 1960s, a group of young, gifted, and Black artists came together to form Toledo's Black Arts Movement. The group, known as the Confederation of Black Artists (COBA), and later, the Creative Workshop, consisted of visual artists, poets and creative writers, choreographers, musicians, and dramatists. The group's goal was to provide a creative space to communicate the Black cultural experience at the highest level of artistic excellence.

There is, perhaps, no greater danger that confronts a community than to have its cultural memories, values, and heroes either erased or forgotten.

White pushback on Nikole Hanna Jones' Pulitzer Prize-winning 1619 Project and its adoption into educational curricula bears me out. As does the White backlash surrounding freedom of Black cultural expression in Black History Month celebrations at Toledo's St. John's Jesuit High School. Numerous other protests are occurring throughout America over inclusion of history's cold, hard facts of racial injustice in schools' educational curricula.

I spoke with internationally-acclaimed artist Johāna, co-founder of Toledo's Confederation of Black Artists (COBA) between 1968 and 1975. This article is the conclusion of our two-part conversation on his award-winning cultural expressions and Toledo's Black Arts heritage.

**Perryman:** When did you first know that you wanted to be an artist?

**Johāna:** At Pickett School in Toledo, the teacher gave us some tempera paint. I did two pieces from drapery or curtains, and he hung them on the boards along with the other students' work. From there, it grew on me, and I knew I wanted to be an artist at nine or 10 years old. I would get myself a little odd job helping people in the neighborhood and get about a quarter to do some small tasks. I would buy a pack of paper for 20 cents and use the other nickel to buy me some candy or cookies.

By the time I got to high school, we had an excellent art department and a whole school of artists, so I elevated my work. Then, in the 11th or the 12th grade, my pastor opened an account for me downtown at the art store so I could go down and get art supplies to take home.

**Perryman:** You have done so many inspiring Black cultural pieces, including the African Odyssey collection you painted or exhibited in Cameroon. My favorite work of that series is the watercolor called "Marketplace." The Black Madonna is a religious gem that you did earlier in your career. However, my absolute favorite is the series you did of the legendary American jazz saxophonist John Coltrane. Please tell me about your Coltrane series and how it came about.

**Johāna:** Former U.S. Representative John Conyers came to Cincinnati to see the Coltrane series. I was in Africa at the time, so I couldn't oblige him. When I got back, an article in the newspaper said that he personally came to town to see the series because he had strongly followed John Coltrane.

Most of the work I do emerges from interests, situations, or previous experiences. That's the same thing with Coltrane. I've always liked his music and that of Miles Davis, Pharaoh Sanders, and all those guys. That interest developed as a result of my association with jazz musicians, especially the progressive types.

The series emerged from my involvement at the Creative Arts Workshop in Toledo and listening to jazz to the extent that I was at the time. It grew to a point where I decided to do a tribute to John Coltrane as an appreciation for his work. I liked him because he had a progressive side to his music. When you create from a source as I did with Coltrane, your source becomes the basis of energy, and it pushes or forces you to respond in a way that you wouldn't if you just sat down at a desk. That was the idea behind the Coltrane Series and other ones as well; it was a push.

There was a musician, and he's a writer and music critic also, who was saying that when he first saw Pharaoh Sanders playing with Coltrane, his first impression was that Pharaoh Sanders was trying to outplay John Col-

trane. Then, later, he realized Sanders wasn't trying to outperform Coltrane. Instead, he learned that Coltrane put together musicians. All the musicians in his group were there to push the other musicians. It's like Miles (Davis), in Stanley Nelson's Grammy-nominated film *Birth of the Cool*. Miles brought Herbie Hancock and other guys. They were ages 22 and 26, and another guy in the group was 17. Miles told them, 'I'm not paying you to play what you know. I want you to play what you don't know!'

He brought them on stage to play during the performance, not playing or practicing in advance. They were all put together to push each other because it often pulls you to do things that logically you wouldn't do.

In doing Coltrane, I knew the basics and hadn't had a lot of experience, but working from Coltrane's music, would force you to step out there and do things that, if you have to think about, may not happen. That was the idea about the John Coltrane Series apart from the appreciation for his music and everything. It also served to push me beyond that creative zone that I was familiar with.

**Perryman:** How would you describe the style of your Coltrane series?

**Johāna:** To a degree, the series is a form of abstract expressionism. I have evolved to become a little bit more of a lyrical abstractionist now. So, I guess you could call it lyrical abstraction because it responds to Coltrane's compositions.

**Perryman:** Black Art icons such as Jacob Lawrence used a dynamic cubism style. Romare Bearden was a master of abstract collages.

**Johāna:** Lawrence's style is much more analytical. He breaks the composition down into shapes and forms. He uses color, movement, and space in relation to the subject in a very well-thought-out or analytical way.

Bearden is also analytical. You have paper and stuff all over the studio floor, and Bearden would look at it and figure how he wanted to use it in a composition. That requires a lot of meditation, thought, and imagination to take what's before you and then use it to create a statement or work of art out of it.

I created the Coltrane series differently. When I'm creating, I can put down 2 or 3 strokes of color on a canvas, and it begins to dictate what the next move is going to be. What I do is just work with it. I don't try to make it into something. I work with what the dictates are.

**Perryman:** How many pieces make up the Coltrane Collection?

**Johāna:** There are about 22 pieces, including the pair you have. Your canvases are approximately 3x4 each and put together make a 4x6. The remaining 20 paintings are each 4 feet wide by 5 feet high.

**Perryman:** Marvin Vines was also one of Toledo's great Black artists. How would you describe Vines' style and art?

**Johāna:** Marvin was a very dedicated artist with a realistic style, probably influenced by his experience as a mathematician and math teacher. He was very exacting anatomically. Vines was a magnificent artist, and that was the realm in which he worked.

In later works, he got heavily into Maxwell and emphasized using decorative patterns in his paintings. Part of that, though, was inspired by me.

**Perryman:** Please elaborate.

**Johāna:** I painted Coretta King at Martin Luther King's funeral using a

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# If You Don't First Succeed....

By Lafe Tolliver, Esq  
Guest Column

The ending words to the title of this article are.... Try, Try, Again! That is exactly what the GOP members are planning on doing regarding their embarrassing losses in the State of Georgia where Joe Biden took the popular vote total, received all electoral college votes and upset their political apple cart when the Democrats won both Senate seats.

Because of that of unexpected and debilitating loss of two GOP Senate seats, Mitch McConnell had to eat crow and step down as the Senate majority leader. It was a huge blow to his overblown ego and to his plans to deadstart any of now President Joe Biden's policy agenda.

Not to worry. The GOP, now totally abandoning any pretense that they have a "big" tent approach to growing their party, is in full war paint and they want to decapitate minority voters in many of the swing states that swing to Joe Biden.

The GOP malcontents have been in overdrive in scheming and devising ways by which they can get political power back in the 2024 elections. According to many news reports, the GOP is in constant churn mode of turning out legislation that will, in their opinion, stop any political impetus that the last election realized in record turnouts of college students, independents, black and Latino voters.

Especially so in Georgia where that hapless party is introducing dozens of voter related bills that will give what they believe to be "an edge up" in winning future congressional races.

Strikingly, one of those bills is to end the popular "Souls To The Polls" which allowed church goers to early vote on Sundays, right after church services let out in Georgia.

The GOP has been sniffing the political and racial air in both Georgia and around the country and they realize, albeit belatedly, that people of color are gaining in numbers and which normally means, new Democratic voters.

Rather than enact favorable policies, such as increasing the minimum wage and the Child Care Credit and providing working mothers with tax breaks for daycare and time off from work, the GOP, cynical as they are, are saying "no" to such people-affirming perks.

When you understand that GOP voters normally are steadfast about voting and registering to vote and that in a close contest, the GOP can win because of favorable gerrymandering that occurred in Republican-controlled states houses, it is imperative for them to stop the tide of black voters going to the polls.

Much credit must be given to the heroine, Stacey Abrams, for her dedication and perseverance in getting out the vote in Georgia and convincing voters in that normally red Republican state that if they vote and vote en masse, they can do wonders.

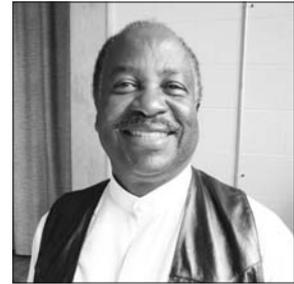
And it happened. Both Jon Ossoff and Rev. Raphael Warnock won their elections against Trump-backed candidates.

The GOP saw that as a harbinger of things to come so they are firmly invested in any means or political shenanigans that will discourage minority voters from taking the time and effort to either register to vote or to vote when the polls open.

Stripped of any veneer that what they are doing is for the best interests of its citizenry, the GOP in Georgia and other "swing states" are saying, "Yeah, we don't want black folks and other minority groups taking our place in the House or the Senate or the governor's chair!"

Their racist antics are thinly clothed in political mush, but it will give birth to dozens of court challenges by groups who see this for what it is, a desperate power play by desperate politicians who want to hang on for

dear life to their jobs and power perks. Don't kid yourself. The currently constituted GOP is not your friend. Rick Perry, the former Energy Secretary for President Trump, said that the people in Texas would rather freeze longer than they must in order to avoid any federal government intervention or assistance! Imagine those words coming from someone who is supposed to be a public servant of the people.



Lafe Tolliver

That same GOP is fighting tool and nail Joe Biden's COVID-19 relief package and especially the provision about raising the minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour to that of \$15.00 per hour.

Now, if much of the country has already indicated that they are in favor of such a pay raise (no raise since 2009), why is it that the tone-deaf GOP cannot read the handwriting on the wall?

It is because any victory that Joe Biden wins with the American public means that the GOP is diminished in its ability to provide favorable legislation and win over converts to its so called, "Big Tent."

Matter of fact, some GOP bumpkins have gone so far as to question the authenticity of the January 6 riot at the Capitol because the crowd was purportedly overwhelmingly Republican!

So, going forward in a Joe Biden administration, you will read about constant deadlocks in which obstructionist GOP members will attempt a scorched earth policy to derail anything that places the Democrats in a favorable light.

The best antidote to this shameful behavior? Vote early and vote often!

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# A Question for Black Americans : Vaccine or Body Bag?

By John E. Warren, Publisher, The San Diego Voice & Viewpoint

Guest Opinion Column

Today there is a crisis in Black America that is greater than the Tuskegee experiment itself. That experiment for more than 30 years deliberately used Black men as lab rats to test the effects of syphilis on men infected with venereal disease. It took over 30 years, but the experiments were discovered and exposed. The people conducting those experiments were all White. But some things have changed. One such change is the presence of Black scientists engaged in research affecting Black people.

Today in the case of the development of a vaccine to fight COVID-19, a female Black Scientist named Dr. Kizmekia Corbett, at the National Institutes of Health's Vaccine Research Center has led the research. She has been the lead scientist in the development of one of the two vaccines currently being used.

But Black people, who are at the greatest risk of dying from Covid 19, have the lowest rate of receiving the vaccine, it appears, for two reasons: one, we have logistical issues of appointment, locations and transportation; and two, we actually have people refusing to take the vaccine in spite of current scientific data developed by a Black scientist that proves the vaccines save lives.

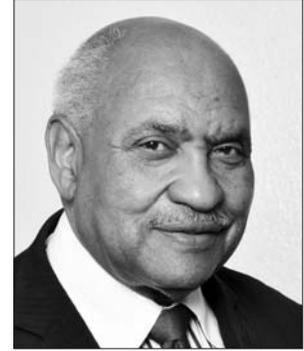
No one is thinking of forcing any of us to take the vaccine if we decide not to. But we should understand that the virus and its developing mutations, which have taken almost 500,000 lives in the United States alone, appears to come down to two choices: the vaccine or a body bag.

The body bag is what we use to remove the bodies of those who die, regard-

less of the cause. Those who refuse to take the vaccine should know that you become possible transmitters of the virus, if not affected directly yourself. This means that family and loved ones can die as a result of contact with those who have not taken the vaccine as a means of stopping the transmission of the virus.

This also means that until such time as we have full vaccinations of the entire country, those of us who have not had the vaccine yet will have to rethink our personal relationships with those close to us who refuse to take the vaccine. Let us not forget that each person has a right to refuse the vaccine, but that right must not get confused with our right to choose to live.

The choice really is between the vaccine and the body bag. We know the body bags will go to those who did not take the vaccines first, but will their refusal cause others among us to die and get a body bag also?



John E. Warren

## New COVID-19 Vaccine Resource Honors Skepticism among Black Americans

By LaTroya Hester, The Center for Black Health & Equity

Guest Column

For critically important reasons, there is a national push to persuade hesitant African Americans to become vaccinated against the virus that causes COVID-19. Miracles of modern science, the two FDA-authorized vaccines have arrived with the promise of delivering us from the grip of the pandemic.

Yet, for a community whose trust is so often met with betrayal, there is

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# COVID Vaccines: The Time Was Just Right for This Science

By Fletcher Word  
Sojourner's Truth Editor

Skeptics of the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines generally have two concerns about their effectiveness and safety. Such concerns were seemingly stoked during the previous presidential administration which, first, denied that a crisis existed, then coined the phrase "Operation Warp Speed."

So, ask skeptics, how do the vaccines work and how is it possible that they were developed so quickly?

As Dr. Mallory Williams, MD, Toledo resident and Howard University professor of surgery, scans the science and the results of the two COVID-19 vaccines currently in use, he sees nothing but good news. The efficacy of the vaccines appears apparent. The steady drop of infections in nursing homes, for example, is one clear sign of that efficacy, given that such residents were prioritized as the vaccines rolled out.

After more than 50 million doses have been injected, just since the recent inauguration, notes Dr. Williams, the results have been positive. And will continue to be.

There is no plot to harm Black folks with the vaccines, says Dr. Williams. "There is no conspiracy to kill Black people using the COVID vaccines; they wouldn't need to. We are already dying from hypertension, diabetes, obesity and other issues."

The science of the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines is indeed novel as far as treatment for a virus. The vaccines, m-RNA (messenger-RNA) are a new type of vaccine used to trigger an immune response and teach the body's cells how to make a protein to trigger an immune response in a body. "A building block for protein," says Dr. Williams.

"It is fundamentally a template to hold protein," he says.

The difference between this new type of vaccines and the traditional ones is that previously vaccines were made from the virus itself. The traditional vaccine science goes back centuries when people in various places such as Africa and Asia discovered that a bit of disease, scraped from the pustules of a diseased person, could be used to place into the body of a healthy person so that cells could be fooled into thinking that the person already had the disease and was immune from further infection.

Compared to the new m-RNA, says Dr. Williams, the smallpox vaccine, and similar vaccines developed since, are "a riskier way of developing immunity since people with weaker immune systems may develop problems."

On the other hand, m-RNA does not contain the virus, potentially much safer than traditional vaccines. These m-RNA vaccines give instructions to the body's cells to make a harmless piece of "spike" protein which will force cells to begin to build an immune response and make antibodies, simulating a natural infection against COVID-19. Thus, a body is protected against future infection without having to risk actually getting sick, even slightly, with a COVID-19 live virus.

While this is the first time m-RNA vaccines have been applied to such a virus, they are not new. Scientists have been studying and working with m-RNA vaccines for decades – which accounts for the relative speed with which the COVID-19 vaccine was completed. Cancer research, for example, has used m-



Dr. Mallory Williams

RNA to trigger the immune system to target certain cancer cells.

In 2005, Katalin Kariko, a Hungarian-born scientist at the University of Pennsylvania, and her collaborator Drew Weissman, an immunologist, uncovered the key to rendering synthetic m-RNA effective by tweaking the original formula and creating a hybrid m-RNA that could sneak into cells without alerting the body's defenses.

Such long-time work in the laboratory has meant that the process was standardized enabling COVID-19 vaccines to be developed much faster than the traditional methods of producing vaccines.

So, it was fast, but it safe, emphasizes Dr. Williams. And there is no grand plan behind all this to harm anyone.

"This ain't a plot," he says. "This is real business. This is real."

*COVID-19 Vaccine... continued from page 4*

no wonder why some African Americans have embraced the vaccines with skepticism, hesitancy, and six feet of distance. Although this "Tuskegee effect" is a current hot topic, references to medical mistrust are often discussed with a shoulder shrug and a follow-up call to move on from relics of the past. But this matter of history must not be taken lightly because not all expressions of racism are created equal.

Racism that manifests through medical bias and malpractice are distinct from other forms of racism because the injustice is inflicted directly onto Black and Brown bodies. Whether categorized as hate, indifference, or unconscious bias, such forms of social harm—put plainly—are more akin to lynching than the weighty oppression of economic disadvantage or the inconvenience of microaggressions. So, we must take seriously all side-eyes

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# Facing the COVID Challenge Together as a Community

By State Representative Paula Hicks-Hudson

Guest Column

"We have to improve life, not just for those who know how to manipulate the system, but also for and with those who often have so much to give but never get the opportunity." - Dorothy Height.

For almost a year, the world has struggled to combat the once-in-a-century COVID-19 virus that has killed more than 500,000 people in the United States and some 710 and counting here in Lucas County. Additionally, this pandemic has exposed the cracks in our healthcare system, which too often disadvantages communities of color.

For much of the pandemic, especially in the early stages, Black Ohioans saw a disproportionate share of cases, hospitalizations and deaths. To make matters worse, the state failed to implement a robust testing effort in Black communities, leading to worse outcomes for Ohioans of color.

Now, as the state continues its vaccine rollout, we again see many of the same issues negatively affecting the equitable delivery of healthcare services to communities of color. African Americans make up 27.4 percent of the population in Lucas County, but only five percent have been vaccinated to date.

The rollout of the vaccine has been hampered by politics and propaganda. The limited supply of the vaccine distributed to states based upon the political decisions by the previous administration left states and local health departments scrambling to create a system to deliver the shots to people who want them.

There are also other challenges for many who currently are eligible for receiving the vaccine. I posted a question about a month ago on social media and received overwhelming responses about the problems that seniors were experiencing to get an appointment. We heard of stories about many senior citizens who do not have access to the internet or are not tech savvy

enough to navigate the often multi-step process to schedule their appointments.

Further, the local agencies who have been assisting persons in scheduling the appointments have been overwhelmed by the demand - leading to long wait times, frustration and too many vulnerable Ohioans falling through the cracks.

Lastly, communities of color have had extremely low vaccination rates. There are a number of reasons for this. Some have pointed to the suspicion of the government, or the quickness of the approval process for the vaccines. Unfortunately, there are some who still don't believe that Covid is real. But the biggest obstacle simply is access.

Many have been trying to get vaccinated since the vaccines became available, but have not been able to register using the current system. The good news is that the federal government is increasing the vaccine supply and the Federal Drug Administration just approved another vaccine, bringing the number of approved vaccines to three.

While this development will go a long way to solve the state's issue of supply, questions remain just how local health departments and community partners will be able to effectively and efficiently administer those vaccines.

Last Saturday, the Movement solved this problem. Mostly known for their work in increasing voting participation for minorities in Lucas County, they used their network to reach people who wanted to be vaccinated. In partnership with the Toledo Lucas County Health Department and Mercy Health System, the Movement was able to vaccinate 500 people, primarily African Americans, last Saturday, February 27.

They will be registering for a second site.

Other Community organizations have also stepped up to find innovative

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Rep. Paula Hicks-Hudson

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## COVID-19 Vaccine... continued from page 5

given to new medical interventions claiming to save the day. For many Black and Brown Americans, this kind of suspicion is a front-line, protective measure.

Kizzmekia Corbett, PhD, an African American immunologist who led the coronavirus vaccines and immunopathogenesis team, stated it in best on CNN. She said:

You've earned the right to ask the questions that you have around these vaccines and this vaccine development process. Trust—especially when it has been stripped from people—has to be rebuilt in a brick-by-brick fashion. I'm going to do my part in laying those bricks.

In most cases, suspicion should be honored. It drives people to ask questions, research, and seek the information they need to make the best decisions for their health. The newest resource for understanding the COVID-19 vaccines, Better For It, was designed with this in mind. The downloadable guide, developed by The Center for Black Health & Equity in partnership with American Lung Association, invites African Americans to lean into skepticism and learn more about how the COVID-19 vaccines work. Most importantly, the resource answers the question lingering in everyone's mind: How were these vaccines developed so quickly, and can I trust them?

Decisions about health, immunization, and new vaccines should never be unduly rushed without thorough investigation. The good news is that the information is available. While the Better For It toolkit does not urge readers to take the vaccines, it does provide the information needed to further conversations about it and move readers toward making their own decision.

The toolkit may be used to supplement one's own research on the vaccines, share accurate information on social media, and get to know the contributions of African American scientists and public health advocates who are helping to bring this pandemic to an end. The Better For It toolkit also contains resources, Q&A, and links to COVID-19 webinars hosted by African American civic leaders.

# Union's Annual Black History Month Event Recognizes Honorees

Tricia Hall

Sojourner's Truth Reporter

The Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) Toledo Chapter held the 32nd annual black history month celebration. The event was held virtually on the organization's Facebook page on February 27.

"This is a virtual event, but we're still planning for an enjoyable celebration," shared Cheryl Tyler-Folsom, CBTU president.

The celebration continued with a musical selection of the Negro National Anthem, "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing," by Olivia Johnson and Emily Morin of the Toledo Opera. The event honored three individuals and an organization that has demonstrated a record of serving the community. Tina Skeldon Wozniak received the Political Action award. She has served as a Lucas County Commissioner since 2005, with several terms as president of that body, has previously served as District 5 City of Toledo councilwoman and is married with three children.

"Thank you. I'm honored to receive this award from such a prestigious organization. It means a lot because of the work that you do in our community that makes a real difference," shared Wozniak.

Micheal Alexander received the Labor award. He serves as the United Way Labor liaison and is first vice president of the Toledo NAACP.

"Thank you for this honor, for recognizing me. Thank you to United Way for the work that I am allowed to do. I am a proud member of UAW. I also want to thank my mentor, my family and friends, and my pastor for the love and support," said Alexander.

The Ohio Unity Coalition received a special recognition which was accepted by State Convener of the Ohio Unity Coalition Petee Talley. Sonia McNair of SONIA Organics, which promotes urban farming and green space, received the Community award.



Sharon Roach; Petee Talley; Shanda Gore, EdD; Erika White; Anita Madison

"Honored to be here tonight. Our work is far from over, but the work we achieved so far is remarkable. Our work is being welcomed in the community," said McNair.

The event also featured guest speaker, Shanda Gore, EdD, and welcomed over 50 views during the live event on Facebook.

"We're excited to have you here with us today. This year has been a testimony and struggle for each of us. Since 1972, we have fought for equality. I want to thank each of our sponsors for making this virtual celebration possible," said Erika White, event mistress of ceremony.

**Perryman ... continued from page 2**

technique with Elmer's glue to create some exciting patterns in her veil and the image. I gave it to Marvin and his wife as a wedding present, and he really liked it. We were good friends, and he said, "Johana, you don't mind if I use your patterns and paint technique?" I said, "No, Marvin go ahead, man." He got married back in about '71-'72, and he got into those patterns, and kept those. He didn't use the same technique as the pattern itself, but he incorporated those patterns.

A lot of his work from that point on, you can find that the execution or the image is very realistic. Sometimes they were realistic. Yet, he would also use a variety of different colors in his paintings. So, he could be somewhat impressionistic too, because he used a lot of different colors. Vines used simple colors and then would incorporate patterns in a lot of images as well. He was a good friend. I met Marvin in '66, and we had been friends ever since.

Perryman: You have painted several works for churches and community institutions also. Haven't you?

Johana: I did a series, Religious Crisis in Social Ministry at Jerusalem Baptist and I painted one of Christ for the Ascension Lutheran Church. Then Imani Temple in DC, Archbishop Stallings, he has a piece there in DC. Then there's a 6'x8' piece that sits right above the baptismal pool one

... continued on page 8

**COVID Challenge... continued from page 6**

ways to close the gap. Several churches have opened their doors to have providers give vaccines. For example, ProMedica partnered with First Church of God to get shots in the arms of parishioners.

The NAACP has also provided leadership and will monitor as the rollout continues. When I learned about the gap in vaccines and my constituents wanting the vaccine, I reached out to the governor to get a better understanding of the situation and pushed for more vaccines, especially in communities of color.

Working with the Lucas County Commissioners, our local healthcare systems and the

organizations that have authentic relationships with our community, we have a plan to fight this pandemic. But this plan is not set in stone. Everyone involved must continue to work together to reach the people. We all must understand that true communication is two-ways. We must listen as well as talk. We must go to where the need is and engage those who know first hand what needs to be done.

Dorothy Height, President of National Council of Negro Woman, understood that the voices of the people are just as valuable as the voices of the experts. As I work for you in Columbus, I know that my constituents have valuable information that helps me make the case for us. We'll get through this together.

In Loving Memory Of

## Regina "Gina" Willis -- July 9, 1964 – February 8, 2021

Regina "Gina" Willis, born July 9, 1964, finished her race and went to be with the Lord on February 8, 2021. Gina Willis is the daughter of Lula (Revels) Willis and Henry Willis, II, and is survived by three daughters: LaFonda Willis, Sharonda Willis, and Angel Pate; two grandsons, Eduardo "Champ" Adams, III and Isaac "I.J." Harvin, Jr.; one sister, Doristeen Willis; and three brothers: Lawrence Earl Willis, Alvin Willis, and Henry Willis, III. Mrs. Regina Willis was a treasure and her daughters, grandsons, family, and friends will all miss her more than words can say.

Gina Willis was preceded in death by her mother, father, two sisters, four brothers, a host of nieces, nephews, and cousins, and the love of her life, David Pate. Gina and her three girls attended Libbey High School in Toledo, Ohio. Gina was a Homemaker upon her passing and was known and admired in the Toledo community for her cooking, nurturing, warm hospitality, generosity, and lively spirit. She knew how to have fun and hosted the best family gatherings. Gina showed her love for family and friends through the meals she cooked and the hundreds of people she fed. When it came to dancing, Gina thought she was one of the Five Heartbeats or Temptations, whether she was dancing in her house, in her car, or on a dancefloor.

Gina loved and was especially gifted with children. The Head Start Program and Toledo Public and Catholic Schools recognized Gina for her involvement with the education and development of her two grandsons, I.J. and Champ. The neighborhood kids adored Gina and loved to spend time talking with her and playing and learning in her home and backyard. Gina

was also known, respected, and praised around the City of Toledo for her exceptional organizational, cleaning, and interior decorating skills. She did not like disorder or a "speck of dust" in her house.

People who met and knew Gina describe her as a "true Queen," an "angel," and "very sweet lady." Mrs. Regina Willis is beloved and was a mother figure, neighborhood aunt, and support to many. She is unforgettable in many ways and will be dearly and deeply missed. Her family will host a Celebration of Life & Legacy and a Candlelight Vigil in her honor on Sunday, Easter Day, April 4, 2021.



In Loving Memory

## Prescilla Brown Hutchens – July 11, 1956 – February 6, 2021

Prescilla Brown Hutchens, 64, of Toledo, Ohio, made her transition suddenly on Saturday, February 6, 2021. She was born July 11, 1956, to Preston and Lucille Brown.

The Family of Prescilla Brown Hutchens would like to thank all that: called, messaged, sent gifts, sent cards, donated, sent food, prayed, sent photos, and visited. We appreciate the love and support of The Indiana Ave. Missionary Baptist Church. This was a sudden loss, but your prayers lifted us. We Love you always, The Brown Family. Special thanks to all local and non-local family that made her home going royalty!



*Perryman ... continued from page 7*

in Arkansas at New Hope Baptist Church. I also did a social commentary years ago for the Economic Opportunity Planning Association.

Perryman: Thank you for helping to preserve these historical memories about our cultural identity.

In 1980 Johāna was nominated for the Corbett Award for work done by an individual artist. In 1981 he was honored by the NAACP for artistic contributions and with a feature in the Black Art International Magazine. In 1987 he was a finalist for a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship. In 1988 he was nominated for an Award in the Visual Arts (AVA).

Contact Rev. Donald Perryman, PhD, at [drdperryman@centerofhopebaptist.org](mailto:drdperryman@centerofhopebaptist.org)



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# Local Black-owned Women Business Showcase

By Tricia Hall

Sojourner's Truth Reporter

In celebration of Black History Month, a showcase of five locally-owned businesses led by black women was held on February 25 at Fowl & Fodder in downtown Toledo.

Attendees sampled tasty cuisine from Island Soul Cuisine and Hotbox Bistro, which are both owned by black women, on the main floor of the facility. There was an additional opportunity to sample sweet deserts from Be Sweet Treats and Advocado & Cheese and to view art pieces created by Art by Cyd. Be Sweet Treats is owned by Chanell Phenix, Advocado & Cheese is owned by Alisa Gafeny, Art by Cyd is owned by Cydnee Moore, Island Soul Cuisine is owned by Mikhala Bagot and Hotbox Bistro is owned by Keitha Sheares.

"I had a great time. The food was great and so was the company," explained Marshina Jones, attendee

The event was organized by HerHub, a Women of Toledo Initiative that serves as an online resource for women that want to expand the reach of their business. The mission of HerHub is to connect women, resources, businesses and organizations through an online hub that will expand her reach. HerHub is not another group, program, event or organization but an initiative that curates a connection and collaboration among others. For more information about this initiative, visit [www.419herhub.org](http://www.419herhub.org).

The event also featured advertisement for locally women-operated black-owned businesses that are associated with HerHub: Art Restoration & Construction, Elite Karate Fitness & Wellness, HotBox Bis-

tro, Mitchell Dermatology, Toledo J'Dog Junk Removal, Advocado & Cheese, Fearfully & Wonderfully Made, Simply D'Vine Boutique, Five Star Quality Cleaning, Shakhan Kelly Photography, The Ronald Group, Synergy Engagement, Diana Patton Consulting, Be Sweet Treats, Janelle Massey, Nurse Education Solutions, Matching Peace, Art by Cyd and Island Soul Cuisine.



Be Sweet Treats' Chanell Phenix



Island Soul Cuisine's Mikhala Bagot and Hotbox Bistro's Keitha Sheares



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# The Truth HEALTH



## Personalize Your Plate

By Patrice Powers-Barker, OSU Extension, Lucas County  
The Truth Contributor

National Nutrition Month® is an annual campaign created by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. During the month of March, everyone is invited to learn about making informed food choices and developing healthful eating and physical activity habits. The theme for March 2021 is Personalize Your Plate. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to nutrition and health. We are all unique with different bodies, goals, backgrounds and tastes.

We all know that what we eat is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. You don't have to be an expert to make healthy decisions. The experts on food and nutrition are Registered Dietitian Nutritionists or RDNs. They study the details of food and nutrition to help individuals and families create healthy eating plans to meet their goals within their lifestyle. Although we don't have to be experts about food, we can learn from the experts. The following details about nutrients are shared by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics to help support a healthy immune system:

- Beta carotene is found in plant foods, such as sweet potatoes, spinach, carrots, mango, broccoli and tomatoes.
- Vitamin C is found in citrus fruits such as oranges and grapefruit, bell peppers, and strawberries or foods fortified with vitamin C, such as some breakfast cereals.
- Vitamin D is found in fatty fish, eggs and milk and 100 percent juices fortified with vitamin D.
- Zinc tends to be better absorbed from animal sources such as beef and seafood, but also is in plant-based sources such as beans, nuts and seeds.
- Probiotics are "good" bacteria that promote health. They can be found in cultured dairy products such as yogurt and in fermented foods such as kimchi.

•VProtein is found in animal sources such as seafood, lean meat, poultry, eggs and plant-based sources such as beans and peas, soy products, nuts and seeds.

I am not an RDN, but I eat every day. What do I need to know? The recommendation is to Personalize Your Plate by including foods that you prefer from each food group. Including a variety of foods can help you get all the nutrients that are needed for good health. The variety of nutrients come from the five food groups: milk, protein, grain, fruits and vegetables.

Sometimes it can be a challenge to Personalize Your Plate when you live with a houseful of people. We don't all have the same food tastes or preferences. If you have many people eating around the table, take an idea from popular restaurants. Let individuals Personalize Your Plate or "build your own" recipe and meal options. Some examples include:

- Salad bowls
- Grain bowl
- Create your own quesadilla or taco
- Soup and salad
- Some healthy mix and match recommendations from the experts:
- Whole grain pasta with garbanzo beans and canned tomatoes, seasoned with basil and served with a medley of microwaved frozen vegetables on the side.
- Whole grain like brown rice or quinoa with black beans, corn, and bell pepper, dressed with olive oil and lime juice.
- Salad with lettuce, hard boiled eggs, tuna, tomatoes and olives and dressed with a little olive oil and vinegar.
- Soup using grilled or baked chicken, low-sodium broth, veggies and brown rice.

When it comes to adding vegetables to the plate, it's really not too hard to add some sliced vegetables, a side salad or heat up a can or frozen bag of

...continued on page 11

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Health Section • Health Section

A Mental Health Moment

# Alcohol-Related Disorders

By Bernadette Joy Graham, MA, LPC, NCC, Licensed Mental Health Therapist

The Truth Contributor

The month of January each year has been deemed by many as a “dry” month meaning people decide to not drink alcohol during the entire month of January. Some decide to do so due to maybe overindulging from the previous months holiday seasons, some decide as a new year’s resolution and others just to see if they have the ability to do without alcohol for an extended amount of time.

So why do people indulge in alcohol? A number of different motives for drinking alcohol include drinking to enhance sociability, to increase power, to escape problems, to get drunk, for enjoyment or for ritualistic reasons. Recent reports have indicated that the present pandemic of Covid-19 have led people to drink more often and in higher doses. People were at home unable to socialize, there was a need to escape problems of worry related to instability with losses of employment, loved ones who died from COVID-19 or other health related issues, increased stress in relationships and simply pure boredom.

Alcohol is a drink that contains ethanol, a type of alcohol produced by fermentation of grains, fruits, or other sources of sugar. It causes intoxication. Depending on the amount consumed determines the affect. Having a nice martini after work for happy hour with friends can be enjoyable. Unfortunately, after consuming a bottle or two of vodka and some beers will not only wreak havoc on your liver it impairs your ability to function, think clearly, make some not so good choices and wake up with a massive hangover.

Alcohol-related disorders according to the diagnostic and statistical manual 5 (DSM-5) which is used for medical providers to diagnose, list criterion for one to be diagnosed. Of the 11 criteria two must be met in a 12- month period. Most common criteria is alcohol taken in larger amounts over a longer period of time than intended, craving or a strong desire or urge to

use alcohol, continued use despite having persistent or recurrent social or interpersonal issues (DUI’s, domestic violence, loss of employment), building a tolerance with needing more alcohol to get the desired effects and withdrawal (anxiety, insomnia, increased hand tremor, nausea or vomiting or sweating and high pulse rate greater than 100 beats per minute.)

Alcohol consumption can be enjoyable or it can become your hell. Take a mental health moment to ask yourself which it is for you. There are reasons why consumption of alcohol is framed with legal age limits and legalities for safe quantities consumed while driving. It’s not illegal to drink alcohol over the age of 21 and while some religions regard alcohol a sin or assign moral issues, it is a personal choice and between the drinker and God, after all Jesus did turn water into wine.

If you or you know someone with a possible alcohol-use disorder seek help immediately but understand one has to want to stop consuming alcohol first and it certainly won’t happen overnight just don’t give up and be supportive.

*Bernadette Graham is a Licensed Professional Mental Health Counselor, National Certified Counselor and Certified Grief Recovery Specialist. Provide feedback or reach out at graham.bernadette@gmail.com For appointment information please call 419.409.4929 (Telehealth is available for ongoing and new clients at this time as well as in person appointments available on Tuesdays and Fridays only). Office location is 3454 Oak Alley Ct. Suite 300 Toledo, OH 43606 www.bjgrahamcounseling.com*



# Equitable Vaccine Access - VPROJECT Minority Health Committee Update

\* The Toledo-Lucas County Health Department, Neighborhood Health Association, Mercy, and ProMedica have agreed to direct at least 20 percent of vaccine supply to Black and Latinx/Hispanic populations.

\* This 20 percent is on top of existing health-care provider locations where the public can go and be vaccinated.

\* A unique vaccine registration link will be sent out for people to register at the locations that are part of the equitable vaccination plan. This link will not be made public through the Health Department’s website and normal communication process. Instead, this link will be sent directly to organizations and individuals who are part of, or work with, the communities

of focus.

Action Needed: Spread the Word:

There will be an Equitable Vaccination clinic on March 8th, 2021 from 8:00 AM- 6:00 PM at the UAW Hall on Ashland Ave. ProMedica and the Health Department will operate this particular vaccination clinic.

Personalize Your Plate... continued from page 10

vegetables. While the weather is still cool, make sure to heat up the oven and roast them.

While my standard go-to is any combination of root vegetables (carrots, onions, sweet potatoes, turnips, beets, potatoes, etc.), any single or combination of vegetables taste good. I finally got around to roasting cauliflower and everyone in my household loved it.

Here’s how easy it is: Heat the oven to 450 de-

grees. Take one large head of cauliflower (wash first) and break it into smaller pieces. In a large bowl, mix the pieces of cauliflower, 2 tablespoons olive oil, about 4 cloves of chopped garlic, a little bit of salt and pepper and your choice of seasonings (try a teaspoon of one of the following: paprika, rosemary or red pepper flakes). Mix until evenly combined. For easy clean up (but not required), cover a baking sheet with either parchment paper or foil. Place cauliflower in a single layer on the baking sheet. Roast for 15 minutes

and then stir. Continue roasting for another 10-15 minutes until tender and starting to brown at the edges. Serve immediately.

My take-away from roasted vegetables? If everyone at my house liked roasted cauliflower, there are probably other recipes we’d like that we haven’t even tried yet. What’s a healthy food you’ll try this month?



**Bernadette Joy Graham, LPC, LLC**  
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# Natural Superfoods to Boost Immunity During Rough Times

*Special to The Truth*

A strong immune system can help you stay healthy, which is especially important during cold and flu season and the ongoing pandemic.

To strengthen your immunity this winter and beyond, consider relying on the unique benefits of propolis, a natural bee product collected from the buds, leaves and stems of plants. With its antiviral, antibacterial and antifungal properties, it's been used as a natural remedy for centuries. Here's a bit more about what propolis is and how to maximize its benefits.

- **Consume propolis:** It's important to know that propolis needs to be extracted through a complex method to consume. Consider incorporating a product such as BEE&YOU Water Soluble Propolis 15 percent Extract, which uses a patented and awarded extraction technology. This particular extract has three times more antioxidant and antibacterial activity than the highest-grade Manuka honey and has 80 times more antioxidant than pomegranate juice. Compared to similar products, BEE&YOU Water Soluble Propolis 15 percent Extract has a minimum three times more phenolics and flavonoids. It has a natural taste and is free of drugs, pesticides, GMOs, gluten, alcohol, artificial flavorings and colors, and sweeteners, making it convenient for any diet. Simply add 20 drops to your favorite drink daily. Or, for a chewable option, try the brand's Royal Jelly Bee Pollen Propolis Tablets, which in addition to boosting immunity and energy, support cognitive, cardiovascular and digestive health.

"Though it's the strongest natural antioxidant, many people are unfamiliar with propolis. However, adding this superfood into your daily routine can help you stay healthy year-around," says Dr. Asli Samanci, a food scientist and the founder of BEE&YOU, who developed an award-winning extraction technology for propolis to cure her five-year-old son's autoimmune illness.

- **Take propolis wherever you go:** Propolis is such a strong antiviral and antibacterial bee product that Dr. Asli Samanci suggests taking it with you wherever you go. For an antioxidant-rich, detoxifying and multi-effect snack, consider this quick delicious recipe: mix 1

tablespoon apple cider vinegar, raw honey, 1 teaspoon cinnamon, 1 teaspoon ginger, 1 teaspoon turmeric and 10 drops of propolis into yogurt. These ingredients, when taken together, have a synergistic effect. Plus, ginger, apple cider vinegar and turmeric are good sources of vitamin C. Or, carry BEE&YOU On-The-Go Immune Support & On-The-Go Detox packs in your bag, which combine the above ingredients.

- **Use it as a natural remedy:** Even with strong immunity, it can be easy to pick up a bug that gives you a sore throat, particularly during cold and flu season. Propolis is like a natural barrier for your throat against viruses and bacteria. For fast recovery and relief, keep BEE&YOU Propolis Raw Honey Throat Spray on-hand, which provides antiviral and antibacterial activity to protect and soothe sore throat while boosting immunity, and can also be used to relieve allergy symptoms.

- **Add superfoods in your diet:** "We are what we eat. 50% of our health is related to our diet," says Dr. Asli Samanci.

It's very important to have a balanced diet with enough vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, amino acids, proteins, fiber, enzymes, lipids, and carbohydrates daily. Include natural superfoods like artichokes, onions, broccoli, quinoa, kale, black garlic, berries, propolis, royal jelly, pollen and raw honey. These superfoods are rich in essential amino acids, vitamins (A, D, E, K, C and B groups), and minerals like zinc, magnesium, selenium, iron and calcium, plus they have antioxidant effects.

100% natural BEE&YOU superfoods are traditionally-sourced, organic and fair trade. With every purchase, the company gives back to support sustainable beekeeping. To support your immune system naturally and for wellness advice visit [beeyou.com](http://beeyou.com). You can also receive a 25 percent discount using the code: BNY25.

Immunity-boosting natural products have become more important than ever. Be sure to include superfoods in your diet to maintain optimal wellness and health during these rough times.

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# *Raceless: In Search of Family, Identity, and the Truth About Where I Belong* by Georgina Lawton

## *Surviving the White Gaze: A Memoir* by Rebecca Carroll

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

The Truth Contributor

Who are you?

That's a question some people never ask themselves: seemingly intuitively, they know the answer at birth and they don't think about it again. Then there are those who struggle with knowing until their last breath. Still others have stories to tell about their search to learn who they are. Read on...

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304 pages

c.2021  
Simon & Schuster  
\$26.00 / \$35.00 Canada  
320 pages

One big secret-not-secret lies at the heart of *Raceless* by Georgina Lawton.

Born after a long labor in a London hospital in 1989, Lawton was the child of a (white) British father and a (white) Irish mother, and with her black hair and deep brown eyes, she "was not the baby they had been expecting." To save face, her conception, the result of a one-night stand, wasn't talked about, and her curly hair and brown skin was blamed on a genetic quirk on her mother's side. End of story.

Lawton was raised with love, never questioning anything until four years ago, when she took a DNA test that indicated Nicaraguan ancestry.

Her father had died by then, and her mother refused to discuss it.

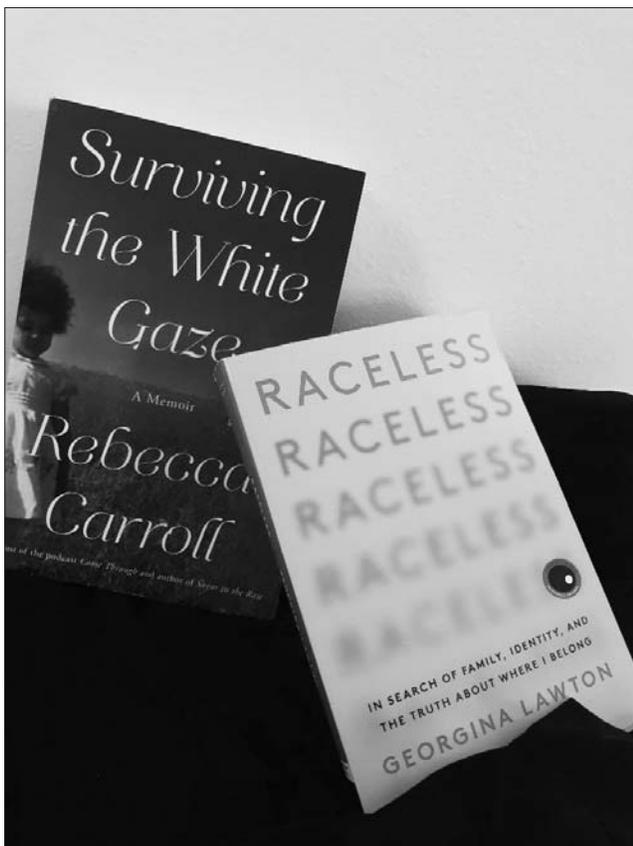
The frustration and the not-knowing sent Lawton on a round-the-world excursion, from Great Britain to Nicaragua to the U.S., South Africa, and elsewhere, in a search for racial identity. This book is the result: a thoughtfully-written, beautifully-told look at Blackness, culture and love. It's a story that sometimes reads faintly like a travelogue, but one in which the search is not for interesting sites, so much as it is for insight, making this a quietly persistent, personal, and wonderful story to enjoy.

Like Lawton, **Rebecca Carroll** grew up in circumstances that were unique: as a little girl, she was literally the only Black person living in her small New England town. In *Surviving the White Gaze*, she writes about a picture-perfect childhood, the beliefs she was raised with, a feeling that there was something amiss, and her ultimate reckoning.

The story of how she was born and entered her family's lives was something Carroll knew from a very early age. Unlike Lawton's family, Carroll's parents never hid anything from her; she was told the names of her birth parents and she knew some of the woman's close relatives so it's a bit of a surprise that meeting her (white) birth mother was rather anticlimactic. Still, that meeting and the subsequent relationship they forged left Carroll walking a long, fine line between two mothers, and looking for the identity she craved all along.

*Surviving the White Gaze* is good: it's full of nostalgia for anyone over 50 and it perfectly explains the inner turmoil and delicate balance of straddling two worlds while searching for place. Also, though, it's heavily peopled and the number of names you'll need to keep track of can be a challenge. Just beware, and take this thoughtful, thought-provoking memoir as it comes.

Then, once you've devoured these two books, there's good news: in the last few months, many authors have taken this journey of identity and are willing to share, no matter who you are.



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# NAACP Recognizes Black History Month; Honors Local Heroes

*Sojourner's Truth Staff*

The NAACP is well known for a rich history of working "to ensure a society in which all individuals have equal rights without discrimination based on race," as the organization's Vision Statement says.

On Thursday, February 25, the NAACP Toledo Chapter recognized Black History Month by honoring four local individuals whose contributions to the community have been just as important to this area as the big national names of the past – a Thurgood Marshall or Fanny Lou Hamer, for example – have been to the country.

Newly elected president of the Toledo Chapter, Rev. Willie Perryman, opened the ceremony at the Toledo Lucas County Port Authority by praising this year's Black History Month's honorees for "their accomplishments and dedication to our community."

This year's honorees are: Gwendolynn Gregory, RN, director of Nursing with the Toledo Lucas County Health Department; Robin Reese, executive director of Lucas County Children Services; Claudia Sebree Pressley, co-founder and owner of Aunt Minnie's Food, Inc. and Thomas Winston, president and CEO of the Toledo Lucas County Port Authority.

All four honorees were present for the ceremony and received their plaques acknowledging the occasion and their achievements.

Gregory, who earned both her masters in business administration and master's degree in nursing from Spring Arbor University in Michigan, worked many years as a floor nurse in the Medical Intensive Care Unit at the University of Toledo Medical Center before moving on to nurse manager.

She served as the Chief Nursing Officer at the State Hospital in Toledo overseeing about 136 employees during a time when the hospital was taken out of immediate jeopardy status and passed its Joint Commission Accreditation under her leadership and direction.

Reese, who earned her undergraduate degree in sociology from The Ohio



L to R - Thomas Winston, Gwendolynn Gregory, Rev. Willie Perryman, Robin Reese, Claudia Sebree Pressley, Micheal Alexander

State University and her masters in social work from the University of Toledo, has been with Children Services since 1984 rising from case worker to manager of the Placement Department and eventually up the ladder to executive director in 2016.

Sebree Pressley, and her mother Minnie Sebree, founded Aunt Minnie 29 years ago becoming the first women of color to bring frozen food products to USA grocery shelves. The task was never easy but with passion, creativity and determination, the two women kept pushing and kept driving forward, never being content with "no" for an answer.

According to one testimony to their determination, Aunt Minnie and her daughter Claudia recipe for success included "dreaming big, creating amazing products, being persistent, never accepting the word no and always doing it with a full portion of love."

Winston, a native of Chicago, IL, earned his undergraduate degree in economics and philosophy from Ohio Wesleyan University and his MBA from Loyola University Chicago. After several leadership positions in various business capacities with companies such as Owens Corning; Pfizer, Inc. and Nuveen Investments, he joined the Port Authority in 2010 as vice president and chief financial officer.

Winston was promoted to president and CEO in September 2019.

The national NAACP organization was founded in 1909 and currently has approximately a half million members around the world. The Toledo chapter organization is led by Rev. Willie Perryman who assumed the leadership role recently from Ray Wood who had led the chapter for nine years. Micheal Alexander, the first vice president, and Anita Madison, communications chairperson, also attended the ceremony at the Port Authority.



Ray Wood, Rev. Willie Perryman, Micheal Alexander

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Thomas Winston, center, and his staff at the Port Authority