

The Sojourner's Truth

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Volume 82 No. 5

“And Ye Shall Know The Truth...”

February 14, 2024

Local Historians Spotlight Memorable Events!



Shirley L. Green, Author, *Revolutionary Blacks*



Robert Smith, African American Legacy Project



“We as Black people have to tell our own stories. We have to document our history. When we allow someone else to document our history, the history becomes twisted, and we get written out. We get our noses blown off.”

—Erykah Badu, musician, actress and producer

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Setting the Record Straight on an Important Piece of Black History

By Ben Jealous

Guest Column

With the start of Black History Month, I brace myself for the mis-telling of Black History yet again.

In schoolhouses and everywhere the stories are told, a persistent myth shows its ugly head: the ridiculous notion that great Black leaders are not just exceptional but exceptions.

It is an idea rooted in the ahistorical and unnatural misperception that the most notable Black Americans were superhumans that sprung forth from collective misery. It discounts the many, many Black leaders who were – and are – the children and grandchildren of courageous leaders in their own right.

Paul Robeson was a phenomenal actor, orator, singer, athlete, and activist. The family that produced him might be even more impressive. His father escaped enslavement to earn two college degrees and become a prominent minister. His mother was part of the Bustill family, who were famous abolitionists and included Grace Bustill Douglass, the crusading abolitionist and feminist.

Kamala Harris's path to the vice presidency began as a transformative district attorney. She refused to pursue the death penalty, and shifted her department's punitive focus away from sex workers and squarely onto sex buyers and traffickers. She both provided a model for the movement to elect more Black and progressive district attorneys and spawned the national training institute for female candidates known as Emerge America. Vice President Harris would readily admit there is no explaining her uncommon courage without account-



ing for her civil rights activist parents and her education at the very university that produced Thurgood Marshall.

Martin Luther King is perhaps Black America's best-known leader. His grandfather was himself a crusading Black Baptist preacher and the first president of the Atlanta branch of the NAACP.

Whitney Houston became an iconic star of radio and the silver screen. Her first cousin was Dionne Warwick. Through Warwick, Houston had close, life-shaping relationships with other celebrated female singers and actors like her "honorary aunt" Aretha Franklin, godmother Darlene Love, and close friend Cicely Tyson.

Malcolm X is America's most famous Black nationalist. Before him, his father Earl Little was a Black nationalist Baptist preacher who organized for Marcus Garvey. Harassment by the Ku Klux Klan forced the Littles to relocate from Omaha, Nebraska to Lansing, Michigan, where Earl was murdered by a Klan-like white supremacist group.

Stacey Abrams rose to become the first woman leader of a party in Georgia's legislature and the most impactful voting rights activist of the 21st century. Her parents were courageous civil rights activists and her father was among the youngest leaders of the Hattiesburg boycott in Mississippi.

Middle Tennessee claims a famous political father-son pair in former Congressman and Senator Albert Gore, Sr. and former Senator and Vice President Al Gore. But western Tennessee saw its own confrontational and crusading

... continued on page 10



CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH and the Leaders of Tomorrow

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A Beacon for Two Decades: Celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the African American Legacy Project & Museum of Northwest Ohio

By Asia Nail

The Truth Reporter

In the historic Dorr Street Corridor, where the echoes of history whisper through time, the *African American Legacy Project (AALP) & Museum* stand as a testament to the enduring legacy of the African diaspora, weaving together the resilience, triumphs and untold stories that have helped shape northwest Ohio.

As we embrace a future where equality reigns supreme, our Black community stands on the threshold of a transformative era—one marked by the triumphant unfolding of narratives, written and told by those who have lived them.

Guided by the dedicated leadership of *Executive Director Robert Smith* and a devoted seven-member governing body, the *African American Legacy Project (AALP)* has been a transformative force since its establishment in 2004. Going beyond the traditional role of history preservation, this 501(c)3 organization sparks a vibrant flame, fostering intellectual, socioeconomic, and participatory growth within countless black communities.

Tracing the roots: Celebrating 20 Years of Impact

In the sacred corridors of the African American Legacy Project & Museum located at 1326 Collingwood Blvd, the resonance of history is not confined to

the past; it is the marrow that feeds the bones of our future.

As we celebrate the AALP's 20th anniversary, we are not merely witnesses but active participants in a living legacy. "I remember a time when our grandparents and great-grandparents would sit us around the dinner table weaving tales of the past," recalls Smith.

"It felt like a cherished secret shared with family. Many agree that is how it feels here when you visit the AALP museum."

That's the sentiment that washes over you as you step into the museum's embrace — a longing for the tangible warmth of Grandpa's tales, or a yearning for the depth of connection that you only feel when Mom smiles reminiscing about her wedding day. Those stories have a magic to them, connecting us to our roots in ways that make history come alive.

"Dr. LaRouth Perry had a pivotal role in shaping the AALP," explains Executive Director Smith.

LaRouth Perry, warmly known as "Dr. P" here in Toledo, embodies a legacy of compassion and academic excellence. Holding a Ph.D. in American Culture, she has dedicated her life to education, touching thousands of students



LaRouth Perry, PhD



Robert Smith

...continued on page 10



Paula Hicks-Hudson
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– Paula Hicks-Hudson

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Shirley Green: A Gifted Historian Tells a Great American Story

By Fletcher Word
The Truth Editor

"If you are going to do history, you need to do history right," said Shirley Green, PhD, historian and author of a new book, *Revolutionary Blacks: Discovering the Frank Brothers, Free-born Men of Color of Independence*.

When Green was doing this particular history and doing it right, she discovered things about her own family's history that delighted her, to be sure. Some degree of shock, however, was mixed in with that delight.

Green has had numerous accomplishments in her life. A former police officer, she was Toledo's first ever female police lieutenant. She served as the City Safety Director during the Mayor Mike Bell administration. She has also earned a doctor of philosophy degree in history from Bowling Green State University and is currently an adjunct professor of history at the University of Toledo and Bowling Green State University

Now, above all, she is an historian and an author, someone who has drawn on her own family's history and oral tradition to pen a work about the experiences of an African American family that was free well before the Revolutionary War.

The Frank brothers – William and Ben – are Green's ancestors on her mother's side. The brothers fought in the Revolutionary War, as Green was to discover, with a Rhode Island regiment. Eventually, Green's mother wound up in Ohio, but she knew from the older generation that the family had roots, not only in Rhode Island, but also in Nova Scotia, Canada.

Green had always assumed, as had her mother and aunt, that her Nova Sco-



Thomas Henry Franklin, Green's great grandfather

tia ancestors had arrived in Canada after escaping from slavery. There are in fact a number of Canadian cities and towns where settlements for former enslaved people were established. Those fleeing slavery were prompted to cross the border especially after the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 which enabled slave owners and bounty hunters to chase their slaves anywhere in the U.S. and imposed criminal penalties against those helping them.

Ontario towns such as London, Chatham, North Buxton, Windsor and Toronto established such settlements. So, it was natural to assume that the Black folks in Nova Scotia also ended up there as a result of the mid-19th century flight.

Green knew of her Nova Scotia connections primarily because of Thomas Henry Franklin, her great grandfather, himself a Nova Scotian. Franklin had the opportunity to pass along the tale of the family's travels – in part, the role that two brothers, William and Ben Frank, played in those travels in the late 18th century – to a local Nova Scotia historian in the late 1920's when Franklin was in his 70s.



Black Loyalists settlements map

...continued on page 19



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Happy Black History Month



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-Frederick Douglass

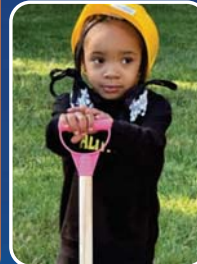
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Toledo Urban FCU Launches Programs to Fight Housing Disparities

By Dawn Scotland
The Truth Reporter

The Toledo Urban Federal Credit Union has launched two new programs: a **down payment assistance program for homebuyers** and **low interest loan program for home repair contractors**. The two programs are in collaboration with the Fair Housing Center and are open to the community with the goal of combatting housing disparities.

In 2008, The Fair Housing Center initiated legal proceeding against Fannie Mae, The Federal National Mortgage Association, Arguing that, during the housing crisis, Fannie Mae had maintained and marketed its foreclosed homes in predominantly white neighborhoods, while leaving black-owned homes in disrepair.

In 2022, Toledo's Fair Housing Center secured about \$755,000 out of a total \$53 million settlement with Fannie Mae. Since then, the agency has funded a number of programs in the area to address those areas most hit. Now the center is funding the two new programs at TUFCU.

The **down payment assistance program** provides applicants of low to moderate income, that are eligible and approved for a mortgage, the ability to receive up to \$5000 in assistance for the down payment of their first home. This is a grant provided by the program - those who receive the grant do not need to pay the money back.

"The way the economy is going [people] really don't have a lot of extra dollars to put up. This is a way to offset that cost that you would be having to try to save up," said Suzette Cowell, CEO and founder of Toledo Urban Federal Credit Union. The hope is to capture as many people as possible who need assistance in home buying.

The **low interest loan program for home repair contractors** provides business owners with needed capital to complete home repair projects. "It allows contractors to get dollars to pay for the upfront cost of [home repair projects]," stated Cowell. Businesses and contractors must meet eligibility requirements. To apply or learn more about these programs call Toledo Urban Federal Credit Union at 419-255-8876 and speak with Jamezz or Warren.

Last month, the Black-owned Toledo Urban Federal Credit Union opened its doors to its second location at the former Fifth Third Bank on Monroe Street. The credit union, which has been in existence since 1996, services the predominantly Black central city neighborhood and has been in operation for 28 years, servicing thousands. This feat is momentous in America where there are, in total, only 32 black owned financial institutions in the country. In the state of Ohio, the only other black owned bank is in Columbus, OH. (source: Businessinsider.com)

"[The new location] is doing very well," said Cowell. "We have people coming in and joining and happy for what they are seeing." The second branch will expand the work that the credit union is already doing in their ongoing service to the Black community.

Founding the credit union did not come without struggles and opposition.

"We work so hard to make sure Toledo Urban survives," reflected Cowell. In 1992, the credit union in its planning stages held a meeting with

...continued on page 16

Please join State Rep. Elgin Rogers, Jr in celebrating the difference makers in our community, during Black History Month!!

State Rep. Elgin Rogers	Dr. Vernon Sykes	Art Tatum	Daisy Smith	Erik Johnson
Johnnye Van Buren Wamsley	David Fleetwood	Rev. I.J. Johnson	Wayman Palmer	
Edrene Cole	Jon Hendricks	Crystal Ellis	Charlon Dewberry	Mark and Faye Lyons
Ella P. Stewart				

Black History Month is an opportunity to identify and acknowledge the contributions that African people have made throughout history!

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Black History: Hidden In Plain Sight

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

The Truth Contributor



Toledo has an incredible music history, sometimes hidden away, but not yet forgotten.

- James C. Marshall, author

What elements shape Toledo's essence or unique identity?

In the foreword to *Tatum's Town: The Story of Jazz in Toledo, Ohio*, James C. Marshall noted the city's "blue-collar roots and lack of majestic landscapes, devoid of the urban, cosmopolitan sophistication found elsewhere," but aptly noted, "Yet, [Toledo] still has a stellar cultural landscape."

Marshall perfectly encapsulates Toledo's essence - a city that "for her size and weight," has more than her share of great talent. Yet despite its rich cultural landscape, Toledo has a complex relationship with our artistic talents.

Anthony Pattin, a Toledo-born pianist, carved out a distinguished 32-year career as a professor, soloist and chamber musician in Birmingham, Alabama, before returning to his roots in 2019. His career has been marked by performances with the Toledo Symphony Orchestra, appearances at prestigious venues like Carnegie Hall, and tours across the globe.

Despite his international success, Anthony Pattin's legacy in Toledo reflects the city's broader struggle to fully appreciate its homegrown talents.

I caught up with Pattin to discuss his career, the musical heritage of Toledo, and the city's recognition of its artists.

Perryman: The jazz genre is usually highlighted when discussing Toledo's great musical heritage. Yet, you are a classical piano icon.

Pattin: My career has focused primarily on classical music, but I'm a versatile musician. I have played a lot of genres other than classical music. I never really got into the jazz scene, but I was able to play for people who wanted

jazz. I was able to play in combos and stuff like that. But no, the strength of my background has been in classical music, and it still is, even though I do church music, which is still affiliated with the church.

Perryman: Talk about Toledo's great artists.

Pattin: Of course, Art Tatum is a much better representative of Toledo, Ohio, than anybody as far as a legend, but then, of course, that story has been told repeatedly, but never enough in Toledo. The few little tributes here in Toledo are disgraceful, especially the little thing out at Huntington Center. It's not worthy of such a significant figure in jazz.

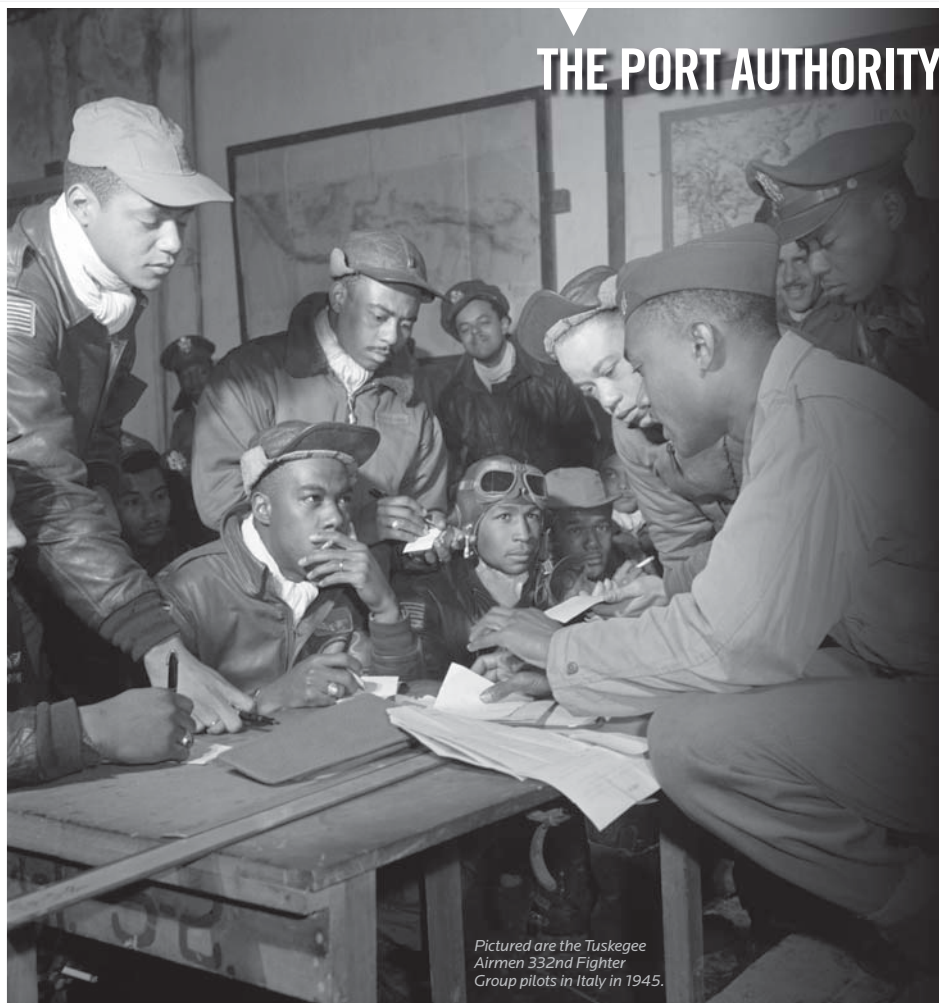
Art Tatum is the gold standard. It's a shame that Toledo doesn't have a real monument to him. The minimalist effort on City Park, I wonder if they'll ever get that presentable.

Perryman: Do we underappreciate our musicians in Toledo?

Pattin: I felt more appreciated when I didn't live here anymore because they were always calling me to come back to do something with the symphony or at the university. I did know about Jon Hendricks because of the jazz program out at Toledo University at his direction.

Ike Stubblefield, a legend, made the Hammond organ really a jazz instrument. Of course, Murphy's Place was a staple of Toledo. Jean Holden is a veteran jazz lounge singer, and her place, Jean's Place, was once the place to be.

If you're going to talk about music, you have to also talk about gospel music, *...continued on page 17*



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Romules Durant... Where Art Thou?

By Lafe Tolliver, Esq

Guest Column

Tick...tock...tick...tock...the clock is signaling for Romules Durant to stand up and be counted.

Exactly where is Romules Durant, EdD, the chief cheerleader for Toledo Public Schools? Where is he regarding making a public statement regarding the dismal reading scores of kids in K-4th grade?

According to the recent state report card on TPS, only one in four kids in K-4 grades are reading at their grade level. The other three?...Lost In Space... unless there is a revolution as to how TPS creates, attacks and sustains a reading and comprehension plan that will produce tangible results for those youngsters who are depending upon a public school to give them a fighting chance in life.

Let's not kid ourselves. It is at age six (or even younger) that if the reading bug has not bitten you, there is a strong correlation between poor reading skills and negative social consequences.

Yeah, reading is that fundamental to acquiring any success in your later years of life including successful job retention, college admissions and just knowing "stuff" that will allow you to properly negotiate the hills and valleys of simply just living.

When I first read that report card on TPS regarding all those kids failing in basic reading skills, you can only wonder why TPS parents and concerned educators are not demanding better results...or else, as a condition for the continued employment of Romules Durant at TPS.

Now, don't get me wrong. It appears that Romules Durant is a swell guy who loves wearing his TPS letters on the collars of his shirts. Fine and dandy! It also appears that Romules Durant is a great Rah! Rah! guy for TPS. Fine and dandy!

But what is not cool or fine and dandy is that TPS has for many years being woefully deficient in preparing young kids to read and without that basic skill being 'nailed' by those kids, I see nothing but frustration and failure in their lives.

Sure, some kids by dint of mere effort and a positive family environment or a positive reading mentor can overcome obstacles, but where is the hard driving



school system which has made reading to your grade level, or better, a number one priority?

When failing kids are passed on to the next grade due to a 'social' promotion, no one benefits from such a farcical approach to education. Alarm bells should be blasting at full measure when a K-1 teacher or even a Junior high school teacher notices that LaShonda or DeMarcus are fumbling to read, "Jack and Jill went up the hill to fetch a pail of water."

Is there any complicity with an underwhelmed teacher's union that sees failure but looks the other way because it is easier to opt out and let LaShonda or DeMarcus fail rather than to take the time to intervene and demand better?

So, in the spirit of helping the clueless TPS school board, who is ultimately responsible to their client, the public, for making sure that their employee, Romules Durant, tows the line and is driven by educational excellence, I propose the following to Romules Durant for immediate implementation so the image of TPS being in the dredges regarding improving reading skills for K-4, can be improved.

(1) The development of a job title for a Reading Czar for TPS. This non-nonsense person is empowered to review all classroom performances of teachers in grades K-4 and make mandatory policy changes so that kids on the edge are recognized and are salvaged before it is too late. This Czar needs to come from outside of the TPS teaching corps.

If the teacher or the reading curriculum is not up to par, that teacher is so noted and is give remedial instructions as to how to teach reading and comprehension for those affected grade levels. All parents must buy into this revolution if it is to succeed.

(2) If it is discovered that the reading materials and attendant helps are not sufficient for the task at hand, they are to be discarded and new approaches are to be implemented forthwith. Thinking outside of the box is required.

(3) Romules Durant is to run "interference" with any overbearing TPS union so that they are not in the driver's seat on this mandate. We cannot afford to have a union that is hostile to change when it involves the education of kids and especially so of those who are already considered marginal by this society.

(4) In the event that the TPS union was to take umbrage or offense at such a radical position, the school board must lock horns with the school union and remind the school union that the mission of TPS is to educate and not to procrastinate and to kowtow to union reps. If they do not like it, let them strike!

(5) Structural changes must be implemented at the seemingly hidebound TPS and the union so that the parent is seen as an equal and valuable partner in the education of their children. Yes, lazy parents must be challenged to do better.

(6) If the above recommendations or something radically similar is not instituted within 120 days, parents need to "pack out" TPS meetings and not ask but demand change, for if not, the same status quo will be perpetuated; and ten years from now, TPS will be "crowing" about getting C's and D's on their state report card and the reading fundamentals for K-4 will remain static and in the dumpster.

Contact Lafe Tolliver at tolliver@juno.com

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PLEASE READ CAREFULLY: IN ORDER FOR YOUR ABSENTEE BALLOT TO BE COUNTED, you may hand deliver your absentee ballot to our office prior to Election Day, or by 7:30 p.m. on Election Day. You may also utilize the drop box located at 3737 W. Sylvania Avenue in the back of the parking lot. If mailed, the return envelope must be postmarked by the day before the election (March 18th) and received by the Board of Elections by the fourth day after the election.

NOTICE TO ALL VOTERS - NEW ID LAWS

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Ben Jealous... continued from page 3

former Congressman Harold Ford, Sr. followed by the diplomatic, incisive, and consensus-building former Congressman Harold Ford, Jr.

From the time he started preaching at the age of four, Reverend Al Sharpton's early years were shaped by the mentorship of Black leaders like Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., James Brown, and the incomparable Jesse Jackson. But it was his mother Ada Sharpton's work that inspired her son's founding of the National Action Network. Mrs. Sharpton rose from poverty to power as a prominent civil rights activist in New York City's outer boroughs and became president of Mothers in Action.

Fifteen years ago, I was named the youngest national president in the history of the NAACP. My grandmother Mamie Bland Todd trained future US Senator Barbara Mikulski as a social worker early in her career. In researching my latest book, I followed my own ancestry back to my grandmother's grandfather. In the late 1800s, Edward David Bland led Black Republicans into coalition with former white Confederate soldiers to form a third party that took over the Virginia state government. Known as the Readjusters, the bipartisan political movement won all statewide elected offices and controlled the Commonwealth of Virginia from 1881-85.

In that time, they abolished the poll tax and the whipping post; radically expanded Virginia Tech and created Virginia State University; and readjusted the terms of the Civil War debt to save the free public schools and take the state from a financial deficit into a surplus.

Parentage and family connection are not and never should be a prerequisite for leadership in our country. But we can still recognize that one of the greatest traditions in Black leadership is Black leaders who raise Black leaders.

Some of those leaders inspire with their art; others with their activism; many with both. The historical arc they help form – which sometimes wavers but ultimately bends towards justice – would not be possible without that tradition.

So, if it occurs to you that you do not know enough about how your ances-

tors might have led, get curious and do some research. You might just find an interesting and inspiring piece of family history.

Ben Jealous is executive director of the Sierra Club, former CEO of the NAACP, professor of practice at the University of Pennsylvania and author of "Never Forget Our People Were Always Free" and "Reach: 40 Black Men Speak on Living, Leading, and Succeeding."

African American Legacy Project... continued from page 4

through programs like Upward Bound and Toledo Excel.

"Dr. LaRouth Perry authored the mission, statement for the AALP which will always serve as our guiding principles," he adds.

"I am forever grateful for her vision. She saw the future need for this organization within our community and her words breathed life and direction into it."

As Smith tells me the story of how it all began, I smile, envisioning the sound of her voice affectionately calling us 'Turkeys,' a name she reserves for the many she loves.

Now retired and living in Florida, Dr. P not only shaped young minds in urban high schools but she also contributed her wisdom to the Africana Studies Department at the University of Toledo.

Beyond her professional pursuits, many of us simply know Dr. P as Bayé, Kai, and Ravi's loving mom. Dr. P's ability to infuse joy into every narrative during her teaching career was contagious and uplifting. Fortunately her nurturing spirit will forever remain a timeless presence within the heart of the African American Legacy Project as a cherished space where everyone feels seen, valued, and, most importantly, loved.

"Dr. Helen Cooks [founder and former director of the Utoledo Excel program]

...continued on page 11



Helen Cooks

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African American Legacy Project... continued from page 10

and Dr. LaRouth Perry are easily considered the founding maternal framers of the African American Legacy Project and Toledo native Dr. John Scott, a prolific playwright, poet and director in his own right, must be considered the continuing Cultural Emissary for the Legacy Project," says Smith. "As Dr. Scott helped to frame and develop BGSU's Ethnic Studies Department, his artistic, creative, and cultural sensibilities serve as his legacy to The AALP and the community."



John Scott

Empowering Through Education: A Commitment to Knowledge

The dedication to documenting and preserving the narratives of northwest Ohio's African American community is not a mere exercise in nostalgia; it is an unwavering commitment, defying systemic erasure while ensuring the ancestral voices of our past resound in our present.

"We create publications for kids in third grade and above and distribute educational pamphlets throughout the Toledo public school system, to the local charter schools, churches and educational organizations," says Smith.

The pamphlets include information about national Black figures in all disciplines. The AALP then includes a local component by telling stories of notables like Wayman D. Palmer, who left an indelible mark on the community. If you're of a certain age, you famously remember Palmer's One-in-a-Million ice cream stand at Division and John R Streets. Palmer and his father, Cecil H. Palmer, epitomized early entrepreneurship, with ventures like Jerry's Carryout on Nebraska Ave, named after Palmer's star-athlete brother, Jerry.



Wayman Palmer

"The kids here in Toledo are always surprised to learn that the first Black female pharmacist was from our Glass City," Smith notes.

Stewart's Pharmacy, an enduring cornerstone established in 1922, bore witness to the visionary leadership of Ella P. Stewart, the first licensed African American female pharmacist in the nation, and her husband, William W. Stewart.

Beyond its role as a healthcare haven, their pharmacy doubled as a sanctuary for Black travelers rejected by local hotels, with the couple offering



Ella P. Stewart

refuge in their home situated above the pharmacy. Far beyond the confines of pharmaceuticals, Ella and William emerged as community leaders, actively engaging in both local and national human rights organizations. Ella P. Stewart's remarkable impact extended to international realms as she assumed a position on the executive board of UNESCO in 1963.

The AALP also collaborates with the Toledo Lucas County Public Library to include a suggested children's book that's related to the subject matter in their educational pamphlets. "We want caregivers to have the opportunity to continue the conversation at home with family," Smith explains.

Dorr Street Live!: Resurrecting the Cultural Heartbeat of Toledo

In homage to the vibrant cultural exchange that once thrived on Dorr Street during the 1950s and 1960s, the African American Legacy Project initiated the Dorr Street Live! event nine years ago. This cherished initiative seeks to revive the spirit of those golden years when Dorr Street stood as Toledo's 'Black downtown', pulsating with creativity, commerce, and community connections.

"Dorr Street was once a bustling hub with hundreds of businesses ranging from independent mom-and-pop stores to family-owned enterprises," explains Executive Director Smith.

It served as a lively gathering place for families and friends. From shopping to movies, bowling to church, Dorr Street was a mosaic of diverse activities that reflected the confluence of cultures in the area.

The importance of Black businesses transcends commerce; They are a pivotal force in reshaping the narrative of economic empowerment, ownership, and the legacy passed down through generations.

Moreover, Black-owned businesses serve as pillars of community empowerment. They are not just enterprises; they are anchors that foster a sense of pride and solidarity. When communities invest in their own, they create a cycle of reciprocity, where economic gains reverberate locally, strengthening the social fabric and fostering a collective sense of progress.

The AALP's Dorr Street History Committee, led by luminaries like Lenard Bey, Pete Culp, and Debra Hogan, has been an instrumental force. Their collective endeavor aims to educate future generations about the profound impact of African American businesses on Dorr Street, an impact that reverberates through the ages.

Today, the City's vision for future redevelopment aims to breathe new life into Dorr Street, aspiring to create a vibrant space where Black-owned enterprises, harmoniously coexisting with businesses of all cultures, can thrive once more.

...continued on page 15



Dear Lucas County Citizen,

I am asking for your vote on Tuesday, March 19th to continue to serve as your Lucas County Commissioner.

I am honored to serve you as an elected official and your vote is crucial in the March Primary election.

I will always be available to you to answer questions and concerns. I am not perfect, but I am dedicated to you as a public servant and our great county. I am happy to call Lucas County my home.

Anita

Office number is 419-213-4500
Cell phone number is 419-764-1090

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Black Fraternities and Sororities Are Compatible with Christianity

By Keith Magee

Guest Column

Historically Black fraternities and sororities – often referred to as Black Greek-letter organizations, or BGLOs – have been making a difference in the lives of Black Americans for more than a hundred years.

Members of these organizations have historically been at the forefront of the struggle for racial equality and have been change-makers in every professional sphere. BGLOs regularly band together to fight principalities, dark powers and wickedness in high places and to promote social justice, voting rights, and anti-poverty measures.

And yet, over recent years, some Christians have denounced their BGLOs, publicly attacking them for being “idolatrous” in their use of symbolic Greek letters and for causing members to put loyalty to their organization above loyalty to their faith.

I know the most fundamentally important aspect of my identity is my love for Jesus as Lord. I trust the Holy Spirit as my lead and guide into all truth, and I constantly seek to live the life that is required of me as a believer. I am convinced that through the story of Jesus’ life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension and soon-to-come return, the message He is sending us, in His wisdom, is one of love.

I try to embody that message in everything I do. I am also a proud member of two Black fraternities, Kappa Alpha Psi (one of the Divine Nine collegiate BGLOs) and Sigma Pi Phi (for professionals). Kappa was founded by 10 principled Christian men. With Kappa, I was younger when I crossed and not quite as knowledgeable as I am now about my faith.

Nevertheless, at no point in my life have I ever entered into an unorthodox, uninformed, or ungodly alliance with a Greek deity. Nor have I ever sworn an oath that would in any way hinder, absolve, or negate my Christian beliefs.

The Divine Nine were established, mainly in the first decades of the 20th century, as peer-support mechanisms for Black college students. These young people experienced routine racial discrimination, not just in predominantly white institutions and in wider society, but also in the majority white fraternities and sororities already established on campuses.

For many Black students, joining BGLOs helped them survive and thrive. Membership allowed them to bond, build lasting networks of brother- or sisterhood, and empower one another and the whole Black community, both at university and then beyond.

It would be impossible to list here the names of all the illustrious leaders from our community who were or are affiliated to BGLOs – there are simply too many to mention. But notable examples include Rev. Samuel DeWitt Proctor (Kappa Alpha Psi); Rev Dr Martin Luther King, Jr. (Alpha Phi Alpha); and Rev. Jesse Jackson (Omega Psi Phi). Bishop Vashti McKenzie, the first female bishop of the AME Church, is a member of Delta Sigma Theta, the sorority of which her grandmother, Vashti Turley Murphy, was one of the founders.

My own mother, Rev. Dr Barbara Reynolds, is a Delta too. One of my peers, Rev. Teraleen Campbell, is the International Chaplain of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority.

And let’s not forget, some of our current political heavyweights are also pledged to Greek letter organizations, including Vice-President Kamala



Harris (Alpha Kappa Alpha), Minority Leader of the U.S House of Representatives Hakeem Jeffries (Kappa Alpha Psi), and U.S. Senator Rev Raphael Warnock (Alpha Phi Alpha).

From their foundation, both Black and white fraternities and sororities chose to associate their organizations with letters of the Greek alphabet as a nod to the intellectual innovators who flourished in the rich cultural arena of ancient Greece. The enduring contributions made by sages like Plato, Aristotle, Heraclitus, and Pythagoras to fields such as philosophy, science, and mathematics meant aspirational college-educated men and women naturally wanted to be connected to such a tradition.

To this day, when the initiates of BGLOs swear oaths of loyalty, they are pledging to participate in the ongoing quest to unlock the secrets of great knowledge for the good of humanity as well as committing to uphold the ideals of their fraternity or sorority for life. Why anyone would see that as being somehow in conflict with Christian values is utterly baffling to me.

I am in no way opposed to an individual deciding to renounce their affiliation to a BGLO because of their personal beliefs, any more than I would take issue with someone choosing to no longer eat shellfish, wear wool, or straighten their hair. However, when I hear a person denouncing BGLOs in general, insinuating that they are somehow “demonic,” and inciting all other members to follow their personal example, that causes me pause.

Even if you experience what you believe to be a revelation that must guide your own choices, how can you then deem that to be the truth, rather than your truth? One person’s shortcomings in life, or the way an individual lives in a particular state of sin doesn’t necessarily apply to everyone. Rather than rail against BGLOs, I wish more believers would be concerned about the ungodly alliances or oaths some of us make to certain churches, other organizations, and leaders who really do act or live in a perpetual reprobate state.

In contrast, I would ask that we all extend a measure of grace to any group or institution – including Black BGLOs – whose members are exhorted to spend a lifetime making a positive impact on their communities and exemplifying the kindness Jesus teaches us. In the case of both my fraternities, I can unequivocally and wholeheartedly serve Jesus as Lord, while fulfilling our collective purposes and aims in the certain knowledge that Jesus gets the glory out of my being a member. Why? Because when I’m present with my brothers, the Holy Spirit is there abiding in me.

I can, likewise, say that in every formal fraternity setting, overt reverence is always paid to what I believe. In fact, I often either attend or serve as the celebrant for the weekly online services that are currently held by one of Kappa’s alumni chapters. Therefore, I am not tethered by being a fraternity brother – far from it. Nothing about my membership of these illustrious organizations restricts me in my faith. I’m entirely free in Him who set me free.

Keith Magee is a theologian, political adviser and social justice scholar. He is chair and professor of practice in social justice at Newcastle University (United Kingdom). He is senior fellow and visiting professor in cultural justice at University College London Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose, where he leads the Black Britain and Beyond think tank, and is also a fellow at its Centre on US Politics. He is the author of “Prophetic Justice: Essays and Reflections on Race, Religion and Politics.” Trice Edney Communications | 6817 Georgia Avenue, Washington, DC 20012 Unsubscribe thetruth@thetruthtoledo.com Update Profile | Constant Contact Data Notice Sent by fatima@nationalnewsreleases.com

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'An Evening with State Representative Elgin Rogers, Jr.'

State Rep. Elgin Rogers (D-Toledo) will host 'An Evening with State Representative Elgin Rogers, Jr.' on Thursday, February 29 from 5:00-7:00 pm at the McMaster Center of the Toledo Lucas County Public Library Main Branch.

The town hall event will give Rep. Rogers the opportunity to provide constituents with legislative updates, as well as receive feedback on the needs of the community.

The event, which is free and open to the public, will feature music from legendary jazz singer Ramona Collins and light refreshments. Space is limited so please RSVP by Friday, February 16th to Rep44@ohiohouse.gov.

INVITATION FOR BIDS GLENDALE FIRE ALARM UPGRADES IFB24-B002

Lucas Metropolitan Housing (LMH) will receive bids for **Glendale Fire Alarm Upgrades in accordance with IFB24-B002**. Received in accordance with law until **March 8, 2024 at 3:00 PM ET**. For documents: www.lucasmha.org; 424 Jackson Street., Toledo, OH 43604; or 419-259-9438 (TRS: Dial 711). Bidders are required to meet Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity requirements as described in Executive Order #11246. This contract opportunity is a Section 3 Covered Contract, and any Section 3 Business Concerns are encouraged to apply.



TAKING YOU PLACES

PUBLIC NOTICE

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)

FY 2024 through 2026 Goals

The purpose of this notice is to afford certified Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs), general contractor groups, minorities, and woman's organizations an opportunity to participate and comment on the Toledo Area Regional Transit Authority (TARTA) draft FFY-2024 to FFY-2026 DBE program and Goal.

The TARTA DBE program proposed goal and methodology may be reviewed for 30 calendar days starting with the first day of publication of this notice.

Questions and comments regarding the goal setting process, the draft DBE goal and the final FFY-2024 to FFY-2026 DBE goal may be mailed or emailed to the email addresses below.

It is the policy of TARTA to provide Disadvantaged Business Enterprises with the maximum opportunity to participate in the performance of contracts financed in whole or part with federal funds. In accordance with the requirements of Title 49 CFR 26.45, TARTA is publishing its DBE goal for Fiscal Years 2024-2026 of 10%. TARTA's proposed goal and its rationale are available for inspection at tarta.com/news-alerts/tarta-business.

A virtual public meeting will be held on February 7 at 10 a.m. To register, get the link at the TARTA website under tarta.com/news-alerts/tarta-business.

To request a copy of the DBE Program or goal, or further information about the DBE program please call Zach Morrison at 419-245-5237 or email zmorrison@tarta.com.

TARTA will accept comments on the goal for 45 days from the date of this notice.

Comments may be addressed to:

Toledo Area Regional Transit Authority
TARTA DBE & Ethics Officer – Sean Smith
1127 West Central Avenue
Toledo, OH 43610
ssmith@tarta.com

It is the policy of TARTA that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds race, color, national origin, religion, age, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANT SERVICES RFP24-R002

Lucas Metropolitan Housing (LMH) will receive proposals for **Real Estate Development Consultant Services in accordance with RFP24-R002**. Received in accordance with law until **February 24, 2024 at 3:00 PM EST**. For documents: www.lucasmha.org; 424 Jackson Street., Toledo, OH 43604; or 419-259-9438 (TRS: Dial 711). Bidders are required to meet Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity requirements as described in Executive Order #11246. This contract opportunity is a Section 3 Covered Contract, and any Section 3 Business Concerns are encouraged to apply.



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR PROJECT BASED VOUCHERS RFP24-R001 F

Lucas Metropolitan Housing Authority (LMH) will receive proposals for **Project Based Vouchers for the HCV program**. Interested parties should be owner/developers, management agent, and/or project sponsors for projects concentrating on Supportive Services. LMH has reserved up to 151 PBV for this rolling RFP. Received in accordance with law until **February 29, 2024, at 3:00 PM ET**. See documents: www.lucasmha.org; 424 Jackson Street, Toledo, OH 43604; or 419-259-9438 (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.



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African American Legacy Project... continued from page 11

Legends: Honoring Notable Community and Sports Icons

The African American Legacy Project's signature event is their "Legends" celebration.

"It's an exceptionally significant occasion for us, as we honor our esteemed legends by presenting them with a custom hand-woven kente sash made in Ghana in addition to a night filled with delicious food, music and festivities," shares Smith.

It's a coveted honor to be recognized in the presence of your colleagues and family for your contribution to African American history and culture, symbolized by the prestigious Legends celebration.

Inductees like **Bill Harris** broke media barriers as the first African American television news reporter in Toledo, Ohio, leaving an indelible mark during his two-decade tenure at *Channel 13*. Evolving from news reporting, he seamlessly assumed public affairs duties and ascended to the role of assistant news director.

His extensive coverage of financial matters and the economy not only earned him numerous accolades, including two Emmy Awards and seven Crystal Awards but also cultivated a vast network of contacts among business and political leaders, locally and nationally. Beyond the confines of newsrooms, today you can find Rev. Harris hosting *In the Word w/Bill Harris at Rapture Ministries*.



Bill Harris



Clifford Murphy

From the unparalleled mastery of jazz pianist **Art Tatum** to the distinguished brilliance of musicians like **Cliff Murphy**, Toledo proudly claims its place as the nurturing ground for extraordinary musical talent.

Clifford T. Murphy, was an acclaimed bassist born in 1932, whose remarkable journey was shaped by both service and passion. After joining the Army at 17 and earning two Purple Hearts and three Bronze stars for his bravery in the Korean War,

Clifford delved into his love for music.

"He founded the jazz group **"The Murphys"** and collaborated with maestros like **Johnny O'Neal and Larry Fuller**. They coined Cliff as "the Gentle Giant," adds Executive Director Smith. "It was a sight to see his big hands gently glide across that bass."

Alongside his partner **Joan Russell**, Clifford established the iconic Toledo jazz hub, *Murphy's Place*, which became a focal point for music enthusiasts nationwide. Clifford's enduring spirit and positive attitude left an indelible mark, making him a notable legend in Toledo's cultural landscape.

The AALP's *African American Sports Legends Hall of Fame* also stands as a testament to the indomitable spirit, skill, and resilience of extraordinary black athletes who have left their profound mark on the world of sports.

Beginning in 2023, Sports Hall of Fame Inductees are given custom blazers, not just as garments, but as vibrant symbols of their lasting contributions to sports history.

"Canton has its iconic "Gold Jacket," the Masters boasts its revered "Green," and now, The African American Sports Legends proudly introduces its own symbol of honor, the **"Hall of Fame Red!"**," adds Smith.

The AALP's illustrious *Hall of Fame* serves as a living chronicle, narrating the tales of those who shattered barriers, defied odds, and became trailblazers in their respective sport. Each inductee symbolizes not only sporting excellence but also a legacy of inspiration and empowerment for generations to come.

Having the opportunity to visit the museum was truly awe-inspiring. Stepping inside, the first thing that caught my eye was the pristine collection of sports paraphernalia, each item holding a piece of history. **From vintage jerseys to iconic equipment, the museum encapsulates a journey through time.**

Exploring the museum, I was captivated by images of legendary athletes, discovering proud Ohioans who had left an indelible mark in the world of sports. However, nothing prepared me for the awe-inspiring moment when I encountered the exhibit featuring my grandfather's best friend, Mr. Emerson Cole.

...continued on page 16

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PATHWAY

African American Legacy Project... continued from page 15

The late **Emerson Cole** (and his son Charlie Cole) was an exceptional running back for *The University of Toledo*. Mr. Emerson was the first African American drafted by the *Cleveland Browns* and later went on to play with the *Chicago Bears*.

The connection felt personal and profound. I could still smell Mr. Cole's cigar as I recalled him and my grandfather laughing over cognac. To my surprise, Smith, also shared fond memories of my grandfather, **Garner Lee Nail**, a distinguished graduate of Jesup W. Scott High School and an honorably discharged U.S. Navy veteran of WW II.

My grandfather went on to earn a Master Pipefitter Degree from Hampton University in Hampton Roads, Virginia, and contributed significantly as a Mechanical Superintendent for the State of Ohio until his retirement. Notably, he held the distinction of being among the first African Americans admitted to the Local Pipefitters Union in Toledo.

As Smith extended an invitation for my family to contribute items from our family's legacy to the museum's archives; the honor felt both humbling and deeply meaningful.

Honoring History: An Important Archive

The *African American Legacy Project* is a covenant with the future. It is a promise to safeguard the stories that empower future generations yet to come. For it is through the lens of history that we can cultivate a society that embraces its diversity, celebrates its shared legacy, and moves forward as one.

I encourage those reading to collectively contribute to our shared history by adding to the *African American Legacy Project of NW Ohio's* archive. This endeavor transcends individual stories; it's a celebration of the collective journey we've undertaken as a community.

It's not about me or you, but about the strength we find in our unity, the wisdom embedded in our shared experiences, and the enduring legacy we create together. Each artifact, photograph, or memory holds a piece of our shared narrative, reflecting the diversity, resilience, and accomplishments of all who



Emerson Cole

have contributed.

As we celebrate the *AALP's* 20th anniversary this Black History Month, we reflect on two decades of unwavering commitment to preserving, honoring, and illuminating the invaluable contributions of the African American community, and we eagerly anticipate the continued growth of this legacy for the posterity of tomorrow.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Robert Smith and the dedicated board members - Norman A. Bell, City of Toledo (ret); Helen Cooks, PhD, University of Toledo (ret); Bernadette Graham, psychologist, private practice; Larome Myrick, director Juvenile Facility, Rhode Island; Joshua Peterson, Esq - Carpenter Lipps & Leland LLP; Rashieda Timpson, nurse practitioner; Willie Ward, principal, MLK Boys Academy - for their visionary leadership, tireless efforts and profound dedication to the African American Legacy Project.

Their commitment to fostering inclusivity, education, and community growth has created a beacon guiding us through the Black history of NW Ohio. Thank you for shaping a future where the voices of the past resonate, and where the legacy of the African American community stands as a source of inspiration for all.

Toledo Urban FCU... continued from page 6

its potential supporters and stakeholders at Friendship Baptist Church. One white gentleman offered his disapproval "He said to us that our community did not deserve this because what we normally do ends up in somebody's basement."

"That was the mentality back then. That's why our board has been in place for so long, that's why the bankers are still with us—because most of us were at that very first meeting."

"I think we've changed the community and we've changed the mindset. You got to respect us...we worked together and stuck together," adds Cowell. That's the way they were talked about and 32 years later they're proving him wrong.

To learn more about the Toledo Urban Federal Credit Union call 419-255-8876, visit their website www.toledourban.net or Facebook Page.

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Perryman... continued from page 7

and you can't talk about gospel music except talking about the Byrd family, legendary almost to the same extent as Mattie Moss and the Clarks are in Detroit.

Yet, the city's music community remains divided by genre preferences, with classical music often attracting a predominantly white audience, underscoring the need for a more integrated appreciation of Toledo's diverse musical landscape.

Perryman: Talk about your upbringing and education.

Pattin: Born in 1953, I graduated from Scott High School, attended Toledo University, and then the University of Michigan. I moved to Alabama for my studies at the University of Montevallo but completed my doctorate in 1994 at the University of Alabama, thanks to its proximity.

Even though it was a new experience and the culture was different, it ended up being a wonderful, positive shift in my life. A lot of good things happened to me while I was in the South.

Perryman: What's the earliest memory about your playing?

Pattin: I was playing for the choir at Scott High School under David Carter. I was the accompanist for the symphonic choir, where I was exposed to various music literature. We were doing Handel's Messiah every year. We'd do The Holy City, the Crucifixion, so I was introduced to great choral music throughout high school. It differs from what they're doing now in schools; it's just an extension of what you hear on the radio.

No, we had legitimately good choral literature that improved my sight reading because I had to play parts as well as the accompaniment. So I became an ace crackerjack sight reader from my experience at Scott, which always opens a lot of doors when people may need you to do things on short notice. So, I became a musical savior in many situations just because I had skills.

Perryman: Talk about your performance career while on the university faculty in Alabama.

Pattin: I was also at a prominent Black church in Birmingham, 6th Avenue Baptist Church, under Pastor John Porter, who had marched alongside Dr. Martin Luther King. Dr. Martin Luther King had done Porter's installation service.

Sixth Avenue had the best of everything you would find at any church - Black or white. They were a sophisticated silk-stocking congregation. You had judges and lawyers and doctors and mayors. All the prominent Black citizens of the city went to 6th Avenue, even if it was nothing more than to visit or around election time to be seen and beg for votes. I stayed at 6th Avenue for about 12 years until the pastor retired and eventually died.

Perryman: What was your position there?

Pattin: I was the Director of Music. I was the organist, pianist, and coordinator; I was like everything at different times.

They were one of the few churches with a brand new pipe organ, having raised money to buy one. One of the world's finest organists living today, Diane Bish, came and did a recital on the 6th Avenue organ.

Those were good years, but the singing, I tell you, they had five different choirs, and every one of them could be a recording choir; they were very, very high quality. So that was a good situation. I grew a little weary of it, and after a while, I got hooked up with white churches and experienced the value of time and timeliness in the order of services, including worship, weddings, and funerals. It was just a different kind of thing, and I haven't lost touch with the Black church.

Perryman: When did you begin at 6th Avenue?

Pattin: Sixth Avenue had a concert series, and they would invite many top concert musicians as guest artists. Kathleen Battle had performed there. So, they invited me to be on their concert series. I was playing at a small Baptist church, and someone told me, "Once 6th Avenue gets a whiff of you, we know you'll be gone, and we know they are going to take you."



Anthony Pattin

And sure enough, they did. That was in 1990, and I stayed there until 2002.

Perryman: What was next after Sixth Avenue Baptist?

Pattin: The white congregation Chapel in the Pines Presbyterian Church followed, where I stayed as Director of Music for 14 years.

Then, I went to Shades Valley Lutheran as their Director of Music in Birmingham. While there, I decided to move back to Toledo, so I only stayed at Shades Valley for 2 1/2 years. Then I was back in Toledo, where I'm now at First St. John Lutheran as their musician.

Perryman: Please tell our readers about your experiences as a performing concert pianist.

Pattin: I've performed three different concert tours in Tokyo, Japan. I've gone to Paris, Central America, three times in New York City, twice in Carnegie Hall, and once at Lincoln Center's Merkin Concert Hall. It's less popular than Carnegie Hall, but it is a very prestigious hall. I've also performed at other venues in between.

Perryman: Please describe some of the other venues.

Pattin: I've gone to just about all of the colleges in the South to perform. A lot of them were HBCUs, but not all of them. For instance, I played at "Ole Miss" and Mississippi College for Women. I've also gone down to Bethune-Cookman, an HBCU. There's just a long list of colleges.

... continued on page 18

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The Lucas County Commissioners join The Sojourner's Truth in celebrating BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Pete Gerken	Lisa A. Sobecki	Anita Lopez

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Black History Month Books for Kids

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

The Truth Contributor

You know your history.

You know about slavery and Jim Crow and Harriet Tubman and Malcolm X. You know about all those things, and more. So now make sure your child knows, too, by bringing home these great Black History Month books for kids...

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various publishers
\$18.99 each
various page counts

Since forever, African Americans have been first-rate gardeners and farmers and in *The Last Stand* by Antwan Eady, illustrated by Jarrett and Jerome Phumphrey (Knopf, \$18.99), Mr. Earl's grandson worries about his Papa, who runs a farmer's market.

Two summers ago, there were five people with country roadside stands. Now, it's just Mr. Earl. What will the people in their community do if there's no fresh produce or fresh eggs? Who will have peppers for Mr. Johnny or pumpkins for Ms. Rosa? What will happen on the day when Papa's "too tired" to go to his market stall? This book, and the stories it can lead to, will help your three-to-five-year-old learn more about everyday Black history.

If your ancestors came North in the Great Migration, then you'll want to bring *Everywhere Beauty is Harlem* by Gary Golio, art by E.B. Lewis (Calkins Creek, \$18.99).

When photographer Roy DeCarava came to Harlem in the early 1940s, he landed in Harlem. And so, after work every evening, he slipped film into his camera, and he went hunting for treasures – not gold or jewels, but people. A man snoozing on the subway, a little boy drawing with sidewalk chalk, an artist standing streetside with his wares, not one of them escaped his notice. Looking into the eyes of those people he captured on film, "Roy sees Harlem."

Your three-to-seven-year-old will want to see, too. Be sure to read the biography at the end of this tale, so you can give your child the full, authentic story.

And finally, if your six-to-nine-year-old needs to know about a legend, read *Fighting With Love: The Legacy of John Lewis* by Lesa Cline-Ransome, illustrated by James E. Ransome (Simon & Schuster, \$18.99).

Here, your child will learn that John Lewis was the son of a sharecropper, and he dreamed of a better life. He wanted an education, and he sneaked out and got one. He was a teenager before he heard the words "justice" and "segregation," and he knew instantly that they were important. When he left on a bus to go to Seminary school, his mother warned him not to get in trouble, but how could he not?



Fighting With Love is wonderfully illustrated but the story's longer and much more in-depth. You may find in the picture book section for little kids, but older children are the right audience for it. For them, this is a great introduction to Lewis's life, and to historical biographies in general.

If you need more Black History Month reading for your child, or if you've got older kids itching to learn more, too, then ask your favorite librarian or bookseller for help. For any age, and any month, that's the place to find books to know your history.

Perryman... continued from page 17

Then, not only did I go to the colleges to play, but sometimes I did master classes where it's like an open public piano lesson. Their students play for you, then you critique them openly and offer suggestions. I did that at Spelman and Fisk. I was just all over the place.

Perryman: How about other experiences?

Pattin: I was on a television program almost every week called *The Pianist at Work* as an invited guest. I'd do a recital about once a month, and it would go out all over the state on Alabama Public Television.

I played with The Alabama Symphony. I did concerts at all of the universities in Birmingham, every last one, even the private ones. My reputation grew when people heard about me and my playing, which took me a long way. My phone was constantly ringing. If it wasn't for playing, it was for lecturing. I was a touring artist for the Alabama State Council on the Arts, so I had their endorsement.

All of this while teaching there and all of this combined separated me from everybody else.

Perryman: What specific advice do you offer for young or aspiring musicians?

Pattin: Since American Idol, *So You Think You Can Dance*, *Mama I Want To Sing*, and these other competitions have come along, many young people aspire to instant fame rather than musicianship. Understanding that becoming a musician requires hard work and mastery of music theory, scales, and chords is crucial. I've personally seen success in some of my committed and versatile students, including those who excel in competitions and those dedicated to improving their church music skills. My advice is to set clear goals, whether it's earning a degree or mastering a genre, and diligently work towards achieving them.

Perryman: Talk about your earliest days and those who helped push you towards music.

Pattin: One of the biggest influences was my brother, Leslie, who was 11 years older and the musician of the family. He was studying at the Bach Conservatory. When Leslie left high school, he played musical instruments in the band at Macomber because he was getting his music education degree. He gave me my first music lessons at about age 9 or 10.

I can also remember always being aware of church music. I remember enjoying singing the hymns. I was really starting to read music. The first time they put me on a program, I was about 11 years old. I remember my name was on the program for piano solo, and they skipped over it. I was thanking God that they had skipped over it because I was afraid.

Then, somebody finally said, "We skipped over the piano solo!" And then said, "The young man's gonna play a piano solo." And my hymn was "Work, For the Night Is Coming"; it was in the key of F, it had that one flat in it that I had to be careful not to forget, but that's how it all started for me. I remember being scared about it, but still being interested in music and aware of singing and the person on the piano and the organ.

Even in school, at Lincoln Elementary School, we had music. We had music books that we learned songs from that were part of our curriculum, and the school would also let you learn how to play an instrument, and they would provide the instrument for you. I took organ lessons in high school, and then somewhere in the middle of high school, I focused on piano because it was more practical. That's pretty much where it's been ever since.

Perryman: Did you have a piano in your home?

Pattin: Initially, it was my brother Leslie's piano, and became mine when he joined the military. Even though we did not own a home, my mother always ensured the piano went with us whenever we moved. I don't care how many stairs you had to climb to get that piano up those stairs; she was going to make sure that I had a piano to play.

Even when the legs had come off, and there was nothing but the body of the piano, they still hiked it up those stairs, and it would just rest across the bed so I could hold it up. It was clear to my family that my interest in piano was profound, so they did everything to support me.

Contact Rev. Donald Perryman, PhD, at drdperryman@centerofhopebaptist.org

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Shirley Green... continued from page 5

Through oral tradition, however, Franklin passed down even more information to descendants about the route the family's ancestors had taken to end up in Nova Scotia but, as Green would eventually learn, Franklin passed down considerably more to the male side of the line.

Green knew that Franklin's son, her grandfather, left Nova Scotia in the early 1900s for New York looking for a better life, eventually serving in the Army during World War I and fathered two sons who served in WWII. His youngest daughter, Sarah, Green's mother, attended Wilberforce College and settled in Ohio.

As Green writes: "The bigger story, passed down only through male members of the family, described how the first member of the Franklin family came to America from Africa by way of Haiti, an enslaved man who eventually gained his freedom. Two of his descendants – two freeborn brothers with the last name of Frank – fought together in the "Black Regiment" from Rhode Island of the Continental army during the American Revolution. It was a story about a manly struggle for liberty and acts of freedom. It was a wonderful story that pulsed with pride in the past"

However, as Green herself would discover, this "bigger story" was not the complete story. And the complete story, when she finally uncovered it, would be a complete surprise.

Green was in class working on her doctorate in 2011 at the University of Toledo taking a course on African American history when Professor Nikki M. Taylor mentioned that Black migration to Nova Scotia was a result of loyalty to the British during the Revolution not flight during the time of the Underground Railroad.

Green went back to her mother, who went back to her sister and finally to a brother. Green's uncle, who told the story of two brothers who fought in the Continental Army. The mystery remained. How did part of the family end up in Nova Scotia ... and when?

Green's task, as she saw it, was to connect the two stories as she delved into her family background. She did that and more. She discovered how and why the family of the two Frank brothers ended up in both Rhode Island and Nova Scotia. She also managed to uncover ancestors that predated the Franklin brothers by almost a century.

First, Green delved into vital, census, marriage and military records from Rhode Island data; she later found set-

tlement records in Nova Scotia. She confirmed that the Frank brothers, William and Ben, were free men well before the American Revolution.

Rufus Frank, a veteran of the French and Indian War, established a household in Rhode Island in the mid 1700s and was the father of William and Ben. William and Ben, carrying on the tradition, enlisted in the First Rhode Island Regiment of the Continental army. Green was able to detail quite extensively how the First Rhode Island Regiment, and the Frank brothers, spent the Revolutionary War.

The conditions were brutal in many ways. Underfed, poorly outfitted and not often paid, the regiment experienced a large number of desertions as soldiers left to return to their farms or to join the British side. The Rhode Island Regiment spent that brutal winter of 1777-78 in Valley Forge, the third and harshest of the eight winter encampments of the war. Of the 12,000 soldiers George Washington led into the encampment in December 1777, an estimated 1,700 to 2,000 died from disease, probably exacerbated by malnutrition.

"The compiled service records housed at the National Archives and the military records at the Rhode Island State Archives and Rhode Island Historical Society provided the first clues to solving the mystery of the Canadian Franklins' lineage," writes Green.

William Frank served honorably for a total of six years and after the war returned to Rhode Island. Ben Frank, on the other hand, served for only three years ... then deserted.

Ben headed for British lines and after the war, left the United States, along with other British loyalists – soldiers and civilians, Black and white – and arrived in Nova Scotia.

Green's discovery of the real story, "the uncomfortable part," was not easily accepted by her family.

"They scrutinized my findings, questioning me and providing guidance to make sure I was now getting the 'real' story."

... continued on page 20



John William Franklin Sr, Green's grandfather



John William Franklin, WWII veteran



Benjamin Franklin, WWII veteran



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Shirley Green... continued from page 19

The real story, while it may have been uncomfortable, turned out to be fascinating, much more fascinating than it would have been if there had only been one branch on the family tree.

Green's work was far from complete with that discovery, however. Her additional research into Rhode Island documents took her further back in time and unveiled an ancestor of Rufus Frank known as Frank Nigro who, by 1694, "had established himself on Providence, the hometown of Rufus Frank." Frank Nigro would gain his freedom a few years later and the racial identifier "Nigro" would be dropped. He became "a purchaser of land; was a landowner who leveraged his property for money ..." among other documented events. This industriousness, writes Green, set the example for the Frank men who would follow him.

Using oral tradition, exhaustive documentary research and genealogical science (DNA), Green has compiled her family's history that is both compellingly interesting and convincingly accurate. The two brothers' - William and Ben Frank - divergent paths during the American Revolution and the Canadian side of the family's re-entry to the States in the early 1900s - John William Franklin, Sr - present an almost unique tale for a Black family in this hemisphere. Only 10 percent of African American families can trace their roots to before the Civil War, according to data compiled by Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates (Finding Your Roots, season 1)

"In this book, I recount the lives of the Frank/Franklin families from the 1750s until the 1830s. I show how Frank men used their military service to assert their manhood, gain standing in their community, and help to create free African American and African Canadian communities," writes Green in the book's introduction.

Green has more history to delve into. Next up is a look at the story of Albert King, the first Black Toledo police officer in the late 19th century. Green will be working with the African American Police League to honor King by placing a marker at the tomb in Toledo where he and his wife, their three daughters, a sister in law and a "boarder" (whose identity is not quite certain yet) are buried.

In addition, she will be quite involved in the approaching ceremonies for

America's 250 anniversary in 2026 - the semiquincentennial. In the next few months she will be speaking to a group in the Hudson River Valley that is planning a series of activities.

Such events mean that in the future Green will undoubtedly be enlightening readers with so many more fascinating lessons from history.



Shirley Green

Lucas County Commissioners Commemorate Black History Month

The Truth Staff

The Lucas County Commissioners kicked off their commemoration of Black History Month by acknowledging and honoring the efforts of two local groups to preserve local history.

Robert Smith of the African American Legacy Project and Washington Muhammad and Jodie Summers of the Community Solidarity Response Network received resolutions from the commissioners thanking them for being "silent warriors of history and trying to keep Toledo's history alive."

"No one will be erased from history," said Pete Gerken, president of the Board of Commissioners.

"We want an opportunity to share our culture and contribute to the economic well-being of the community," said Smith.

The African American Legacy Project has memorialized the history and contributions of Toledo's African American community and individuals during the past 20 years.

The Community Solidarity Response Network is a group active in social and political causes to advance the well being of the African American community.

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