

Women's History Month

Volume 83 No. 1

*"And Ye Shall Know The Truth..."*

March 20, 2024



Chairman, University Board of Trustees

The University of Toledo's Will Lucas

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# The Cultural Roots of Empowerment Leadership

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

The Truth Contributor

*You are responsible for your life. If you're sitting around waiting for someone to save you, to fix you, to help you...you're wasting your time. Only you have the power to take responsibility to move forward. The sooner you get that, the sooner your life gets into gear...*  
- Oprah Winfrey



Councilwoman Jones

Brittany Jones' ascent from Toledo's inner core neighborhoods to her status as a pivotal academic voice and now a dedicated public servant showcases a distinct model of "Empowerment Leadership." With a life deeply rooted in the communal soil of her upbringing, Jones has woven together her scholarly and practical engagements in food systems and urban planning to create a unique perspective.

Her leadership style, enriched by her cultural roots and aimed at empowering her community offers a fresh approach to public service on Toledo's City Council.

In The Truth's conversation with Brittany Jones, Ph.D, we delve into the essence of her paradigm of Empowerment Leadership - the motivations, hurdles and challenges she's surmounted, and the future she envisions.

Our enlightening dialogue reveals how Jones, with her profound connection to Toledo and unwavering commitment to its upliftment, harnesses her diverse experiences and represents a bright promise of impactful transformation for our city.

**Perryman:** Please reflect for a moment on your journey's beginnings.

**Jones:** I was born on Milburn Street, raised in Junction and on King Street and now I live in the Hill Avenue and Reynolds Road area. That's really where my journey has taken me. I went to a Catholic school my whole life, beginning at St. Martin de Porres and then Central Catholic for high school. I went

to Ohio State for a couple of years just trying to get a foothold on adulthood. I graduated in '09 with a journalism degree and returned to Toledo in 2010-2011.

**Perryman:** Please familiarize our readers with your professional career.

**Jones:** When I returned to Toledo, I worked as an intern with the Department of Neighborhoods and in a statewide capacity with the Children's Hunger Alliance. At that point, I was getting my master's in urban planning at Wayne State and I fell in love with food systems and how they affect all facets of life, not just culturally but also politically. That intrigued me, especially regarding the Black community.

From there, I worked in housing at United North until they closed. Then, I transferred to Central State Extension, which is similar to the Ohio State Extension. I was the first educator in northwest Ohio for that.

**Perryman:** One of the ways that I am familiar with you is through the University of Toledo.

**Jones:** I got into the Ph.D. program at UT, focusing on the intersection of food systems and Black urban agrarianism. I'm examining the role of land

... continued on page 11

## Still making history.



**Cordelia Martin**  
Health and Neighborhood advocate, Mother, and co-founder of the Cordelia Martin Health Center, 1969.



**Daisy Smith**  
One of Toledo's first black registered nurses, co-founder of the Toledo Council of Black Nurses, and NHA volunteer, who NHA's Daisy Smith Pediatric Clinic is named for.



**Mildred Bayer**  
Founder of Mobile Meals, advocate for the homeless and Founder of NHA's Mildred Bayer Clinic for the Homeless, 1984.



**Aurora Gonzalez**  
Co-founded La Voz del Barrio, a group to advocate for healthier neighborhoods. The Aurora L. Gonzalez Community Center, where NHA's Aurora Senior Health Clinic is located, is named to honor her.



**Mary Gregory**  
First African American graduate of the former St. Vincent School of Nursing, co-founder of the Toledo Council of Black Nurses, co-founder of the Toledo-Lucas County Commission on Minority Health, and health advocate.

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# Vice President Harris's Fight for Reproductive Freedom

By Ben Jealous

It matters deeply that America has a woman as our vice president. That has never been truer than at this moment.

Nothing makes this more clear than Vice President Kamala Harris's courageous decision to champion reproductive freedom in the midst of a full-on assault on the right to choose.

Right now, Vice President Harris is traveling the country on an extensive Reproductive Freedom Tour.

As noted by the New York Times, "The vice president has been the administration's most forceful voice for abortion rights in the year and a half since *Roe v. Wade* fell."

Even among those of us without a uterus, the impact of the vice president's courage affects many of us personally in our lives.

It affects me as a girl dad, as a member of this country, and because the person who shaped me most as an organizer is my grandmother, Mamie Todd, who started her career in social change at Planned Parenthood in Baltimore. Even though abortion was illegal then, the basic mission was the same: reproductive health and freedom. And while the work mainly focused on birth control, education, and some routine healthcare, it was not without its challenges – especially in a Catholic city in a Catholic state.

By the early 1940s when my grandmother was doing this work, things had come a long way since 1916 when Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger was arrested for opening the nation's first birth control clinic in Brooklyn. But the Comstock Act was still on the books and enforced. That law defined contraceptives as obscene and made it a federal crime to send them through the mail or transport them across state lines.

In the pre-*Roe v. Wade* era, when abortions were illegal in most parts of this country, many still depended on them. Some required them in order to extricate themselves from abusive relationships or avoid other dire consequences. Being illegal, the procedure was risky. Abortions, forced to be conducted in secret, frequently resulted in death or injuries that would leave women unable to bear children.



Ben Jealous



Vice President Kamala Harris

Adding to the risk back then was that many of the people who performed these abortions were terrible doctors ... or not even doctors at all. Yes, there were abortion providers who displayed their own courage, taking great personal risks to ensure that women would not have to stay in dangerous situations. But the reality was the patients were desper-

ate. And there was no system for review of, or accountability for, this type of medical care.

From 1973 until 2022, when the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, abortions were safe and legal. Now, the Supreme Court's decision in the *Dobbs* case has created a flood of laws threatening to send us back to the dark ages. This goes for women who are attempting to sever ties with dangerous men and those in other horrific situations many of us can only imagine. And it is not stopping. Just this month, the Missouri state Senate voted down two amendments to the state's medieval abortion laws that would have allowed exceptions for rape and incest.

That's why Vice President Harris's leadership is so important. It is easy to imagine that whoever was vice president in these times would be fighting these attacks ... that a male with a similarly impressive resume as a litigator and advocate could too be a stalwart for this fundamental right. But the difference is evident when you watch Vice President Harris on the stump, speaking against these laws that would deny freedom to women who find themselves in the situation my mother was in back then. You cannot help but sense that she feels the urgency to help those women in her bones in a way that no man could.

Let me clear, however, about the responsibility that men have at this moment to be good allies. The matriarch of my family, my grandmother, set a powerful example with her fierce advocacy for equality and reproductive freedom. But my parents taught me an important lesson as well. Part of my parents' bond has always been that my father understood men have a role to play in the fight against gender inequality and sexism. President Biden and Vice President Harris's teamwork in pushing back against state-level assaults on the right to choose, to me, echoes that lesson.

It is time for all of us, regardless of our sex or gender, to stand together and push back against the callous disregard for the lives, health, and social equality of those of us for whom abortion must remain a fundamental right. The legions of lawmakers who received, and are now acting upon, the Supreme Court's signal to eviscerate reproductive freedom will not stop unless we stop them. Thank God we have a courageous woman in the vice presidency fighting to do just that.

*Ben Jealous is executive director of the Sierra Club and a professor of practice at the University of Pennsylvania.*

**How to Have a Perfect Saturday... continued from page 15**

day of culinary and artistic exploration.

**8:00 PM – Crafted Spirits & Dessert at Bellwether:**

Venture to Bellwether at Toledo Spirits Company for a fusion of crafted spirits and culinary excellence. Sip on handcrafted cocktails and enjoy desserts showcasing the rich flavors of Toledo. Immerse yourself in the lively atmosphere of this distillery-meets-dining destination.

**10:00 PM – Evening Unwind:**

Conclude your Saturday by unwinding at Peacock Cafe, a Jazz cocktail bar in downtown Toledo, where you can indulge in an exquisite jazz and cocktail experience while reflecting on the day's adventures. Delve into the memories created throughout the day, ensuring lasting impressions in downtown Toledo.

Downtown Toledo beckons with a crafted dawn that transitions into a day filled with culinary, artistic, and hidden delights. Whether you're sipping craft coffee, exploring the brilliance of Caravaggio, or indulging in craft beer delights, this itinerary promises a day brimming with diverse experiences and memorable moments in downtown Toledo.

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About Shana

*Local Food & Travel Blogger Shana Lee is your guide to exploring the world through delicious bites and breathtaking sights. Based in the vibrant Glass City, Shana infuses her stories with the warmth and charm of her mid-western roots. Whether she's exploring the bustling streets of Puerto Plaza or discovering hidden gems and cultural experiences in her own backyard, she brings a unique perspective that resonates with both local and international readers.*

*Follow Shana's vibrant journey on Instagram: @missluvleelocs. Be inspired by her daily stories, drool-worthy photos and travel tips. Connect with Shana on her blog at [www.shanawashere.com](http://www.shanawashere.com) to dive deeper into her adventures, find detailed travel guides and discover hidden culinary secrets*

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# Letter to the Editor /Guest Editorial

## WE NEED BLOCK WATCH AND RING CAMERAS

Another teen has been murdered; the violence continues; unfortunately, it is going to be that way unless someone or something is watching.

In fairness to Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz, a sincere effort has been made to stop the violence through his violence interrupters. However, having been a part of the Coalition to Stop the Violence committee organized by the four former mayors: Mike Bell, Carty Finkbeiner, Paula Hicks-Hudson and Donna Owens; some prominent ministers: Bishop Chester Trail, Father Francis Gallagher, Sister Virginia Welsh and mothers of murdered children and residents who have had enough, we would like for our voices to be heard.

This group has worked tirelessly and sincere; and proposed a plan to help alleviate the crime and violence. Years ago, the city of Toledo had over 200 block watch organizations led by former Toledo city council member Alice Lykowski and continued with a strong presence by Liz Pierson. More recently, when the nine month old baby was shot and



June Boyd

killed for a bullet meant for her father, on Jackman Road, the good news from the tragedy is that a resident had a ring camera on the porch which identified the shooter who is now serving time for the murder.

Murder is not a political issue; it is a final deadly tragedy. The Coalition submitted a request to the city of Toledo administration to re-establish block watch in our neighborhoods and furnish ring cameras to any resident willing to participate in fighting crime which could help in identifying killers. The proposal was ignored.

We must all come together in order to work to resolve this horrific murder problem we are having as is much of the nation. Maybe the violence interrupters can begin recruiting block watch leaders and help to put a reduction to this dilemma. Anyone willing to participate and protect their neighborhood should get a ring camera which is a sure way to catch a bad guy.

This effort can and will be the key to bringing a halt to so many shootings. A community continually saddened by too many murders and too many young people involved. We must come together as a community; It is up to us.

June Boyd

# Caregivers Are Rendering Lifesaving Services

By Paul Hubbard, President, Comfort Care Senior Services

Guest Column

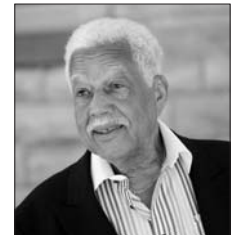
The Black community understands the fact that caregivers are essential to the well-being of families and the economy of the community. Their sacrifices save lives and allow older adults and other with long- or short-

term illnesses or disabilities to receive treatment at home. Caregivers are a crucial part of our health care system.

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) says as the population ages, the demands on family caregivers are going to increase stress on caregivers' bodies and minds. The majority of caregivers with employment suffer from mental health challenges, and many say they are too burned out to do their career jobs as well as they want to, according to an AARP survey.

In our Black community women tend to deal with most of the caregiving load. We know that young couples can be sandwiched between caring for their aging parents and their own kids. Caregivers reported in a AARP survey that despite the multitude of challenges they face, helping a family member or friend in need has a positive impact on their lives. It brings a sense of purpose and pride.

Caregiving spans the spectrum. It touches every race, religion and income bracket. When we come together to support and lighten the burden for caregivers, we reaffirm what it means when we say, "it takes a village to support a family."



Paul Hubbard

### Modeling is a career, it is not an activity.

If you are seriously thinking about getting into acting or modeling you are going to



need an agency that will be willing to work with you to find you paid assignments.

Alright let's get down to business, Do you have to pay to be a client of a modeling agency? NO

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# Will Lucas: Utoledo's Chairman of the Board of Trustees

By Asia Nail

The Truth Reporter

In the ever-evolving landscape of higher education, leadership is paramount, guiding institutions through times of change and transformation. At the University of Toledo, this leadership takes on a new hue with **Will Lucas** at the mantle as chairman of the Board of Trustees, marking a historic milestone for the university and its commitment to diversity and inclusion. As the youngest African American to hold this esteemed position, Lucas brings a fresh perspective and a bold vision to the table.

With a shared dedication to advancing the University's mission and strategic vision, the Board of Trustees and administrators stand united in their efforts to propel the University forward.

"I was appointed to chair in July. This summer 2024 will mark eight and a half years of me working on the Board of Trustees at the university," observes Lucas.

Over the past eight years, the world has undergone a remarkable transformation, marked by unprecedented technological advancements, profound social changes and shifting geopolitical landscapes. From the rapid proliferation of smartphones and social media platforms to the emergence of groundbreaking innovations in artificial intelligence and renewable energy, the pace of change has been nothing short of staggering.

"The whole world has changed over the past eight years, particularly accelerated by the pandemic. To remain relevant and responsive to the evolving needs of our students, the University does its best to innovate quickly," shares Lucas.

Leading the charge in college and university governance, Boards of Trustees shoulder the responsibility of pivotal decision-making, steering the direction of academic institutions.

"Overall, our Board's job is to ensure the President is fulfilling the vision the University has set forth," explains Lucas.

Often tasked with selecting university leadership, approving budgets, and ensuring fiscal responsibility, trustees serve as stewards of both institutional integrity and taxpayer dollars.

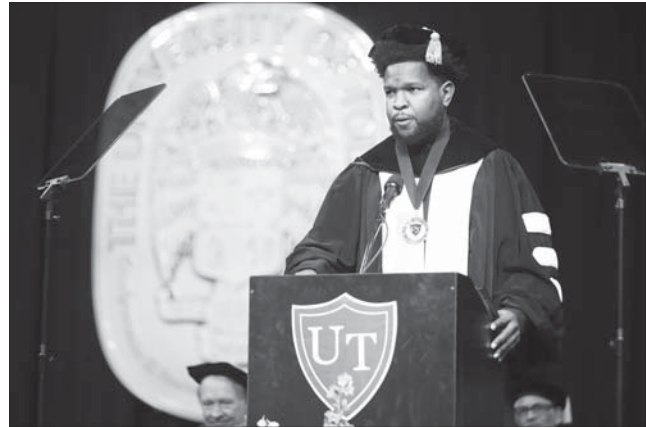
Their duties encompass a broad spectrum, from appointing university presidents to overseeing financial matters and curricular changes. In the State of Ohio, trustees face particularly high expectations, especially those entrusted with public higher education institutions like the University of Toledo by the governor and local officials.

"When I was appointed to this Board by Governor John Kasich, it was important to me that my personal mission be representative of what is possible in this community," Lucas emphasizes.

"I want other young Black men and women to see me and feel that achieving their goals is attainable."

Change is brewing, signaling a dynamic shift in the University's trajectory and commitment to excellence. Lucas's journey to board chair is a testament to his unwavering dedication and multifaceted expertise. A graduate of University of Toledo himself, with a bachelor's degree in Organization Technology, Lucas has cultivated a remarkable career marked by numerous accolades and accomplishments.

As the founder and CEO of aWLCo, a dynamic conglomerate operating



Will Lucas speaks during a graduation event

across media, technology, real estate and hospitality sectors, Will Lucas demonstrates a keen ability to drive growth, foster strategic alliances and harness the power of innovation to effect positive change.

As colleges and universities grapple with the aftermath of the Supreme Court's landmark rulings on affirmative action, the landscape of higher education admissions stands on the brink of significant change. With the systematic consideration of race now largely prohibited in admissions decisions, institutions are facing a critical juncture, compelled to reevaluate their approaches to recruiting and selecting students.

"Every college in the country is dealing with the Supreme Court's decision," attests Lucas.

"It's definitely changing the

landscape. However, this is an opportunity for us to reaffirm our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion in new ways. That starts with ensuring that all

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Angela and Will Lucas

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# The Toledo Jeep Fest Is Returning This Summer

The Truth Staff

The Toledo Jeep Fest, which started nine years ago and has seen a steady growth in attendance over the years, will return this summer during the weekend of August 2 and, according to event organizers, this year's attendance will be even greater.

"This is the biggest event of the summer," said Lucas County Commissioner Pete Gerken during Monday's announcement. Gerken, a Jeep retiree, was accompanied during the announcement by representatives of the partners and sponsors of the event: Laura Kowproski, CEO of TARTA, Lindsey Bond, senior director of Operations & Marketing for Tony Packo's, fellow Commissioner Lisa Sobecki, Bruce Baumhower of UAW 12 and Doug Kerns of Yark Jeep.

TARTA is returning as the official transportation sponsor, Yark Jeep will be the All-Jeep Parade Sponsor.

Last year's Jeep Fest brought in over 72,000 attendees, from 40 different states and several different countries and had an impact of \$5.5 million on the local economy, said Sobecki. She also noted that the event "honors

the men and women in these plants who are so essential to our economy."

Jeep history begins in 1941 when it was designed under contract by the United States military as a four-wheel drive utility vehicle for use in world War II. Dana is credited as the co-inventor of the Jeep, along with the U.S. Army, Bantam, Ford and Willys-Overland.



Bruce Baumhower of UAW Local 12 speaks as Tony Packo's Lindsey Bond, LC Commissioners Pete Gerken and TARTA's Laura Kowproski look on

## Will Lucas...continued from page 5

types of students have the resources and support they need to succeed."

The Board of Trustees is consistently leveraging their diverse expertise and expansive networks to propel the University President Dr. Gregory Postel's vision. Central to this endeavor is the implementation of UT Reimagined: Strategic Plan 2023-2028, a bold blueprint for the future that prioritizes student success, academic innovation and community engagement.

In the absence of race-conscious admissions policies, institutions must redouble their efforts to attract and support a diverse student body. One of the key tenets of their updated plan is a commitment to ensuring student success from recruitment through graduation.

"Guided by our strategic plan, our goal is to propel UT to unprecedented

levels of prominence, making us an even stronger public research university," shares Will.

"The University is innovative in the ways we give instruction. Not every student will be on campus or in physical classrooms."

Today, college is not merely a physical destination; it is a virtual realm where students navigate a complex tapestry of online classes, virtual meetings and digital collaborations. The traditional college experience, once defined by face-to-face interactions and hands-on learning, has undergone a profound metamorphosis, giving rise to a new era of remote education and digital engagement.

Yet, amidst the dizzying array of digital tools and platforms, one thing remains constant: the transformative power of education to shape minds, inspire hearts and change lives. While the landscape may have changed, the essence of the college experience remains as vibrant and transformative as ever.

"The future of higher education is limited only by the bounds of our imagination," adds Lucas.

"Administrators continue to innovate, providing not just remote learning but, 'quality' remote learning opportunities."

The university's strategic plan also offers a roadmap for navigating challenges while fostering a more inclusive, equitable admissions process. As colleges and universities explore alternative metrics and criteria for evaluating applicants, the University of Toledo is positioning itself as a leader in pioneering holistic, student-centered admissions practices.

"UT is a college that has a ton of first-generation students," says Lucas.

"Our goal is to truly nurture first-generation students to achieve gainful employment, become the next doctors and lawyers, provide new scientific research or create new services and products."

Still, the court's ruling directly impacts students who relied on previously appropriated funds to go to college at all.

"We are finding new ways to support these students," Lucas adds.

"On the other side there are donors who have specified they want their dollars to go to specific initiatives. Now committees are reorganizing to meet all the requirements for both students and donors alike."

Imagine stepping onto a college campus, where the air crackles with excitement and anticipation, and the world feels ripe with possibility. For many first-generation college students, this moment is both exhilarating and daunting, as they navigate uncharted territory with a mixture of hope and apprehension. Armed with determination and resilience, they confront the challenges of generational education head-on, driven by a fervent desire to break the cycle of generational barriers and carve out a brighter future for themselves and their families.

By prioritizing outreach and engagement with underrepresented communities, UToledo can proactively address disparities in access and opportunity, ensuring that all students have the resources and support they need to thrive academically and personally.

At the core of Lucas's leadership philosophy is a steadfast commitment to collaboration and partnership. Recognizing that no single individual holds the monopoly on innovation or insight, Lucas has championed a collaborative approach to governance translating vision into action.

By fostering open dialogue, soliciting diverse perspectives, and encouraging collective ownership of the university's mission and values, UT continues to cultivate an academic environment where every voice is heard and every idea is valued.

Through strategic planning sessions, ongoing dialogue, and regular updates, the Board of Trustees remain fully invested in supporting and advancing the

...continued on page 10

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# House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries Visits Toledo

By Fletcher Word  
The Truth Editor

Congressman Hakeem Sekou Jeffries, the minority leader of the U.S. House of Representatives visited Toledo this Monday, along with his hostess, Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur, to speak with local leaders about what Democrats in Congress and the Biden administration have done and will do to better the lives of Americans.

Jeffries has been the U.S. representative for New York's 8th congressional district (Brooklyn) since 2013 and has served as House Minority Leader and leader of the House Democratic Caucus since January 2023.

Jeffries and Kaptur's first stop on Monday was the Neighborhood Health Association's Nexus Center where they joined NHA's CEO Doni Miller, along with a variety of board members and community leaders for a discussion of the importance of quality health care in communities that have so often gone without.

"Access to high quality and affordable health care should not be a privilege, it should be a right," said Jeffries during that discussion.

The NHA conversation focused on not only what local organizations are doing in the community to improve the lives of area residents but also how the federal government can make those tasks easier.

Jeffries, for example, opined that his and his colleagues' next steps would be "to go back to Washington and make enlightened public policies ... and to make sure we are lifting up the great American middle class."

Part of the problem for Americans dealing with the health care system, particularly older Americans who might be on Medicare, for example, is trying to access health care while facing the bureaucratic complexities of the

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Congressman Hakeem Jeffries, Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur, NHA CEO Doni Miller



The panel at Nexus



Doni Miller, Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur, House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, NHA Board President Rev. Talmadge Thomas



Congressman Jeffries, Congresswoman Kaptur and pastors and community leaders at The Worship Center

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Hakeem Jeffries... continued from page 7

government.

"The system has gotten too big," said Kaptur. "It's important to simplify and streamline access to healthcare – across the board," added Jeffries.

However, Jeffries was also able to stress some of the very positive accomplishments of the administration and Congress for Americans who have to deal with the high cost of drug prices. The Inflation Reduction Act, he noted, has been instrumental in capping drug prices, particularly insulin. Diabetics were universally facing an insulin price of \$4000 per year prior to the enactment of the IRA, he said.

"Now it's \$35 per month, we wanted to cap insulin prices and make it affordable to every single person," said. "And the best is yet to come."

After the NHA discussion, Kaptur and Jeffries proceeded to The Worship Center where the pastor, Bishop Pat McKinstry, was hosting a conclave of local pastors who were enthusiastic about the Jeffries' visit and also pleased with the possibility that this year's general election could bring the Democratic Party back to the majority in the House of Representative and deliver the speaker's gavel to Jeffries.

At The Worship Center, Jeffries and Kaptur addressed a wider range of successes that the administration and the previously Democratic-controlled Congress had achieved. Jeffries ticked off such legislative victories as the American Rescue Act which brought relief to so many Americans during the pandemic; the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act which focused on getting people back to work; the CHIPS Act which is meant to reverse the trend of jobs leaving the United States for other countries and the Inflation Reduction Act which, as he had noted previously, has brought down the cost of prescription drugs, among other objectives.

"The 'd' in Democrat stands for 'deliver,'" he said to the delight of the gathered pastors.

Jeffries also spoke of the challenges of working in such a divisive atmosphere in Washington these days.

"We have some people who pray on Sunday at church and then come back to Washington, D.C. and prey on the American people during the rest of the week," he observed while adding that he and his colleague, Congresswoman

Kaptur, "are in Congress to make things better for the lives of the American people."

Jeffries fielded a question about why the successes of the Biden administration and the previously Democratic-controlled Congress have not gained recognition amongst the American people.

His response was basically that currently Democrats are better at dealing with the minutiae of crafting legislation than they are at getting their messages across.

"Our challenge is that there is an abundance of riches in terms of accomplishments and getting people to understand them all," he said. "We have to be a better job messaging, persuading and with the headlines."

The only question Jeffries declined to answer during this session was when he was asked what year he intended to run for president.



Arriving at The Worship Center



House Minority Leader addressing pastors at The Worship Center



Congresswoman Kaptur addressing pastors at The Worship Center

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# The Entrepreneurs Club Announces an Upscale Business Membership

By Dawn Scotland

The Truth Reporter

The Entrepreneurs Club debuted its upscale private business club membership at its Black Carpet Gala Saturday March 9th. The elegant evening featured charcuterie boards, free champagne, live entertainment, DJ and catered food with no cover. The Entrepreneur's Club is a distinguished Black owned business club located on 222 Fassett Street that offers exclusive services to members.

Designed with entrepreneurs in mind, The Entrepreneurs Club is dedicated to empowering Black business owners on their entrepreneurial journey. Their mission is to uplift entrepreneurs through mentorship, marketing, networking and an array of services to aid in the success of their business.

From workshops to seminars and a variety of networking events, members will get to know, support and work with a plethora of local brands in the city and surrounding areas.

### Business Development Services

The Entrepreneurs Club is a one stop shop to start to successfully run your business; It will offer:

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...continued on page 13



The Entrepreneurs Club Servers - Shanice, Shanielle, Shanyia and Tisha



DJ Mpress, Anitra Chery and Faye Scott attend the Black Carpet Gala



DJ CMB



Vince Evans, founder and owner of The Entrepreneurs Club



Server Shae K




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# Shariva Sutton's Versatility Enhances the Customer Experience at Toledo Urban

By Dawn Scotland  
The Truth Reporter

Shariva Sutton wears many hats at the Toledo Urban Federal Credit Union. She's a collection officer, compliance officer and credit card representative.

Sutton started at the credit union five years ago in collections and expanded her role into the other departments. Now, with the recent opening of the new Branch on 3053 Monroe St. she provides her expertise to both branches.

"I love the new branch. It's open, it's bright, it's exciting and it's new. It's an advancement for the credit union so it's nice to be a part of that. Hopefully that turns into three, [and that] turns into four," she remarked.

Sutton worked previously in banking at ProMedica Credit Union as a teller. "For me that just wasn't fulfilling. It's not what I wanted to do. So that's what prompted me to leave and come here."

"It's really rewarding working for Toledo Urban," she continued. "The mission of being a community development financial institution and wanting to serve an underserved population that's really rewarding to me."

Sutton was born and raised in Toledo and graduated from Start High School. She was an STNA following high school and received a degree in medical billing and coding.

She got her first start working in collections in 2013 at a cash advance business where she worked for four years. She then went on to work for several years for collection companies. And Shariva loves what she does!

"I personally like collections" she remarked, "I know that's kind of odd to some people – but I'm good at it. And I like it!"

"I set up payment arrangements, I process payments, make calls and reminder calls, make calls on pass-due loans and handle the repositions and foreclosures."

She highlighted the unique customer experience at Urban. "I'll work with you. I understand life happens. The main thing is communication. As long as my members are communicating with me, I'm willing to do whatever to assist



Shariva Sutton

them to get their loan paid."

Sutton is the mom of two children who are the priority in her life. She likes to shop, listen to live music, cook and spend time with friends.

Shariva invites you to open an account at Toledo Urban Federal Credit Union! "We're willing to work with you. Where you may be denied somewhere else Toledo Urban is definitely going to their best to get you approved," she shared.

To learn more about the Toledo Urban Federal Credit Union visit their location on 1441 Dorr St. or their new second location at 3053 Monroe St. (former Fifth/Third at Swayne Field).

TUFCU offers checking, savings, mortgages, credit cards and loans, among other services, as well as a new down payment assistance program for first time home buyers and a low interest loan for home repair contractors.

Visit ToledoUrban.net or call 419-255-8876 for more information.

### Will Lucas...continued from page 6

president's agenda. Whether it's through advocating for resources, providing strategic guidance, or championing key initiatives, Lucas and his fellow trustees serve as steadfast allies in President Postel's quest to elevate UT to new heights of excellence and impact.

"Our goal is to make sure the University of Toledo is the first place students consider attending for their four-year degree program," says Lucas.

"The University is also expanding certification programs and re-educational pathways for both students and professionals to meet students where they are."

Through collaboration, innovation, and a relentless pursuit of excellence, University of Toledo's Board of Trustees and administrators are paving the way for a brighter and more inclusive future for all students, faculty and staff. As the university charts its course through the challenges and opportunities ahead, it's clear that with steadfast leadership and an unwavering commitment to excellence, they are positioned to achieve success.

Follow [www.utoledo.edu/strategicplan/](http://www.utoledo.edu/strategicplan/) for updates

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The Ohio Housing Finance Agency provides down payment and closing costs assistance for eligible homebuyers as well as affordable loan options.

Find out if you qualify at [myohiohome.org](http://myohiohome.org).





*Perryman... continued from page 2*

banks in supporting the Black food system and its cultural and health implications. I'm still doing that.

I earned my Ph.D. in 2021 in spatially integrated social sciences with a focus on food systems and policy advocacy. That's when I landed at United Way's data department, leveraging my expertise in food policy as the chair of the Ohio Food Policy Network and of the Urban Ag Alliance of Lucas County. I currently consult for various organizations on sustainability in food systems.

In addition to those roles, I continue my scholarly work, including a forthcoming book chapter on food geographies and the development of Black urban agrarianism in Toledo and Dayton. I also founded Earthworks Research and Consulting, focusing on environmental food policy. My latest milestone in my ongoing commitment to food system advocacy and community service has been my appointment to Toledo City Council, which I began serving two weeks ago.

**Perryman:** Talk a bit about your upbringing.

**Jones:** I was raised in a community-oriented family with union roots in the UAW and General Motors. Thanks to my parents and my sister, a supervisor at General Motors, my upbringing was embedded in labor activism.

I call myself a community baby. Ever since I can remember, community and activism have run through my blood, and I plan to keep holding onto them as part of my values and focus, especially in my new position on Toledo City Council.

**Perryman:** What do you bring to the city council, from your perspective?

**Jones:** I bring not just the urban planning and geography aspect but also long-term planning and creative brainstorming, where we try to generate all possibilities when it comes to specific issues. I also bring the connection to people. I'm very easy to relate to, mainly because of my travels, studies, and encounters with many people.

Also, I'm about data. Working for United Way and doing program and methodology evaluation helped emphasize my Ph.D. training in organizing studies and identifying gaps. However, it also made me consider how data can be translated and visualized to convey your desired message.

So, I look more into how to use data to inform our decisions better, and I've noticed that with Toledo, we haven't been doing that.

**Perryman:** How can we engage younger voters?

**Jones:** The one avenue that's been tried and true is social media. Also, the community events, if the weather permits, just having those block parties again, emphasizing what your vote does on the local level.

The message has not been conveyed that you can literally make a difference on your local level, and that will go a long, long way, and just making politics fun, that's the biggest thing.

**Perryman:** Let's shift a little bit to talk about your cultural interests, what are some of them?

**Jones:** I am always for the upliftment of my people. I also love art; I love what it does to people, especially how art and music tell a story in our culture. You can see that evolution and how it affects many of our daily movements and pop culture, fashions, and inspirations. I feel that the contributions of Black people have definitely made a difference. It just keeps getting better and better because people have access to a lot more resources.

Regarding religion, I'm a spiritual person. I grew up Baptist, and I'm still spiritual and believe in a higher power, but I'm fashioning it in a relatable way and not mindlessly following.

I love nature; I love creation, how everybody and everything interacts, the relationship between man and nature, and our responsibility as humans when it comes to the environment. In the Bible, we're given the power to be the Earth's stewards, and I wholly believe in that. Mother Nature can survive without us, but we can't survive without her. We have to realize that and take it very seriously.

Especially now with my daughter, I have to think about what her future looks like, how I am leaving it for her, and how I can influence people to leave Earth in a better place even if they don't have children or anybody to pass it down to, but how can you leave this place in a better state than it was before?

**Perryman:** Who are some of your favorite music or entertainers?

**Jones:** I like genres such as R&B, of course, and I like jazz more. I'm getting into this Lo-Fi genre that is more or less embraces imperfections in the

recording process by messing with the frequencies to create ambient noise, distortion, or hiss. So, you can focus on your work if you want to work. You're working out, but it's supposed to be very calming.

I also like neo-soul artists like Jill Scott or Erykah Badu, and contemporary R&B like Usher. I like Beyoncé. I'll probably get hung cause that's a hot topic, but I like her a little bit. I like where she's going, her new direction.

As far as other entertainment, I like Sci-Fi and futuristic movies, thrillers, and documentaries. I spend a lot of time on YouTube. I also watch a lot of cooking shows and international stuff because I'm trying to see what's happening out in the world and what people are eating. I love to cook and try new recipes.

**Perryman:** What kinds of food?

**Jones:** I love all sorts of Asian food.

I have a wok. I make traditional ramen noodles. I love Korean food, and I've made kimchi. Of course, I've made homemade egg rolls, Crab Rangoon as well as fried rice. It tastes good because it indulges the "sixth sense." It's healthier and lighter, tantalizes the palate, and you can taste everything. That's what I love about that.

Following that, I like Mediterranean food. So, I know how to make falafel. I know how to make shawarmas. I also like Indian food, so I've made Gobi Manchurian before. I've also tried paella and South American dishes; Not to mention, I've been to Africa to study abroad and tried some of their food, and I'm just like, "Oh my God, Southern African food is so, so good!"

**Perryman:** Someone wrote, "Mentors don't necessarily provide us with the answers, but they create the right climate of support for us to be successful and to perform at our highest level." Do you agree?

**Jones:** I agree with that statement because mentors are here to help you decipher what is good for you, what that looks like in the long-term, and what is on the right path you're trying to go, and then you can make your own decision from that. They are there for support in case you fall. It's okay because you're going to occasionally fall, but you should not feel judged, and you should not feel shame when you're talking to your mentor; they should be there to support you in becoming your own person.

**Perryman:** Talk about your mentors who helped make you the person you are.

**Jones:** Truthfully, there is a lot to list. Of course, my mom and my family. I've also had mentors who were my parents' friends once they found out what I was interested in or just wanted to support me in whatever way. They offered themselves as a resource and networking connection. That's anybody from Tiffany McNair, former housing commissioner; Fletcher Word, when I wrote for The Truth a while back; and Coleena Ali, currently in housing.

My dissertation chair, Dr. Sujata Shetty, is the only woman of color in that department at UT and has taught me how to navigate academic spaces. At BGSU, in the geography department, Dr. Karen Webb also mentors me in that space. Growing up, Ray Wood, Mike Alexander, and Ms. WillieAnn Moore offered a lifetime of support.

So, I was blessed to have had those mentors. Luckily, they were open enough for me to learn from them for that connection because, at that time, I was still trying to figure out what career path I wanted to go down.

It's usually always with the organizations they were with, too, just connecting with that and looking for my space and my place. It took me some time, and I'm not saying that I know where I'm going, but I feel more comfortable. I owe it all to them because they let me know the ins and outs, kept it real, and were transparent. If it was going in the wrong direction, they corrected me and said, "No, you don't need to do that; how about this?" They weren't afraid to talk to me, and that's what I needed, what I wanted, and how I talk to other people, even the younger people I contact.

**Perryman:** Finally, what advice do you have to inspire younger people coming behind you who now will be looking at you and watching your every move?

**Jones:** Two things. First, you are the CEO of your life, so don't be afraid to try new things and forge your own path. That is how I got to where I am. I was not afraid to join an organization, move to that next goal or opportunity, get



...continued on page 12

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# AI Can Potentially Help Prevent the Next Bank Crash

By Tiasia Saunders, Howard University News Service

Guest Column

Artificial intelligence is still developing, and some experts believe the technology can assist with risk management in financial institutions by spotting errors and preventing bank crashes.

For example, the types of missteps that took down Silicon Valley Bank (SVB), the biggest U.S. bank failure since 2008.

According to a 2020 McKinsey & Company report on the usage of AI within the financial sector, financial institutions have used AI-powered tools in recent years for automated customer service interactions, fraud detection, and security protection.

"While for many financial service firms, the use of AI is episodic and focused on specific use cases, an increasing number of banking leaders are taking a comprehensive approach to deploy advanced AI and embedding it across the full lifecycle from the front- to the back-office," the report stated.

Initially, AI was created to avoid human error and improve the accuracy and speed of mathematical calculations. Through the decades, it has evolved to tackle a greater range of tasks and take new forms, such as a recent example, ChatGPT.

"When we think about AI, we have to think about three different types of AI. One type of AI would be autonomous, and with this, the AI comes up with a decision and executes the decision—so think of a self-driving car," Greg Dawson, an assistant professor of information systems at Arizona State University, said.

"Semi-autonomous is when the human says what needs to be done, [and] the AI implements" it. An example of that would be a weapons system," Dawson added.

"Lastly, you have augmented AI when something else generates a whole bunch of information and provides it to the human to make a decision. The biggest thing that we are concerned with is something called algorithmic

bias," he continued.

With these advancements, there has been a global conversation about the potential advantages of using AI in different types of companies to reduce errors and improve decision-making.

"I believe the greatest benefit of AI in the financial industry ecosystem has been its ability to provide analytics and key insights during projects and cases for financial institutions," said Bryce Anderson, an honors freshman business major from Jersey City, N.J.

"For example, investment banking analysts can utilize AI as a tool when it comes to predicting key investment decisions on stocks and bonds for higher-earning clientele and, in addition, transform sectors of business they enlist," he continued.

Startups, such as Napier, Quantifind, and Symphony AI, are working to assist financial institutions in managing risks with this new technology. These companies work to validate their training models to ensure no decision bias occurs within the database.

"One of the real benefits that we've seen from a net reveal perspective is access to that new cutting edge AI capability both from detecting new crime. You're actually able to write a rule to detect it, so you see these anomalies happening within the data," said Peter Fisher, the product director at Symphony AI, a generative AI-based company.

"Different types of behavior and outliers that you wouldn't have been able to see before. So, we can detect more criminal activity," he continued.

Through several factors, such as comprehensive data analysis, compliance monitoring, and improved loan application review, AI has the capabilities to strengthen the financial sector.

"AI can identify crashes or downward trends that had similar characteristics in previous moments, allowing for repeated downfalls to be prevented. Knowing this we still need for people to understand that future problems aren't as easily predicted or forecasted as accurately as AI has shown to be," Anderson said.

Despite the influx of AI startup companies, regulators remain cautious about integrating AI technologies with financial systems. Their concerns include AI-based bias/discrimination and regulatory compliance issues.

Daron Acemoglu, a professor in the Department of Economics at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, still needs to be convinced about AI integration within financial institutions.

"In general, there is a tendency to see AI as a solution to all problems, and I'm quite skeptical. Many of the most important problems we have right now, such as climate change or political polarization, are caused by institutional weaknesses and faulty incentives; purely technical systems cannot fix them," Acemoglu said.

Although AI can offer companies advantages, there is speculation about the rapid growth of AI's capabilities. Many experts agree that humans must manage the technology appropriately, regardless of how it is used.

"I think it all comes down to the two factors of transparency and explainability," said Dawson. "We are hugely concerned with the problem of algorithmic bias if we can explain how the AI algorithm works and if we're transparent with the type of data."

AI technologies are still being created and adapted, and their effect on the banking industry remains to be seen. As of now, the primary focus is on governance and transparency.

In discussing the power of AI, Symphony AI's product director Fisher said, "An application that had been trained on data from hundreds of thousands of banks over decades, who would have been very quick to spot the issue that SVB had."

*Perryman... continued from page 11*

into school, or go for my Ph.D. I wasn't afraid of that, of leaving home, or of traveling internationally.

This life is full of opportunities, and you are the CEO of it. You can make your own way. There may be some obstacles, but if you really want it and it's meant for you, it will clear its way. Do not be afraid. And, get out of your own way when necessary. That'll be a third one.

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

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# Easter Books for Kids by various authors

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

The Truth Contributor

Guest Column

How do you know when it's spring?

The robins suddenly make an appearance in your back yard. The flowers begin to poke their heads from the ground and in the stores. Mom and Dad start making garden plans and Grandpa finds his garden shears. Trees begin thinking about sprouting leaves, the temperature rises, and the sun feels nice on your face. The calendar helps, too, because it tells you when it's Easter. So why not get a hop on things and read these great Easter books?

c.2024  
various publishers  
\$12.99 - \$18.99  
various page counts

Chances are, you know all about the Easter Bunny. You can guess what he looks like, what he wears, and what he eats. But what if you make a mistake? In *I am NOT the Easter Bunny!* by T.L. McBeth (Flamingo Books, \$12.99), a "regular bunny" sure looks like the real thing. He acts like the Easter Bunny. He wears a plaid vest and bow-tie, he hops along a trail, he carries a basket, he buys eggs at the grocery store and then he paints them! He swears he's absolutely not the Easter Bunny, but who's he kidding? Not your three-to-five-year-old! This is the kind of book that's so much fun and so funny, you won't mind reading it all year 'round.

Sometimes, there's more to someone than meets the eye, especially when it comes to cute. In *The Cutest Brave Little Bunny* by Joy Steuerwald (Nancy Paulsen Books, \$18.99), a cute little "fluffle" of bunnies is born on the farm one day. They're all so cute and that little one is especially so – although he swears he's not! He's absolutely not cute. He's brave, resourceful, smart, and well, he's kind of mean. Is it possible to be brave and resourceful and smart and fun... and nice, too? This story is adorable and a little bit sassy, and your 3-to-6-year-old will love knowing how it ends.

And finally, what's Easter without a new Easter outfit to wear to church? In *Elijah's Easter Suit* by Brentom Jackson, illustrated by Emmanuel Boateng (Doubleday Books for Young Readers, \$18.99), a young boy wants to get a shout-out from his pastor and the adults in his church for wearing the best outfit – but how? He starts at the department store uptown, but nothing looks "quite right." He searches at the local thrift store, but he gets the same results. Even the oldest store in town disappoints him. Then

Mama Green and Mr. Brown tell Elijah how they used to find their Easter outfits, and that gives him an idea. What makes an Easter outfit great? Kids ages seven to nine will love this sweet story and the great illustrations.

If these books aren't enough – or if you're looking for something for an older child, a teen, or for your own Easter basket, then hop on over to your favorite bookstore or library. You'll find all kinds of helpers there, who can put the right book directly in your paws. They know the perfect book to make your little bunny the hoppiest this Easter.

### Entrepreneurs Club... continued from page 9

- Three-hour free business event (per month)
- 15 percent off alcoholic beverages
- 15 percent off business development services
- 15 percent off personal hall rentals

### Silver Status Membership-\$50

- Two four free business event (per month)
- One free guest per visit
- 10 percent off transportation/ business suites
- 10 percent off business development services
- 10 percent off personal hall rentals

\*All new members get free T-Shirts

\*\*All members receive free access to all in-house held events

\*\*\*Membership Prices are 50 percent off for a promotional time of two months\*\* \*Regular prices will take affect after promo ends.

Vince Evans, owner and visionary behind The Entrepreneurs Club, wants to keep money circulating in the Black community "I notice as a race we spend our money with everybody else, we don't spend keep our money in our community," he said. Evans is a Toledo native and lived in Atlanta, GA, "I came back here with the idea to bring us together, if we start spending our money in our own community we won't have to beg everybody else."

He is the owner of his own transportation company, in which he offers services both commercial and private transportation services. Previously the Entrepreneurs Club operated as a rental hall, now he is fulfilling the next level of his dream.

"We do all the services to open up a business from the start and keep you going throughout your journey like LLC information, vendor licensure and connections with marketing platforms," said Evans "The members support each other, keep it within the circle, keep that money rotating and Make The Money Black Again. The idea is to build new Black Wall Street."

To learn more about or to join visit [www.theentrepreneursclub.net](http://www.theentrepreneursclub.net). Follow on Facebook and Instagram @\_TheEntrepreneursClub

Food was catered by Bridgette Be Cooking (Bridgette Floyd 567-312-0765; FB @ Brigette Be Cooking). Live entertainment presented by Wall Music and singer Anitra Chery. DJ CMB (Facebook DJ La Chaz CMB)



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**Key Responsibilities:**

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- Demonstrate expertise in curriculum development, ensuring alignment with educational standards.

**Qualifications:**

- Bachelor's degree in education.
- At least one to three years of hands-on experience teaching.
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- Strong organizational abilities to manage and streamline educational initiatives.

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### INVITATION FOR BIDS CONCRETE & ASPHALT REPLACEMENT SERVICES IFB24-B003

Lucas Metropolitan Housing (LMH) will receive bids for **Concrete & Asphalt Replacement Services in accordance with IFB24-B003**. Received in accordance with law until **March 29, 2024, at 3:00 PM ET**. For documents: [www.lucasmha.org](http://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.



### LEGAL ADVERTISEMENT REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR AVIATION CONSULTING SERVICES FOR THE TOLEDO-LUCAS COUNTY PORT AUTHORITY

The Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority (TLCPA) is seeking qualified aviation consulting firm(s) to provide professional Architectural, Engineering, and Planning services for the Eugene F. Kranz Toledo Express Airport, Toledo Executive Airport, and Seagate Heliport Heliport.

These services are to be provided in connection with the capital improvement plan (CIP) for both airports, as well as assist in the development of a potential CIP for the heliport. This Request for Qualifications (RFQ) will result in a multi-year agreement with a consultant or consultants for a period of five (5) years. The selected consultant(s) will then negotiate and enter into sub-agreements for services, based on the scope of work, with the Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority on a project/assignment basis during the term of the five (5) year period.

The selection process of consultant(s) is being done in accordance with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Advisory Circular 150/5100-14E, and applicable Ohio statutes and laws.

The required format for the proposal to be submitted to the Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority is described in detail in the full copy of the Request for Qualifications, and is available by either (1) emailing Tina Perkins at [Tperkins@Toledoport.org](mailto:Tperkins@Toledoport.org) or (2) visiting the Port Authority's website at <https://www.toledoport.org/public-notice>. Proposals are due no later than 10:00 a.m. (local time), Wednesday, April 10, 2024.

Thomas Winston, President and CEO  
Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority

### INVITATION FOR BIDS TREE REMOVAL & TRIMMING SERVICES IFB24-B004

Lucas Metropolitan Housing (LMH) will receive bids for **Tree Removal and Trimming Services in accordance with IFB24-B004**. Received in accordance with law until **April 2, 2024, at 3:00 PM ET**. For documents: [www.lucasmha.org](http://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.



### Public Bid Advertisement (Electronic Bidding) State of Ohio Standard Forms and Documents

0049-23-304(2)  
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The University of Toledo  
Lucas County, OH

**Bids Due:** April 02, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. through the State's electronic bidding system at <https://bidexpress.com>

**EDGE Participation Goal:** 5.0% of contract of the contract sum with EDGE-certified business(es) AND additional 10% EDGE-certified OR Diverse Supplier vendors including MBE, WBE, VBE, BSVI, SDVOB, and LGBTBE.

**Domestic steel use is required per ORC 153.011.**

Contract	Estimated Cost
General Trades	\$490,000.00
Alternate No. 1 – Additional Trees	\$3,500.00
Alternate No. 2 – Flood Lights	\$3,850.00
Alternate No. 3 – Mill & Top Asphalt	\$25,000.00
<b>Total General Trades Alternates</b>	<b>\$32,350.00</b>

**Pre-bid Meeting:** March 19, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. – Main Campus, Plant Operations Building - Room 1000, The University of Toledo, 2925 East Rocket Drive, Toledo, OH 43606

**Walk-Through:** Immediately following Pre-Bid.

**Bid Documents:** Available electronically at <https://bidexpress.com>

**More Info:** CBLH Design, Inc., Mike Serdinak, 440-243-2000, [mserdinak@cblhdesign.com](mailto:mserdinak@cblhdesign.com)

### 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](http://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.





# How to Have a Perfect Saturday in Downtown Toledo

By Shana Lee

Toledo's Food & Travel Blogger

Experience a picturesque Saturday in downtown Toledo, where the city's charm comes alive through craft coffee, culinary delights, art, and hidden gems. Follow this curated itinerary for the ultimate city experience, featuring stops at Earth Coffeehouse, Souk, Quenched & Tempered Brewery, Bellwether at Toledo Spirits Company, Registry Bistro, and a visit to the Toledo Museum of Art for "The Brilliance of Caravaggio: Four Paintings in Focus."

### 8:00 AM – Breakfast at Earth Coffeehouse:

Start your day at Earth Coffeehouse, where the morning sun illuminates the cozy space filled with greenery. Indulge in a delicious breakfast paired with ethically sourced coffee. Let the warmth of this botanical oasis set the perfect tone for a day filled with crafted experiences.

### 10:00 AM – Explore Downtown Toledo:

After a leisurely breakfast, take a stroll through downtown Toledo. Discover local shops, art galleries, and landmarks that showcase the unique character of the city. Immerse yourself in the vibrant atmosphere, building an appetite for the adventures ahead.

### 12:00 PM – Lunch with a Mediterranean Twist at Souk:

As midday approaches, head to Souk for a flavorful lunch inspired by the vibrant markets of the Middle East. Indulge in authentic dishes, allowing the rich aromas and unique flavors to add a touch of the Mediterranean to your already amazing Saturday.

### 2:00 PM – Toledo Museum of Art: The Brilliance of Caravaggio:

Visit the Toledo Museum of Art to witness "The Brilliance of Caravaggio:

Four Paintings in Focus." Let the masterpieces captivate your senses as you delve into the artistic brilliance of Caravaggio. Take your time to appreciate each stroke of genius during this cultural interlude.

### 4:00 PM – Craft Beer Delights at Quenched & Tempered:

Head to Quenched & Tempered, Toledo's hidden craft beer gem, for a late afternoon pick-me-up. Sample meticulously brewed beers, each offering a unique flavor profile. Pair your favorites with delicious snacks, continuing your delicious journey.

### 6:00 PM – Sophisticated Dinner at Registry Bistro:

Conclude your crafted Saturday with an elegant dinner at Registry Bistro. Indulge in meticulously crafted dishes that provide a perfect close to your

...continued on page 3



Toledo Museum of Art



Shana Lee



The Peacock Cafe



Earth Coffeehouse



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# Men of St. Paul Encourage Other Men to Stand Firm in Faith

By Fletcher Word  
The Truth Editor

Men of the historic St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church organized their annual Men's Day celebration during the March 9-10, 2024 weekend. The two-day celebration kicked off with a Saturday morning breakfast and concluded with a spirit-filled Sunday morning worship service.

The St. Paul congregation has a tradition of making a weekend of their Men's Days (as with the annual Women's Day) but this was the first time since 2019 (before the COVID19 pandemic) that the church returned to that tradition.

Biblical scripture 1 Corinthians 16:13-14 served as the 2024 weekend's inspiration for the celebration: "Men of God standing firm in Faith," and Rev. Allen T. Smith of New Community Bible Fellowship in Cleveland Heights was Sunday's guest speaker.

Smith, a native of Toledo, and his wife, Vontyna Smith, PhD, moved to the Cleveland area in 2008 and he serves as the CEO for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Ohio. While still in Toledo, Rev. Smith was ordained by St. Paul MBC pastor, Rev. James Willis, and served St. Paul as a Sunday school teacher, Sunday school superintendent and associate minister.

Church members and guests were surrounded by various black and white decorative items, and every man of the church wore the same symbolic black and white tie during the service.

"The tie represents spiritual uniformity and is something we plan every year. This year, black and white was decided because of the theme. Take a moment to look at the storm, when the storm is ragging there are clouds that surround you. When we depend on God, you can't let darkness of the storm

stop us. Even though darkness it is because of God's light, we can battle the storm," explained Rev. James Willis Sr, pastor of St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church.

Sunday's service opened with a musical selection by the St. Paul Men's Day Choir and a Call to Worship by Deacon Joseph Diggins.

Following the Lord's Prayer, led by Deacon Charles Matthews, the welcome from Brother Tyrone Farrow and the responsive reading led by Deacon Darryl Reed, the congregation joined in a hymn – "We've Come This Far by Faith."

Announcements and the recognition of guests were offered by Brother Edward Gordon and after a scripture reading by Deacon Michael Evans, the speaker, Ref. Smith, was introduced by Deacon Diggins.

Various congregations and St. Paul ministries submitted words of gratitude for the Men's Day Weekend Celebration including: Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church and pastor Rev. W.L. Perryman, DMin; Third Baptist Church and pastor Rev. Odell Brown, Jr; Mount

Ararat Missionary Baptist Church and pastor Rev. John Walthall III; Mt. Nebo Baptist Church and pastor Rev. Cedric Brock; The Glass City Church of Christ and pastor Rev. Robert Birt; Calvary Baptist and Pastor Floyd Smith, Jr; and a host of church ministries and local businesses and elected officials.



Deacon Joseph Diggins, co-chair; Rev. James Willis; Vontyna Smith, speaker's wife; Rev. Allen T. Smith, speaker; Deacon Bibby McDole, co-chair



Pastor James and First Lady Linnie Willis



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