



Volume 85 No. 6

"And Ye Shall Know The Truth..."

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Transforming Leadership Through Service



Rodney Eason, HR Professional, Philanthropist, Difference Maker

Photo by Will Lucas/Creadio

Playing the Long Game

By Fletcher Word

The Truth Editor

The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.

— Lao Tzu



Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, youth violence, particularly in urban areas like Toledo, has become an increasingly urgent and pressing issue. Far too often, the lives of too many young people are cut short or irreparably damaged by acts of violence that are both senseless and tragic.



Malcolm Cunningham

A vast and complex network of socioeconomic issues lies at the core of the problem, including poverty, limited access to high-quality education, low-cost nutritious and culturally appropriate food, safe and affordable housing, and the persistent impact of gangs and criminal activities in specific neighborhoods.

Despite the immense political pressure on the City's leadership to produce immediate results, addressing the byzantine issue of youth violence requires more than a high-profile quick fix or short-term intervention.

Instead, the Long Game approach requires sustained, strategic efforts that address both the immediate needs and the underlying causes of youth violence. Central to Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz's strategy is the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (MONSE), an initiative designed to address violence through prevention, intervention, and community engagement. MONSE's current director, Malcolm Cunningham, brings a global experience and a deep commitment to making his native Toledo a safer place for all its residents.

In this week's article, Cunningham discusses MONSE's strategy to tackle youth violence: focusing on long-term solutions that empower and support at-risk youth while building the foundation for a safer Toledo.

Perryman: Before discussing the five-year plan between Cities United and MONSE to reduce gun violence, I'd like to introduce you to our community. Please share a bit about yourself.

Cunningham: I was born and raised in Toledo. I grew up on the 700 block of Pinewood and moved to Lawrence Avenue when I was 16 or 17 years old. So, my roots are pretty much Junction and then Old West End. I attended Central Catholic High School and then went to Ohio State, where I initially planned to pursue a career in counseling. But decided to get into global health and development, community development just based on a couple of experiences

Perryman: What about your post-college career?

Cunningham: After college, I joined The Peace Corps and served in Rwanda as part of the first group to return after the genocide 15 years earlier, working

in health and community development. Despite leaving Toledo, I always found my way back to my hometown. In 2021, I bought a home in Old Orchard, and yeah, I'm back home.

Perryman: How long have you been leading MONSE, and how did your appointment come about?

Cunningham: I've been leading MONSE

for 15 months. My appointment came about while I was working for ProMedica. There were a few incidents, and I was impacted by them. So, I got permission to reach out to JoJuan Armour, who then held the position of Program Manager for the Mayor's Initiative to Reduce Gun Violence. I reached out and linked him with some people from my network who are involved in this type of work and had been supportive behind the scenes.

Perryman: What other organizations or entities have you worked with?

Cunningham: I worked at The Zepf Center from 2011-2017, then at The University of Michigan School of Public Health before returning to ProMedica in late 2019 or early 2020.

Perryman: Could you outline the main goals of this five-year plan to reduce gun violence in Toledo and how it will address the unique challenges in our African American communities?

Cunningham: The goal is to reduce violence, particularly gun and interpersonal violence, focusing on Black males aged 15-29 and reducing violence against Black women. We target those at highest risk, offering intensive support, reducing risk factors and increasing protective ones.

Our approach includes:

- Changing attitudes and behaviors around conflict and violence.
- Reducing gun charges and recidivism.
- Providing comprehensive case management and support.

We also work on shifting community norms, addressing issues like blight and disinvestment, and improving access to living-wage jobs. Additionally, we're tackling structural challenges like the benefits cliff and exploring ways to help people rise out of poverty without losing essential resources. So, our goals are to reduce violence, change attitudes, improve social conditions, strengthen neighborhoods, and drive structural change.

Perryman: It is a very long and broad answer. Do you think the plan is too big or broad to accomplish realistically?

Cunningham: If we focus on those at the highest risk and target neighborhoods where violence rates are high, it's not too broad or too big to accomplish. Trying to solve it for all 270,000 Toledo residents might be too ambitious, but concentrating on the 300 people who need access to opportunities makes it more manageable. For example, we have 63 people in the Save Our Community Program, and other programs handle 15-20 people at a time.

This approach is achievable by providing intensive, direct support to these individuals and focusing on community-level change. Save Our Community's success is evident, especially after JoJuan Armour joined. The Junction area, for instance, saw homicides drop from nine to two in a year, even as citywide gun violence increased. The Lagrange Corridor also experienced similar reductions in both fatal and nonfatal shootings.

We can make a significant impact with proper support from the city and community. While the plan may seem broad, we focus on well-defined and achievable specifics.

Perryman: Gun violence is often a symptom of deeper issues like poverty, lack of education, and limited economic opportunities. You mentioned these factors but didn't delve into the disparities. Are you addressing these root causes, and can tangible outcomes be achieved without tackling them?

Cunningham: While temporary change is possible when focusing on broad



Malcolm Cunningham addresses marchers

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Kamala Harris's Chicago Convention and Illinois' Unique Place in Civil Rights History

By Ben Jealous

The modern civil rights movement hit a new peak last week in Illinois. It marked the movement coming full circle, in a way, back to the state of its birth more than a century ago.

Illinois is the unsung "alpha and omega" of the movement.

It was the 1908 Springfield, IL Race Riot that sparked the creation of the NAACP. That marked the beginning of what would become the modern civil rights movement that evolved through the 1950s and 60s and is still evolving today.

And last week, Illinois hosted the nomination by one of America's major parties of a candidate for president who has broken barriers her entire career ... who comes from a family of bold civil rights activists ... who could be our first woman president, our first president of Asian descent, and only our second Black president.

If Springfield was the civil rights movement's "alpha," then this year's Democratic National Convention in Chicago and Kamala Harris's campaign are, to date, its "omega." Barely more than a month ago nobody knew this was going to be Harris's convention. Yet the history of the civil rights movement makes poetry of the fact she accepted her party's nomination in Illinois.

The city of Chicago itself has played a crucial role in this history. In the wake of the Springfield Riot, the anti-lynching crusader and Chicagoan Ida B. Wells-Barnett was a leading national voice against that racial violence and one of the original cofounders, six months later, of the NAACP. And Chicago played host to a key civil rights moment featuring another NAACP cofounder, W.E.B. Du Bois.

In 1929, it was where Du Bois dispatched white supremacist Lothrop Stoddard's toxic eugenics claptrap, arguing for racial equality in what was billed at the time as "one of the greatest debates ever held."

It is the home of Mayor Harold Washington and Jesse Jackson. Reverend Jackson's presidential campaigns offered me one of my own first experiences in political organizing. I was captivated by his campaigns and led my county's arm of Youth for Jackson when I was 14.

Those Black leaders' groundbreaking campaigns helped create a tailwind for Black candidates across the country to make history in the 1980s. Doug Wilder became the first African American elected statewide in Virginia as Lieutenant Governor in 1985. 1989 then saw Wilder become the first ever elected Black governor in the United States and David Dinkins elected the first Black mayor of New York City.

I had this epiphany about Illinois' special place in the civil rights movement right before traveling to Chicago to take part in various events held during this year's Democratic convention. It was at the White House, of all places. I had the privilege of being in the Oval Office for President Biden's dedication of the site of the 1908 Springfield Race Riot as our country's newest national monument. Among the crowd were some of Illinois' top political leaders. And one of them mentioned that Illinois currently does not have a Civil Rights Trail.

I thought about that as I was walking out and a photograph on display in the Oval Office caught my eye. It was President Biden with his mother and then President-Elect Barack Obama on election night in 2008 in Chicago's Grant Park. I remembered that night and was immediately awash in more memories close to my heart and my sense of patriotism. I was in Springfield, IL when President Obama launched his campaign for president there in 2007. I have always remembered that campaign kickoff vividly because of its historical significance and because of how cold it was. It will be forever even more deeply ingrained in my memory because one of my crew that day who I stood with during the rally was my friend Kamala Harris, then the district attorney of San Francisco.

Springfield was the home of Abraham Lincoln. When the NAACP was formed in 1909, six months after the Springfield Race Riot, it was on what would have been the Great Emancipator's 100th birthday. Then in 2007, nearly 100 years after that, Springfield was where Illinois Senator President Obama chose to begin his presidential journey. Once again, it was that pattern of things continuing coming full circle back to Illinois in our nation's long march towards freedom and justice.

Clearly, Illinois deserves to have several Civil Rights Trail-recognized sites.

Last week's convention was one for the ages. The speeches, the optimism, the energy, and yes, the joy. It was also just the latest of Chicago's

and the state of Illinois' immense contributions to America's progress toward the day when the rights and dignity of all people are fully realized.

This week we celebrate Women's Equality Day. It is the anniversary of women gaining the right to vote with the adoption of the 19th Amendment in 1920. As our country sits poised to elect its first woman as president, it is also fitting to remember that Illinois was part of the very first group of states (along with Wisconsin and Michigan on the same day) to ratify that amendment.

Ben Jealous is the Executive Director of the Sierra Club, former president and CEO of the NAACP and a Professor of Practice at the University of Pennsylvania.



Perryman... continued from page 2

metrics like violence reduction, addressing root causes is essential for lasting impact. To create meaningful change, we must improve access to opportunities, such as increasing household incomes, supporting families, and providing mental healthcare for those affected by trauma and community violence.

One key focus is on young people under 25 who are not in school, training or employment. This group is particularly at risk, so we're exploring ways to engage and support them directly. For instance, the community recommended restarting the Youth Build Program and securing funding for it, as well as creating pathways into specific city employment opportunities.

A recent project with four youths from our caseload who have been impacted by violence highlights the potential for change. They worked over the summer, reducing blight in the neighborhood and earning over \$20 an hour. Once they turn 18, they'll have the opportunity to interview for jobs. We're expanding the program this spring and summer to include 20 young people who will shadow professionals in departments like Urban Beautification or Parks and Youth Services, offering valuable experience and potential long-term employment.

While these initiatives won't solve the entire issue overnight, supporting those at elevated risk and providing opportunities is crucial. These deliberate actions contribute significantly to our long-term goals.

Perryman: In a Blade interview, you mentioned that social media might be a significant driver of community violence. What strategies are being implemented to address this, and how do you plan to engage younger community members?

Cunningham: Our entire Save Our Community team is trained in E-Responder, a model focused on online violence interruption. This involves identifying risks like grief or retaliation concerns and mediating conflicts online to

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The Impact of AI on Life in the Future

By Paul Hubbard

Guest Column

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is one of the most discussed topics on most media platforms. This is why Black people need to understand it. This is a 2024 part of life.

There is great optimism and great fear about the proliferation of what this technology will bring us in the immediate and not so far future says Earle Charles in the Boule Journal. But the truth is this technology is not new. Artificial intelligence has roots going as far back as the ancient Greeks, where the myth of Talos give us an ancient conceptualization of automation and robotics.

Artificial Intelligence is the frontier of computer science, aiming to create systems that can perform tasks traditionally requiring human intelligence, with applications ranging from practical tools in today's technological landscape to theoretical concepts that push the boundaries of what machines could achieve in the future, says Charles.

Not all AI is AI as we might perceive it. There are broadly three categories of AI:

1. Virtual personal assistants like Siri and Alexa to help make our lives easier when we ask for directions, when we desire to listen to a particular song. Netflix, Amazon, etc.
2. AI general intelligence where it conceptualizes that a machine can perform any intellectual task that a human can. For example, advance autonomous vehicles that can navigate environment without human input. Health systems that diagnose and recommend treatment for patient. Produce original music and art.
3. Super AI is a form that will surpass human intelligence including creativity, general wisdom and problem-solving skills. This is the one that created Frankenstein the monster.

The AI we know today is in manufacturing, health care, financial transactions in real time, transportation routes and car maintenance, agriculture with precision farming, advertising, energy, retail (Amazon), educational applications, social media (Facebook), insurance claims and cybersecurity in air traffic and home cameras.

Challenges and ethical considerations of AI, according to Charles in the Boule Journal, are: bias and decimation; privacy and data protection; em-



ployment disruption; accountability; safety and unintended consequences; Inequities.

There is no doubt that the productivity and other benefits many companies expect from AI are also the same reasons employees and job seekers see as a threat to finding or maintaining employment. In 2023 the Psychological Association said 38 percent of job seekers are worried about AI.

Paul L. Hubbard MSW, President Comfort Care Services.

Survey Says: Customer Satisfaction Scores Continue To Rise For TARTA

Special to The Truth

Guest Column

Services Efforts put into culture development and customer service in recent years by The Toledo Area Regional Transit Authority (TARTA) continue to produce positive results, according to a recently completed survey of the people who depend on public transit in northwest Ohio.

The most recent survey, conducted by TransPro Consulting in late April and early May, took place on all TARTA services (fixed route, paratransit, Flex on-demand) and targeted customers riding or waiting for TARTA services at different times of day. The result show scores a step above both industry average and previous surveys of TARTA customers in most categories.

"We often say that our team members are the best advertisement that TARTA could have, and it is gratifying to see that the commitment to serving the public and dedication to our improvement made by our entire team is having an impact," said TARTA CEO Laura Koprowski. "Our human resources team has worked so hard to make the right additions to our team, and that shows in these numbers as well.

"There is still a lot of room for improvement, and we are eager to hear from anyone who depends on our system about where we are falling short and what we can do better. That said, I am happy that people have noticed the effort put in by our Team TARTA members. We look forward to continuing to improve the way we connect people with their communities."

A Net Promoter Score (NPS) uses questions to gauge the likelihood that a rider would recommend a service to a friend or neighbor, and the enthusiasm with which they would do so. According to April's survey, the NPS for TARTA's fixed route services is 57, well above the public transportation

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The Intersection of Leadership and Service: Rodney Eason's Approach

By Asia Nail

The Truth Reporter

In today's fast-paced corporate world, leadership often takes center stage. However, as Rodney Eason, a seasoned human resources professional and philanthropist, eloquently argues, the true power lies in the intersection of leadership and service. "I'm a businessperson who practices HR," Eason explains, highlighting his belief that effective leadership is deeply rooted in serving others.



Rodney Eason

The Essence of Service

Service in leadership isn't about grand gestures or self-sacrifice; it's about understanding and fulfilling the needs of others—whether they are employees, customers, or the community. Eason's career, which spans significant roles at Principle Business Enterprises, **The Andersons**, **Fifth Third Bank**, and **UPS**, has been a testament to this philosophy.

In these roles, he didn't just guide his teams from the top; he worked alongside them, ensuring their needs were met so they could, in turn, meet the needs of the company. "I help businesses align their human resources with their growth and development," he says, underscoring his commitment to service-driven leadership.

This approach has been instrumental in his success. At **Erie Home**, Eason has been at the forefront of talent development, not just by directing his team but by serving as a mentor, guide and supporter. His methods create work environments where employees feel valued and empowered, directly translating to higher morale and better performance.

Service vs. Leadership: A False Dichotomy

The notion that leadership and service are mutually exclusive is a common misconception. In reality, the best leaders are those who understand that service is an integral part of leadership. Eason believes that service is not just an act but an attitude—one that requires empathy, humility, and a deep commitment to the well-being of others.

"When you're in a significant role within a nonprofit, corporate, or for-profit business, are you exposing people to new experiences so they can learn from you? As leaders, we must share resources and leverage our influence to serve others."

When leaders serve, they build trust. This trust becomes the foundation of strong teams and successful organizations. Employees are more likely to go above and beyond when they know their leader has their best interests at heart. This isn't just theoretical; it's a principle Eason has applied throughout his career with tangible results.

Transforming Leadership Through Service

By focusing on the growth and development of a business's team, he ensures staff members are equipped not just to follow orders but to think critically, innovate and lead in their own right. This, he argues, is the ultimate

goal of leadership—to empower others to lead. "I am blessed, and that makes me required to be a blessing to others," Eason reflects, encapsulating his belief that true leadership is about lifting others up.

Eason's approach is a reminder that leadership is not about titles or authority; it's about influence. And the most enduring influence is achieved not through command but through service.

Service Beyond the Office Walls

Rodney Eason's commitment to service extends far beyond his professional life. His involvement in organizations such as the **Toledo Museum of Art** and the **Alpha Phi Alpha** fraternity highlights his dedication to serving the community. As *vice chair* on the *Toledo Museum of Art Board*, Eason plays a pivotal role in ensuring that the museum remains a vibrant cultural hub in the community. He is particularly excited about the museum's current exhibition, **Ethiopia at the Crossroads**.

"It's an amazing opportunity for the African diaspora to see themselves represented in the museum," he says, emphasizing the importance of diverse representation in cultural institutions.

"From a board oversight perspective, we work with the TMA team to ensure that all backgrounds are well represented at our museum."

Similarly, Eason's membership in Alpha Phi Alpha, a fraternity with a long history of community service and leadership development, underscores his commitment to empowering others. Through his involvement, he mentors youth, guiding them in both their professional lives and personal growth, teaching them the importance of giving back to their communities.

The Ripple Effect of Service-Driven Leadership

Eason's commitment to service-driven leadership is creating a ripple effect that extends far beyond the immediate circles in which he operates. When leaders like Eason actively engage in community service, they set a powerful example for others to follow. This example is particularly impactful in corporate settings, where the focus can often become narrowly centered on profit and efficiency. Eason demonstrates that by investing in the well-being of the community, organizations can cultivate a more holistic and sustainable approach to success.

One of the most significant outcomes of this ripple effect is the fostering of a culture of service within organizations. Employees who see their leaders actively serving the community are more likely to engage in similar activities themselves. This culture of service not only improves employee morale but also strengthens the organization's connection to the community, leading to a more loyal customer base and a stronger corporate reputation.

Moreover, the benefits of service-driven leadership extend to the community itself. When organizations prioritize service, they contribute to the overall health and vitality of the community. This, in turn, creates a more supportive environment for businesses to thrive. It's a symbiotic relation-

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Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority Kick Off Levy Renewal Request

The Truth Staff

“The purpose of the Port Authority is to drive economic development for our region,” said Thomas Winston, president and CEO of the Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority on Thursday, August 22, as he led off a press conference at Ironville Terminal designed to explain why this election cycle’s Port Authority’s levy renewal request is important to the economy of the region.

The Port Authority invests in a number of huge projects – investments, said Winston, that have been leveraged to bring in hundreds of millions of dollars worth of funds for capital projects.

Winston noted that the Port Authority’s seaport and airport operations fund 11,000 jobs and have an economic impact of a combined \$1.5 billion in the northwest Ohio area.

However, the levy renewal, said the speakers at last week’s press conference, is geared to work for the benefit of local small organizations.

“There is so much good work happening in our community – big and small,” said Robin Whitney, the Port Authority board chair. “There are amazing non profits in our community that are doing good work every day. This levy helps to support economic development initiatives that really help.”

Whitney added that as much as the Port loves the big projects, such as the Cleveland Cliffs project at the site of the Ironville Terminal, “we also love the fact that we can help these smaller projects.”

“We believe in building the community one business at a time,” said Wen-



Thomas Winston, TLCPA CEO, speaks as Mayor Tim Pedro of Waterville, LC Commissioner Anita Lopez, Robin Whitney TLCPA chair and Wendy Gramza, Chamber CEO listen

dy Gramza, president and CEO of the Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce which has endorsed the November levy.

The Port’s levy request is a renewal 0.4 mill collected on real estate. The renewal is for five years, first due in the calendar year 2025 and will cost, said Lucas County Commissioner Anita Lopez, about \$8 annually per \$100,000 of real estate value.

The levy is expected to raise \$350,000 annually to help community organizations.

“When I was county auditor, this was one levy no one complained about,” Lopez added.

Perryman... continued from page 3

prevent escalation. We have already used this model in four schools, working directly with youth.

Long-term, we plan to train more community influencers—coaches, pastors, principals—who can mediate conflicts within their communities using these skills. Additionally, we need to push for media literacy at a younger age, helping youth understand how algorithms influence what they see and consume. By promoting media literacy, we aim to take a preventive approach to violence, addressing issues upstream rather than relying solely on interventions. Currently, we focus on expanding E-Responder training locally and integrating media literacy as a key long-term strategy.

Perryman: A couple more questions. How has the collaboration with Cities United influenced the Peace in Motion Plan? What key takeaways from their national experience can be applied explicitly to your work in Toledo?

Cunningham: Cities United has played a crucial role in shaping our approach, emphasizing the need to build a robust network rather than relying solely on a single program like Safe Our Community. They’ve helped us understand that while programmatic interventions are essential, they’re just one part of a larger ecosystem.

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Survey Says...continued from page 4

industry standard (28) and 41 points above TARTA’s score in a similar poll taken in March of 2022.

TARTA’s paratransit service has an NPS of 59, eight points above industry standard and 10 points above where it stood for the team two years ago. This spring’s survey marked the first conducted for TARTA Flex. TARTA’s on-demand pilot program owns an NPS score of 57, with an overall satisfaction rate of 97 percent.

The overall customer satisfaction rate for fixed route services sits at 85 percent, which is eight points above industry average and 11 points above TARTA’s satisfaction rate in November of 2020. Overall satisfaction with paratransit service is 98 percent, which remains six points above industry average.

TARTA customers, community leaders and the general public can find out more about efforts to enhance customer service and make every ride more efficient by attending TARTA’s Community Update Thursday, November 14 at the Glass City Center. Find out more at bit.ly/TARTACommunityUpdate.

The Truth Colours Gallery

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League of Women Voters Celebrate the 19th Amendment

By Dawn Scotland
The Truth Reporter

The League of Women Voters of Lucas County celebrated the ratification of the 19th Amendment, giving women the right to vote, at Scramblers Monday, August 19. The celebration included brunch and a presentation of Sojourner Truth's 1851 speech in Akron, Ohio (later referred to as "Ain't I a Woman?")

The League of Women Voters®, a non-partisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. (source: www.lwvtoledo-lucascounty.org) The

motto of the organization is "Empowering Voters, Defending Democracy."

"We're here today to celebrate the 19th amendment which was ratified August 18, 1920," stated Co-President Bonnie Bishop. "And that we've made considerable progress yet our struggle continues for women's equality."

Recently the organization has been heavily involved in the issues of gerrymandering and fair maps. "We worked hard with the fair districts and we're hoping for a good outcome on the gerrymandering issue which will be on the

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Co-President Bonnie Bishop speaks to members alongside Co-President Rosie Barciz



Nancy Gurney, Co-President Bonnie Bishop and Leena Jhunjunwala celebrate the ratification of the 19th Amendment



Members Judy Hoelzle, Holly Monsos and Judy Kehrl

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Toledo Leaders Welcome MLK and Ella P. Stewart Students Back to School

The Truth Staff

On Monday, August 19, a sizeable group of influential men and women arrived early at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Academy for Boys and the Ella P. Stewart Academy for Girls to welcome the students back on the first day of the 2024-25 academic year.

The men formed a line on the sidewalk outside of MLK Academy and offered words of encouragement and shook hands with each young boy before he entered the school building.

At Ella P. Stewart, the women received a greeting from the school's first

year principal, Shannon Tisdale Carter, in the auditorium, before lining up in the hallways to greet the young students. Earlier in the morning, the men at MLK had extended warm welcomes to the arriving students but the women were much more raucous with their welcome. They cheered, clapped, shouted, waved pom-poms and created excitement.

The greetings at both schools won't end there for many of these students. A number of community leaders will be involved with the students during the rest of the academic year serving as mentors and hosting special events.



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Toledo Supports Black Men and Black Men's Health and Wellness

By Tricia Hall

The Truth Reporter

The African American Wellness Agency and Toledo-based volunteers organized a Black wellness event on Saturday, August 17, 2024 at Jesup W. Scott High School. Participants received a warm welcome and access to plenty of resources.

"Good morning everyone," said Natalye Donnally, vice president of the African American Wellness Agency. "Let's take control of your health today."

"The health of Black men is very important in our communities and this country," said Joe Patterson, Scott Hub Director. "We as Black men look after everyone else, we need to take care of ourselves, so we can continue to provide for our families and lead the community."

There were activities geared towards improving the physical health, mental wellbeing and wellness of Toledo's Black men. The parking lot, football area and gym filled with Black men including men from the Divine Nine fraternities.

"As Black men, we must demonstrate through our actions, that our health is important," said William Hayes, Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc., Toledo Chapter Polaris. "We know that Black men's health and wellness is important, to ourselves, our families and our community."

"Black men's health is one of our fraternity mandates," said Keith Jordan, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., Toledo Chapter president. "We must be present to hear and share the knowledge on how to improve our health."

The activities included: 5K walk and run, health screenings and community resources.

The African American Wellness Agency's goal is to close the gap and impact Black men's lives. Cernel Smith, EdD served as honorary chairman. Johnson & Johnson, Genentech, CareSource, Janssen, Juice 107.3 fm, Mercy Health, 13abc news and Scott High School were sponsors.



Dr. Michael Stubblefield, DDS, and James Mann of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.,



John Jones and Rodney Eason of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.



Men of Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc.,



Treva Martin and Brandon Key



News anchor James Stark and former Toledo Fire Chief Bryan Byrd



Natalye Donnally and Joe Patterson



Men of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc



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Rodney Eason...continued from page 5

ship where both the organization and the community are uplifted through acts of service.

Practical Steps to Implement Service-Driven Leadership

For leaders looking to adopt a service-driven approach to leadership, Eason's career offers several practical lessons. First and foremost, it's crucial to lead by example. Eason's involvement in the community isn't just for show; it's a genuine reflection of his values. Leaders who wish to inspire a similar commitment to service must be willing to roll up their sleeves and get involved themselves.

Another key aspect of service-driven leadership is creating opportunities for others to serve. Eason has consistently focused on empowering those around him, both in his professional roles and his community involvement. By mentoring others and providing them with the tools and opportunities to lead and serve, he ensures that the impact of his leadership is multiplied. Leaders can emulate this by establishing programs within their organizations that encourage and support community service, whether through volunteer days, charitable giving, or partnerships with local nonprofits.

Communication is also vital in fostering a culture of service. Leaders must clearly articulate the importance of service within the organization and how it aligns with the company's values and goals. Eason's approach to leadership emphasizes transparency and open dialogue, ensuring that everyone within the organization understands the value of service. This communication helps to build a shared sense of purpose and motivates employees to contribute to the organization's service initiatives.

Finally, it's important for leaders to recognize and celebrate the contributions of those who serve. Eason's leadership style is characterized by a deep appreciation for the efforts of his team and his community. By acknowledging and rewarding acts of service, leaders can reinforce the importance of these actions and encourage others to follow suit.

Challenges and Opportunities in Service-Driven Leadership

While the benefits of service-driven leadership are clear, it's not without its challenges. Leaders may face resistance from within their organizations, particularly if the culture has traditionally been more focused on profit than on service. Changing this mindset requires patience, persistence, and a willingness to challenge the status quo.

Additionally, balancing the demands of leadership with the commitment to service can be difficult. Eason's involvement in both his professional and community roles is a testament to his time management skills and his ability to prioritize what truly matters. Leaders looking to adopt a similar approach must be prepared to make sacrifices and find ways to integrate service into their busy schedules.

However, these challenges also present opportunities. Leaders who successfully implement service-driven leadership can differentiate their organizations in a crowded marketplace. In an era where consumers and employees alike are increasingly looking for companies that align with their values, a commitment to service can be a powerful competitive advantage.



The Legacy of Service-Driven Leadership

Rodney Eason's career and community involvement illustrate the profound impact that service-driven leadership can have. By prioritizing service, he has not only achieved professional success but has also made a lasting difference in our community. His example serves as a powerful reminder that leadership is not just about directing others but about serving them.

"What I want people to say about me when I'm not around is that I made a difference in the lives of those I met, and in the lives of those I did not have the pleasure of meeting as well."

As more leaders embrace this philosophy, the ripple effects will continue to spread, creating stronger organizations and more vibrant communities. Thank you for your life's work, Mr. Rodney Eason. Your legacy of service-driven leadership embodies empowerment, growth, and positive change—a legacy that every leader should strive to leave behind."

Perryman... continued from page 6

Their guidance has expanded our view of the entire violence prevention space and connected us with a national network of professionals doing similar work, a connection that we value greatly. Our next step is to tap into this network of funders to secure long-term support for our initiatives.

Additionally, Cities United has provided valuable recommendations for training programs and facilitated partnerships, such as the sub-grant with ROCA, Inc., a Massachusetts-based non-profit that works with high-risk youth. These collaborations have significantly informed and strengthened our Peace in Motion Plan.

Perryman: Finally, if you had to narrow the scope of this approach, what one area and metrics would you focus on?

Cunningham: I would focus on reducing the risk of violence and increasing access to opportunities for those at the highest risk. This would involve working intensively with about 100 individuals, providing the necessary support to lower their risk and connect them to resources that offer opportunities.

Perryman: One hundred people from where? What geographical area and age group?

Cunningham: We focus on the Junction, Englewood and Lagrange Corridor areas. I'm considering Black males aged 14 or 15 to 29. Our school-based program targets ages 14 to 19, and our street team works with a broader population. I also need to focus on a few other areas.

Various community-based organizations are also involved, targeting similar age ranges, all working towards the same goal.

Perryman: Simply stated, then, the main goal would be to reduce the homicides and incidents of violence, correct?

Cunningham: Yes, specifically reducing homicides, nonfatal shootings, and shootings into homes. The Peace in Motion Plan website, page 7, outlines our goals and objectives related to reducing gun violence and related outcomes.

Perryman: Thank You.

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

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How I Got My Passport in 1 Day!!

By Ricky Tyus

The Truth Contributor

So, about a year ago, I decided to treat myself to an eight-day All-Inclusive escape to Aruba. My first international jaunt since COVID and I said goodbye. Aruba is a desert island lounging in the Caribbean Sea where it's perpetually sunny 83 degrees and rains just enough to tease you.



Oh, and hurricanes? Not invited. Perfect, right?

Earlier this year, I settled the bill for my dream vacay and started sketching out a list of essentials. Call the credit card company, check. Inform the cell phone provider, check. Pack fabulous outfits, check. Passport - oops, almost forgot. With a week to go before paradise, I finally cracked open my passport only to find out it expired during the pandemic. Fantastic, right? Cue the frantic drumroll.

Spent the weekend donning my detective hat, searching for solutions.

Found a local hero who promised a three-day turnaround but wanted my wallet along with it. Commence the eyeroll. Just when I thought all was lost, a fellow procrastinator schooled me on the magic of getting a passport in a single day. Intrigued? Thought so.

Here's how:

I sauntered over to <https://travel.state.gov> and discovered that Uncle Sam runs this VIP passport agency and center gig. They're not like your everyday post offices or libraries; these folks are by appointment only, catering to desperate travelers within 14 days of their exodus or those needing a visa in 28 days.

After some paperwork jazz on travel.state.gov, I ring 1-877-487-2778 to book an appointment. Spoiler alert, no slots available. Panic mode, activate!

It's Monday and Aruba is calling on Saturday. Enter the 72-Hour Emergency Service, the unsung hero of the passport world. If your flights are

within 72 hours, they grant you an appointment. So, I had to bite my nails till Wednesday to call, and tada!! Got a Thursday appointment. Rolled in and, boom, passport handed over the same day. Crisis averted.

Pro tip: Dodge the nail-biting drama. Apply early at a trusty acceptance facility or by mail. Your future self will thank you.

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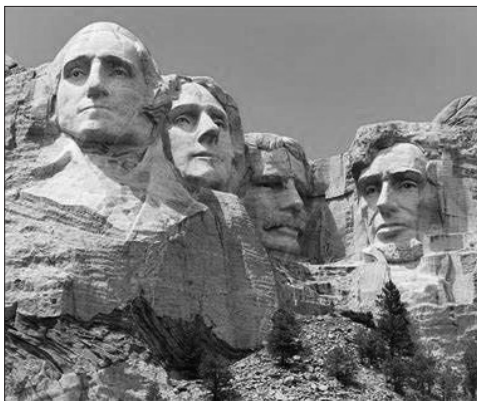
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Ricky Tyus is also the Publicity, Education & Program Chair for PTANA Greater Detroit Chapter

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Port Authority... continued from page 7

November 5th ballot," she stated.

Issue 1, The Citizens Not Politicians Amendment, aims to end gerrymandering by empowering citizens, not politicians, to draw fair districts using an open and transparent process by:

Creating the 15-member Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission made up of Democratic, Republican, and Independent citizens who broadly represent the different geographic areas and demographics of the state.

Ban current or former politicians, political party officials and lobbyists from sitting on the Commission.

Requiring fair and impartial districts by making it unconstitutional to draw voting districts that discriminate against or favor any political party or individual politician.

Requiring the commission to operate under an open and independent process. "

(Source: citizensnotpoliticians.org)

LWV-TLC is one of the oldest Local Leagues in the State of Ohio. Since 1921, the League has earned a reputation as a highly respected citizens' organization that researches issues from many points of view and educates the public and decision makers. The League consists of women and men who want to make a difference in our communities, our country, and our world and who care about democracy. The LWV is considered the original grassroots citizen network. LWV-TLC is a chapter of the League of Women Voters of Ohio and the U.S. (source: www.lwvtoledo-lucascounty.org)

The LWV-TLC is also currently conducting outreach at the local high schools encouraging high school seniors to register to vote for the upcoming election. The group is also recruiting young poll workers with "Youth to the Booth."

"We have lots of irons in the fire. We're always trying to educate voters. Not just registering people- but actually getting them to the polls," said Bishop.

How to Join

Lucas County residents can call 419-540-3487 or go to lwvtoledo-lucascounty.org to either join online or print a mail-in membership form. The organization is open to men.

How to Support League Activities

Contributions to LWV-TLC support the League's non-partisan, local pro-



Regina Vincent-Williams, EdD, dressed as Sojourner Truth

gramming in northwest Ohio. Funding is needed to underwrite publications, such as the New Citizens' Guide to Voting, sponsor speakers on issues of concern to the community, and a multitude of other voter service programs. The LWV is a 501(c)(3) not for profit organization so contributions are tax deductible.

Contributions in any amount to assist with local programming of LWV-TLC are greatly appreciated. Donate online or send checks to:

League of Women Voters of Toledo-Lucas
P.O. Box 2506
Toledo, OH 43606

A Calendar of events are listed on the LWV-TLC website www.lwvtoledo-lucascounty.org. General Meetings are open to the public. All are welcome.



Nancy Gurney, Dr. Regina Vincent-Williams and Leena Jhunjhunwala



Regina Vincent-Williams, EdD, (standing) with Co-presidents Rosie Barcz and Bonnie Bishop

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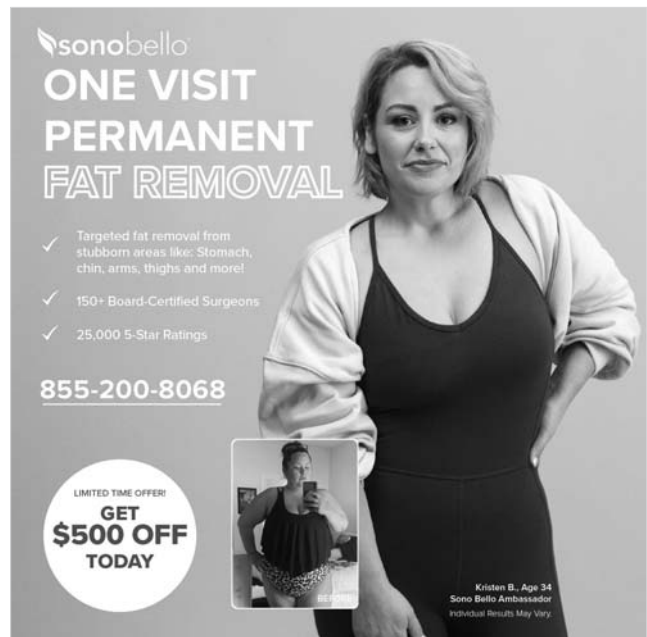
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A Passionate Mind in Relentless Pursuit: The Vision of Mary McLeod Bethune by Noliwe Rooks

By Terri Schlichenmeyer
The Truth Contributor

Ten feet tall. Larger than life.

c. 2024
Penguin Press
\$28.00
208 pages

Surely, that describes the person in history you most admire. He was a giant among men. Her actions were bigger than anyone could imagine in her time and place. You think about that a lot, and the rest of their story. Is there, as in *A Passionate Mind in Relentless Pursuit* by Noliwe Rooks, more to learn?

In the early winter of 1938, Eleanor Roosevelt took a stand when she followed her friend, Mary McLeod Bethune into the Southern Conference for Human Welfare and sat beside Bethune, defying the racist Public Safety Commissioner of Birmingham, Alabama. That's an account that's easy to find anywhere, and it's thrilling, but the story misses something: at one point, the conference's organizer asked for "Mary" to come up to the platform.

Bethune drew herself up and told the organizer "My name is Mrs. Bethune."

Says Rooks, it was uncommon for a Black woman to demand that she be called by a name she chose. That Bethune did is just one of the things that stick in Rooks' mind.

Bethune was her parents' 15th child and the first one born free. That wasn't

her last "first": she was the first Black woman to establish a hospital for Black Floridians, and the first Black woman to launch an HBCU for young Black women in the eastern U.S.

Rooks says that Bethune conceived of the idea of the Tuskegee Airmen, she was the founder of several civil rights organizations and served on the boards and committees of others; she was a teacher who held literacy classes for Black adult voters in the South; and she opened Florida's first beach exclusively "for Black people."

Rooks says that her grandparents knew Bethune and, in doing research for this book, her understanding of Bethune was totally changed. Bethune was more than an activist – she was also a dream maker and "the first lady of Black America."

Here's something you won't often see in this column: *A Passionate Mind in Relentless Pursuit* is not lengthy enough. Not by a long shot.

Author Noliwe Rooks brings the story of Mary McLeod Bethune to readers' attention, but there could've been more. We get a nice, albeit scattered, list of Bethune's work and accomplishments, but you may be left with the sense that the list is somehow incomplete. Even Rooks' thoughts and the stories of her own ancestors is so good that you'll be left wanting.

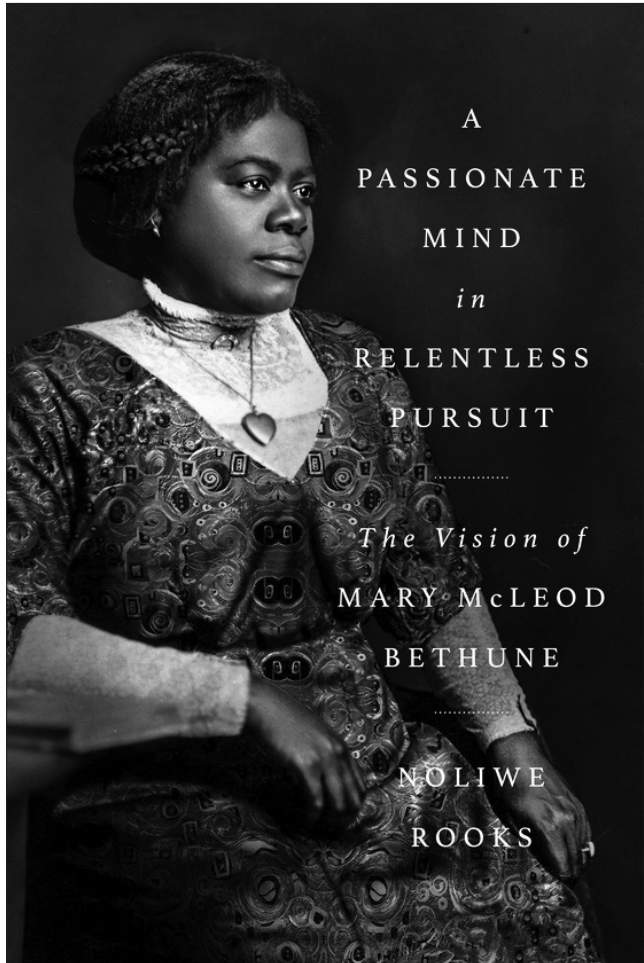
If only this book was longer.

This means you'll devour what is here: the stories, the jaw-dropping achievements, and a lingering feeling that Bethune never felt like she was done, like there was always more to do. Like Rooks, you may find that that, and Bethune, stick in your mind awhile.

Absolutely, this book will send you looking for more information on this talented, driven, brilliant woman. What you'll find here is a little short on substance but still, as an account of the magnitude of one woman's accomplishments, *A Passionate Mind in Relentless Pursuit* is a "10."

* * *

If you're up for more unique history, look for *On a Move: Philadelphia's Notorious Bombing and a Native Son's Lifelong Battle for Justice* by Mike Africa, Jr. It's the story of MOVE, a Black Civil Liberties organization and the 11 people killed in a police bombing in 1985. One of those affected in the aftermath was Africa, whose parents were incarcerated and who remembers the bombing and the ensuing questions surrounding it. This is a deeply moving story that sheds light on a little-discussed chapter in history.



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In Memoriam

Antoine Nsang O'Khan Kabwasa

Antoine Nsang O'Khan Kabwasa passed away peacefully on August 20th in Toledo Ohio at the tender age of 85 surrounded by family and friends. He was loved and will be missed.

Antoine was born in 1939 in a little town called Kikwit in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He had four brothers and two sisters. He went to the Kinzambi Catholic School in Kikwit. He was among the first scholars selected by the newly independent Congo to go to the United States to study.

He came to the US to study at the University of Michigan where he obtained a Certificate in Communications. He continued his studies at the University of California, Los Angeles and University of Redlands in California, where he received his Bachelor's degree in Government International Relations and Economics in 1964. He received a Master's from the University of Wisconsin in 1973. He completed a two-year Ph.D. program in Education at the University of Ontario, Canada where he completed all courses but the dissertation in 1976.

From there, Antoine had a rich career, working for the United Nations, UNESCO branch. Antoine's assignments were dear to his heart because they would lead him to participate in the development of African populations whom he loved. As a UN diplomat, he visited many countries throughout every Continent. One of his missions was to work for the Economic Commission for Africa, in Addis Ababa Ethiopia as the Program Specialist and Senior Officer for Manpower and Training Development in 1977. After his retirement from UNESCO, he also gave various lectures in the Humanities Department at the University of Toledo.

He spoke five languages, KiKongo, Lingala, French, English and Spanish. He was also a storyteller, a poet and an author. One of his works, Pali-Pali, the Bird, and the Mask: a tale from Zaire 1979 received a L' Harmattan award. It is a story that will be enjoyed for generations.

Antoine was the patriarch of the Kabwasa family. When he left for university studies as a young man in his twenties, it was always important for him to uplift his siblings and fulfill his father's dream to see the Kabwasa family travel throughout the world. Antoine supported his whole family.

He took care of his late mother Therese Ntsh Olol - Mulolo and father Francois - Nkum Abui, his late brothers Etienne Ngom Otem and Michel MbungMpush as well as his late sister Ampyng-Marie. He also took care of his surviving siblings Constant Nga-Ambun(Madeleine), Janvier Ngun-Etiet and Eugenie Anzang-nkie.

Antoine was married to Angele Kadima-Nzuji, with whom he spent 38 beautiful years. He passed away two days before their wedding anniversary.

He is survived by his spouse Angele, seven daughters: Florence Kabwasa-Green (Richard), Celine Kabwasa Woods (Brian) Andrea Kabwasa, Yannick Mubenga Lubamba (Bob), Sandrine Mubenga Lufungulo (Safari) Adole Kabwasa Krysewsky (Daniel) and Soleita Kabwasa.; two brothers: Constant (Madeleine) and Janvier, one sister Eugenie, his 12 grandchildren (Troy, Taylor, Amara, Kasem, Brison, Etienne, Nahano, Imanga, Osime, Hanah,



Antoine Kabwasa spins a tale or two

Nathaniel, Nyota), his 27 nieces, nephews, and great and great- great nieces and nephews.

Antoine passed away in peace and now he is with the Lord.

Visitation was held at the Coyle Funeral Home on Friday, August 23. Funeral Services were conducted on Saturday, August 24, in the mortuary, followed by a Funeral Mass at Corpus Christi University Parish. Interment followed at Resurrection Cemetery.



Antoine and Angela Kabwasa and family

Rep. Rogers Announces \$8.5M for the Department of Developmental Disabilities

Allocation supports construction and renovation of community housing

State Rep. Elgin Rogers (D-Toledo) last week announced the Controlling Board's approval of \$8.5M for the Department of Developmental Disabilities Community Capital Assistance Program projects to develop community housing for people with developmental disabilities throughout the state.

"These funds are a crucial resource needed to make sure all residents of Ohio have access to a roof over their head and the care they require. As a state representative, I will continue to advocate for investment into agencies like the Department of Developmental Disabilities that provide essential services to my constituents and people across Ohio," said Rep. Rogers.

Additionally, the Controlling Board approved \$168.8M under Ohio Department of Transportation's state and federal Highway Construction funds to contract with various vendors to provide construction plans, environmental investigations, planning services, construction inspections, and right of way acquisition for various projects throughout the state.

Some other items approved by the Controlling Board include:

- \$26.6M under Ohio Department of Natural Resources for various renovation and improvement projects at state parks throughout the state.
- \$4.66M for the State Board of Education (SBoE) to support the SBoE's Teacher Certification and Licensure Fund.
- \$3.8M under the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce to support high-dosage tutoring services throughout the state for students most impacted by learning loss as a result of the pandemic.

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10th Annual Motown Dinner & Dance Cruise

The Truth Staff

On Friday night, August 16, about 150 Toledoans headed north to join Donnetta Carter on her 10th annual Motown Dinner & Dance Cruise aboard the four-story Detroit Princess. This year the Toledoans filled up the third story of the Princess and enjoyed a sumptuous buffet dinner, a Motown music revival by the Prolifics, a cruise along the Detroit River to admire the beauty of both the American and Canadian shorelines and a lot of dancing.

The 6:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. dinner and dance cruise offers those on board an opportunity to view the sights during daylight hours and to see the nighttime lights on all the downtown Detroit buildings. An almost full moon on this particular night added to visual pleasures.

As always, the cruise is more than just an opportunity to party. Carter always uses the funds raised to donate to a worthy cause. This year, the recipient of those funds was

a non-profit organization called Operation Surprise Attack. Carter presented a check to the organization for \$1,950 on the night of the cruise and assured that more funds are forthcoming from additional donors.

Founded by Lisa Fulton three years ago, Operation Surprise Attack's goal is to bring some joy to children afflicted by diseases and conditions that

leave them permanently disabled. The funds pay for cards and gifts for these children.

Following dinner, the donation and the Motown stylings by the Prolifics, the Toledoans were treated to a bit of surprise – a hula hoop contest conducted by DJ Invisible that had the diners roaring with laughter from beginning to the end.



Donnetta Carter - left - and Lisa Fulton



The Prolifics



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toledo zoo.org

