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A Legacy of Leadership in the Junction Community



Alicia Smith, YWCA Milestones 2025 Honoree for Social Services

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A Fork in the Road: The Future of DEI

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

The Truth Contributor

Stop trying to be color-blind. Be color-brave.

- Vernā Myers



Executive orders dismantling key Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) policies within the federal government and President Donald Trump's dogged political pressure on companies and institutions to abandon DEI efforts have the nation grappling with a landmark challenge.

A hoard of high-profile corporations like Google, McDonald's, Walmart, Ford and Target have wilted under the sweltering political heat and have abandoned or scaled back their diversity commitments. Others, including major financial institutions such as Morgan Stanley, JPMorgan Chase, Citigroup, Wells Fargo and Bank of America, have quietly scrubbed public mentions of DEI, rebranded existing strategies, or taken their efforts underground.

Meanwhile, bold, principled brands like Apple and Costco have openly resisted the relentless coercion campaign, urging shareholders to instead validate and uphold inclusion strategies.

The truth is that extensive, credible research studies confirm that DEI has "never been about lowering standards but ensuring fair opportunities." Moreover, the demand for DEI efforts is back to a 2020 high following the murder of George Floyd, according to a report from the Edelman Trust Barometer.

Yet, despite overwhelming evidence that DEI enables organizations to attract a wider range of talent (and) reach different consumers, reduces employee attrition and increases employee motivation, the mounting legal and political threats against DEI have profound implications for workplace equity and civil rights, making its future uncertain.

Where do we go from here?

Indeed, many companies jumped on the bandwagon after George Floyd's May 25, 2020 killing, offering a "performative allyship" of abstract intentions without prioritizing measurable outcomes and impact (policy changes and enforcement), let alone the adequate support, budget, infrastructure, and other resources needed for success.

In addition, too many mainstream DEI programs scuffled due to superficial training offerings, one-off bias or anti-racism workshops that don't change behavior, or corporate lip service that included companies hiring chief diversity officers but not giving them real power.

Nevertheless, Kimberle Crenshaw, executive director of the African American Policy Forum, made it clear during a panel convened by the National Urban League's Emergency Session on DEI that pivoting, re-

branding or softening DEI won't work.

The brutal political attacks on DEI, Crenshaw emphasized, are not just about training programs but are part of a larger rollback of Civil Rights victories and aligned with efforts to erase Black history, attacks on Critical Race Theory (CRT), legislative bans in education and efforts to dismantle affirmative action and voting rights protections.

The attack on DEI is at a time when "those who represent the best of our values are looking for jobs, and those who represent the worst of our nightmares are being pardoned and released from prison. Therefore, we cannot afford to compromise or retreat in the face of such historic resistance to Civil Rights progress ... We have to fight collaboratively, we have to fight collectively, we have to fight creatively, but we also have to fight with the idea that we refuse to allow any of what we have created to be lost," Crenshaw added.

What is the Next Move?

Will DEI survive? Will it remain but become a watered-down, feel-good initiative that comforts the powerful while failing the marginalized? Or will it indeed become a force for structural change?

In the coming weeks, I plan to speak with local corporate executives, university administrators, and community leaders to ask tough questions about the state of DEI:

Have their DEI programs actually improved hiring, promotion, and pay equity for African Americans? What measurable outcomes can they point to beyond mission statements and symbolic gestures, such as themed marketing or Juneteenth sales that exploit Black culture without providing substantive authentic investment? How do they navigate the political backlash against DEI while advancing racial equity? Are they willing to fight more aggressively to protect racial progress rather than merely pivot or retreat?

These interviews seek to provide real answers about whether DEI is still a viable tool in Toledo for racial progress—or if it's time for African Americans to look within or elsewhere for economic and social empowerment.

More to come - Watch this space!

Contact Rev. Donald Perryman at drdlperryman@enterofhopebaptist.org



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White Only Ads You May Not See

By Lafe Tolliver, Esq

Guest Column

Question: Which one or ones of the below proposed immigration notices would you prefer if you have the sole power to determine who enters this country...or who does not.

Such notices would periodically run in newspapers and podcast adverts. Remember, before you answer, the death rate in America is purportedly rising higher than the white birthrate, which means the US of A will need a surplus of new people (called immigrants) to offset the death rate, support Social Security payments, new enlistees in the military; workers for the menial low paying jobs that many white Americans simply will or would not take.

Did I fail to inform you that these ads will only run in the following countries: Sweden, Norway, Finland, Belgium, Scotland, England, Wales, Canada, The Netherlands, Denmark, Greece, Russia, Poland, Germany, South Africa and France.

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- (3) coverage for medical, dental, prescription and optical benefits for the first three years for the entire family, aka: Obamacare.
- (4) fast track for immigration clearance.
- (5) job placement services, nationwide.
- (6) if the incoming single male or female would serve in any branch of the military, an additional cash payment of ten thousand dollars after three years of active service upon an honorary discharge.

Remember also, that the above countries would be given favorable nation status which means that there is no limit to the number that could qualify for this program.

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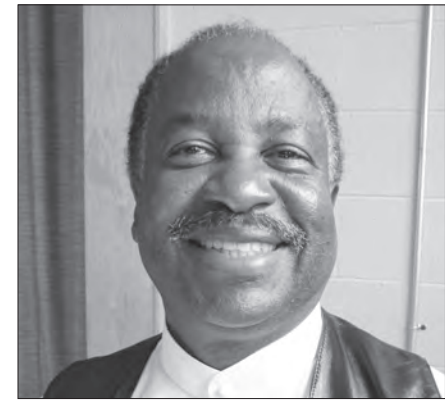
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AD FOUR: Ever wondered how that phrase, "Once Upon a Time..." could be your life story? Well, it can be in America! We have the goods for you. Follow that path to victory and chart your own course. You got what it takes, and we got what you need to succeed!

AD FIVE: Nothing Ventured...Nothing Gained! Is that you? Never wanting to venture anything because you think you will fail? Well, cheer up! America is the country for venturing and gaining and we want you to be a part of that incredible journey!

AD SIX: The Big Picture Needs You! America is opening its doors to you. We want to showcase the world that America is the land of opportunity and hope, and we want you! Read the benefits offered and give us a call! Your success is only a phone call away!

If you could not tell by now, none of those ads went to any country that Trump has declared is a sh*thole country which means if your skin color is not considered or judged ethnically white, those ads do not include you. So, to the people of Sudan, Mexico, Nigeria, Chad, Niger, Morocco, Ghana, India, and China among many others, please, go away...far, far away!

Note: For those who did not read the Sunday Blade two Sundays ago, there is a story in there in which Trump is actively seeking out white South Africans to come to the US as refugees and to get settlement preferences! They told him, "no thank you."

You cannot make this stuff up!

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Environmentalism Declares Trump's Actions 'as Clueless as They Are Cruel'

By Donovan McNeal, Howard University News Service

Guest Column

Climate experts and organizations are concerned for the environment and the effect on the public with the flurry of executive orders from President Donald Trump during his second term.

Among these is a second withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement, an international treaty with the goal of decreasing the global average temperature to well below two degrees Celsius. President Trump withdrew the U.S. from this same agreement in his previous term. The U.S., Iran, Libya and Yemen are the only four countries not aligned with this goal.

Ben Jealous, president of the Sierra Club, one of the largest grassroots environmental organizations in the nation, expressed his displeasure with the withdrawal. As the largest historic emitter of greenhouse gases (GHG), the United States has a moral obligation to assist in relieving the climate crisis, he said.

"Donald Trump's failure to even begin to understand the magnitude of this moment is as clueless as it is cruel," Jealous said in a statement. "Withdrawal from this agreement is nothing more than a symbol of his selfish and empty acts that only emboldens other nations who see yet another opportunity to lead where we refuse to."

According to the World Resources Institute, the top three GHG emit-



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When They Tell You About Their Own, Believe Them

By Wilmer J. Leon, III, PhD

Guest Column

"I don't know who you are and I don't know why you like this guy (Trump). I think what you like about him; he appears to be strong and the rest of us are weak... That's what he's selling... Here's what you're buying... He's a race-baiting, xenophobic religious bigot. He doesn't represent my party. He doesn't represent the values that the men and women who wear the uniform are fighting for... He's the ISIL man of the year." Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) on CNN 2015



Wilmer Leon, III

There are periods in history... epochs, distinctive periods in time marked by notable events, that in many instances signal change. Columbus stumbling upon the Americas where Indigenous peoples had been living for thousands of years. The French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, the invention of the semiconductor, WWII, the Civil Rights era, etc.

In many instances, one may not realize that they're living in the historic moment. It's only upon reflection that you realize the significance of the time. There are other periods, I call them Oppenheimer moments, where you know that you are in the moment. The first atomic bomb was tested on July 16, 1945. The bomb, nicknamed "Gadget", released 18.6 kilotons of power. We are told that Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer, upon watching the first ever atomic bomb explode, quoted a line from Hindu scripture; the Bhagavad Gita, "Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds". Oppenheimer knew he was in the moment.

As we look at the current geopolitical landscape, we find ourselves firmly in the grips of the second Trump administration. There is a dramatic decline in the status of America, both domestically and internationally. The economic outlook is uncertain. America is funding a war in Ukraine and a genocide in Gaza. Homelessness, unemployment and incarceration rates are continuously on the rise. One can only conclude that we are living in a historic moment. Steve Bannon, the former Trump campaign and White House advisor calls it "managed decline".

One of the ironies in all of this is we have seen this movie before. We are watching Trump Redux. We are not just watching the film; we are actors in it. For those of us that are old enough to remember, watching the news and political programs today is analogous to watching the Rocky Horror Picture Show. We find ourselves constantly yelling at the screen, except this is unscripted.

People are aghast listening to President Trump attack DEI policies, firing federal Inspectors General, threatening to close the Department of Education and pledging to fire FBI agents that investigated January 6. Steve Bannon told us in 2019 of what was to come, "...we had a whole tiger team of the White House counsel guys, the 'deconstruction of the administrative state,' which is a huge element...we want less (government intervention). In fact, we want to start to take apart certain parts of the apparatus." America, you were warned.

Now, the authoritarian that over 77M Americans voted for wants to disregard the constitutionally guaranteed right of "birthright citizenship". He is impounding funds, freezing nearly all foreign aid, federal grants and loans as if he has been magically granted the power of the "ex post facto veto".

Almost none of President Trump's policies have gone through legislation or House votes. Trump issues his edicts through Executive Order. The American people are being subjected to a flurry or whirlwind of executive action. Bannon called it "flooding the zone and muzzle velocity". "Every day we hit them with three things. They'll bite on one, and we'll get all of our stuff done, bang, bang, bang. These guys will never—will never be able to recover. But we've got to start with muzzle velocity." Some people may think Trump is crazy. If he is, he's crazy like a fox.

But it's not just him. President Trump is not alone. The racist suggestion of Trump saying, the United States should own Gaza and develop it into "the Riviera of the Middle East" by displacing the Palestinians from their homeland to other countries in the region, was first posited by former President Joe Biden. The AP reported, "A Western diplomat in Cairo said Egypt rejected similar proposals from the Biden administration and Eu-

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Alicia Smith: A Legacy of Leadership in the Junction Community

By Asia Nail

The Truth Reporter

Some leaders are chosen. Others rise from the heart of the struggle, molded by the needs of their community and driven by a purpose greater than themselves. **Alicia Smith** is the latter. As the executive director—and proud community liaison—of the **Junction Coalition**, she has spent over a decade ensuring that the Junction neighborhood is not just surviving but thriving. Now, as the **YWCA Milestones 2025 Honoree for Social Services**, she is being recognized for her unwavering dedication to social justice and peace education—work that has reshaped not only the Junction neighborhood but the city itself.

A Mission Rooted in Community

Smith's journey is deeply personal. "What keeps me motivated is my family. I have three beautiful children, two boys and a girl, and a grandbaby," she shares. Raised in Toledo with strong ties to her grandmother, she was instilled with the values of service, care and advocacy at an early age.

"Grandma taught me to take care of the elders in our community and how to work with young people," Smith recalls. "She taught by example, working as a bus driver for Toledo Public Schools." That legacy of care and responsibility laid the foundation for Smith's work, shaping her leadership philosophy as one of collaboration rather than command.

A Community Liaison, Not a Director

For Smith, the title of "**community liaison**" is intentional. "Directors direct. They point, and people go. I struggle with this title because we don't need unilateral leadership anymore; we need collective practice," she explains.

"A community liaison works for and with the community. They move to the sound of the community. They ask for permission, respectfully. They carry out plans and report back the results."

Smith believes that leadership is a shared journey, one where collaboration fosters real change.

Four Pillars of Justice

At the heart of the Junction Coalition's work are four pillars: Social Justice, Economic Justice, Environmental Justice and Peace Education. These are not abstract ideals—they are the blueprint for tangible change.

One defining moment came when Smith was sitting in a doctoral-level human rights course taught by Dale Snauwaert, PhD, at the University of Toledo. "He was speaking about peace, education, economic, and environmental rights. He was focused on sustainability, and I reflected on the Junction area where I live—it didn't have a voice. I wondered, 'Why am I only now learning many of these truths only at the doctorate level? Why don't my neighbors know that we live in hazardous environments?'"

From that realization, Smith took action. She attended environmental conferences, learned how to effect change on a local level, and spearheaded initiatives addressing water safety, urban heat islands and air quality.

Her work has led to critical programs like the **419 Lead Out initiative** focusing on lead abatement and education, working to eliminate lead con-



Alicia Smith

tamination in homes and create safer living conditions for families. Through safe and affordable water initiatives, she has championed efforts to improve water quality, access and affordability, advocating for sustainable solutions that prevent water crises in marginalized communities. Additionally, the **Reimagining Swan Creek** project seeks to revitalize the area by enhancing green spaces and fostering economic development while transforming the creek into a resource benefiting both residents and the local ecosystem.

Empowering Youth

Smith's advocacy extends beyond immediate community needs—it builds a future where young people have the tools to lead. The **Urban Narrative Expression Podcast** is one of those tools.

"The podcast gives our youth a voice, but more importantly, it teaches them how to use their voice," she explains.

Through the platform, youth discuss critical topics like bullying, racism, and systemic barriers. "We all need to be able to talk, to have public deliberation around the things that are harming us. At the Junction Coalition, we ask our youth: Where does it hurt? We don't just ask to offload, we ask so we can build the resources to support them."

Alicia's son, inspired by her work, started a nonprofit at a young age. "When Trayvon Martin was murdered, my son came to me and said, 'Mom, I want teens and young people to be able to talk to each other about how we feel seeing this on television.'" That moment reinforced Smith's belief in the power of restorative justice, leading her to become a certified restorative justice practitioner, working within the juvenile court system and beyond.

Turning Voices into Action

"The greatest success we've seen in the Junction area is people coming out and vocalizing what they want to see," Smith reflects. "Then we take those

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A Community in Crisis: The Urgent Need for Breast Cancer Awareness

By Robert Smith, Founder African American Legacy Project

Guest Column

It is not often that a man takes up the cause of women's health, but the urgency of this issue demands attention from all of us. Our community is facing a crisis—one that affects our mothers, sisters, daughters, and wives.

She was here, full of life and strength. And then, suddenly, she was gone. The news of her passing was shocking. A woman so vibrant and seemingly healthy, with no sign of illness, was taken too soon. Her loss left a void—one filled with pain, suffering, and heartbreak. Too often, the families are faced with unimaginable losses. The women of our community are at risk.

According to the American Cancer Society, breast cancer mortality rates in the United States have dropped by 43 percent since 1989. However, Black women continue to face a stark disparity. Despite having a four percent lower incidence rate of breast cancer than White women, Black women experience a 40 percent higher death rate. One of the key factors contributing to this disparity is the higher prevalence of Triple Negative Breast Cancer (TNBC) among Black women—an aggressive and difficult-to-treat form of the disease.

Early detection is crucial. In the midst of busy lives, it's easy to postpone health screenings, but undetected cancer only has more time to spread. Regular screenings remain the most effective way to catch the disease early when treatment options are most successful.

Healthcare professionals stress the importance of frequent mammograms, especially for African American women. Routine screenings can save lives, ensuring our loved ones have the best chance at survival.

For years, public health advocates have urged the medical community to take action. In response, Mercy Health has introduced a mobile mammography unit to bring critical screenings directly to the community.

We must come together to protect the women who shape our families and our future. Pick up the phone, call a friend, and take a proactive step toward health.

Join us on Saturday, February 22, 2025, as the Mercy Mammography Mobile Van partners with community organizations to celebrate the rich history

of Toledo's Dorr Street community. The event will take place at Indiana Avenue Missionary Baptist Church, 640 Indiana Ave., from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

For more information or to schedule a mobile mammogram, call 833-MAMM-VAN (833-626-6829). Your health—and the health of those you love—depends on it.

Hicks-Hudson Condemns Passage of Senate Bill 1

Last week, state Senator Paula Hicks-Hudson (D-Toledo) issued the following statement after the Ohio Senate voted to pass the highly controversial Senate Bill 1:

"It is interesting that this is the number one priority of the majority members of the 136th General Assembly when there are real issues of hunger, the need for property tax relief and affordable housing, or any of the basic issues that most Ohioans actually care about," said Hicks-Hudson. "We need to talk about education. We should focus on providing necessary support so that students go to school ready to learn and graduate with skills to compete in the world economy."

Senate Bill 1 contains several provisions that would drastically change Ohio's higher education landscape, including prohibiting university faculty members from striking; banning diversity, equity and inclusion programs; and forbidding institutions of higher education from taking positions on "controversial beliefs or policies."

According to U.S. News, Ohio has nine schools in the top 200 public institutions in the United States, the fourth most in the country. Critics argue the passage of S.B. 1 would jeopardize the quality of Ohio's higher education by driving away students, faculty, and critical business partnerships.

The U.S. Department of Labor states the groups that benefit most from DEI are white women, Latinos, Asians, Native Americans, individuals with disabilities, veterans, LGBTQ+, and then finally, Black Americans.

Financial Planning Career Pathways for Students of Color

Special to The Truth

As a college student, you have the opportunity to explore many exciting career options. One avenue you may not have considered is financial planning. This in-demand field offers impressive starting salaries, the potential for growth and career satisfaction. What's more, one-of-a-kind opportunities exist to assist students of color embarking on this journey.

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Getting certified: The CFP® certification process is challenging but rewarding. The process involves completing coursework, accumulating experience, meeting the ethics requirement and passing the CFP® exam. The coursework requirement typically takes 12-18 months. Once you have that certification in hand, you'll have gained the knowledge and acumen needed to hit the ground running.

Finding support: To better meet the needs of a diverse client base, CFP Board has launched initiatives to recruit and support people of color in finan-

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The African American Legacy Project presents

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Black Communities Again Getting the Short End of the stick Under Trump

By Marcus W. Robinson

Senior Spokesperson

Democratic National Committee

This past Monday, we honored our Presidents and celebrate their contributions to the American story.

Unfortunately, this year and for the next three years, Donald Trump will remind this nation of the harm that a President can cause when he is more interested in lining his own pockets than helping people.

For Black Americans, the first Trump Presidency spelled disaster, and so far, his second presidency is more of the same. Look no further than Trump's first month in office, where he has made it clear that he has no meaningful plans to make life better for Black communities.

In fact, his first actions have demonstrated that he'll do the exact opposite. And it's more than just his shameful erasure of Black history across the federal government.

From taking action to raise prices and dismantle critical federal programs to even freezing funds to Head Start, Trump's second term is already making things worse at an alarming rate, and Black communities will be disproportionately affected. We saw the devastating effects on Black families during Trump's first presidency, and his warp-speed attack on programs and services families rely on is a recipe for disaster.

These are just a few highlights in Trump's crusade against Black communities, including:

- * Rescinding President Biden's historic actions to lower prescription drug costs for Medicaid and Medicare recipients, which could raise prices for the roughly 40 percent of Black Americans who rely on public health care programs for coverage.

- * Signing an order freezing Bipartisan Infrastructure Law money, which is helping revitalize our nation's infrastructure — including by replacing lead pipes, whose effects are disproportionately felt by Black communities.

- * Putting Medicaid — which provides health care to nearly 40 percent of Black Americans — on the chopping block to fund tax breaks for the ultra-wealthy.

- * Pushing to expand our reliance on fossil fuels — disproportionately harming Black communities who already bear the brunt of the impacts of climate change.

- * Freezing funds secured in the Inflation Reduction Act, taking away good-paying infrastructure jobs for tens of thousands of Black workers.

- * Shutting the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, which has worked to tackle practices that have disproportionately targeted Black Americans, like overdraft fees.

- * Weakening anti-discrimination policies in hiring by dismantling the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

- * Backing a budget proposal that would gut Medicaid in order to finance a tax handout for the rich — which would be particularly devastating for expecting Black families, two-thirds of whom rely on Medicaid to cover childbirth.

It is clear that when given the choice between uplifting communities of color or his billionaire cronies — Donald Trump will side with the ultra-wealthy every time.

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Big Brothers Big Sisters Hold Valentine's Day Fundraiser

By Paul Hubbard, Maritime Academy Board Chair

Special to The Truth

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwestern Ohio sponsored a Valentine's Day fundraiser to support the agency's youth. "Wine and Dine" was held at Claude's Prime Seafood in Perrysburg's Levis Commons and was attended by community-minded individuals including Perrysburg Mayor Tom Mackin and Wood County Sheriff Mark Wasylyshyn as well as State Representative Elgin Rogers, Dr. Brian Dolsey and his wife, Dee Dee Kent Dolsey, and Marie Bush, PhD, former board chair of Big Brothers Big Sisters.

Marvin Whitfield, PhD, president and CEO of Big Brother Big Sisters, said one-on-one mentoring relationships and leadership programs inspire and empower the next generation. So many of our youth live at risk and need mentoring and leadership development opportunities that brighten the future of youth in Toledo and Lucas County.

Marie Bush noted that over 90 percent of the youth in Big Brothers



Perrysburg Mayor Tom Mackin, State Rep Elgin Rogers, Wood County Sheriff Mark Wasylyshyn



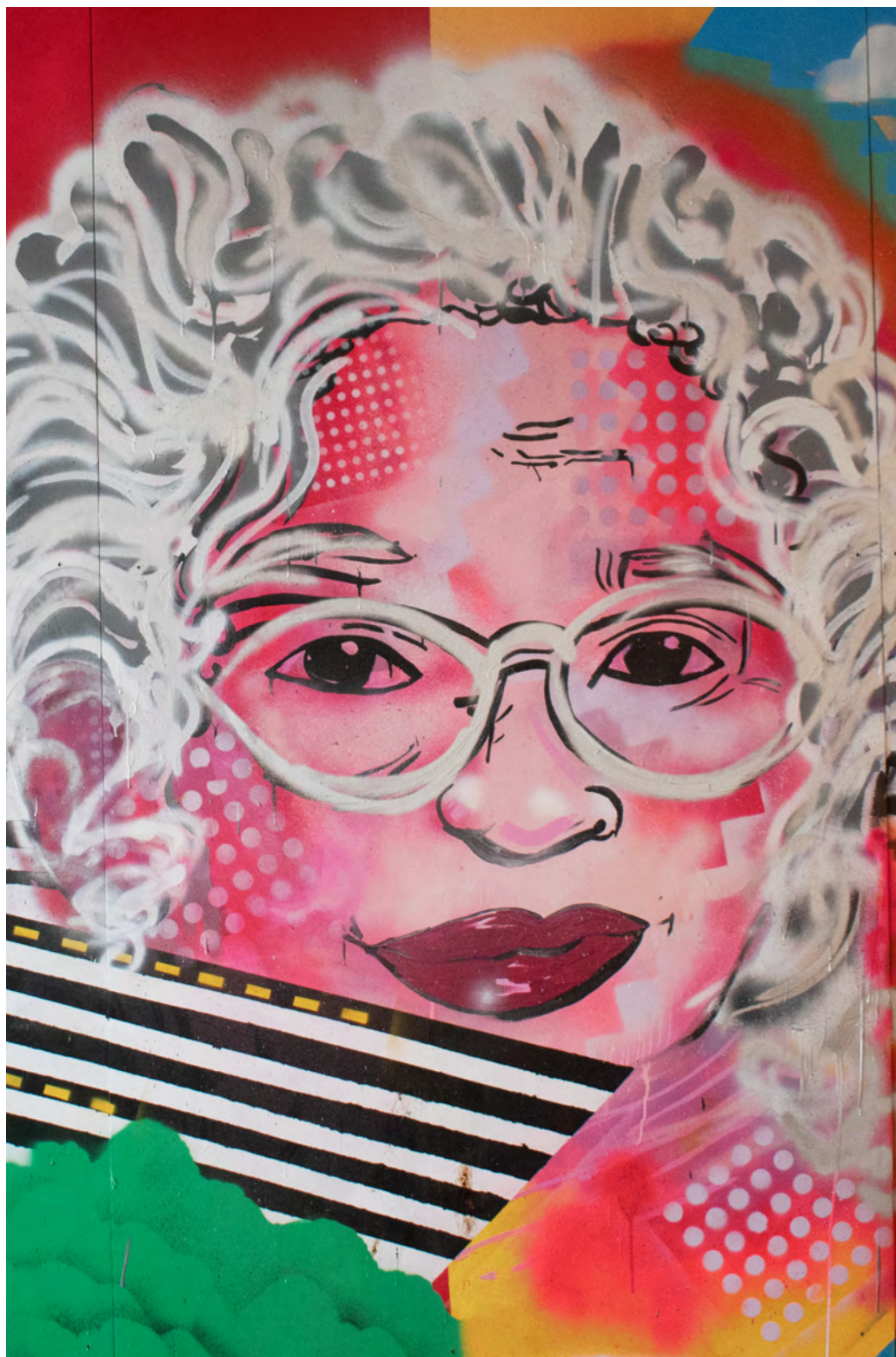
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Marie Bush, PhD; Marvin Whitfield, PhD; State Rep. Elgin Rogers

Big Sisters are African Americans. She would like to have more African Americans men and women as Big Brothers Big Sisters for our youth. Interested people can contact Marvin Whitfield at 434-466-1287 or www.snow.org

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◀ A Mural of Rosa Parks created in collaboration with The Arts Commission of Greater Toledo by local artist Mercé Culp is on display at TARTA's Transit Hub at 612 N. Huron in Toledo.

A Celebration of Black History and a Recognition of Difference Makers

The Truth Staff

On Sunday afternoon, February 16, a celebration at St. Mark's Baptist Church, organized by State Rep. Elgin Rogers, brought together hundreds in the community to celebrate Black History Month and to recognize the difference makers in our community who have contributed to that black history in recent years.

The celebration began with a welcome from the mistress of ceremonies Charlon Dewberry, Esq, followed by a prayer offered by youngster Amir Perryman of St. Marks Church.

My5tery Music, an ensemble of school students taught and directed by Erick Dixon, sang "Lift Every Voice and Sing," along with several other selections.

Janitra Bailey and Saharah Bruce presented a visual compilation; Kaleb Perryman offered a spoken word presentation; followed by Maxine Wilson's "Who Am I and another musical selection by Mystery Music.

After Amir Perryman's "Ancestor's Dram and Sani Perryman's "My Black is Beautiful," Brenda Lee Mitchell recognized the "Difference Makers" to whom the event was dedicated.

The "Difference Makers" were: Wendi Huntley, president and CEO of Connecting Kids to Meals; Dione Somerville, PhD, president of Owens Community College; Kwinlyn Tyler, community affairs manager for TARTA; Clarence Smith, Jr., director/educator for the Clarence Smith Community Chorus; Marvin Whitfield, PhD, CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwestern Ohio; Chanell Phenix, president of the Toledo Alliance of Black School Educators; Micheal T. Johnson, educator for the Toledo Public Schools-Barber Program; Robert Smith, director of the African American Legacy Project of Northwest Ohio; Sheila Howard, journalist, author and wellness influencer for The Blade and she Jag, LLC; Errick Dixon, executive director of My5stery Music LLC; Leroy Bates, retired teacher/basketball coach for Toledo Public Schools; Chris Jenkins, Toledo Public Schools employee; Denisee Johnson-Gaston, playwright/director, Dramatically Inspired Works; Harvey Savage, Jr, executive director, MLK Center Kitchen for the Poor.

The Difference Makers were honored with both cloths and plaques. Each was praised for being "a remarkable individual, combining civic concern and dedication with selfless initiative to become a dynamic leader in the Toledo area."

"These folks are doing the work in our community that you don't see," said Rogers. Some of the individuals themselves may work unseen and out of the public eye, but the work they all do is readily apparent and has made a huge impact on this community.

Rogers offered closing remarks about the individuals and the occasion of Black History Month and Rev. C.L. Johnson of St. Mark Baptist gave the closing benediction.



Josiah Mann recites a poem by Useni Perkins



Mystery Music Choir



Robert Smith, Wendi Huntley, Leroy Bates, Chanell Phenix, Sheila Howard, Dione Somerville, PhD



State Rep. Elgin Rogers



The Mistress of Ceremonies Charlon Dewberry, Esq.



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Environmentalist...continued from page 4

ters are China, the U.S. and India. They contribute to 42.6 percent of total global emissions, while the bottom 100 countries account for 2.9 percent.

In addition to this withdrawal, Trump's other executive orders include declaring America in an "energy emergency," which is aimed at increasing the production of fossil fuels in place of renewable sources, and a rollback on federal vehicle emission standards, which reverses the Biden administration's order to produce more energy-efficient and clean vehicles.

Jealous condemned the notion of an energy emergency when the U.S. is the largest producer of oil and gas in the world.

"Donald Trump believes we are in such a dire energy emergency that he wants us to stop producing affordable clean energy and force dated and wasted technology," he said. "The truth is, the only emergency he is focused on is repaying the corporate polluter executives for donating to his campaign."

Jealous added that the American people will bear the brunt of higher energy bills. "If he truly wants to help the American people, he would keep investing in the clean energy solutions that are putting our communities back to work and lowering our utility bills, not deepening our costly reliance on dirty and expensive fossil fuels."

Costs for renewable technologies have decreased annually since 2020, according to a study by the International Renewable Energy Agency. Concentrating solar power fell by 26 percent, onshore wind by 13 percent, offshore wind by nine percent and solar PC by seven percent. Additionally, the agency predicts that new renewable projects will save emerging economies up to \$156 billion over their lifespans.

Despite this positive trend, President Trump has also signed an executive order to halt development of offshore wind projects in the U.S. The Sierra Club stated that this pull away from the offshore wind sector will cancel 77,000 jobs created during the Biden Administration.

Similarly to Jealous, Abigail Dillen, president of the environmental law organization Earthjustice, said the president's executive orders did not surprise her organization and that they don't reflect the best interests of the American people.

"The president's job is to protect the people, not corporate interests," Dillen said in a statement. The flurry of executive orders today will increase industry profits, but don't lower costs for people or dig us out of the many crises we face as a country."

"We will keep fighting in court to ensure we all have the protections we need and deserve."

Dillen also commented on the Trump administration's decision to disband the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council, established by President Biden in his Executive Order 14008, "Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad." The council is designed to increase the federal government's efforts to address environmental inequality for issues such as pollution and exposure to toxic pollutants in overburdened communities, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

"This means more cancer clusters, more asthma attacks, bigger hospital bills and, ultimately, more deaths among Americans," Dillen said. "Ac-

cess to clean air, water and energy should not depend on your ZIP code, race or income."

"By rolling back efforts to address historic underinvestment and overburden in communities of color and low-income communities, President Trump is putting good health and prosperity out of reach for millions of people."

Dillen made a vow that Earthjustice will keep fighting with these affected communities "who continue to demand justice."

Amid the fast progression of these executive orders, Mustafa Santiago Ali, the executive vice president of the National

Wildlife Federation, said it is also the job of the states as well as the federal government to protect and uphold the work of environmental justice.

Ali provided the example of the toxic train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio, where seven people died and hazardous toxins entered the community two years ago in February 2023. He also referenced Louisiana's "Cancer Alley," an 85-mile stretch along the Mississippi River that has a high concentration of industrial plants and high rates of cancer among its predominantly Black residents.

"We just got to make sure that safety net continues to be in existence," Ali said, "and we got to make sure that there's a space for vulnerable communities to be able to share about the impacts."

Donovan McNeal covers environment and energy for HUNewsService.com.



Abigail Dillen

When They Tell You...continued from page 4

ropean countries early in the war." Trump's major faux pas was he made Biden's secret proposal public.

Trump is not alone in his racist deportation efforts. CNN reported, "According to an analysis by the Migration Policy Institute, more than 12 million people were "deported" – either removed or returned – from the US during the Clinton administration. More than 10 million were removed or returned during the Bush administration. Far fewer – more than 5 million – were removed or returned during the Obama administration." Lest we forget, President Obama was dubbed the "Deporter in Chief".

Trump's ideas of deconstructing the administrative state, cutting government agencies or his privatization/neo-liberal policies via Project 2025 are not new. Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich proposed similar tactics with his "Contract with America". Former President Bill Clinton thought he could make government more efficient by employing principals from the private sector by "Reinventing Government as We Know It".

The major problem with these schemes is very simple. The goal of pri-

... continued on page 11

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The Art of the Cut Returns to the Toledo Museum of Art

The Truth Staff

The Toledo Museum of Art, ProMedica and local barbers have once again joined forces to present "The Art of the Cut." On February 23, about a dozen barbers, along with salon stylists and nail technicians, will appear at the Museum's Peristyle Theatre to showcase their skills and to advocate for men's wellness.

"We wanted to make sure our community is served," says Toni Gordon, TMA's senior manager of Education and Programs, and the point person behind the Museum's efforts to resume the program. "That's why we are working with a group of community organizers."

This will be the third "Art of the Cut," the brainchild of Robin Sulier-Charney, and a variety of local barbers. Sulier-Charney is the community outreach coordinator for ProMedica, who has long been a champion for health in the African American community. The Art of the Cut is an outgrowth of those efforts to bring health screenings into local barber-shops, to provide blood pressure and cancer checks.

"Barbers and hair stylists are true community champions," says Gordon. "Their work goes beyond the chair—it's about creating spaces where people feel seen, valued, and supported. Art of the Cut is a celebration of their artistry and their impact on our community."

One of the barber/artists who will be showcasing his stylings is Matthew Vasquez who has been cutting hair for about 10 years and manning a chair at Victory Barbers for the past five years.

Vasquez stumbled into the profession almost by accident but is so very glad he did. "Something like this is something I always wanted to



Tawann Gaston sculpts Jacob Bates' hair into a masterpiece

do," he says of the freedom to utilize his artistic stylings. The profession also helps in the mental health aspect, he says of the positive experiences he encounters.

The barbershop collaborations and the Art of the Cut helped to inspire a film back in 2021-22 – Sons of Toledo, a short film about the lives of barbers fighting to keep their community together, which had its world premiere at the fourth annual Mammoth Film Festival February 3-6, 2022 in the resort town of Mammoth Lakes, CA.

The film was based on the true stories of Toledo's Black barber community, their role as com-

munity advocates in their neighborhood, and the hardest role they fulfill for far too many of their customers, performing the final cut.

The Art of the Cut will be hosted by barbers from CrysStyles Hair Salon, DaShop, Fletcher's Hair Design, Foster's Hair Concepts Unlimited, Tal-Mon Barbershop, Victory Barbershop, and many more. In addition to live demonstrations and discussions, attendees can enjoy entertainment throughout the Peristyle Theater, snacks, and a cash bar.

Join TMA on Feb. 23 from 4 to 6 p.m. in the Peristyle Theater for an afternoon of art, dialogue and connection.

When They Tell You...continued from page 10

vate sector capitalism is the maximization of profit. The goal of democratic/republic government is the protection of the people and the delivery of services. Contrary to the beliefs of the oligarchs, government is not in the "business" of making money. It's lucky if it breaks even.

Don't let this context confuse you. Sen. Graham is correct, President Trump is "...a race-baiting, xenophobic religious bigot." This is evidenced by his baseless rants about Mexican rapists, his proposed Muslim ban, his lie about Barack Obama's birthplace, his attack on the Central Park 5, his baseless attack on DEI programs, removing historical videos of its storied Black Tuskegee Airmen from Air Force training modules, supporting genocide in Gaza, just to name a few. Remember, all of this resonated with over 77M Americans.

So, what are we to do? Well, for starters do not listen to Rep. Nancy Pelosi. Anyone who tries to insist that the election was not a rebuke of the Democrats is delusional and anyone who argues that Democrats don't need to change is clueless.

I strongly suggest reading Dr. King's 1963 Letter from a Birmingham Jail, "We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed." Then read Frederick Douglas', 1857 speech, If There Is No Struggle, There Is No Progress – "Find out just what any people will quietly submit to and you have found out the exact measure of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them, and these will continue till they are resisted with either words or blows, or with both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress."

After that, read more and remember, when they tell you about their own, they are also telling you about themselves. Believe them.

Wilmer Leon, PhD, is a nationally broadcast radio talk-show host. Author of *Politics Another Perspective*. Host of the podcast *Connecting the Dots w/ Dr. Wilmer Leon*. Go to www.wilmerleon.com or email: wjl3us@yahoo.com. www.twitter.com/drwleon and Dr. Leon's Prescription at [Facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com) © 2025 InfoWave Communications, LLC

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History Forgotten...continued from page 16

they are trying to make stories that sell. Most of us know that these stories also have a hidden implication: that people of color could never have made these great architectural monuments— that their civilizations could not have been advanced enough, etc.. While it might make you click on a show on a streaming service, and these fantastical ideas might be entertaining to imagine, there is a larger impact. Now we have the opportunity to tell 'stories' on a grander scale, to show how epic even just being a homesteader, railroad worker, or nurse was."

Mason added, "As Howard Zinn's, *A People's History of the United States*, and the new era of research it and subsequent work it inspired shows us, there is so much more to learn about how people actually lived from primary sources and from a 'bottom up' approach, rather than a 'top down' history of 'Great (usually white) Men'—history as we have traditionally been taught it. I am hoping that these techniques and some emerging software will allow me and many others to tell stories, to share the wisdom that would otherwise be lost. Every neighborhood, often every generation, has multiple stories worth telling. My Godfather, Josh Pais, directed a wonderful film called '7th Street,' about growing up on the lower East Side of Manhattan.

"There are stories and characters everywhere. We only have to think back to our childhoods, and of all the individuals who left a mark on our memory, helped us form our values and who we are. Most of us have not gone back and interviewed our parents, neighbors, friends—at least not formally. But there is so much there. Lifetimes of accumulated experience, wisdom—and often humor. I encourage everyone to take out their phone (with permission and ideally a heads up, of course), and document the stories of their elders and other interesting people you may know. Sometimes they are not comfortable on camera, but most people will at least let you record a voice memo—you most certainly know people who like to tell stories, and our memories of these stories years later are often sadly lacking. It's something I cherish having done with my mother, and others."

Mason then went on to discuss implications and potentials of these new ways of storytelling: "This experience, and some other elements of my life

and career, have led me to really focus on the possibility of assisting people all over as to how to record and preserve local histories. Here in Braceville, we have been discussing creating a template for schools and integrating family oral history projects with existing core curriculum standards—as well as preserving archival footage to be viewed in its entirety. These stories need not be one unedited shot of your abuelito (though that is quite important to have a copy of if possible, properly backed up in "the cloud"), but could include cutaways to photographs and even AI recreations of historical events (or just be integrated with existing copyright free footage, if possible; not as needed for personal or educational use, but you never know where your story may lead or how many people may want to watch it if you post it online). The cost of enhancing and expanding these stories to the scale of a History Channel production like *America: The Story of Us* just a few years ago would have been quite prohibitive."

"Now we can inspire the next generation with 'the epic' personal histories of their family, their experiences, and how their families formed their values—became who they now are. That is essential, especially in a world where a new wave of revisionist history is trying to take hold in our country. It's our responsibility to document these histories before they are lost, as we know other won't—they'll probably aim for the opposite. It's perhaps almost equally as important to tell our audience when and how something is manipulated (AI or otherwise), and a good practice to provide access to the original sources of everything, for historical purposes."

"Here at the Braceville African American Heritage Museum we are looking into (and ideally seeking additional funding and volunteers for assisting in) telling more stories, and especially aiming to support others in doing so. Over the next year or so we are looking into creating a studio where families and school children can gather to record or enhance family and local histories. We hope to offer educational programs both in-person at the museum, in schools, and online. At the same time, we are hoping this helps with the revitalization of the town, affected by the closing of the steel mills. We hope emerging artists and historians might be drawn to this project and some other key initiatives. With a focus on what made Braceville unique (and generally considered an fairly ideal place to grow up), and an understanding of its history and values, we hope that in time some people may wish to stay and raise the next generation, keeping the 'Braceville Spirit' alive."

"We have the expertise, access to the proper hardware and software, and much more to provide these services and attract people, including interns from Kent State and Youngstown State, each only about 20 minutes away. Most people have at least one uncle or cousin who is really 'into' genealogy or family history. I encourage everyone reading this to reach out to us at bcf@bracevilleplatt.org (or come talk to us in person at the film screening!) and let us know of your interest. We want to preserve these voices for future generations—and ideally preserve them in a way that inspires the younger generations to not just pretend they are listening, smile and say, 'Sí, Abuelito'—and then proceed to just stare back down at their phones, connecting with neither their past or even their present—let alone process how these connect to and inform their own, unwritten future..."

History Forgotten and *Now for All to See* will be showing at **Robins Theater, 160 E Market St, Warren, Ohio** on **February 16, 2025 at 2:00 PM**; the doors open at 1 PM. **Tickets are \$10 and available online:** <https://www.etix.com/ticket/p/68772723/history-forgotten-the-story-of-bracevilleohio-warren-robins-theatre>

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Alicia Smith... continued from page 5

community voices and we've turned them into local, state, and federal investments."

These investments are visible—homes being built, businesses receiving support, and youth programs expanding. "We have gone from speaking something, to implementation, to now seeing it take place," she says with pride.

A Recognition That Amplifies

Being honored by the YWCA as a Milestones 2025 Honoree is not just an accolade for Smith; it is a moment of collective recognition for the entire Junction community. "The recognition means our work is not in vain. It means when we take the time to learn from one another and show our greatness openly—we can move mountains."

Alicia Smith's work is history in the making—both Black history and Women's history intertwined. She stands in the lineage of Black women who have built communities, uplifted voices, and demanded justice. She is proof that when a community stands together, change is not only possible—it is inevitable.

And for the Junction neighborhood, this is just the beginning.

Congratulations to Alicia Smith on this well-deserved honor! Learn more about the YWCA Milestones Awards here.

Becoming Spectacular: The Rhythm of Resilience from the First African American Rockette by Jennifer Jones

By Terri Schlichenmeyer
The Truth Contributor

Step, step, kick.

Twirl, step, and kick again. Left, right, step. The choreography is all new to you, but you'll get it eventually, no problem. You know what it takes to be a great dancer: getting enough rest, taking care of yourself, practice, and as in the new book *Becoming Spectacular*, by Jennifer Jones, you'll need all the perseverance you can muster.

Born in New Jersey in 1967, Jennifer Jones had a relatively happy childhood. The daughter of an interracial couple, her parents worked hard to give their three girls good lives, fun activities, safe neighborhoods in which to live, good schools, and a firm love of the arts.

As a youngster, Jones took twirling classes and tap lessons; she remembers seeing plays on Broadway and imagining she could be the next Stephanie Mills in *The Wiz*. Even though Jones was a child then, Mills' iconic performance made it clear that there was a place for little Black girls on the Great White Way.

When Jones was a pre-teen, her mother paid for dance lessons and Jones found a mentor, Frank Hatchett, co-founder of the Broadway Dance Center. She also entered a pageant and got fourth runner-up but over time, her love of performing began to take a backseat to boys and drugs as she entered her teens.

It didn't help that her parents fought, and they divorced.

At 17, Jones expressed an interest in rekindling her love of dance, but her then-boyfriend scoffed – which she took as a challenge, and she worked her way onto a music video. Seizing her passion, she took classes in Manhattan while attending college, working odd jobs to pay the bills, and attending try-

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outs as often as possible.

A painful break-up with a different boyfriend sent Jones back to New Jersey, but dance was still in her blood. She'd noticed a listed audition for Radio City Music Hall's Rockettes, and the ad specified that minorities were welcome to try out – so she did.

And in an instant, she was a Rockette.

And that's that, right?

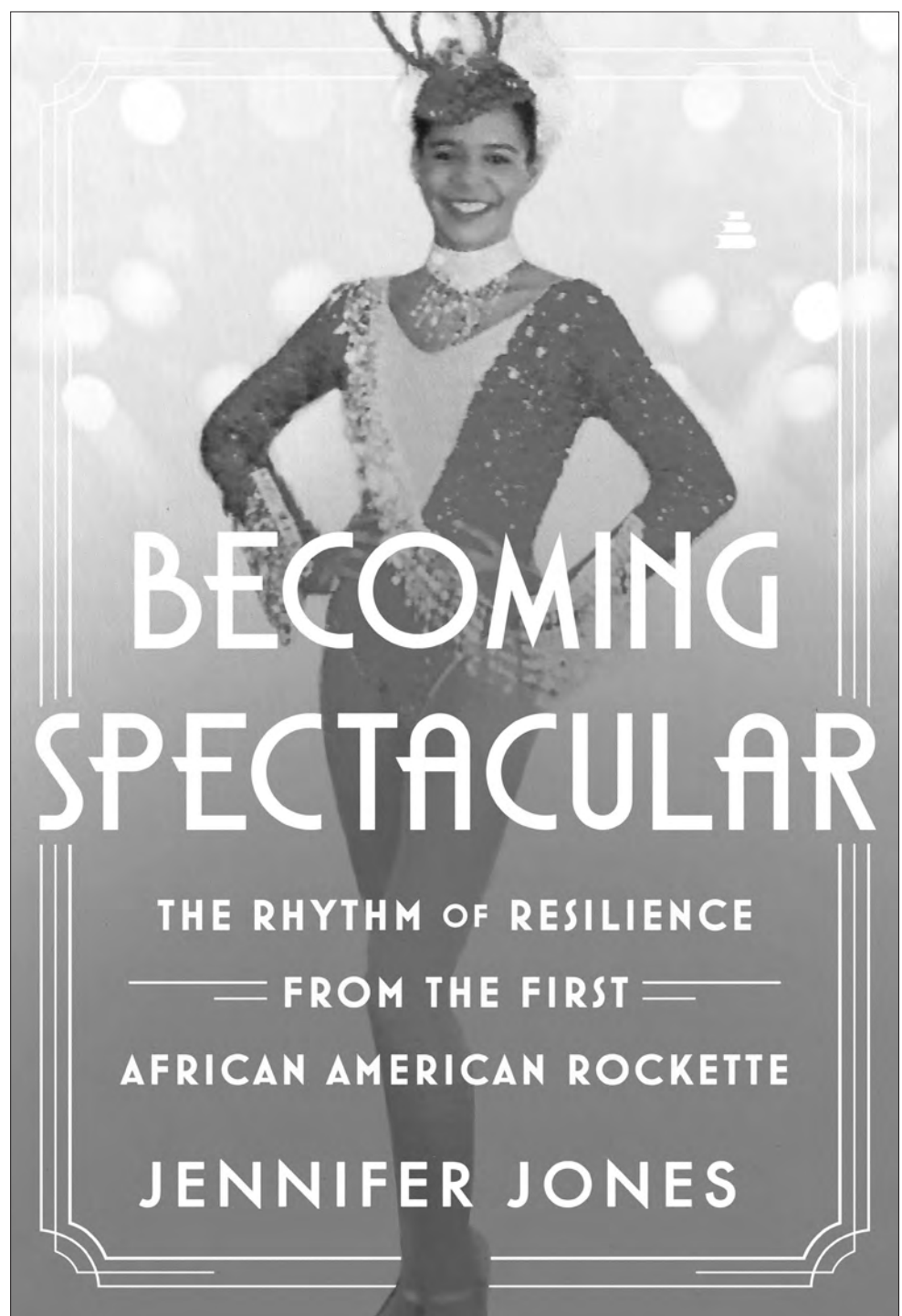
Not so fast. That's what you get in the first half of *Becoming Spectacular*, but author Jennifer Jones has a whole lot more to tell. Are you sure you want to read it, though?

Think twice: Jones' basic story and her perseverance are worth cheering about, but readers may sometimes feel uncomfortable in what may seem like oversharing of private matters and parent-child issues in other places in the tale. Jones rushes her early story quite a bit, sometimes barely touching upon areas that might have served to inspire readers, and all her hard-won triumphs are often minimized – especially considering the end of Jones' story, her struggles and the difficulties she experienced as a Black woman. That makes this tale as uneven as a cobblestone street.

Overall, this quick story could've been longer and better but even so, there's inspiration here to be found, if you look for it. Know that, going into *Becoming Spectacular*, and you might get a kick out of it.



Becoming Spectacular author, photo courtesy Ben Esner



Financial Planning Center... continued from page 6

cial planning. This includes administering third-party scholarship programs that help cover education and exam costs for CFP® certification, which are awarded based on merit and financial need to individuals from underrepresented groups.

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Lucas County, OH

Bids Due: March 11, 2025, 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.

<u>Contract</u>	<u>Estimated Cost</u>
General Trades	\$350,000.00

Pre-bid Meeting: February 25, 2025, 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: No walk-through at this time.

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

More Info: Fishbeck, Kevin Lafferty, PE, 419-893.3141, klafferty@fishbeck.com

REPORTER NEEDED

The Sojourner's Truth is seeking a part-time reporter. Call 419-243-0007 for more information.

LUCAS COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY ENCOURAGES RESIDENTS TO RUN FOR OFFICE; SEEK PARTY ENDORSEMENT

This week, the Lucas County Democratic Party (LCDP) has opened its 2025 endorsement application for candidates running for public office who would like to do so as an official "endorsed Democrat." "The May Primary is quickly approaching," said Schuyler Beckwith, chair of the LCDP. "Many local races will appear on the ballot – Mayor, Council, and Municipal Court. We have strong Democratic incumbents but we also know there are many Democrats across the County who are ready to run."

The deadline to submit an endorsement application to the LCDP is February 6, 2025. It can be found on LCDP's webpage at lucascountydemocraticparty.com/screening. Signatures to run for office are due to the Lucas County Board of Elections on March 7, 2025, with the May Primary happening on May 6, 2025.

In Lucas County, May primaries will be occurring in the City of Toledo, Village of Berkey, Village of Holland, Village of Ottawa Hills, City of Sylvania, City of Waterville, and the Village of Whitehouse, as well as judgeship seats on Toledo Municipal Court.

"If there are Lucas County residents who want to run for office but don't know where to start, please contact the LCDP. We want Democrats who believe in expanding personal rights, who believe in organized labor, and who believe in community-centered solutions to make that leap to run for office," said Beckwith.

Being an endorsed LCDP candidate has numerous benefits, such as access to volunteers, fundraising opportunities, and a greater connection to active local Democrats. Again, the deadline to submit an endorsement application to the LCDP is the end of the day, February 6, 2025.

VOLUNTEER TUTORS NEEDED

St. Philip Lutheran Church, 3002 Upton at Central is seeking tutors in Math and English for our "Raise a Child" tutoring programs. This will be for 4th to 6th graders from McKinley Stem Academy on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4pm to 5pm, from February to May. This is a wonderful opportunity to share your time and talent with children who need assistance in these subjects. Background checks and child safety classes will be required. Please call 419-283-434 if you are interested.



TAKING YOU PLACES

Security Services

The Toledo Regional Transit Authority (TARTA) intends to hire a firm to add Contracted Security Officers to provide protection, assistance, information, and miscellaneous related services to the management, employees, and visitors of TARTA facilities.

Duties of these contracted officers at TARTA's Transit Hub (612 N. Huron Street, Toledo) and Central Avenue garage (1127 Central Avenue, Toledo) may include:

- Providing a visual security presence
- Making hourly patrol rounds, logging activity and noting unusual occurrences
- Monitoring cameras
- Reporting suspicious activity to TARTA management
- Observing passengers in TARTA facilities and on buses
- Observing employees while on duty
- Assisting in investigation of accidents, incidents and other safety issues

TARTA reserves the right to award multiple firms. There is no guarantee of work through this solicitation.

The submission deadline for questions regarding this request for qualifications is February 7. Submissions must be delivered by 3 p.m. on February 21 through opengov.com (free to sign up, can follow TARTA for all future procurement notices). Questions may be directed to: Steve Wise, Manager of Safety, Security & Training, TARTA at swise@tarta.com.

DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL MINISTRY

St Martin de Porres Parish is seeking a part-time (20 hours a week) Director of Social Ministry. A Community Health Worker would be preferred. Main responsibilities include working collaboratively with the Pastoral Team, with the Food Pantry team, and with The Claver House team to continue and expand the social ministry of the parish. The successful candidate will work with various social agencies in the City and Diocese. An active Roman Catholic is preferred. EOE Send letter and resume via email to virginiawelshosf@gmail.com. 419 241 4544

History Forgotten, and Now for All to See

By Colette Córdova and Daniel Mason

Special to The Truth

History Forgotten and Now for All to See, a documentary about the rural Great Migration African American Community of Braceville, Ohio, is a captivating documentary that unveils the rich tapestry of Braceville, a “Small Town with Big History.” This remarkable town is the birthplace of numerous notable figures, who have left an indelible mark on the world.

Colette Córdova, of Toledo, met Daniel Mason, of the Cleveland area, a film editor and technical director of the film, while working on a political campaign and began working on projects that promote advocacy, especially for people of color, including this documentary.

“I was amazed at all of the work that goes on behind the scenes and the countless hours needed to perfect a film.” said Colette Córdova, vice president of the ALAS, Escuela Smart Advisory School Board. “Given the times we are in now, it’s more important than ever for oppressed populations to get our history out there. Both the Latinx and African American communities have been marginalized for too long.”

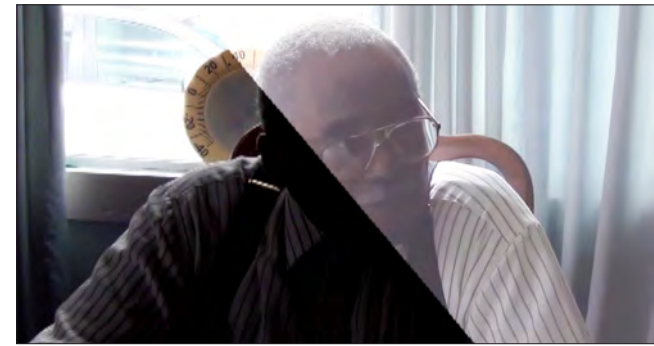
Mason feels at the core of the film is a question: “How did this community, who escaped from the Jim Crow south—some of them fleeing with nothing in the middle of the night—end up producing so many notable sons and daughters? What was it about this particular community that led them to live the American Dream, where so many other communities ‘set aside’ for people of color were actively prevented from reaching their potential? How did a small community of maybe 90 families even at its peak, sitting in a flood zone in the countryside of Ohio—improbably produce multiple millionaires, an Olympian, hall of fame boxers, a member of Jackie Robinson’s All Stars, state track and field record-holders, filmmakers, and many other notables? And, maybe even more importantly, how is it that they are all just about the nicest people you have ever met?”

Mason’s main challenge for the film was taking archival home video interviews, and restoring them to the point where they were presentable. “The footage was in multiple less common older formats—but more importantly was an issue that has been a problem with imaging for decades: The technologies for autofocus and auto exposure, so common on older consumer cameras, were not tested or developed with people of color in mind,” Mason said.

“We had one interview in particular with a pillar of the community, Daniel Shavers, and it was shot near a window. The auto exposure feature decided to properly expose everything outside the window behind him. We could barely make out his face, and a lot of people thought that this critical footage was unusable. But, with Colette and the film’s director, Ron Hughes (along with help from fellow filmmaker Jessie Bryant), we were able to apply both traditional filmmaking color correction techniques—as well as some cutting-edge software techniques, including utilizing artificial intelligence software, to restore his facial features—and even upscale the old footage to 4K.”

Mason continued, “I know some people are rightfully weary of AI in film—and elsewhere—but when you are trying to help marginalized people’s voices be heard—and the historical record is often by the nature of said marginalization scant—I think any tool that can help is worth using. The History Channel might be able to employ hundreds of historical actors, dressed up as Spartans or Civil War era soldiers- and add computer animation to bring lost eras to life. But smaller productions, less influenced by the commercial model, will now be able to cover more perspectives; let more people’s voices be heard. I see way too many ‘documentaries’ trying to imply that aliens built the Great Pyramids or Incan Temples, and yes,

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Before and after restoration of prominent Braceville citizen, Daniel Shavers