

Volume 90 No. 3 “And Ye Shall Know The Truth...” June 25, 2025



Steve Parker of Steve's Sport N Cuts

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The Quiet Legacy of Our Elders

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

The Truth Contributor



Without community, there is no liberation.

- Audre Lorde

Although Juneteenth has passed and its barbecues and cultural celebrations still echo, it is always appropriate to reflect on the full meaning of freedom.

Yes, we must remember the monumental—the hard-fought victories, the marches, and the milestones. But we must also remember the quiet legacies—those small, sacred acts of care that nourished us in ways the world never saw or fully understood.

Legacies like tea cakes and pound cake. And legacies like Mother Allean Roberts-Harris.



Allean Roberts-Harris

Last week marked the homegoing of “Miss Allean”—one of those steadfast Church Mothers, whose life was stitched into the fabric of our community and our memory. A woman who represented a generation of African American elders that is rapidly and painfully leaving us. These were the women who didn’t just pray and sing and raise families—they fed souls with food, rescued children from judgment, and preserved our humanity in everyday, practical ways.

To this day, I remember it vividly: I’d be outside playing baseball with the neighborhood kids, losing track of time, when I was supposed to be inside washing dishes. And just when I was about to face certain doom, here came Mother Roberts quietly stepping into the kitchen on several occasions, tying on an apron and washing those dishes for me.

We both laughed together as she reminded me about it at a friend’s funeral in November 2024, when I last saw her.

But back then, there was no fuss. No lecture. Just grace. A last-minute unrequested rescue that saved me from punishment—and reminded me what love looked like in real-time.

That was who she was. The kind of elder who didn’t need a platform to lead or a title to matter. She led by showing up. By doing. By caring. She was the kind of person who made sure you had a plate, a ride home, a second helping, or an alibi when it counted most.

And Mother Roberts, like so many of her generation, represents a time when pound cake and tea cakes were not just desserts, but a declaration: you are thought of, you are loved, you are not alone, you matter.

If you grew up Black in the 1950s, ‘60s, or ‘70s, you know exactly what I mean. The pound cake and tea cakes were always there—whether for Sunday dinner, a repast or just because someone needed a little sweetness to balance the bitterness of life.

Not the store-bought kind either, but the kind made with love and a legacy. Golden pound cake kissed with lemon or vanilla extract, blended together with butter to produce a texture so smooth that it needed nothing extra to knock you off your feet. A pure blessing in a slice wrapped in

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War Clouds Gathering?

By Lafe Tolliver, Esq

Guest Column

Well, President Trump, aka: Dear Leader, is up against the wall when it comes to making a decision about whether he will give in to the jingoistic instincts of his military muscle men or will he tone down the war rhetoric with Iran’s supreme leader.

The current odds on favorite is that Trump will give the Muslim leader another two weeks before he either pulls the trigger and releases “The Birds,” aka: bomber planes and jets, or gives peace a chance.

It is no surprise that Bibi Netanyahu wants Iran bombed backed into the 15th century, which axiomatically will result in regime change in Iran and thus a hope that the progressive Iranian population can install a semblance of a democracy.

If Israel and the US of A are counting on the power and might of the bunker busting bombs to turn the tide, all eyes will have to wait and see in two weeks; if the untested “mother of all bombs” is a dud because the targeted Fordo underground nuclear site is about a half mile deep under rock and concrete. All bets are off!

If the gargantuan bomb fails the test, then expect a long war of attrition between Israel and Iran with both sides throwing everything they have against the wall in order to wear down their opponent.

Israel would then pressure Trump to pummel Iran both with planes from the three aircraft carriers already in place and to throttle the source of Iran’s monies...oil.

As for military planning, the word is that Trump is not relying upon any advice from Defense Secretary Hegseth since he is woefully unqualified to direct the Department of Defense and any war advice would come from the in place generals at the Pentagon.

This is what happens when you bring in a clown car of sycophants and ninnies whose only claim to fame is that they are telegenic or have slavish loyalty to Trump. Of course, if war is the inevitable outcome of this debacle, the question must be raised, what happens to the tax cuts for the uber rich? Can you afford to give billionaires more monies so they can buy that third yacht or do you fund an open ended war. Curious minds want to know!

Not to worry! Trump will find a way to blame any war caper on both Biden and Obama. Trump wants an unconditional surrender from the Iranian leader and the Iranian leader has said that irreparable damage will be done to the US of A if it gets involved.

What’s at stake? If Iran still has any “sleepers cells” ready to rise up and attack the Great Satan (as they call the US of A) or if Iran can lull Trump into sending in boots on the ground, all bets are off.

The winner would be the military industrial complex which makes the bombs and the bullets and the other war goodies that would be consumed

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Community Calendar

June 28

Warren AME Missionary Sunday: 11 am; Speaker Rev. Diane Yvonne Greer-Travis; Luncheon at noon

July 20

NAACP Youth Council meeting: 3:00 pm @ Sanger Branch Library

July 26

Christmas In July: 12-4 pm UAW Local 12 Union Hall vendors & Food Trucks

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Black People: Ending Racism Isn't Our Role — Reclaiming Our Power Is

By Carla Thomas

The Truth Contributor

Racism. I'm so tired of it. Tired of the hate. Tired of the gaslighting. Tired of being expected to act like this country doesn't run on a system that was never meant to include us.

Black people: we didn't start racism, and we cannot be expected to end it. That burden belongs to those who created it and still benefit from it. Now breathe.

Our work is different. It's reclaiming our power by protecting our communities. Building power. Creating unity. Strengthening what's ours so we can address racism from a place of strategy, not survival.

For too long, we've been made to believe that if we just do a little more, speak more softly, protest more peacefully, dress more "respectably," or discipline our communities harder, then maybe, just maybe, racism will loosen its grip. HA!

Racism is not a Black people problem. It never was. It's a system created by white people to preserve power, wealth, and dominance. The responsibility for dismantling it rests with those who built it and continue to benefit from it.

Yes, we can and should call it out when it shows up in our lives. We have every right to speak truth to power and defend our communities. But ending racism? Nope. That's not our role. It's not our responsibility to fix what we didn't break.

We need to stop exhausting ourselves trying to ease white guilt or prove we're worthy of their understanding. That's not our burden to carry.

Whiteness Was Invented to Divide and Conquer

To understand our current reality, we have to understand where whiteness, and this system came from. "Whiteness" itself is a fabricated identity



born not out of shared culture or heritage, but from colonization and control. In the 17th century, in places like colonial Virginia, European elites began unifying various ethnic groups (English, Irish, German, etc.) under a new umbrella term: "white." This wasn't about solidarity, it was about hierarchy. "Whiteness" became a tool to divide the working class and to justify the enslavement of Africans. As journalist Robert P. Baird explains in *The New Yorker*, this racial category was deliberately constructed in response to events like Bacon's Rebellion, to prevent unity between poor Black and white laborers. It's not a race. It's a strategy.

Dog Whistles and False Equivalencies: Respectability Won't Save Us

Yet despite knowing this, Black people are still saying things like: "How can we expect them to stop killing us if we don't stop killing us?"

This dangerous logic reinforces a false equivalency: when two vastly different things are treated as if they're the same. In this case, it falsely equates community-based violence among Black people (which is rooted in systemic oppression) with the targeted violence of white supremacy. But white supremacy isn't reacting to our behavior, it's the very force that created the conditions for that behavior: through redlining, underfunded schools, job discrimination, mass incarceration, and decades of systemic neglect.

When people use the phrase "Black-on-Black crime" as a way to derail conversations about racism, they're not offering solutions, they're using a dog whistle: a coded term that sounds neutral but is meant to reinforce racist ideas. Violence happens most within communities because of proximity, not because of race. White people harm other white people too, but we never call it "white-on-white crime." See how that works?

This whole mindset that we can "earn" safety or acceptance if we just "act right," is a lie.

Liberation isn't something we get by behavior. It comes from standing in our dignity, letting go of respectability politics, and reminding ourselves: we don't need to prove our humanity. We were never the problem.

As civil rights leader John Lewis said in *Walking with the Wind*, and as bell hooks quotes:

"As far as I'm concerned, this was the turning point of the civil rights movement. ... We had played by the rules, done everything we were supposed to do, had played the game exactly as required, had arrived at the doorstep and found the door slammed in our face."

This realization that we can do everything "right" and still be denied basic humanity, must shape how we understand our role in this struggle.

Why Is Everything Always About Race? Because It Always Has Been

Why is everything about race? Because racists made it so. This question is rarely sincere. It usually shows up as a deflection, thrown out when a Black person names racism for what it is. It's a way to dismiss the truth, protect comfort, and avoid accountability in a system built on racial inequality.

Ahmaud Arbery was murdered for jogging while Black. Elijah McClain, a gentle, autistic young man in Colorado, was stopped, brutalized, and later killed by police while walking home from the store. Christian Cooper, an avid birdwatcher, had the police called on him in Central Park because a white woman weaponized his Blackness against him when asked to leash her dog. Even something as simple as opening a bookstore like Blacklit, owned by LaTasha Lewis in Dallas, Texas invites harassment, protests and surveillance, simply because the owner is Black. After just two years in business, she was forced to close her doors due to relentless backlash and targeted opposition.

None of these events were about what the people were "doing." These people were attacked for who they were. So when people ask, "why is everything always about race?" the answer is clear: because in this country, Blackness is always being policed, surveilled, questioned, and threatened. Period.

The real question isn't why everything is about race, it's why people are treated differently because of their race, forcing these conversations to exist in the first place.

Living in a World Built Against Us: What Real Allyship Requires

To the white people who pride themselves on having Black friends, at-



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... continued on page 12

The Faith It Took to Stay: The Relentless Rise of Steve Parker

By Asia Nail

The Truth Contributor

In a sunlit corner of Toledo, at the crossroads of legacy and love, there stands a barbershop unlike any other. The floors are painted like a football field. As clippers vibrate like stories passed from one generation to the next, the walls echo with laughter, sports talk, and life lessons. This is *Steve's Sport N Cuts*—but the man behind it has built far more than just a place for fresh fades.

Steve Parker has built a movement.

"They counted me out," he says, with a calm that only comes from proving people wrong. "But I kept going."

And that's been his magic. In a world that celebrates speed, Steve Parker has become a master of staying—through hardship, through hustle, through hope. His story isn't just one of success. It's a blueprint for building, brick by brick, when the world leaves you barefoot with only belief to walk on.

From Clippers to Calling

As a teenager, Steve couldn't always afford a professional haircut. So he took matters into his own hands—literally.

"I started cutting my own hair at 15," he recalls. "Then my brothers'. Then kids in the neighborhood. It's just something I've always been good at."

His journey into entrepreneurship didn't begin with ambition—it began with necessity. After attending culinary school and working in the food industry, he found himself caught between rising bills and child support making it nearly impossible to get ahead. So he turned to what he knew—**cutting hair**—and leaned into it with purpose.

"I didn't plan to be a barber. But it became the way I could build something real."

Doors Closed, Windows Opened

When Steve tried to get a loan to open his own shop, banks turned him away. Despite excellent credit and a solid business plan, he was told barbershops were too risky.

That didn't stop him.

They didn't see what he saw: the sweat equity. The late nights. The vision for a space that wasn't just about hair—but about hope.

So he did what dreamers do—he built it without the bank, using faith as his financing.

"I saved every dollar while renting a chair at another shop," he says. "When I finally found my own space, the landlord graciously gave me 90 days rent-free. *Build first, then pay*, he said—and that's exactly what I did."

With grit and vision, he transformed the space into something beautiful. A floor painted like a football field. Murals of sports legends. Vibrant colors and conversations that welcome every generation.

It isn't just a shop—it's a space for brotherhood, mentorship, and healing.

A Barbershop that Builds Men

In many communities, barbers are unofficial counselors, coaches, and



Steve Parker at work

comforters. **Steve's Sport N Cuts** is more than a business—it's become a beacon. Young boys come for haircuts and leave with lessons in manhood, credit, purpose, and pride.

He didn't just fade edges—he sharpened minds.

"I've had some of these young men in my chair since they were seven or eight," Steve says, his voice thick with memory. "Now they're grown, in college, working, and successful."

From the chair, he taught life skills. Outside of it, he partners with Pro-Medica, the Toledo Museum of Art, and other local leaders to host *The Art of the Cut*, men's health fairs, and youth violence prevention events.

He even advocated for life-saving equipment in barbershops after one of his clients had a heart attack in his chair. At the time, Steve could only dial 911 and pray.

So he worked with a local cardiologist to bring AEDs—defibrillators—to every barbershop involved in his men's health events.

"We have to be ready," he says. "We have to be more than just barbers. Sometimes we have to be a lifeline."

From One Chair to a Care Network

His next chapter came from the same heart of service.

After years of cutting hair for individuals with developmental disabilities, Parker realized the need for a more intentional support system. His wife, a licensed social worker, had stepped away from her field and longed to return to meaningful work. That's when the lightbulb lit.

...continued on page 12



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Toledo Urban Federal Credit Union to Host 20th African American Festival

The Truth Staff

Two decades ago, Suzette Cowell, CEO and president of the Toledo Urban Federal Credit Union, created the first African American Festival and welcomed about 500 guests to the small Grace Park at the corner of Smead and Indiana.

Things have certainly changed. Now, in 2025, the African American Festival, to be held this summer on July 18-19, has grown into one of the main highlights of the summer season and includes a Prayer Breakfast, a community day, a parade and a Music Fest that will bring thousands of attendees to the Huntington Center to listen to the artistry of Lyfe Jennings, Troop, Musiq Soulchild, Pokey Bear, Le'Andria Johnson and the ever popular Zapp Band.

"This was a vision," said Cowell on Friday, June 20, at the TUFCU Monroe Street branch during a press conference to announce the plans for this year's Festival. "The vision is still coming together 20 years later."

The Festival Prayer Breakfast will take place this year at Indiana Avenue Missionary Baptist Church at 8 a.m. on Friday, July 18. At noon on Friday, Community Day will start on the grounds of the Monroe Street Branch featuring vendors, activities for children and the promotion of the Festival theme – "History, Health and Education."



Suzette Cowell, - - at the podium - discusses the upcoming African American Festival

Immediately after those activities there will be a panel discussion on the topic of "History, Health and Education."

The parade will start at 10 a.m. on Saturday morning at the Door Street TUFCU Branch, it will proceed towards downtown, then turn right on City Park and right again on Indiana Avenue.

That afternoon, the doors will open at 2:00 p.m. at the Huntington Center for the finale – the concert.

The weekend of the Festival is a source of pride for the TUFCU and the community as a whole, noted Valerie Simmons Walston, vice president of Public Relations for TUFCU.

"I am proud to be part of a movement that celebrates African American culture," she noted.

Perryman... continued from page 3

wax paper or aluminum foil.

Or, those tea cakes—something between a nutmeg-butter cookie and a whisper from an elder—were the soul food of our everyday lives. No frosting, no nuts, no flair, nothing extra but delicious, either velvety soft or crunchy. A couple of tea cakes, folded carefully into one of those thin glassine envelopes, and slipped into your hand in the church basement after Sunday service, would bless your self-esteem for the entire week.

But don't get it twisted: I'll fight you for a gourmet meal. I've dined in places where they presented the entrée and dessert like majestic works of architectural art, and I appreciate fine ingredients and creative technique. My wife's palate is much more refined than mine, and we've both prepared and enjoyed many elegant meals together.

But when I want to remember who I am and where I come from, I don't reach for a menu—I reach for a memory.

The type of memories that don't always require a special occasion, because they were the occasion. They reminded us that even if money was tight, if your name was forgotten, or if the world dismissed you—someone in your life took the time to make something from scratch just for you.

And now, the generation that carried those quiet traditions is slipping away and disappearing.

So, yes, we'll continue to enthusiastically celebrate Juneteenth—the power of emancipation, the resilience and endurance of our people, and the fight for justice. Absolutely!

But let us also honor the freedom to be loved in small ways by people who made a ministry out of the mundane. Who saved you with a clean kitchen, a full plate and a slice of cake that said, You're still mine.

Contact Rev. Donald Perryman, PhD, at drdlperryman@enterofhope-baptist.org

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The Juneteenth Week – What a Week It Was!

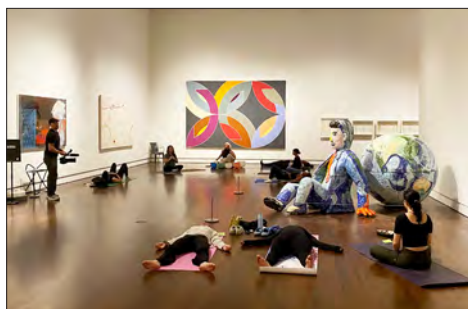
The Truth Staff

The City of Toledo kicked off the festivities with a press conference on Friday, June 13 and then on Saturday, the celebration opened in full force with a parade and a host of other activities.

Powell's Beauty and Barber Supply hosted a vendors' pop-up event, Vince Davis and the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity held a health and wellness event and

the NAACP and Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity held a celebration at the Toledo Lucas County Main Branch Library.

And the celebration continued through the week with the highlight arriving on June 19, Juneteenth itself – the holiday celebration at the Toledo Museum of Art.



The Toledo Museum of Art Galleries Celebrated Juneteenth

By Jefferson Díaz

The Truth Reporter

Thirteen hundred people filled the halls of the Toledo Museum of Art last Thursday, June 20, to participate in a series of activities commemorating Juneteenth.

With art, music, guided tours and even yoga classes, the TMA administration highlighted the importance of this day and invited Toledo's various communities to recognize the freedoms brought by the Emancipation Proclamation and the knowledge of that document brought to the enslaved folks of Texas 160 years ago on June 19 1865..

"We must honor and respect the freedom that Juneteenth grants us. That's why we've designed this series of activities, not only to honor this day but also to bring communities closer to the museum," said Toni Gordon, public program supervisor.

Juneteenth kicked off at 11 a.m. at TMA with a series of family activities in the gardens. At 11:30 a.m., a yoga class with instructors Holly Strawbridge and Dani Nolff took place. At noon, James "Dirtykics" Dickerson gave a tour of artworks inspired by Toledoans and how they've impacted their communities.

Chudney Patterson offered a live painting event where attendees could observe his creative process and its relationship to the other works by African Americans in the museum.

Dorian Gray offered a magic show that captivated both children and adults, and Ramona Collins was in charge of closing the day with a live concert that could be heard throughout the museum's galleries.

"This museum is a fundamental part of our city, and we want communities to come, not only for Juneteenth but for the other activities we'll have throughout the year," Gordon said.

To learn more about the museum's activities, you can visit its website. toledomuseum.org where you can see the calendar of events. The next one will be the PRIDE celebration on June 28.

Family Center Activities

11:00a.m.–5:00p.m

Family Center

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The Cultural Heritage Festival



The day of June 19 brought inclement weather to the area but by late afternoon, the rain had ended and the skies had cleared up – just in time for the Cultural Heritage Festival at the Glass City Pavilion and Event Lawn.

Vendors lined up, the DJ was set and the musicians were warmed up – just in time. The audience arrived and the show was on – and activities were available for all ages.



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The AKAs 2025 Juneteenth Scholarship Brunch

By Fletcher Word

The Truth Editor

The members of the Zeta Alpha Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. held their annual Juneteenth Scholarship Brunch & Silent Auction Day Party with a Purpose on Saturday, June 21, honoring this year's scholarship recipients while emphasizing the sorority's commitment to help small businesses and nurturing leadership.

The doors opened at The Pinnacle at 11 a.m. and Sonya Randall, Protocol chair, opened the festivities by introducing special guests and, after that opening, Clara Petty, vice chairman served as the mistress of ceremonies.

A welcome to the audience, who had been prompted to wear Afrocentric attire, was offered by Richelle Watkins, Chapter president, and Felicia Roberts-Dunston, chairman, provided the purpose and arrangements for the benefit of the guests.

As always, live music was a feature of the brunch and this year's music was provided by the band, Distant Cousinz.

Then brunch began as attendees sampled the grazing stations. After brunch, the scholarship recipients were introduced by Kimberley Fisher, Scholarship chairman.

This year's recipients are: Natalia Diaz-Sanchez, Raniyah Rogers, Syrenity Nunn, Alasia Huggins, Kaitlyn Diggins, Elana Williams and Madelyn Page.

Scholarship Acts of Love were presented by Petty and then the silent auction began and Petty announced the winners.

Closing remarks were offered by Felicia Dunston, chair, and Richelle Watkins, chapter president.



Top row (l-r): Paula Martin, Cheryl Phillips, Ashleigh Foster, Cheryl Slack, Andrea Price, Tracii Johnson, Patrice McClellan. Bottom row (l-r): Clara Petty, Felicia Roberts-Dunston, Richelle Watkins, Kimberley Fisher



Standing: (l to r) Clara Petty, Vice Chair; Kimberley Fisher, Scholarship Chair; Felicia Roberts-Dunston, Chair; Seated: Natalia Diaz-Sanchez, Raniyah Rogers, Syrenity Nunn, Alasia Huggins, Richelle Watkins, President; Kaitlyn Diggins, Elana Williams, Madelyn Page

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Immigration Experts Gathered at the Toledo Lucas County Library's Main Branch

By Jefferson Díaz

The Truth Reporter

The "Ask Us about the U.S. Immigration System" forum was held to a packed house on Tuesday, June 17, in meeting room 1 of the Toledo Library's Main Branch.

Speakers: Eugenio Mollo Jr., clinical assistant professor of Law and Director of the Immigrant Justice Clinic at the University of Toledo College of Law; A.S. Kefa Otiso, PhD, professor of Geography at Bowling Green State University and founding member of the New African Immigrant Commission of Ohio; Mechelle Zarou, chief People and Culture Officer and deputy general counsel at the Sisters of St. John the Baptist Church. The speakers devoted themselves for just over two hours to giving a current X-ray of our country's immigration system.

"Improving our immigration system, to provide visas and other legal documents to migrants, requires more political will than a very complicated solution," said Mollo, who reported that a full immigration reform has not been implemented in the United States since 1986.

"Our system has been broken for a long time. What's worrying right now is that due process isn't being respected," added Mollo, who also provided details on how long it can take for a migrant in the U.S. to obtain a green card or citizenship.

For example, approval times for a green card can take up to two years, although once obtained, the wait time is retroactive to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services for obtaining citizenship. Refugees have a shorter wait time for a green card, just over a year.

Mechelle Zarou highlighted the economic value that migrants have for Toledo and showed some figures in this regard: six percent of migrants in the city have some kind of entrepreneur activity, which is above the national average; in 2017 - these are the most recent figures available -



they contributed \$1.4 billion to Lucas County's GDP; and 35 percent of migrants in Toledo have a bachelor's degree, compared to 17.9 percent of those born and raised in Toledo.

Otiso emphasized the importance of international university students to the academic and intellectual development of the United States. "If we begin to implement a restrictive policy on international students obtaining student visas, countries like China and India will overtake us in the intellectual race. Currently, California and New York are the states with the most international students."

The Q&A session was intense, with most questions focusing on what to do if a migrant is arrested by ICE and how to apply for asylum for citizens who arrived in the United States under the CNHV (humanitarian parole) program, which was eliminated during this second Donald Trump administration.

The Toledo Library's management pledged to hold more events of this kind soon due to the importance of the topic in these current times.



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TMA Premieres “When We Free the World,” a Documentary by Kevin Powell

By Alexandria Leatherberry

The Truth Reporter

On Friday June 20, the Toledo Museum of Art closed the first night of summer with the final premiere of “When We Free the World.”

The museum held a week-long celebration for Juneteenth which highlighted artists of all media, and the Friday night movie brought meaning to the gathering. The film was comprised of nine chapters, representative of the 2020 written publication, that were aimed to answer one big question, “What is a man?”

At first thought, a viewer might construct his or her own simple framework of what has been the driving stereotype he or she is conditioned to believe. However, Powell’s film instructs the viewers that they may need to challenge their own definitions.

The film is framed around a speech that Powell made at the 2018 National Bioneers conference titled “Redefining Manhood.” His address at the conference was clear as he shared his own journey “to move from toxic manhood to what is healthy masculinity.” The film shared a collection of interviews with those on a similar pursuit to define their own manhood.

The interviews raised topics such as the effects of trauma, threats to Black manhood, the necessity of community and healing from the dismantling of mental barriers. The participants shared their perspectives featuring a range of individuals, such as Mayor Ras Baraka of Newark, New Jersey, to community changemakers like the University of Toledo’s David Young.

Following the film Rhonda Sewell, TMA’s director of Inclusion, moderated a discussion during which she asked Powell about his selection of participants. Powell responded with simple criteria: active in the community and have something to say. He explained his approach was to capture as many stories as possible.

“You see other stories out there and it helps you understand your own,” stated Powell. Powell shared a broad perspective from 70 male voices across five generations. Powell, of course, did not execute this task alone, his wife Evangeline Lawson also produced and wrote alongside Powell.

“He lived it and I was witness to his experience,” said Lawson as she also recollected her motivation for the film.

The Toledo premiere was the final premiere of the project as the creators look to move the project onto streaming platforms. It was an honor for the Toledo Chapter brothers of Alpha Phi Alpha to share this moment with Kevin Powell who is also a proud member.

“When we Free the World” is one of many of Powell’s works. Having established his writing credentials with Vibe magazine in the 90s – he was a senior writer during the founding years of Vibe magazine from 1992 to 1996 – he has authored over 14 books.

Beyond films and books Kevin Powell’s writing has also received a Grammy nomination for Best Spoken Word Poetry. Powell has proven his artistry to have no bounds and has translated it into multiple formats making his work accessible for all.

Powell’s activism has focused on ending poverty, advocating for social justice and ending violence against women and girls. He was a Democratic candidate for the United States House of Representatives in Brooklyn, New York, in 2008 and 2010.



Toledo City Councilman John Hobbs and Rhonda Sewell



Evangeline Lawson and Kevin Powell

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Steve Parker...continued from page 5

“I said, let’s start something of our own,” Steve recalls.

Together, they built **Parker Residential**, a care agency that now serves people around the clock in homes the couple owns and manages. They recently launched an **Adult Day Program**, where clients socialize, access resources, enjoy books, games, computers, go on outings, and enjoy structured daily activities.

“We wanted to offer care that feels like family,” Steve says. “Not just housing, but home.”

A Legacy Rooted in Service

Steve Parker doesn’t measure success in titles or plaques. He measures it in lives touched, families helped, and futures made possible.

He now owns multiple businesses: the barbershop, a food trailer (**Parker’s Mobile Kitchen**), a care agency, a property management company, and the Adult Day Program. And while not all of his children want to follow in his barbering footsteps, many have found their purpose within the family business.

“I tell them, your last name is Parker—why go build someone else’s dream when you can build your own right here?”

Black People...continued from page 4

tending a Juneteenth festival, sitting on the boards or being a part of Black organizations: what are you doing when no one’s watching? It’s not enough to be near Blackness, you have to confront whiteness. That is, if you call yourself an ally.

This is where proximity politics falls apart: the idea that simply being close to a marginalized group through relationships, friendships, work environments, or cultural involvement, is enough to claim allyship. Some white people pride themselves on being in close proximity to Blackness. They will date Black people but won’t challenge racism in their own families; raise Black children but never confront the anti-Blackness embedded in their parenting, families or schools; work in Black spaces but refuse to examine their own privilege and biases.

They show up in selfies and photo ops, but never in fights. Comfortable around Blackness, but uncomfortable confronting whiteness. They believe proximity equals solidarity all the while quietly basking in the privileges that white supremacy affords them. They love the culture, the connection, the community, but they don’t examine how their whiteness still shields them, still centers them, still grants them access and power we’re denied.

This is passive supremacy, the quiet comfort of being near Blackness without ever challenging the systems that keep whiteness in control. It’s not overt hatred, but it’s not harmless either. It’s a refusal to risk the safety, status, or silence that comes with whiteness, even while claiming solidarity. Proximity is not proof of progress if you’re still invested in a system that dehumanizes the very people you claim to love.

That means challenging your family at the dinner table. It means calling out your coworkers when they make a “joke.” It means doing the unglam-

orous, uncomfortable work of unlearning your own internalized supremacy and actively working to dismantle it in your communities.

The Power of Staying the Course

When asked what’s next, Steve doesn’t offer a flashy answer.

“I stay the course,” he says. “When I don’t know what’s next, I don’t panic. I put my head down and keep working.”

That steady faith has brought him through every challenge—from rejection to reinvention—and led him to a life of impact that stretches far beyond the barbershop chair.

“I’m not the best barber in the city,” he says. “But you’ll never outwork me.”

And maybe that’s what makes him the best after all.

That, right there, is the magic of Steve Parker.

He stayed.

He served.

And in doing so, he built a legacy that will stand long after the clippers cool.

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This Is Not the End But a Redirect

It’s time we stop trying to conform, accommodate every demand, dispel every stereotype, or meet every unreasonable expectation placed on us. If we’re supposed to be created equal, why are we still chasing goalposts that never stop moving? The truth is: we will never be “right” enough for a system that’s functioning exactly as it was designed to.

History has proven it, no matter how well we speak, how much we achieve, or how many barriers we break. We can earn rights and privileges. We can succeed. We can even become President of the United States. And still, racism persists.

Instead of trying to dismantle racism, we focus on building what’s ours:

- Strengthening our communities
- Unifying across differences that divide us
- Unlearning internalized oppression
- Telling our stories and reclaiming our narratives
- Building economic power and ownership
- Creating systems of protection and support
- Confronting racism strategically, not just emotionally

We can’t fix a system that is functioning as intended, but we can prepare ourselves to face it with clarity, unity, purpose and power.

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Tolliver...continued from page 3

in vast quantities both by the US of A and Israel, our ally.

The majority of polled Americans are against another Middle East engagement that costs billions and billions and exposes the military to unknown casualties.

In the back of Trump’s mind (?), he knows that an unpopular war would cost the GOP both the House and the Senate and his agenda, whatever that is, would be in peril; if the Democrats were to win big in both chambers, they could pass bills without fear of a veto from the White House.

Need I remind you that President Obama had an agreement in place with Iran regarding their nuclear capacities but, of course, anything with Obama’s approval on it, causes Trump to break out in hives and thus he pulled out of that agreement.

So, in the next months or so, will it come down to “butter or bullets” as was the case with former President L.B.J. with the never-ending imbroglio in the Vietnam war?

Of course, with this looming momentous decision, what gets lost is the continuing sage in Ukraine, the rising military problems in the South China Sea with China eyeing Taiwan, inflation in the US of A and the immigration debacle.

Are we having fun yet?

Contact Lafe Tolliver at tolliver@juno.com

The Ghosts of Gwendolyn Montgomery by Clarence A. Haynes

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

The Truth Contributor

You fit right in.

Whatever it takes, that's alright. It's human nature to change your mind and be one with the group. To relax your presence to maintain good will. To stay quiet and under the radar – but be careful. As in the new book, *The Ghosts of Gwendolyn Montgomery* by Clarence A. Haynes, denying who you really are can be deadly.

Beautiful, talented and driven, Gwendolyn Montgomery's touch was magic.

Everyone who wanted to be famous knew that she alone could make it happen, that her work at Sublime Creative could make someone a legend like Gwendolyn herself.

Yes, she was a superstar.

Personally, though, things were different. Working long hours with whiny, demanding stars was fine, but Gwendolyn wanted companionship. She was lucky she met James, who was sweet and kinda geeky, not perfect, but better than another one-night stand.

And there was that other problem: someone or some thing was trying to ruin Gwendolyn's career.

It was horrible when a fashion show she'd organized at the Brooklyn Museum was trashed by a red substance that the police said was blood. It was terrible when the same thing happened at an event she'd done for her baddest, most spoiled client. But the gory Spanish words scrawled on the wall of both venues were what scared her the most.

"TRAIDORA," they said. Traitor.

Ever since he was a teenager, Fonsi Harewood talked to ghosts; re-

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cently, he learned that he could sleep with one, too. That super-hot incubus was literally only the man of Fonsi's dreams, though, and so Fonsi renounced love and threw himself into being a part-time psychic and running La Playa, a store for believers in the spiritual.

He loved that store and his customers but lately, he'd noticed that something was wrong and his BFF's mother, Estelle, also a psychic, confirmed it. El Intermedio, the spirit world, was roiling and they needed someone with more power to help hold the spirits back.

Someone like Fonsi's long-estranged cousin, also a Guardián, wherever she was...

If you're like a lot of people, you pick up a book, skim the first few pages, and make your decision: to read or not to read. Do that with the beginning of *The Ghosts of Gwendolyn Montgomery* and you'll be tempted to put it back.

Trust this, though: despite that it's a jumble at first, you won't be sorry if you stay.

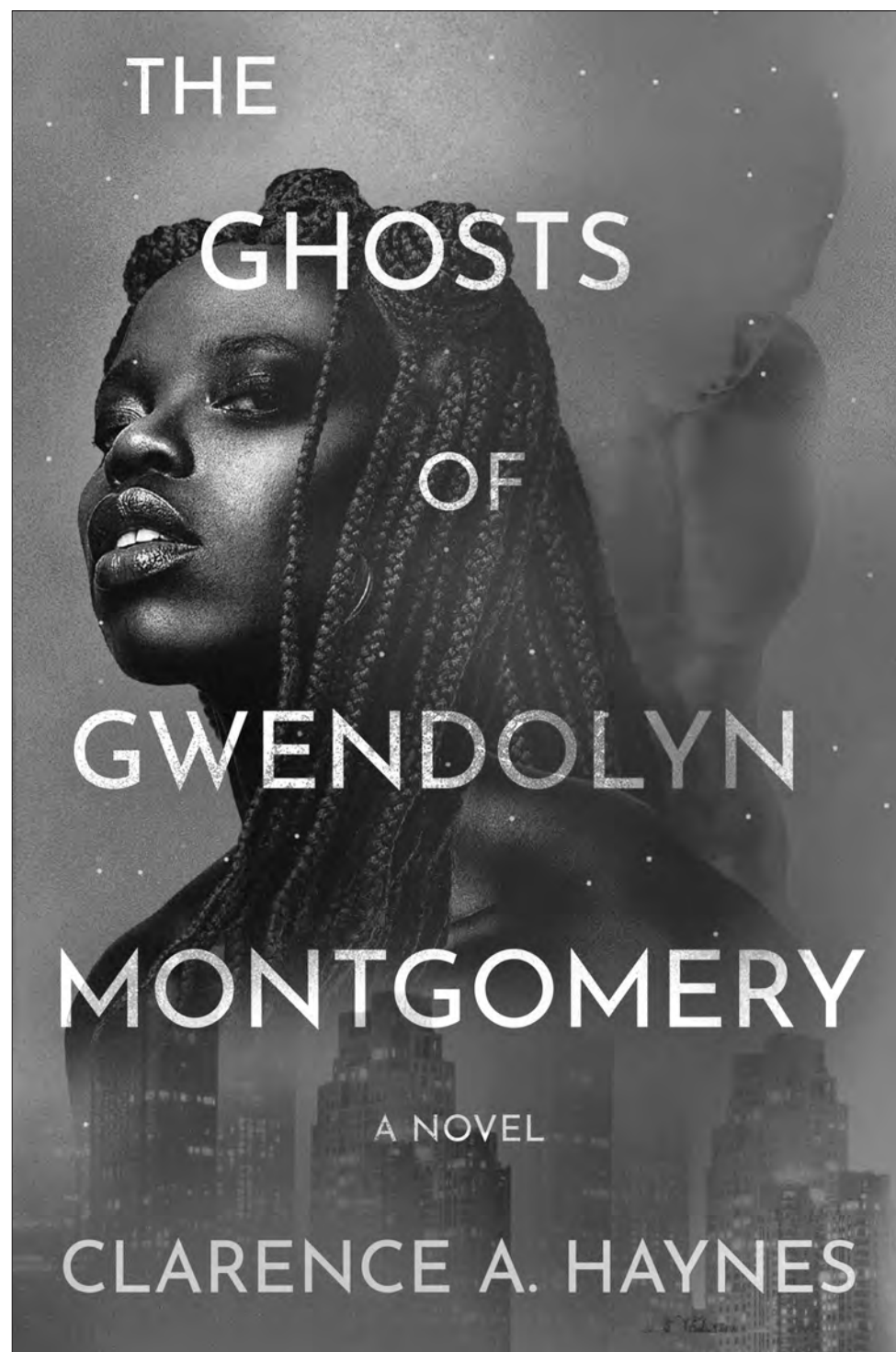
Whether you believe in ghosts or you scoff at the idea of a spirit world, this novel will satisfy your cravings with lots of hair-raising moments and one or two moderately-explicit eyebrow-raisers, along with an intriguing back-story that includes a bit of mystery. But it's not all boo-who: author Clarence A. Haynes injects enough excitement and humor to keep even the most sober-minded reader entranced with a plot that's twisty fun.

For your vacation this year, you know you're going to want to take a good book along and you can't go wrong with *The Ghosts of Gwendolyn Montgomery*.

Check your suitcase. It'll fit right in.



Author: Clarence A. Haynes
Credit: Erin Patrice O'Brien



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Pre-bid Meeting: June 24, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. – Health Science Campus, Facilities Support Building, – Room 1300, The University of Toledo, Health Science Campus, 1135 East Medical Loop, Toledo, OH 43614.

Walk-Through: Immediately following Pre-Bid.

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

More Info: Brian Linc Architect, LLC, Brian Linc, AIA, 330-352-2456, brian@brianlincllc.com

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Lucas County Board of Developmental Disabilities is now hiring and offers competitive compensation and a comprehensive benefits package. We are currently recruiting for the following position: Service & Support Specialist

Requirements:

- Bachelor's Degree in Social Work from an accredited program.
- Bachelor degree from an accredited college or university and one (1) year of experience in case work
- Valid driver's license with acceptable driving record

Please visit our website at www.lucasdd.org for additional details and to apply. All candidates must submit a resume and cover letter along with an employment application via the online application process. We are an equal opportunity employer. If in need of ADA accommodations, contact us directly at 419-380-4033.



Uniform Vendor

The Toledo Regional Transit Authority (TARTA) seeks proposals from capable vendors to provide high quality, durable uniforms and accessories to transit operators, ambassadors, customer service personnel and transportation supervisors.

TARTA is accepting electronic bid submissions. Bidders shall create a free account with OpenGov Procurement by signing up at <https://procurement.opengov.com/signup>. To view a complete list of project details and requirements, visit <https://tarta.com/work-with-us/doing-business-with-tarta>, and click the Open Procurements button.

Those submitting proposals should also provide samples of garments for evaluation to: Oscar Correa, Director of Transportation, TARTA, 1127 W. Central Avenue, Toledo, Ohio 43610 and/or Sylvester Jones, Operations Manager, TARTA Move, 130 Knapp Street, Toledo, Ohio 43604. Samples should include:

- Dress Shirt - In light blue; long or short sleeve
- Polo Shirt - In grey, black, light blue or navy blue
- Middleweight pants
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- Parka

TARTA reserves the right to award this project to multiple firms.

Proposals must be submitted by 3 p.m. on June 26. Questions may be directed to: Oscar Correa, Director of Transportation, at ocorrea@tarta.com.

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To Apply: Submit applications via ABLE's Careers Page<<https://www.ablelaw.org/careers-with-able>>. Position open until filled.

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ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND INCLUSION MANAGER

Lucas County Board of Developmental Disabilities is now hiring, and offers competitive compensation and a comprehensive benefits package. We are currently recruiting for the following positions:

- Organizational Culture and Inclusion Manager
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Please visit our website at www.lucasdd.org for additional details and to apply. All candidates must submit a resume and cover letter along with an employment application via the online application process. We are an equal opportunity employer. If in need of ADA accommodations, contact us directly at 419-380-4033.

Lucas County Government Officials Host Upward Bound Students

The Truth Staff

High school students in the Upward Bound Program at Lourdes University spent Wednesday afternoon, June 18, in the Lucas County Commissioners' Conference Room at One Government Center listening to a number of local government officials describe their roles in making the various departments of government function.

Upward Bound at Lourdes University is funded by the United States Department of Education and serves students who attend Waite and Woodward high schools in the Toledo Public Schools District.

Upward Bound's mission is to help students from low-income households and from households whose parents or guardians have not earned undergraduate college degrees.

Last week's first ever Upward Bound student visit to local government offices was organized by Tonya Colbert, director of Upward Bound, and brought together about 30 students and instructors for the afternoon's insight into how government operates and the possibilities of career choices.

Wednesday's government speakers were: Lucas County Recorder Mike Ashford, Lucas County Sheriff Mike Navarre, State Rep. Michele Grim (by video), Lucas County Clerk Bernie Quilter, Toledo City Councilwoman Cerssandra McPherson, State Rep. Erika White (by video), Lucas County Commissioner Anita Lopez, Lucas County Auditor Katie Moline, Toledo Board of Education Member Chris Varwig.

During the hour and a half session, the government representatives spent about five to six minutes describing their departments and the roles such departments play in the lives of the citizens they serve.

"It's the Auditor's job to make sure that we account for every dollar and how it is spent," said Moline, for example, of the LC Auditor's function.

The speakers then opened up for questions from the students which were generally plentiful.

"This event is important to educate and enlighten our students about civic education, their rights, responsibilities and obligations, as well as the workings of government and society," said Colbert. "This further aims to equip them with the knowledge, skills and values necessary to become informed and engaged citizens."

Commissioner Lopez served as the facilitator for the event and her closing remarks about her family's financial hardships during her youth and her determination to overcome those hardships to make it to college, to law school, to law practice and into government service will undoubtedly prove to be an encouragement to many of the Upward Bound students.

It's not often that students receive information on how the government works, noted Lucas County Recorder Ashford.

"They don't teach civics classes anymore," Ashford said. "So this is an opportunity for young folks to get to know what their local government does."



Toledo Board of Education Member Chris Varwig



Lucas County Commissioner Anita Lopez



Lucas County Auditor Katie Moline



Students and county officials

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The Crawford Family 30th Celebration of Father's Day

The Truth Staff

It's a 30 year-old tradition for the Crawford family – a family reunion on Father's Day to celebrate why fatherhood has such a special meaning in the Crawford family. This year, as in past years, the Father's Day Cookout was held at the Swan Creek Metropark, a familiar location easily accessed by the out-of-town family members who come to Toledo for the event from Detroit, Cleveland and, even as far away as, Atlanta.

Thirty years ago, Anthony Crawford, the eldest brother, was told by health professionals that he could not become a father, recalls his sister, event organizer Linda Coker. Those health professionals were wrong. Anthony did become a father. He was blessed to have daughter Chloe Crawford (now aged 30) enter his life and his family's lives.

Anthony and his seven siblings – three brothers (Anthony, Arnie, Alan) and five sisters (Andrea, Linda, Karn, Kristie, Kelly) – have been celebrating that major bit of good fortune on Father's Day for the past 30 years. Mother Barbara Griffin, who lives in Detroit, is also an important part of the festivities.

So, the Crawford family – mother, siblings, spouses, children, cousins, approaching as many as 100 this year – gather at Swan Creek for a day



of food, music, games and, most importantly, the enjoyment of basking in each other's company.

And the food is always plentiful because there is a rib off and a fish fry as the family members compete for recognition for their culinary skills. More than recognition actually, as gift baskets and trophies await the winners.

Swan Creek is an ideal site for the family get together. Lots of space for adults to work out on the grills, lots of space and playground equipment on which the kids can entertain themselves.

The Crawfords know how to celebrate fathers and family!



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