



Volume 90 No. 4

"And Ye Shall Know The Truth..."

July 2, 2025

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A Skin Detective, A Storyteller and A Trailblazer



Dr. Hope Mitchell, MD, Dermatologist

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The Sleight of Hand in OH-9

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

The Truth Contributor

You don't make progress by standing on the sidelines, whimpering and complaining. You make progress by implementing ideas.

- Shirley Chisholm



It's easy to get caught up in the daily "Three Shells and a Pea" drama swirling around Ohio's 9th Congressional District.

One day, the GOP shuffles the shells: former State Representative Derek Merrin and current State Representative Josh Williams launch dueling campaigns within hours of each other—each convinced they're the one who can flip the district red. The next day, Alea Nadeem, a decorated U.S. Air Force veteran, enters the race with her own compelling story of service and survival.

While the Dems' eyes dart back and forth, trying to keep track which candidate presents the greatest threat to Marcy Kaptur's 23rd term in the U.S. House of Representatives, or which shell to bet on, so to speak, something more important is happening out of view.

Because in every shell game, the real question is not what cup you pick. It's whether the pea was ever under any of them to begin with.

While the voting public is led to believe that the campaign for Ohio's 9th Congressional district is a contest of credentials, personalities and loyalty to Donald Trump, the media, playing the role of the shill, dutifully elevates the performative outrage, rewards shallow sound bites over substance, and "treats the campaign like a horse race to be wagered on rather than a serious choice about people's lives."

But you know, like I know —the Republican field isn't genuinely competing on credentials at all. That's the hustle; it's just for show.

Their contest revolves only around who can out-Trump Trump himself. For the GOP, it is an opportunity to leverage grievance and spectacle to make this seat a referendum not on issues but on identity. It's less a primary and more a demolition derby—a contest to see who can burn the house down first.

Meanwhile, Democrats and pundits spend endless hours dissecting who moved where, who filed paperwork first, or whose record of chaotic leadership, hollow soundbites, or scorched-earth culture-war proposals will resonate beyond social media.

But while everyone else's attention is glued to the clown show—watching which candidate can shout the loudest or squeeze into the clown car, Republicans are quietly slipping the pea into their pocket and focusing on something far more consequential: redrawing the map itself. That's the real chessboard, if I may switch the metaphor for a moment. And Democrats are still playing checkers.

It's the Map, stupid!

This election will be won or lost on cartography and not on policy issues or personality.

A seasoned political observer put it bluntly: "There's actually a huge amount of uncertainty related to this congressional campaign because Ohio will be redrawing the district lines before the next election. The fear is that they will legislate Marcy out by dividing Toledo into two congressional districts. This is similar to how they got former Ohio 3rd Congressional District (Dayton) Tony Hall out of the House."

That is the game Republicans are playing. While Democrats are busy scrutinizing the Republican demolition derby, Republicans are preparing to fracture the map and engineer a permanent advantage in our district. And it is the real threat facing Marcy Kaptur and any Democrat who wants to represent northwest Ohio.

This is not hyperbole but a blueprint.

The GOP currently controls the Ohio legislature and holds a 5-2 majority on the redistricting commission. The Ohio Supreme Court—once the last line of defense against partisan gerrymandering—now has a 6-1 Republican majority following the retirement of Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor. The same court that previously struck down earlier maps for being unconstitutionally rigged is unlikely to intervene again.

That simple truth should guide everything from fundraising to fieldwork because no amount of nostalgia or charisma will matter if the district itself is reengineered out from under the Democrats.

Yet, anticipate the new gerrymandered lines to come— but don't be

paralyzed by them.

As Mary J. Blige once sang, "I'm not gon' cry, I'm not gon' cry, I'm not gon' shed no tears."

Those lyrics should be the Democratic Party's mantra now. There is no time for tears or hand-wringing—because no one is coming to save Northwest Ohio if voters and organizers don't save themselves.

While Democrats argue over checkers, Republicans are flipping over the entire board.

The question is whether, this time, Democrats will finally "stand on business!" Not merely pick up the pieces, but learn the real rules of the game, and play to win.

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

To the Editor:

I have a great deal of respect for Harold Harris. He's a good man who truly cares about Toledo, and I was proud to support him in the primary. He ran a strong, thoughtful campaign and brought important issues to the forefront. But the reality is, he didn't win. That's how elections work.

Now, Harold has launched a write-in campaign for mayor. While I believe his intentions are sincere, the unfortunate consequence is that his candidacy risks splitting the vote — ultimately helping to secure a third term for Mayor Wade, the very outcome Harold has publicly opposed since the term-limit issue hit the ballot last fall.

This is not the time for division. Harold's continued advocacy won't put him in the mayor's office, but it could very well ensure Wade stays there. The better path forward is unity. Harold should stand with Roberto Torres — the only viable candidate positioned to bring about real change for Toledo — and help lead a broad coalition that puts the city first.

Toledo deserves a fresh start. Let's not let this moment slip away.

Zach Hall
West Toledo

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Drones vs. Dinosaurs: The Future of War

By Steve Flagg

Guest Column

As a child, I was fascinated by flight. From radio-controlled planes to model rockets, I immersed myself in building, flying, launching, and understanding the science of why things fly. That childhood curiosity came rushing back recently when I read about an audacious operation by Ukraine that blends science, strategy, and sheer ingenuity: Operation Spiderweb.

In a stunning demonstration of asymmetrical warfare, Ukraine deployed an estimated 117 low-cost, virtually autonomous drones to destroy as much as \$7 billion worth of Russian aircraft. The drones, costing between \$200,000 and \$500,000 in total, struck at airbases deep inside Russia—a return on investment so lopsided it reads like fiction. But it was real. The details are astonishing.

The drones were smuggled in the camouflaged compartments of wooden containers with remotely controlled roofs, driven by truck to nine Russian regions, and launched in coordinated waves. According to independent military analysts, these drones navigated without GPS or Starlink, instead relying on dead reckoning—navigation using landmarks and calculation based upon direction, speed and distance travelled, AI-driven object recognition, and local mobile networks.

Ukraine's clever twist? They embedded SIM cards that tapped into Russia's 3G/4G cellular networks, turning the Russian telecom grid into an unwitting partner. The drones streamed video and telemetry data back to Ukrainian operators in real time, allowing for target confirmation and mid-flight corrections. The entire civilian telecom infrastructure became an unknowing pawn in the Ukrainian war machine.

The brilliance of Operation Spiderweb isn't just in its execution but in what it reveals: the vulnerability of traditional military hardware and infrastructure. Defending against such attacks would require massive investments over many years in physical defenses, cybersecurity, and communications infrastructure—likely costing hundreds of millions of dollars,



not to mention the economic burden of regulating or hardening telecom networks.

At the same time, AI-guided drones are rapidly redrawing the rules of the battlefield. Tanks, carriers, fighter jets—once symbols of strength—are now lumbering giants. Expensive. Exposed. Obsolete. Consider the U.S.-supplied Abrams tanks in Ukraine. All 31 have reportedly been destroyed by Russian drones.

With each Abrams costing up to \$30 million, that's nearly a billion dollars neutralized by relatively cheap, often commercially adapted drone systems. Or take a U.S. aircraft carrier strike group. A Ford-class carrier costs over \$13 billion. Add destroyers, cruisers, submarines, and aircraft, and you're looking at \$30 billion or more in assets.

Yet a coordinated swarm of drones—costing a fraction—could pose an existential threat. The math isn't just sobering, it's paradigm-shifting. This isn't hypothetical. AI-enabled weapons are already in the field. Loitering munitions, autonomous underwater drones, and ground robots are transforming warfare into something less about manpower and more about microprocessors. AI doesn't fatigue. It doesn't flinch. And it doesn't need a billion-dollar runway.

The implications stretch beyond cost. Conventional military doctrine, training, and procurement cycles—often spanning decades—are no match for the pace of AI and drone innovation, which evolves monthly. Nations that cling to legacy systems will find themselves outmaneuvered by adversaries who embrace distributed, autonomous, and low-cost tactics.

If we fail to evolve our doctrine and procurement, we risk losing the next war before the first shot is fired. And yet, even as the battlefield evolves, the symbolism of power—steel-clad parades, billion-dollar tanks—remains stuck in the past.

This June, the U.S. rolled out Abrams tanks in a military parade marking the 250th anniversary of the U.S. Army. It may be a grand spectacle, but one that rings hollow when set against the lessons of Ukraine. We're celebrating dinosaurs, not strategizing for the future.

Operation Spiderweb isn't just a successful mission. It's a missile aimed at the heart of conventional military doctrine. It is an emphatic statement that the next war won't be won by whoever has the biggest ship or the fastest jet. It will be won by who has the smartest swarm. The future is here, and the battlefield's dinosaurs are marching toward extinction.



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TARTA Special Event Service Set For Toledo Fireworks, Maumee Music Fest

It's the start of one of the busiest weeks of the summer, and the Toledo Area Regional Transit Authority (TARTA) wants to make it easier for families to reach the events that help make it great.

TARTA has planned Special Event Transportation for both the City of Toledo's Fireworks in the 419 and the Uptown Maumee Music Fest. These shuttles will provide a \$3, round trip ride from a park-and-ride location to the event area and back, helping attendees avoid looking for parking near the event.

Those wanting to check out Fireworks in the 419 this Friday, July 4 can take a shuttle from Franklin Park Mall directly downtown (Jackson & Superior streets). Buses leave Franklin Park Mall's Royer Road stop every 30 minutes beginning at 8 p.m., with the last trip downtown leaving at 10 p.m. Shuttles will return from Jackson and Superior 20 minutes after the end of the fireworks show.

TARTA's Special Event Transportation to the Uptown Maumee Music Fest will run Thursday, July 3, with trips from the Lucas County Rec Center to E. John and Conant streets and back. Shuttles run every 30 minutes beginning at 1:30 p.m., with the last shuttle back to the Fairgrounds

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State and Local Ohio House Dems Assail House Bill 96

Special to The Truth

State Rep. Michele Grim (D-Toledo) last week voted “NO” on House Bill (HB) 96, the Republican-crafted state operating budget, citing cruel and chaotic cuts and its abject failure to invest in children, public education, healthcare, and basic services – all while shoveling billions to the wealthy and well-connected.

“Republicans are delivering for the wealthy and well-connected while screwing over ordinary Ohioans. This budget gives handouts to wealthy special interests while gutting safety net services and underfunding our libraries and public schools. It’s Robin Hood in reverse,” said Rep. Grim.

Budgets are about choices, and Statehouse Republicans chose to invest in billionaires and corporations instead of making life more affordable for everyday Ohioans. HB 96 protects a broken status quo—leaving local communities, property taxpayers, and families to shoulder the burden alone. Ohio deserves a budget that lifts people up, not one that leaves them behind.



State Rep. Michele Grim

State Rep. Elgin Rogers (D-Toledo) last week voted “NO” on House Bill (HB) 96, the Republican-crafted state operating budget, citing cruel and chaotic cuts and its abject failure to invest in children, public education, healthcare, and basic services – all while shoveling billions to the wealthy and well-connected.

“This bill marks a bad day for Ohioans. This bill fails to put Ohioans first. This Bill’s impact will be felt significantly by the poor and middle-class. The cuts to lead water line replacement will be especially harmful to northwest Ohio. Ohio has the third-highest number of lead water lines in the country. Toledoans and all Ohioans deserve access to clean,



State Rep. Elgin Rogers, Jr.

safe drinking water,” said Rep. Rogers.

Budgets are about choices, and Statehouse Republicans chose to invest in billionaires and corporations instead of making life more affordable for everyday Ohioans. HB 96 protects a broken status quo—leaving local communities, property taxpayers, and families to shoulder the burden alone. Ohio deserves a budget that lifts people up, not one that leaves them behind.

State Rep. Erika White (D-Springfield Township) last Wednesday voted “NO” on House Bill (HB) 96, the Republican-crafted state operating budget, citing the devastating impact of drastic budget cuts on vital services for working people. This report highlights the GOP’s alarming failure to adequately invest in children, public education, healthcare, and essential community services. At the same time, it highlights the troubling trend of diverting billions of taxpayer dollars to enrich wealthy and well-connected Ohioans, thereby exacerbating inequality and undermining the financial security of millions of Ohio workers for generations to come.

“This budget fundamentally undermines the well-being of all Ohioans, especially those in District 41. The residents of Ohio deserve a budget that prioritizes targeted tax relief rather than engaging in tax shifting. This GOP majority budget imposes onerous unfunded mandates on public education, draining public schools of their resources and restricting their ability to fund.”

The Republican-crafted operating budget prioritizes cutting funding for public libraries while also diverting unclaimed Ohio funds to build a new football stadium. This comes at a critical time when rural hospitals are closing their doors, and our housing crisis continues to deepen.

The GOP budget gutted nearly 45 percent of funding for H2Ohio this jeopardizes our environmental and economic health here in NW Ohio, which is crucial in protecting Lake Erie and our other watersheds. H2Ohio has helped in combating harmful algal blooms and ensuring the safety of our drinking water. We must demand a budget that truly invests in the future of Ohio and its citizens!” said Rep. White.



State Rep. Erika White

Other Ohio Dems Comments on HB 96

* **An Income Tax Scam for the Ultra-Wealthy:** Republicans call it a “flat tax” but it’s really a fat tax cut only for the wealthiest few. Four out of every five Ohioans will see \$5 or less under the bill, while someone making \$2.5M gets a \$18K tax break. The choice to include this flat tax will cost the state \$1.67B over the next two years. Cutting taxes only for the wealthiest isn’t going to solve the real problems facing Ohioans. It’s not going to make childcare cheaper; it’s not going to make the cost of rent or healthcare go down, and it’s definitely not going to lower rising property taxes.

* **Gutting Public Schools:** For decades, the state legislature has failed to uphold its share of responsibility to provide adequate state funding for public education. This budget continues to prioritize billions in vouchers for private schools over the investments we should be making in the public schools where 90% of students in the state go to school. The Fair School Funding Plan is a bipartisan, constitutional solution developed by education experts, and Ohio has the resources to fully and fairly fund it. Yet the statehouse republicans deliberately chose to ignore the evidence and continue to underfund our schools.

* **Forcing Schools to Put More Property Tax Levies on the Ballot:** This budget passes the buck on property tax relief by trying to raid savings accounts that school districts have diligently invested in, instead of the state stepping up to provide the relief. This will only force more schools to put levies on the ballot more often to stay open, so either your taxes will keep going up or your schools will be closing because the state is failing to act.

* **Fewer Childcare Slots to Support Working Ohioans:** Families need childcare so parents can work, and kids can receive quality early education, but we continue to lag behind the rest of the country when it comes to access

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Youth Basketball Camp Takes the Court For Father's Day Celebration

By Alexandria Leatherberry

The Truth Reporter

On Saturday, June 14, the gym of Western Toledo Preparatory Academy was filled with parents and their children for a Father's Day celebration led by Devonte Pratt. The celebration was free to the community to participate in DP Basketball Camp for a day.

"My goal is to get as many kids as possible into a good environment," said Pratt. The camp's team facilitated activities focused on building discipline, teamwork, sportsmanship, and the health of the youth. Games challenged the children's attention and drills drew out the youthfulness of all attendees as parents accompanied their child for the activities.

Devonte Pratt has defined his leadership through his sports accomplishments since helping his team to state finals in 2010 and 2013 during his four-year run as a varsity starter at Rogers High School. Pratt's accomplishments continued as a guard for Angelo State from where he was drafted by and signed by Gatos Salvajes de Sombrerete in Mexico.

Pratt has hosted his camp locally since the beginning of his professional career in 2018 and now has returned to playing local with the Toledo Glass City Wranglers. DP Basketball Camp will be hosting high school students July 21- July 24 with programming returning for youth five through 13 on Sept 21.



Devonte Pratt, founder of DP Basketball camp, instructs game for attention and memory skill building.



Terry Armstrong, sports trainer and volunteer for the camp



Vershawn Cheers, former Scott Bulldog starting guardforward, moderates game play of participants.

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Bill 96...continued from page 5

and affordability of childcare. This is a question of who we are prioritizing, and the budget is making the wrong choice when it comes to helping families afford childcare.

* Jeopardizing Healthcare Access: Almost 800K Ohioans will be at risk of immediately losing their health insurance and all Ohioans will see hospitals and providers in their communities at risk of closing. For years, Republicans have targeted Medicaid expansion. Now they're using a draconian and unnecessary trigger law to strip healthcare coverage from hundreds of thousands of Ohioans if the federal government lowers its contribution by even a single dollar.

HB 96 passed the Ohio House of Representatives by a vote of 59-38 Wednesday. It now heads to Governor DeWine for signature. While the Governor may mitigate some harm through a line-item veto, this budget remains one of the most immoral in Ohio history. This is the first budget to pass without a single Democratic vote in more than a decade.

First Responders Make the Final Call to the Stage

By Alexandria Leatherberry

The Truth Reporter

Widows Empowered Strengthened and I, Inc. called Toledo's Fire and Safety to the rescue for a fashion emergency. There was no wardrobe malfunction, but a generous effort to fundraise for support of the efforts of Widows Empowered Strengthened and I.

Members of area Police, Fire, and Sheriff's departments came together to strut down the runway in summer fashions from Dillard's. The crowd enjoyed styled selections from Dillard's Manager Brianna Husted on the servicemen and women who brought them out of uniform and into community-starlit behavior.

The audience shared laughs, fellowship, and food catered by the Premier provided by the host. Widows Empowered Strengthened and I, Inc. held this annual event in honor of the director's late husband, Wesley J. Watson. Watson was a member of the Toledo Police Department. His wife Marian Idell Watson founded the organization and teamed up with Lieutenant Gina Shubeta for this initiative to support women who have lost a loved one and their support.

Widows Empowered aims to aid women in their grief to grant time to navigate difficult life transitions. The safety department was eager to support Ms. Watson's endeavor and now partners for Uniforms on the Runway annually. More events and opportunities to be involved with the organization can be found at <http://widowsempowered.org>.



State Rep. Erika White



Marian Idell Watson





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Wellness with Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc. Toledo Alumni at Mott Library

By Alexandria Leatherberry

The Truth Reporter

On June 21, 2025, the Toledo Alumni of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc. chapter held a wellness workshop at Mott community college. The organization gathered resources and scheduled activities to kick off the first weekend of the summer in total wellness.

Vendors shared information on resources for psychological, dietary, financial and physical wellness. The vendors included Rachelle Roy, S.C.O.T.T. Center, House of Herb N Soul, Bold Beginnings Center LLC, Boss Financials, Zepf Center, Arlinda Self Love Movement.

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LaShardae Scott explains sickle cell issues



Rachelle Roy





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Hope in Every Shade: The Dermatologist Who Sees Us All

By Asia Nail

The Truth Reporter

If skin could talk, **Dr. Hope Mitchell** would be its favorite listener.

Hope Mitchell, MD, is the founder and medical director of Mitchell Dermatology, where she has been helping people feel better in their skin, literally, for over 20 years. With a white coat like a superhero's cape and a heart trained by love and legacy, she listens, heals and reminds you that your skin tells a story worth honoring.

As a board-certified dermatologist, her work isn't just about rashes or acne—it's about confidence, compassion and catching clues the body tries to whisper through the skin.

She's not just a doctor; she's a skin detective, a storyteller and a trail-blazer. And guess what? She's the kind of representation we didn't always see but always needed.

Where Her Story Meets Her Science

"My journey began back in medical school when I had the pleasure of shadowing two brilliant professors of dermatology, **Drs. Dorinda and Walter Shelley**, within the Medicine Department at the Medical College of Ohio," shares Dr. Mitchell.

Like watching magic up close, she saw how skin can be a window into the body's secrets.

"I learned that a rash could be more than just a rash. It could be the body waving a red flag," she explains.

But it was more than science that pulled her into dermatology—it was soul. "I didn't see many dermatologists that looked like me," she said. As a proud Black woman, Dr. Mitchell saw a need...and filled it. She wanted

to serve her community and make people of color feel seen, heard, and healed.

So she launched Mitchell Dermatology in 2005, and 20 years later, she's still growing, now in her very own building. That's right. She doesn't just run the practice; she owns the building too. Talk about goals!

Mom, Mentor and Motivation

Behind this strong doctor stands an even stronger woman—her mom. A nurse and single mother who raised two daughters while working hard and staying kind, her mother taught Hope the power of action, the joy of learning and the hustle of entrepreneurship.

"She showed me how to work hard and dream bigger," she says. That dream includes writing as well. As a valued contributor to The Sojourner's Truth, Dr. Hope uses her pen as power to educate readers on everything from lupus to hair loss.

What Does Excellence Look Like?

To Dr. Mitchell, dermatological excellence is two-fold: deep knowledge and deep kindness.



Dr. Hope Mitchell, MD

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“THE CITY IS ENFORCING THE LEAD ORDINANCE. ARE YOU IN COMPLIANCE?”

Walden Wilson
Property Owner

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Cool Eating for Hot Summer

By Patrice Powers-Barker, OSU Extension, Lucas County

The Truth Contributor

It's hot! Are you drinking enough water? Are you eating foods to help you stay healthy and hydrated? Foods that typically provide the highest water content are fruits and vegetables! Make sure to eat a variety but this is also an important time to enjoy fresh produce. Any foods with more than 80 percent water content are a good choice to help your body get the water it needs but these following foods have over 90 percent water content: asparagus, carrots, broccoli, cabbage, celery, cucumbers, iceberg or romaine lettuce, peppers, skim milk, spinach, strawberries, watermelon and zucchini.

What are your favorite, easy, cold foods that you can enjoy indoors (especially with air conditioning) or outdoors in the cooler morning or evenings? Here are a few ideas:

- Sliced fresh vegetables and enjoy a dip like cucumber tzatziki sauce, hummus, or guacamole and tortilla chips.
- Cold salads like pasta salads with added protein, cucumber salad, or bean salad
- Creative sandwiches like filling a pita pocket, or a tortilla roll up.
- Fruits and dip for something sweet or a fruit based, no-bake dessert.
- Snack on a handful of nuts, trail mix, or celery sticks with nut butter topped with fruit like dried cranberries or raisins or fresh fruit like chopped apples.
- Don't forget to hydrate with drinks like water, 100 percent juice or infused water. No matter how much water-rich food you consume, it's still important to drink enough fluids to stay hydrated.

Although the idea of a picnic at the park might be associated with a large picnic basket, you can use whatever container is convenient for the food. A small cooler is a good option to add some ice to keep everything cold. Don't forget to bring extra supplies like paper towels, and if needed, plastic ware, paper plates, a picnic blanket, hand sanitizer and/ bug spray and sunscreen.

You can enjoy this cool summer meal as is or you can make it an "adventure" by creating a Progressive Picnic at the park. This will take a little bit more preparation but not much. This idea is shared from University of Nebraska Extension. A Progressive Picnic could be an inexpensive date or an entire family activity.

Supplies needed:



Picnic tables waiting for you at Toledo Botanical Garden Metropark

- One sandwich baggie with five different slips of paper numbered from 1-5.
- One sandwich baggie with five slips of paper to choose a location (see details below)
- Five types of picnic food. These five different foods will be eaten in five "courses". Use any of the ideas above or decide on your favorite 5 foods for the picnic.
- Five brown lunch bags to sort the five different types of food. For example, one bag will have the servings of food with a salad, one bag will have all of the sandwiches, one bag will have all the fruit, etc.

To Prepare for the Progressive Picnic:

Pack the 5 different bags of food and number each bag from 1-5. Fill one sandwich baggie with the numbers 1-5. Fill another sandwich baggie with five locations. What should you write on the five slips of paper for locations? If it's a new park that you have never visited, you will have to choose general spots to list. If it's a favorite park that you have visited regularly, you might be very specific when you list the locations. Here is an example of general locations:

1. Picnic table
2. Water fountain
3. Shade tree
4. Sunny spot
5. Playground

How to "play" the Progressive Picnic:

When you arrive at the park, draw a slip from the location bag. This will tell you where to go. When you get to that spot, draw a slip from the number bag. This number will tell you which numbered bag of food to eat at that location. For example, if your location slip says "Shade Tree", find a tree, walk to it and then see what numbered bag of food you will eat. When you are finished eating (and playing, if you are at the playground), choose the next slip for the next spot. When you arrive there, choose your next number for your food items. Continue the game until you have visited 5 locations in the park and have eaten all five courses (or foods) of your picnic meal.

The advantage of a Progressive Picnic is that you've already planned and prepared the meal – now you get to enjoy it. Also, you have the chance to revisit a favorite site or explore a new location. You can combine healthy eating and some basic exercise such as walking, hiking, or biking and even take time to play and exercise on the playground equipment.

While we recommend any – and all – local parks to visit, the OSU Extension office is located at the Toledo Botanical Garden. In addition to a beautiful, free space to visit, there are also free, monthly walks open to the public. Consider joining us for the next ones: Tuesday, July 1, 6 – 7:30 pm or Tuesday, August 5, 6 – 7:30 pm. There are two entrances to TBG, one off of Bancroft and the other off of Elmer. For these walks, enter and park at 5403 Elmer Drive, Toledo, OH, 43615. Information about hydration is from UCLA Health and Harvard Health Publishing.

JULY 4th Weekend

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A Mental Health Moment

July Is Black Mental Health Awareness Month

By Bernadette Joy Graham, MA, LPCC, LLC

The Truth Contributor

— a time dedicated to spotlighting the mental health challenges uniquely affecting the Black community. As a licensed clinical mental health therapist, I witness firsthand how deeply systemic inequities, generational trauma, and social pressures impact the emotional well-being of Black individuals and families.

Our community's resilience is powerful, but it must not come at the cost of our mental health.

The State of Black Mental Health: What the Numbers Tell Us

- According to the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**, Black Americans are **20 percent more likely to experience serious mental health problems** than the general population.

- However, only **one in three Black adults who need mental health care actually receive it**, according to the **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)**.

- Suicide rates among **Black youth ages 10–19 rose by 60 percent** between 2001 and 2020, making it the fastest-growing rate of any racial group in that age category.

- Despite similar rates of mental illness compared to white Americans, Black individuals are **less likely to receive evidence-based treatment and more likely to be misdiagnosed**.

These disparities are not simply due to individual choices — they are the result of long-standing racial inequities in health care access, stigma, and cultural misunderstanding within the medical system.

Understanding the Roots: Why Black Mental Health is Under Strain

Mental health in our community is deeply connected to:

- **Historical Trauma:** Legacies of slavery, segregation, and systemic racism still shape our experiences and identities.

- **Daily Racism and Microaggressions:** Constant exposure to racial bias contributes to chronic stress, anxiety, and depression.

- **Economic Inequality:** Poverty, housing insecurity, and underemployment increase mental health vulnerabilities.

- **Stigma:** Cultural messages that equate therapy with weakness or “airing dirty laundry” discourage many from seeking help.

- **Lack of Representation:** Many Black individuals don't feel understood by non-Black providers, leading to mistrust and underutilization of services.

Solutions: What Can We Do to Heal Our Minds and Strengthen Our Spirits?

As a therapist working in and for the Black community, I offer these solutions:

1. Normalize the Conversation

- Mental health is health. We must treat therapy as we do check-ups or physical training — a proactive investment in ourselves.

- Encourage open dialogue in churches, barbershops, beauty salons, and family gatherings.

2. Culturally Competent Care

- Seek out **Black mental health professionals** or those with cultural humility and training in anti-racist care.

- Platforms like **Therapy for Black Girls, Therapy for Black Men, and Clinicians of Color** make it easier to find culturally aligned providers.

3. Community Healing Spaces

- Group therapy, support circles, wellness retreats, and community-led healing events help build collective strength and reduce isolation.

4. Spiritual and Holistic Practices

- Mindfulness, meditation, yoga, art, and storytelling are culturally rooted



tools that help manage stress and reconnect us to joy and purpose.

5. Policy Change and Advocacy

- Push for equity in mental health funding, insurance coverage, and culturally competent training for all providers.

- Support Black-led mental health initiatives and nonprofits doing grassroots work.

Healing Is a Form of Resistance

In a society that too often dismisses or devalues Black lives, protecting our mental health is a radical and necessary act of self-love and survival. This July, take a mental health moment; let's not just raise awareness — let's **take action**, seek healing, and uplift one another.

You don't have to struggle in silence. *Your story matters. Your healing is possible. Your mental health deserves care.*

If you or someone you love needs immediate mental health support, call or text 988 to reach the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. To find a Black therapist, visit: www.therapyforblackgirls.com, www.therapyforblackmen.org, www.psychologytoday.com or www.inclusivetherapists.com

Dermatologist...continued from page 9

On the science side, she stresses the importance of seeing a board-certified medical doctor, not just anyone in a lab coat. “There are over 3,000 skin, hair and nail conditions,” she says. “And not every doctor treats them with the same passion.”

Her passion? Hair loss. And not just general hair loss—hair loss in Black women, which is often misunderstood or brushed aside. Patients come to her not just for answers, but for empathy. They might need to remove a wig, a headwrap or even their pride and Dr. Mitchell treats each person with care, never judgment.

Then comes the heart side: professionalism and compassion. “It starts at the front desk,” she says. “From the way we answer phones to the way we treat you in the exam room, every step matters.”

Skin Clues and Chronic Conditions

Did you know your skin might be the first to tell you that something's wrong inside your body?

That's why Dr. Hope Mitchell considers herself a skin detective. Conditions like lupus and psoriasis often show up on the skin before they show up in lab work. “We ask a lot of questions,” she says. “Sometimes I joke with patients, ‘I hope I'm not getting too much in your business!’ But truly, to help you, I need to know you.”

Dermatologists often work hand-in-hand with specialists like rheumatologists, OBGYNs, and endocrinologists. Hair shedding? Could be a thyroid issue. A rash? Maybe an autoimmune disorder.

“We're not just treating what's on the outside,” she says. “We're solving the puzzle from the inside out.”

Educating Without Overwhelming

In the age of Google, patients often walk in with questions, ideas, and sometimes, misconceptions.

Dr. Mitchell welcomes it.

“I want patients to be informed,” she says. She breaks each appointment into three parts: (1) Listening and asking questions, (2) Examining the skin, and (3) Educating on what's going on and what to do next.

“People are reading more in this digital age,” she says. “So I ask, ‘What do you think it might be?’ When we talk through it together, it builds trust. And trust leads to better care.”

... continued on page 12

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Dermatologist...continued from page 11

Beauty Without Pressure

For many African-American patients, uneven skin tone is a top concern. Mitchell Dermatology offers chemical peels, laser treatments and injectables like Botox, but only after making sure a person's skincare routine is solid. "It's like building a house," says Dr. Mitchell. "You don't put up fancy windows without a strong foundation."

She's also working to bust myths around cosmetic procedures in Black communities. "A lot of people worry about safety for melanated skin," she explains. "But these treatments are safe and effective when done correctly."

What Needs to Go? DIY Skincare!

Dr. Mitchell's biggest pet peeve? Homemade skincare products with mystery ingredients.

"People are putting stuff on their face without knowing what's in it," she warns. "The skin is an organ. It absorbs. Some of these ingredients can disrupt your hormones, or worse, cause cancer."

She wants people to stop playing chemist and start playing it safe. "Don't just buy something because it's trending," she says. "Do your homework—or better yet, see a dermatologist."

A Final Word of Advice

Dr. Mitchell leaves us with three golden nuggets of wisdom:

1. **See a dermatologist early.** Don't wait until it's worse.
2. **Check their credentials.** Not every "skin expert" is a medical doctor.

3. **Don't be afraid of second opinions.** Your skin deserves the best.

In a world full of filters, Dr. Hope Mitchell is the real deal.

She treats skin, yes. But more than that, she treats people with warmth, wisdom, and the quiet confidence of a woman who turned her calling into purpose.



And for anyone who's ever felt invisible because of their skin—she's proof that representation doesn't just matter. It heals.

Ed. Note: Dr. Hope Mitchell will be a regular contributor, starting in August, to The Truth's health section which is included in the first week of every month. Discover expert, compassionate care at Mitchell Dermatology

ProMedica Community Events in July

ProMedica will offer the following community events in July:

July 2, 2025 – Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Support Group – The Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Support Group is supported by the National MS Society. The support group will take place at the UToledo-ProMedica Neurosciences Center (2130 W. Central Avenue, Toledo, OH 43606) beginning at 6 p.m. The group is also open to friends and family. No registration is required. A virtual option is available, please call 419-291-2059 for more information.

July 7, 2025 – ProMedica Weight Loss Surgery Support Group – The ProMedica Weight Loss Surgery Support Group is designed for patients who have undergone weight loss surgery or for community members seeking more information about this procedure. The group meets on the first Monday of every month at the ProMedica Health & Wellness Center, Education Conference Rooms 1 & 2 (5700 Monroe Street, Sylvania, OH 43560), beginning at 6 p.m. No registration is required.

July 24, 2025 – Stroke Support Group - The ProMedica Stroke Support Group will host a young stroke survivor speaker panel. The event will take place at the ProMedica Flower Hospital Conference Center (5200 Harroun Rd., Sylvania, OH 43560) beginning at 4:30 p.m. Stroke survivors, caregivers and supporters are all encouraged to attend. Registration is required. Please email Melinda.Hendricks-Jones@ProMedica.org for more information.

TARTA...continued from page 4

taking off at 12:30 a.m.

Customers can also take TARTA's regular fixed route service to either location. See tarta.com or download Transit App to plan your trip.

TARTA Holiday Service

Friday, July 4, TARTA services will run on a holiday schedule. Fixed route and paratransit services will operate from 6:30 a.m. to 8:21 p.m., and TARTA Flex will operate from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. TARTA's Transit Hub will be open to the public from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Wellness...continued from page 8

Some vendors took the opportunity to engage with the community, Arlinda of the Self Love Movement led the group in a chair meditation activity. During the activity Arlinda shared her mission of creating space for her family to have an opportunity to pour out and into themselves to navigate life with intention.

House of HerbNSoul also led an activity to promote the use of natural elements that better your total health through dietary ingestion. Amongst enjoying the activities the organization had several giveaways they shared with raffle winners. The Toledo Alumni Chapter of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc. service committee has held past community events to foster education and activities that promote health in the African American community.

Beyond the endeavors of the organization its members make their impact through their individual pursuits, like Rachelle Roy, who leads Lupus awareness, or Lashardae Scott, the founder of S.C.O.T.T center that champions for sickle cell education and individualized therapy.

The health care has been a mission of Zeta Phi Beta on a national level where they partner with Good Health Wins, March of Dimes and other organizations that address health concerns that largely affect African Americans. The members of the Toledo Alumni Chapter will continue to support this mission with events coming this fall, more information will be available on the social pages and website.



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That's How They Get You: An Unruly Anthology of Black American Humor, edited by Damon Young

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

The Truth Contributor

Bust a gut.

Laugh your rear-end off. Laugh yourself silly, until you almost cried, it's the best medicine. Had you rolling in the aisles, holding your sides coz they hurt. When something's funny, you know it but what does humor look like across racial lines? In the new book, *That's How They Get You*, edited by Damon Young, it might get the last laugh.

When he was a kid in Pittsburgh, Damon Young thought his friend, Var Butler "was the funniest person I'd ever met." Var didn't go for nasty humor and he didn't hurt people who couldn't defend themselves. Instead, says Young, Var "intuitively knew the power dynamics baked into humor..." And, as he understands now, Var's humor was honest, home-grown, and not "A rich-white-person thing."

Says Young, "What makes Black humor Black ain't the subject matter, because not all humor involving Black people is Black. Sometimes, it's just humor."

You don't have to be Eddie or Martin or Cedric to be funny. You could be like the many authors of the stories in this book.

In "No One Makes 'Yo Mama' Jokes After the Funeral" by Hanif Abdurraqib, bad timing can be awkward – but it can also be wholly, perfectly Mama "sung back to life..."

If you've ever wanted to change what folks call you, "The Karen Rights Act" by Mateo Askaripour is your story. That woman's name says it all. Too much, in fact, but only for offending white females.

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Pantheon
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256 pages

That's How They Get You

**An Unruly
Anthology of Black
American Humor**

Edited by
Damon Young

Thurber Prize-winning author of
**WHAT DOESN'T KILL YOU
MAKES YOU BLACKER**

Nobody but Miss Ruby cooks in Miss Ruby's kitchen – until **Alex Hardy** convinces his grandma that he's capable with a spoon. In "Unmurdered in Grandma's Kitchen," his meals for the family hasn't killed anyone yet.

And if you've ever been irritated by a co-worker, then you need to read "The Necessary Changes Have Been Made" by **Nafissa Thompson-Spires**. When Randolph gets a new job, it seems perfect, until he's told that his perfect office must now be shared. But his new co-worker definitely doesn't share his opinions...

Chances are that if you see *That's How They Get You* on a shelf somewhere, you might grab it, expecting to spend the rest of your day laughing.

And you'd be wrong.

While the personal essays and fiction inside this book are good – very good, in fact; some of them are downright excellent and you'll want to turn around and read them again on the spot – many of them are not funny.

One essayist even says it: "It's funny, really. Not ha-ha funny."

The stories might be about humor or situations that will make you snort. There's a theme here and it's clever, sometimes sweet, written in perfectly cynical tones. But will you take off your glasses, wipe your eyes, and call someone to share? Not so much.

Absolutely, read this book. It's an excellent collection, you'll enjoy what you find inside *That's How They Get You*, and you'll find a whole new group of writers to follow. Just be aware that if you're looking for ROFL kinds of laughs, it could be a bust.



Damon Young
PHOTO CREDIT: Garrett Yurisko

McKinstry...continued from page 16

"I was feeling helpless," says Cowell of her motivation for enrolling in the Midwest College of Theology programs and her desire to gain as much knowledge and insight as she could. The September – June coursework kept her busy during those precious few moments when she wasn't running a financial institution, planning community events such as the African American Festival or serving on a number of boards throughout the area.

"I was hungry for the word – to learn. It was a lot of work, a lot of late nights but I learned so much. We had some wonderful ministers and instructors and I learned so much from them.

"Life has changed," she says of the ongoing and evolving challenges of the modern world. "Issues are totally different today and you want to help [yourself and others] deal with those situations." Studying the Bible, she says, has enabled her to deal more effectively with those changing circumstances.

"Biblical theology is about understanding God's great story," said Mari-sha Peace during her commencement remarks. Peace is another graduate who earned a doctorate degree. "It taught me how God reveals himself."

Lucas County Board of Mental Health and Recovery is now accepting applications for the following position:

Manager, Benefits & Claims

SUMMARY

The Manager of Benefits and Claims will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of client enrollment and claims services on the Board's Claims Processing Software. The Manager will serve as the point of contact with provider agency billing and intake departments regarding these processes and support accounting functions as assigned. The position will support the development and implementation of business rules related to the Board's Claims Processing Software and provides accounting support for payroll and accounts payable functions.

EDUCATION/EXPERIENCE

Associate or bachelor's degree in a health, behavioral health, business, or financial field; five years of claims processing experience. Demonstrated knowledge of claims, Ohio Medicaid coding regarding Behavioral Health, plus familiarity with the national standard 837 Professional and 835 Remittance forms and 270/271 Medicaid eligibility inquiry and response files. Working knowledge of Microsoft Word and Excel. The ability to work without the direct supervision of others and to report results in a timely and accurate manner. Excellent written, oral, and analytical skills required.

Starting Salary \$54,000, salary dependent on experience.

For detailed position description and to apply please visit:

<https://tinyurl.com/5cpd285x>

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SERVICE & SUPPORT SPECIALIST

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.

POSITION AVAILABLE: SENIOR ATTORNEY – AGRICULTURAL WORKER AND IMMIGRANT RIGHTS PRACTICE GROUP

Advocates for Basic Legal Equality (ABLE) seeks a Senior Attorney to join its AIR Practice Group to provide legal representation, community outreach, and systemic advocacy for low-income immigrants and agricultural workers. The position is based in Toledo with hybrid work possible.

Requirements: Licensed to practice law in Ohio or eligible for admission by motion/temporary certification. Minimum 5 years of litigation, policy advocacy, or community legal experience. Experience in immigration law, including USCIS and removal defense. Strong leadership, communication, and interpersonal skills. Spanish proficiency preferred.

Salary and Benefits: Annual salary ranges from \$81,000 to \$108,202, with comprehensive benefits including health insurance, loan repayment assistance, and paid leave.

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

Equal Opportunity Employer: ABLE values diversity and encourages applicants from underrepresented backgrounds. For accommodations, contact hrteam@ablelaw.org <<mailto:hrteam@ablelaw.org>>.

POSITION SUMMARY

WGTE Public Media seeks a visionary, mission-driven President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to lead the organization into its next chapter of service and innovation. Reporting to the Board of Trustees, the CEO is responsible for advancing WGTE's mission by guiding all aspects of the organization, including strategy, content, operations, fundraising, technology, and community engagement.

About WGTE Public Media

WGTE Public Media is a non-profit, multi-platform public media organization serving northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan. Based in Toledo, WGTE provides high-quality, educational, cultural, and informational programming through its public television (PBS), public radio (NPR), and online services.

Key Responsibilities

- * Lead the development and execution of strategic initiatives that serve diverse audiences across platforms.
- * Oversee all departments, ensuring a collaborative, inclusive, and innovative organizational culture.
- * Build strong relationships with staff, board, donors, partners, and the broader community.
- * Serve as the chief spokesperson and advocate for WGTE at the local, state, and national levels.
- * Direct fundraising strategies, including membership, underwriting, grants, and major gifts.
- * Ensure fiscal responsibility, regulatory compliance, and operational excellence.
- * Champion digital transformation and technological innovation to grow WGTE's reach and impact.
- * Deepen WGTE's public service role through educational outreach and community-centered initiatives.

Qualifications

Required:

- * Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution.
- * Proven experience in executive leadership, strategic planning, and financial oversight.
- * Excellent communication, relationship-building, and team leadership skills.

Preferred:

- * Advanced degree in public administration, nonprofit leadership, media management, or related field.
- * Experience in public media, education, or digital content strategy.
- * Successful track record in fundraising and public advocacy.

Location

Located in Northwest Ohio within the western Lake Erie basin. The city is home to institutions that draw regional, national, and international visitors, including the Toledo Zoo-voted #1 in the nation-the nationally award-winning Toledo/Lucas County Metroparks System, the award-winning and globally recognized Toledo Museum of Art, and the Toledo Lucas County Public Library, a recipient of the National Medal for Museum and Library Service. Cultural highlights include the Toledo Symphony, Toledo Ballet, and Toledo Opera. With top-ranked schools, several local universities, and easy access to Ann Arbor, Detroit, and Chicago, Toledo is an exceptional place to live, work, and grow.

How to Apply

Please submit a cover letter and résumé to employment@wgte.org <<mailto:employment@wgte.org>> or mail to: Human Resources, P.O. Box 30, Toledo, OH 43614.

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
- Requirements Bachelor degree in HR, BA, SS or related
- Two years fostering positive workplace
- 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.

St. Paul MBC and Pastor James Willis Host Youth Day

By Fletcher Word

The Truth Editor

On Sunday, June 22, St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church held its annual Youth Day with the theme of "Keeping Our Focus on God While We Are Young," John 9:4. The special service allowed congregants to honor a number of young people in their midst.

Sunday's service opened, appropriately enough, with a processional by the St. Paul Youth Choir and was followed by presentations by the youngsters – the Lord's Prayer by JaLynn Coley and Leah Edwards; the Responsive Reading Psalm by Zoey Harris; a scripture reading by Jayda Coley; an After Song by Jacee Coley; After Call by Mikala Evans/Kennedi.

Other youngsters who were part of the Youth Day service were Adrian Brown, Amira Nelson and Aufwiedersehen Agee.

The guest speaker for Youth Day was Rev. Thomas Hutchens of Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church.

The centerpiece of Youth Day was the awarding of scholarships to two young women who are headed to college in the fall: Kaitlyn Diggins and Celina Winfield-White.

Kaitlyn graduated from Notre Dame Academy having served as class president for each of her high school years. She has participated in athletics (basketball, track & field, lacrosse and cross country); is a board member with Jems 2 Jewels and has been part of Toledo Excel, the Law and Leadership Program and Youth Leadership Toledo.

Kaitlyn will attend Arizona State University to double major in political science and international relations on her way to law school in the future.

Celina is a graduate of Central Catholic where she was a cheerleader and swim team members – setting a school record in the 100-meter butterfly. She has performed community service with Boys and Girls Club of Toledo, the Alpha Esquire 2025 Beautillion Beaus, Junior Beaus and Belles, Groomed

for Greatness and was a runner up for Miss Debutante 2025 with the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Toledo Club.

Celina will enter the University of Toledo in the fall majoring in pre-law on her way to law school.

Words of Gratitude from the two scholarship awardees and a Benediction by Pastor Willis closed out the Sunday Youth Day service.



Pastor Willis with the scholarship recipients - Celina Winfield-White and Kaitlyn Diggins



Youth Day participants



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Spring Commencement at McKinstry Midwest College of Theology

By Fletcher Word

The Truth Editor

On Sunday, June 22, the Worship Center's sanctuary was packed with the family and friends of the graduates of the McKinstry Midwest College of Theology. This year's commencement, during which 20 diplomas were awarded for those earning associate, bachelor, master and doctorate degrees, featured the largest group of graduates in the 19-year history of MMCT.

The MMCT, says Bishop Pat McKinstry, pastor of the Worship Center, is accredited through the Midwest College of Theology. The MCT, headquartered in Missouri, has affiliates in 28 states and seven foreign lands, according to founder and president Don Jones, DMin, who was present at the Worship Center for the commencement and also to honor Bishop McKinstry for her personal achievement as MCT's Administrator of the Year.

Rev. Mark Williams, EdD, served as the master of ceremony for the commencement and attendees were welcomed by Valerie Walston Simmons, EdD, after which Claudia Dodds and Meredith Capps, offered a bit of a "flash from the past" about their experiences with the theology programs they undertook.

Commencement addresses were given by a number of graduates in each class such as Shannon Banks, who earned an associate's degree.

"This was one of the most transformative experiences of my life," said Banks. "This taught me that God is not distant; it taught me that we have to worship in a definitive way ... I walk with a new attitude."

The experience of earning a master's degree, "gave me a sense of fulfillment and enrichment," said graduate Priscilla Richardson, who earned a master's degree. "And it will inform the way you live for the rest of your

life," she added. "It enriches your perspective of the world."

One graduate, Suzette Cowell, CEO of the Toledo Urban Federal Credit Union, earned two degrees – a master's of Divinity and a doctorate of Theology.

Cowell had enough college credits, says McKinstry, to skip the



The 2025 graduates of MMCT with Bishop McKinstry and Don Jones



Associate's Degree Graduate
Shannon Banks



Master's and Doctorate Degree
Graduate Suzette Cowell

bachelor's program and enroll in the MCT's master's course. In addition, says McKinstry, "I felt she could do both years in one year."

...continued on page 13





Musiq Soulchild



Troop



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Bishop Pat McKinstry and Don Jones, DMin



The Greater New Life Kingdom Angels deliver a Message in Dance