The Sojourner's Truth

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What A Weekend!!

Rise and Thrive Community Health & Wellness Fair

2025 Scott Alumni Weekend

Fourth Annual Glass City JazzFest

Alice Grace: A Life In Color

In This Issue...

Empowered Wellness Foundation Holds "Rise and Thrive" Health Fair

The Truth Staff

On Saturday, August 9, the recently founded Empowered Wellness Foundation, Inc. hosted its first ever "Rise and Thrive" Community Health and Wellness Fair at the Wayman Palmer YMCA – an event designed to uplift Toledo families with free medial services, educational resources and fun fitness activities.

Toledo families were extremely receptive – they started lining up for the event well before the 10 a.m. start time and continued to arrive in great numbers throughout the day.

Empowered Wellness Foundation is a non-profit organization founded by two local African American physicians, Drs Jamie McBride and Michael Bush-Arnold, with a mission to provide the support to individuals to enable them to lead healthier lives.

Drs Bush-Arnold and McBride, a husband-and-wife team, brought together numerous doctors, including 15 African American local doctors, and other health care professionals, , for Saturday's health and wellness fair. In addition, numerous health care organizations were on hand to provide information to the public.

In collaboration with community members and nonprofits, services were provided on diabetes prevention, high blood pressure screenings, mammograms, sports physicals, immunizations and more will be offered — all free and accessible to all, regardless of insurance status.

In addition, families were able to enjoy free food and refreshments and to receive book bags filled with school supplies. The Imagination Station offered STEM activities, the Toledo Lucas County Public Library provided giveaways and a walk-through inflatable lung exhibit, face painting and free dance classes were also available to visitors.

Dr. Bush-Arnold is a Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation physician and Dr. McBride is an Emergency Medicine physician.

"We're bringing revolutionary care directly to the communities that need it most," said Dr. Bush-Arnold. "This isn't just about medicine – it's about empowerment, education and building trust."

Drs Michael Bush-Arnold and Jaime McBride

Part of the medical team

Embracing Difference

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

The Truth Contributor

It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences

- Audre Lorde

Supporters framed the recent Supreme Court's decision in *Mahmoud v. Taylor*, giving parents the legal right to remove their children from any lesson, activity or book that includes LGBTQ+ people, as "protecting parental rights." Underneath, however, the case is about controlling who gets to belong and whose stories are erased.

Let me bring it closer to home.

While reading about the ruling, I thought about another space where belonging is often policed through cultural exclusion or identity shaming—not by the courts, but from the pews: the Black Church.

The Black Church, that storied vessel we call the Old Ship of Zion, has been our shield, our refuge, our shout, our song, and has helped us weather many a storm. But it has also, at times, been a tyrannical gatekeeper—insisting that salvation and the protocol of praise must conform to the confines of a rigid, outdated theological box. Anyone who dared to differ has been scorned, shunned, and then cast aside.

When I was a teenager in the church I was born into, my adolescent peers and I tried to incorporate drums into the worship experience. Not to disrespect tradition, but to express the rhythm of our faith in a language that made sense to us during the Civil Rights movement. We were rejected, ostracized and finally excommunicated. In our conservative Baptist congregation, drums symbolized rebellion and worldliness.

And today? Drums are almost universal in almost all denominations of the Black Church. What once was forbidden is now foundational.

This pattern of church hurt and scorn isn't new. A few generations ago, churches wrestled over whether Mahalia Jackson's powerful gospel voice was "too emotional" for Sunday morning, her fashions too revealing or her Spirit-filled movements were "too suggestive." Years later, James Cleveland's sweeping arrangements and unrestrained emotion, and then the contemporary, jazz-infused sounds of Andre Crouch and Edwin Hawkins, redefined gospel music, taking revamped hymns like O Happy Day into dance clubs and sparking fresh debates along with the formation of gospel choirs on college campuses and youth choirs across the entire country.

Today, artists like Kirk Franklin and contemporary Christian hip-hop artists have pushed those boundaries even further. In every era, the old guard gatekeepers resisted—and each time, the Spirit moved regardless.

Yet, sadly, there is another truth beneath these worship wars: a not-so-subtle class divide. Some modern Pharisaical or "respectable" churches—seeking legitimacy in a white-dominated society—looked down on the shouting, dancing, and ecstatic worship common in Holiness and Pentecostal traditions. These expressions, rooted in African heritage and the survival practices of enslaved people, are ridiculed and then dismissed as undignified by some of the modern Pharisees.

That dynamic is the same one playing out in America's schools under

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Community Calendar

August 17
Community Meeting: NAACP Toledo Youth Council meeting; Sanger Branch Library; 3:00 pm

August 19
Toledo NAACP general public meeting: 1326 Collingwood Blvd; 5 pm

August 23
The Bible Way Church of Toledo, in partnership with Wider Circle, Early Morning Prayer, The Dr. Sam Show and The Voices of Legacy will host a Back-to-School Book Bag Giveaway; Noon to 2 pm

Massa Knows Best

By Lafe Tolliver, Esq

Guest Column

The latest distraction concocted from the Trump Administration regarding the deadly flesh eating bacteria known as the Epstein Files is that Trump wants to take over the District of Columbia and claw back its home rule status.

The jagged logic behind this earth rattling move is that the D.C. is overwhelmed with crime and its present governance is unable to cope with the problem.

For the uninitiated, Trump has always had a burr in his saddle regarding Black men and women in governance. Since the mayor of D.C. is a Black woman, that sticks in his craw that she and her council have authority to make rules and laws in the nation's capital.

For all intents and purposes, Donald Trump wants to return to the glorious days of being "Massa" of the Negroes in D.C. He wants to control their behavior and habits and impose his will upon them since, how in the world can such people govern themselves without his grace and benevolent intervention?

If you look at his "hit list" of Black celebrities and newsmakers to wit: Oprah Winfrey, Barack Obama, Gayle King, Jennifer Crockett, Beyonce, et al., these are people of color who have not bent a knee to Trump nor have they given him any deference that he sorely desires.

Donald Trump wants a plantation type of governance with the D.C., insofar as he wants either himself of a hand pick board of sycophants who will rule the roost in D.C. to make sure that the Negroes behave themselves and do not give the white residents any cause for undue alarm.

In another Massa move, Trump is seeking one billion dollars from UCLA with the threat that Trump will curtain all federal funding to the stellar university until they meet stringent qualifications to again receive federal funds for research.

Of course, one of the primary demands from Trump to UCLA is to make sure that no non-students are admitted who are deemed not qualified and to show justifications when such a non-white student is admitted over a white student!

Trump even wants the university to submit to a overseeing monitor who will micromanage the admissions process and to compare GPA's and college entry scores of non-white students and white students to make sure that "those" non-white students are not given any admission preferences.

Trump, whose knowledge of American history can be stored in a thimble, is totally bereft of that history when it comes to hundreds of years of intentional denial of minority students to higher education; for the simple reason of white racism. Full stop.

Trump does not seek a society in which wrongs are righted or that access

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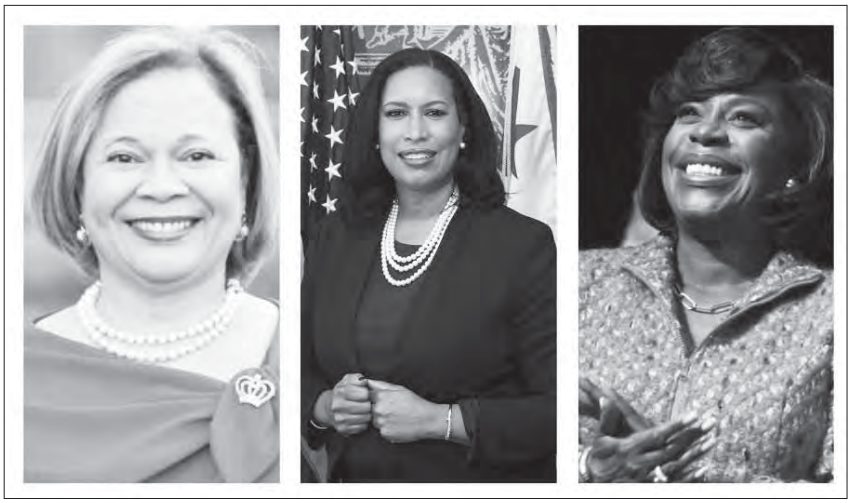
Black Women Are Leading Cities and Shaping the Future of Democracy

By Glynda C. Carr

Guest Column

In 2014, when Higher Heights for America and the Center for American Women in Politics released our first report on the status of Black women in American politics, the data confirmed what we already knew: Black women were underrepresented at every level of government. But we were also organizing, running, and winning , often without the institutional support our leadership deserved.

More than a decade later, our just-released 2025 Black Women in American Politics Report shows how far we've come. The United States has seen a steady increase in the number of Black women running, winning, and leading in elected representation. As of this year, eight of the 37 women leading America's 100 largest cities are Black. That's more than a third of all women mayors in major cities, clear evidence of not just progress, but momentum.



Charlotte Mayor Vi Lyles, Washington, D.C., Mayor Muriel Bowser, and Philadelphia Mayor Cherelle Parker — three of the Black women mayors who rose through the ranks of city councils to lead major American cities, exemplifying the strength of a purpose-built leadership pipeline.

Black women aren't just running for office; we are building power, transforming institutions, and governing through some of our country's most complex crises. In Charlotte, New Orleans, and Los Angeles, Black women mayors have led their cities through natural disasters, public health emergencies, and historic uprisings for racial justice — with calm, competence, and community at the center of their leadership.

This moment didn't happen by accident. It is the result of more than a decade of intentional investment in a leadership pipeline designed by and for Black women.

Many of today's Black women mayors previously served as city council members, council presidents, or congressional representatives. They now stand poised for higher office, backed by a strong, purpose-built pipeline.

In Charlotte, Mayor Vi Lyles, a former city council president, is seeking her third term after decisive re-election victories. In Jersey City, Council President Joyce Waterman is running to become the city's first Black woman mayor. In Detroit, two Black women, current Council President Mary Sheffield and former Council President Saunteel Jenkins, are vying to lead one of the country's most iconic cities. And in our nation's capital and the birthplace of American democracy, Washington, D.C., Mayor Muriel Bowser and Philadelphia Mayor Cherelle Parker both began their political careers on city councils before rising to lead their cities.

These women are more than candidates; they are crisis-tested leaders who govern at the intersection of policy and lived experience. They center equity, engage communities, and address not just the symptoms but the root causes of systemic injustice.

Yet despite this progress, the numbers still don't match the need. Black women make up nearly eight percent of the U.S. population but hold a disproportionately small share of elected offices at every level of government. We are leading in spite of the system, not because of it.

So we must ask: What more could Black women do if we were fully resourced? Fully supported? Fully believed in?

The stakes are high. We are at a political crossroads where our democracy demands bold leadership grounded in accountability, justice, and vision. Black women are already doing this work, but we cannot do it alone.

This is a call to action for political institutions, donors, and voters: Invest in Black women. Not just when we are breaking barriers or making history, but every day in between. Build and sustain the infrastructure that allows us not only to run but to win and to govern effectively.

Because here's the truth: The future of American leadership is being shaped in city halls across this country by Black women. And if we stay the course, if we keep building, supporting, and believing, the next decade won't just be defined by "firsts." It will be defined by Black women shaping a democracy as powerful, inclusive, and visionary as we are.

Higher Heights for America, a 501(c)(4) organization, and its connected federal political action committee, Higher Heights for America PAC, which works to expand Black women's elected representation and voting participation. Learn more at https://www.higherheightsforamerica.org.

NAMI -Greater Toledo Hosts the 12th AALIC Conference

By Emily R. Evans

The Truth Reporter

On Thursday July 31, NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness)– Greater Toledo held its 12th annual conference to enlighten the public about the program and how it can assist the community.

Since 1983, NAMI of Greater Toledo has been supporting thousands of families and individuals impacted by mental health. As a local affiliate of NAMI National, the staff promotes community wellness, breaks down barriers to mental health care and provides support and expertise in Toledo and beyond.

Mental health encompasses everyone's emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how people think, feel, and act, and helps determine how everyone handles stress, relates to others and makes choices. Taking care of one's mental health is important throughout life, and it can impact various aspects of one's life, including physical health.

The conference was organized by Ta'shara Ballard-Brown, social impact coordinator for the African American Leadership Initiative Chiar of NAMI—Greater Toledo, who has an extensive mental health background among other certifications. Many thoughts about how mental health affects the community were brought up by members of the conference such as: How are we as a community tackling issues with mental illness?

This year's panelists were:

Albert "Prince" Bell —

Boxing champion and Toledo native, Albert Ball notes that he is a part of the youth and adult programs assisting them in merging back into the community as well as mentoring the young adults in how to start off in society.

La'Tasha Sullivan

La Tasha Sullivan, PhD, is a highly regarded licensed professional clinical counselor with over 15 years of experience in the mental health field. She has demonstrated expertise in trauma-informed care, cognitive behavioral therapy, suicide prevention, as well as topics specific to women and gender identities, social justice, and collegiate mental health.

She has served as a clinician and Director of Mental Health at a public college counseling center, and is the owner operator of Healthy Huex, LLC a mental health and wellness business tailored to Black women.

Patricia White, MBA, FACHE

Patricia White is a native Detroiter with over 25 years of the health care industry experience. In 2024, she was named CEO of the Encompass Health Inpatient Rehabilitation Hospital of Toledo, Ohio. Patricia has served in key leadership roles with Detroit Medical Center, Wayne Health, Authority Health, Henry Ford Health System, Select Medical Corporation, Bronson Health Care Group, Trinity Health and St. John Health System.

Brian Byrd

Brian Byrd is a committed public servant who served 34 years as a firefighter and paramedic for the Toledo Fire & Rescue Department where he rose through the ranks, retiring as the Chief of the Department.

He continued service to the community for two years as the Director of Public Safety for the City of Toledo where, from the Mayor's office, he had oversight of the fire department, the police department and the city's gun violence intervention program.

Brian Byrd

Ta'Shara B and NAMI Executive Director Marriah Kornowa

The panelists were introduced by Tatiana Cash of WTOL who served as the mistress of ceremonies for the discussion. Each panelist discussed how his or her roles have impacted mental health and then answered a series of questions about generational views on mental health in a session titled "When We Listen, We Learn."

Each panelist answered questions pertaining to mental health, how it has affected them in their own life and how they help those in the community deal with such issues. The conference was well needed amongst the community and showcased many positive attributes of the new YMCA on Bancroft street Toledo Ohio.. These types of conferences that discuss ways to assist the community when they are going through mental crises are needed and we as a community need to use the resources available to us and seek the help we need to heal.

The stated goal for the attendees was to learn how to build a stronger community and to remove the stigma of mental illness from the community and the workplace.

Last week's event was part of the NAMI – Pathway to Hope Series 2025. The series continues on August 22 with a virtual day at Friendship Baptist Church, on August 23, with a picnic and back-to-school giveaway at Friendship Baptist and on September 16, with a Family & Friends Community Event at NAMI – Greater Toledo.

Perryman...continued from page 3

the "parental rights debate" today. One group uses its convictions to force them as the standard for everyone else. Difference equals threat, so diversity is erased in favor of a single acceptable way of being.

But God has never been that small.

Theologian John E. Anderson hits the nail on the head in his take on the Tower of Babel: The scattering of people and confusion of language, asserts Anderson, is not a curse or a punishment, but is God's course-correcting the world to be in alignment with what has always been the divine intention… "At Babel, God not only blesses and sanctions diversity—God creates it."

Notably, at Pentecost, adds Anderson, "the Spirit didn't undo Babel by making everyone the same. Instead, the disciples spoke in many languages, and each person heard the good news in their own tongue. The gospel spread not in spite of difference, but through it."

That is the vision our nation and the Black Church are both called to embody.

History has shown that when disagreements harden into condemnation, we lose something sacred. We lose people and generations. We lose our joy and the ability to see God's image in those who do not mirror us.

Yet, we can honor the old without weaponizing it against the new and embrace difference without creating division. Then we are empowered to keep what is timeless, guide without shaming, and maintain our roots without clipping our wings.

Tradition and identity should be foundations, not fences.

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

Tolliver...continued from page 3

is afforded to those whom but for racial reasons, were denied entry in higher education, professional schools government and the military. All prior bastions of white supremacy.

Trump, being the blatant white nationalist that he is, wants to make America great again and that "great again" is a reference point to the sordid American history in which racial hostility and segregation was the rule of the day.

Trump is fixated on an era of American history by which and in which the white American male sat at the top of the totem pole and his word was fiat. The forties, fifties and sixties were epochs in which Black dissent was brutally opposed and people of color were relegated to the edges of society, menial jobs and daily humiliations just to live.

That is Trump's idea of a great America.

By putting the knife of threatened cut offs of federal funding to the throats of schools (Harvard, Brown Columbia, etc.) that Trump deems "too liberal" for his liking, he is determined to reshape higher education in his perverted image.

If you are part of the administration of a school of higher education and you depend upon large grants of federal monies to conduct vital research for the good of all, you have a hard choice to make. You either capitulate to the rantings of an angry, illiterate bully and pay him forced settlement monies or you have to redo your budgets to forego the loss of vital federal monies.

If this was a Mafia movie, the gangster is shaking down the store owner for some big bucks because the gangster would hate to see something "happen" to the store.

With a complicit GOP fawning over Trump, do not count on those docile sheep to utter a word in protest because if they do, Trump will threaten to have them primaried, or in the alternative spew nasty words about them so they will fall in line.

What a shameful specter of grown men and women, doing a jig for Trump whenever he looks their way. It is their way of how smaller dogs turn on their backs and expose their bellies to a bigger bully dog. A doggie way of saying, "I'll be good! Don't bite me. You are my superior!"

Will these affected universities hold the line and tell Trump to step off, or, will they be good doggies and flip on their backs so as to save themselves?

Only time will tell but what is now being experienced, Trump and his clown car of buffoons are determined to not encourage a diverse society where people of color can play in the same sand box as and with white Americans.

The tale of the tape will happen when the tariffs and the onerous portions of the fabled "Big Beautiful Bill" hits white America in their pocketbooks; for those who dare to think for themselves, they will finally realize that the con is on them from a convicted felon who sits in the White House laughing all the way to the bank.

America is coming to a critical period in its history that it either rejects the oncoming shadow of an autocrat or it simply, out of sheer fatigue, gives in to Dear Leader and his band of un principled rascals.

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Alice Grace: A Life in Color

By Audrey Johnson

Special to The Truth

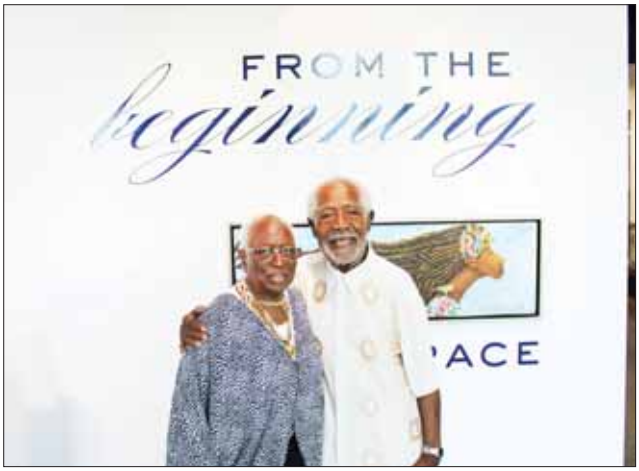
The Martin D. Porter Gallery at The Portal at TSA (Toledo School for the Arts) proudly presents **"Alice Grace: A Life in Color,"** a solo exhibition celebrating the life and creative legacy of 84-year-old multidisciplinary artist **Alice Grace**. The exhibition will be on display from August 5 through August 30, 2025, August is the artist's birthday month.

Alice Grace began her artistic journey in ninth grade in Louisiana, drawing maps and labeling parishes for classmates—a humble start that blossomed into a lifelong pursuit of expression through diverse mediums, including quilting, doll making, acrylic and oil painting, ceramic figures, wood carving, and button making.

"All that I see in my environment is my inspiration," Grace shares. "A group of people walking, a child posed in prayer, the sky and land—all churn my inner desire to capture the moment on canvas."

"Painting is my therapeutic free association about the world around me. I love to show feelings through textures and vibrant colors," she adds.

Her work is a deeply personal reflection of memory, faith, and connection to place—offering viewers a vibrant, textured world grounded in everyday beauty and emotional truth.



Alice Grace and her first cousin, Norman Bell

Welcome Home! Land Bank and Habitat for Humanity Create New Homeowners

The Truth Staff

During a press conference on Wednesday, August 6, the Maumee Valley Habitat for Humanity and the Lucas County Land Bank celebrated their "special partnership" with the Ohio Department of Development and introduced two newly renovated homes on Arletta Street along with five first-time homeowners.

Erin McPartland, executive director of the Maumee Valley Habitat for Humanity, opened the press conference, in front of the two homes at 2770 and 2776 Arletta Street, by praising the partnership with the Land Bank and expressing gratitude to the Ohio Department of Development for providing the funding for the renovated houses.

Lindsay Webb, Lucas County Treasurer thanked State Rep. Matt Huffman of Lima, speaker of the Ohio House, for piloting the program through the Ohio General Assembly and helping local leaders "stave off out-of-town investors who make homeownership more difficult."

David Mann, president and CEO of the Land Bank, praised his team who "have poured their hearts into this by working side-by-side with the Habitat for Humanity."

The two houses on Arletta that have been renovated are ready to be occupied by first-time homeowners who have undergone hours of financial education and have actually assisted in the renovations. They will now assume loans with zero interest.

In all, five homes have been renovated by this recent partnership between Habitat for Humanity and Lucas County Land Bank. The two on Arletta are the first to be completed and readied for occupancy. The other three, in the same north Toledo neighborhood, will be completed by early 2026.

All five of the new homeowners – Ebony, Catalyia, Melanie, Lana and Victo – were on hand to thank the agencies that have helped them achieve the dream of a lifetime – homeownership.

Catalia and Victo will own the homes on Arletta, 2770 and 2776 respectively, where Tuesday's press conference was held.

Erin McPartland, Executive Director of Maumee Valley Habitat for Humanity opens the announcement

New homeowner Catalia thanks the agencies who assisted her

Ebony, whose house on Berwick Avenue will be completed in 2026, spoke during her expression of gratitude about the value of the process, the financial training and the home repair participation such as helping to install siding on the walls. "They give us skills to be successful after we become homeowners," she said.

There is still time to register for the 2025-26 school year.

ELEMENTARY

Toledo Public Schools strives to provide elementary school students with a strong educational foundation that will prepare them for high school and beyond.

- Students go to state-of-the-art schools that are in their neighborhood
- Our highly trained, caring teachers support their students and guide them toward academic success
- Students have access to the latest technology
- TPS offers a variety of classes including music, art and gym
- TPS provides free transportation to students who live more than one mile from their home school

Thursday, August 21 - Elementary School Open Houses - 5 to 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, August 21, and Friday, August 22
Staff Professional Development; no students

Monday, August 25 - First Day of School for students in 1st through 8th grades

Monday, August 25, through Wednesday, September 3
Preschool and Kindergarten students will have staggered starts (families will be notified about what day their students will start)

Thursday, September 4
The first day for ALL Preschool and Kindergarten students

HIGH SCHOOL

Toledo Public Schools strives to ensure high school students are college and career ready when they graduate. Students have access to an array of college prep classes and career tech focused-programs to prepare them for the future.

- Our highly trained, caring teachers support their students and guide them toward academic success
- Students attend state-of-the-art schools and have access to the latest technology and online classes
- TPS offers free transportation to students who live more than one mile from their home school
- With more than 30 career technology programs, students can begin preparing for a career path
- TPS offers music, art and gym classes, along with numerous extra-curricular activities and sports

First Day of School - If your student attends one of our magnet high schools, please check with the school to confirm the first day of classes as they sometimes follow a different schedule

Monday, August 25 - First Day of School for freshmen

Tuesday, August 26 - First Day of School for sophomores

Wednesday, August 27 - First Day of School for juniors and seniors

High school open houses will be held during the first two weeks of school

TPS PROUD
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TPS.org

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From the Projects to the Big Stage: How Shawanda "Spyda" Johnson Clarke Built a Dance Empire

By Asia Nail

The Truth Reporter

Some people talk about following their dreams. **Shawanda "Spyda" Johnson Clarke** lives it — every single day.

For more than 15 years, she has been the powerhouse behind ***FAMED Studios*** and ***Spyda's 3-D Complex***. Her mission? To show young people that where you start in life doesn't determine how far you can go.

She's taught more than 5,000 kids to dance, act, model and dream bigger. She's taken them to TV competitions, coached them through national wins, and even shared the stage with stars. And now? She owns six studios across Toledo, Holland and Columbus, with Cleveland on the horizon.

But Spyda's story didn't begin in the spotlight. It began in struggle.

A Childhood in Motion

Born in Lexington, Kentucky, Spyda moved to Holland, Ohio with her grandmother and mother when she was just eight.

The 80s were a tough time. "It was the crack era," Spyda says matter-of-factly. Her mother battled addiction, and as the oldest of four children. and the only girl, Spyda often had to be the strong one.

"God prepared me young," she says. "I took the lead, and I wanted more for my life."

While friends got caught up in drugs or trouble, she made herself a promise: she wouldn't drink, smoke, or let her environment define her. At 44, she proudly says she's kept that promise.

"I wanted to show people — you can still be cool, have money, and look fly without falling into the traps around you."

Leader Before Her Time

By her teens, Spyda wasn't just dancing, she was organizing. She gathered kids from her neighborhood, encouraging them to try flips, sports, and creative outlets instead of street life.

She spoke at schools, led workshops, and choreographed events. She created dances for city programs, worked with Grace Community Center, and taught teens they could "turn up" with class — no twerking required.

Her energy and skill caught attention. Schools began hiring her to coach dance teams, lead cotillions, and even choreograph weddings. She worked at a suburban dance school for ten years, gaining professional training while sharpening her own vision.

By 17, she was already on staff with Toledo Public Schools. She formed a dance crew that traveled the world, won big at ***Showtime at the Apollo***, appeared on BET, and became a local name.

A Leap of Faith

Success didn't shield her from challenges. Eventually ownership changed at the studio where she worked.

"My aura was strong," Spyda says with a laugh. "When God gives you something, sometimes the enemy shows up too."

Shawanda Johnson Clarke

Instead of folding, she prayed. And then she acted.

One Sunday, driving down Reynolds Road, she spotted a space for lease. It was owned by a retired firefighter and his wife, who agreed to rent it to her. In 2012, FAMED Studios was born.

She balanced her new business with her job at Winterfield Elementary. When FAMED outgrew its first home, the school let her use their gym until she found something bigger. That "something" turned out to be an old dentist's office at 2610 Central Avenue. She moved in by 2019 — and two years ago, she bought the building outright.

Today, she has locations on every side of Toledo, plus Holland and Columbus.

The Spyda 3-D Complex Vision

Her studios don't just teach dance. They offer acting, modeling, and life skills training. Students learn poise for the runway, precision for the stage, and discipline for life.

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What We Lose—and What Our Kids Gain—When Phones Leave the Classroom

By Steven Flagg

Guest Column

Steven Flagg

My wife and I raised our millennial children during a different time.

Back then, the biggest battles we faced were around too much TV and the early days of instant messaging. Phones were still attached to walls although they were increasingly cordless. Social media was not even a word yet.

Today, parents are dealing with a digital world on steroids—apps, games, group chats and endless social media with those all-knowing algorithms designed to keep our kids glued to their screens. And they work. Parents, you know this from personal experience: how often do you find it hard to put your own phone down?

Let us be honest: saying no to a smartphone today feels almost impossible. Every child has one. And every parent has come to rely on that line of connection—whether it is a quick text to say "pick-up is around back" or just the peace of mind that comes from knowing we could reach our child if something went wrong.

So, I understand the gut reaction when you hear that TPS and schools across the state are locking up student phones at the start of the day and keeping them sealed until dismissal. For many parents, this feels like they are losing something important. Perhaps this is a moment where we need to look not just at what we lose—but what our kids stand to gain.

Why it is Happening.

This policy is not unique to Toledo—it is now required across Ohio. A new state law says schools must limit student phone use during classroom hours. TPS has decided to take this a step further by implementing Yondr pouches—secure sleeves that students place their phones in at the start of the day. They stay locked until school is out unless there is a medical or special education need.

Yes, it is a big change. But it is not being done lightly.

The Case for Change

Phones are not just distractions, they have become a constant companion, and not always a healthy one. We have all seen it: students scrolling under desks, checking notifications between classes, watching TikToks in the bathroom, texting during a lesson.

But it is not just that they are missing a few minutes of instruction. Research and experience both show that constant phone use erodes focus, increases anxiety, and contributes to social isolation. I recently heard a school principal state, "It's not just about academics—phones are getting in the way of kids learning how to be around each other."

TPS is not the first district to try this. Schools across the country that have limited or locked phones report fewer fights, fewer discipline issues, more face-to-face conversations, and higher student engagement. Some even see grade bumps. Teachers say they spend less time policing and more time teaching. In short: students are present again.

What Parents Worry About—and What TPS Has Considered

Still, I get it. As a parent, your first question might be: "But what if there's an emergency?"

TPS has put protocols in place to ensure parents can always reach their children through the school. In the event of a real emergency—like a lockdown—schools have rapid notification systems in place. Office staff are trained to connect parents and students if the need is legitimate and time sensitive.

The fear of not being able to text your child in a crisis is real. But here is something to remember when there is a real emergency, phones often cause more confusion, not less. They spread rumors, mislead, and could clog communication lines. And in too many cases across America, they have created unnecessary panic.

TPS is trying to make sure every student can focus, learn, and feel calm—and they need our help.

James Gant, TPS Deputy Superintendent, told me, "We are trying hard to make the change as painless as possible. Still, this is new, and we want parents to attend school meetings, ask questions, make suggestions, and hopefully support us in a change that while it is mandated still makes a lot of academic sense."

What Our Kids Stand to Gain

Teachers where cell phones have been removed from the classroom see the difference when phones are out of sight. Students look up. They talk to each other. They pay attention. And when the school day ends, the phones come back—but the brain has had six or seven hours of breathing room. Time to think. Time to build friendships. Time to grow.

We all want our children to succeed. And while phones have their place, the classroom is not it.

This isn't about punishing students or controlling families. It's about giving students the chance to learn without competing with an algorithm. It is about giving teachers the space to teach. And it is about helping parents—yes, all of us—let go of the illusion that more digital connection means better communication.

A Final Thought

This change will not be easy. There will be pushback. Some kids will resist. Some parents will worry. But I believe we will look back on this as a turning point, a moment when we decided to take back our schools from the digital noise and give our kids the gift of being present again.

Because what we lose—a few texts during the day—is nothing compared to what we can gain: students who are more focused, more grounded, and more connected to the world right in front of them.

Your child is important to your family's legacy and, with declining birthrates, the future of America. Every child should have a learning environment where they are focused on classroom success, and we have an obligation to see that it happens.

Dance Empire...continued from page 10

And Spyda has big dreams for the future — a private arts and education school that will reach kids worldwide.

"I'm surrounded by amazing staff, parents, and supporters who understand our mission," she says. "That's what keeps us going."

Lights, Camera, Spyda

Her impact isn't limited to the studio. Spyda's résumé reads like a Hollywood casting list. She's acted on Empire, The Chi, Lovecraft Country, and Power: Force. She's appeared in a Juneteenth commercial for Target, toured with the Millennium Tour, and performed at the Apollo.

Her latest film, Substantial Evidence, is streaming on Tubi. She's also an independent recording artist — her fourth album, Complex, features Toledo Grammy-nominated producer Todd Young and a hit single "Dale" with Raz B of B2K.

... continued on page 13

NCBCP President & CEO Melanie L. Campbell Statement on the 60th Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965

Melanie L. Campbell

"Now More Than Ever, Congress Needs to Pass the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement "

On August 6, 2025 we paused to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the historic Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA), the landmark law that granted and protected long-denied voting rights for Black Americans. Unfortunately, since 2010 over 25 states have enacted restrictive voter suppression laws to create barriers to minority, low-income and young voters.

Also, the 2013 U. S. Supreme Court voting rights decision, Shelby v. Holder, further weakened the enforcement powers of the VRA that has left voters vulnerable to more barriers.

As an example, less than 24 hours after the Shelby v. Holder decision, Texas wasted no time in announcing that it would put into place a strict voter ID law. The Supreme Court decision also led to an increase in voters being purged from voting rolls. Many of those voters where Black.

As a result of, and in response to, this outbreak of widespread voter suppression by the states, the John R. Lewis Voting Right Advancement Act was introduced and passed by the U.S. House of Representatives in August of 2021. The bill was designed to restore and strengthen parts of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, most notably its requirement for states and jurisdictions with a history of voting rights violations to seek federal approval before enacting certain changes to their voting laws.

Sadly, by a narrow margin, the bill was not passed by the U.S. Senate. However, realizing the need to address that voter suppression is even greater now more than ever, and with our very democracy at stake, House Democrats reintroduced the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2025 in March and the U. S. Senate Democrats re-introduced the bill on Tuesday, July 29, 2025.

This situation begs the question of "what changed, how did we get here and what is driving this critical point the nation is enduring in what has become a modern-day "Civil War" for political power and domination by one political party and fight to save our democracy from peril that must benefit ALL Americans and not just a handful of billionaires, if it is to survive.

Did the "change" begin when America chose a Black man to become President of the United States in 2008 who led America out of an economic crisis, was overwhelmingly re-elected in 2012? Did things "change" in 2010 when the U. S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of big business and large money interests in the Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission case, allowing unlimited amounts of money to influence elections?

The ruling removed restrictions on independent expenditures, allowing big corporations to independently support political candidates with financial resources.

Did things "change" in 2013 with the Supreme Court's Shelby County v. Holder decision that opened the floodgates for voter suppression in the states? Did things "change" in 2019 when President Obama's ability to appoint his own Federal judges for the next two years was blocked?

Did things "change" when George Floyd, a Black man, was murdered by a white police officer in Minneapolis, shocking America and the world to the fact that a dangerous brand of racism was still alive and thriving in this nation?

Did things "change" in 2024 when a highly qualified Black woman, who had already occupied the office of Vice President of the United States, ran for the office of President? Or did things "change" in 2025 when a billionaire and DOGE decided to indiscriminately gut the federal government of its valuable services and employees.

Clearly, there is an apparent "pattern" with regard to the lengths that some groups are willing to go in order to gain and remain "in power," at ALL costs. Now, that cost is our cherished democracy. Even now, this thirst for power is growing more insatiable.

Texas, the very state that could not wait a mere day to implement strict voter suppression laws after the Shelby County v. Holder decision, is shamefully trying to redistrict the state in such a way as to severely dilute the voting power of Blacks and Hispanics, and give white Republicans five more seats in Congress. This is all about power and control.

The United States of America is moving swiftly towards an authoritarian regime of historic proportions that has absolutely NO interest in democracy. Those in power want the majority of Americans, especially people of color, to be less healthy, less educated and less financially secure, in no uncertain terms.

We, the people, must use the power of our vote and collective power of dissent---to fight back these attacks to protect our right to vote, freedoms, democracy and freedoms. Not just for us, but for our nieces, nephews, children and grandchildren. Whatever "changed" in over a decade, now is the time to take a stand. This is now America's new "Civil War" and we must fight back!!!

We must continue to get in "good trouble" like Congressman John Lewis, Fannie Lou Hamer, Martin Luther King, Jr., Medgar Evers, A. Philip Randolph, Dr. Dorothy Height and all the unsung heroes and sheroes who fought and died for our rights and freedoms.

We must demand and push the leadership in Congress to do the "right thing" for all Americans, no matter their party and our democracy and pass the reintroduced John R. Lewis Voting Right Advancement Act and pass it now!

The National Coalition on Black Civic Participation is a dedicated advocate for the rights and empowerment of Black and underserved communities. Through various initiatives and programs, NCBCP works to ensure equal representation, civic engagement, economic empowerment and the protection of voting rights for all. For more information on the NCBCP visit www.ncbcp.org.

Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: A Veteran's Memoir by Khadijah Queen

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

The Truth Contributor

c. 2025
Legacy Lit
$30.00
348 pages

Keep your head down.

Stay steady, mind your business, and don't compare yourself to others. You are where you are for a reason, don't lose sight of it. There's a prize at the end, and endurance is the only way to get it. You have a job to do and, as in the new memoir ***Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*** **by Khadijah Queen**, you'll do it until you can't.

Khadijah Queen hated Inkster, Michigan.

She had begged to stay in L.A. but her mother ignored her pleas and moved the family to Inkster to take care of the at-risk children of Queen's addicted eldest sister. Not old enough to stay in "Cali" by herself, but old enough to work and contribute to the household, Queen rushed to sign up for classes at a local Michigan college because she knew education was the only way to escape the situations that had her family in a stranglehold.

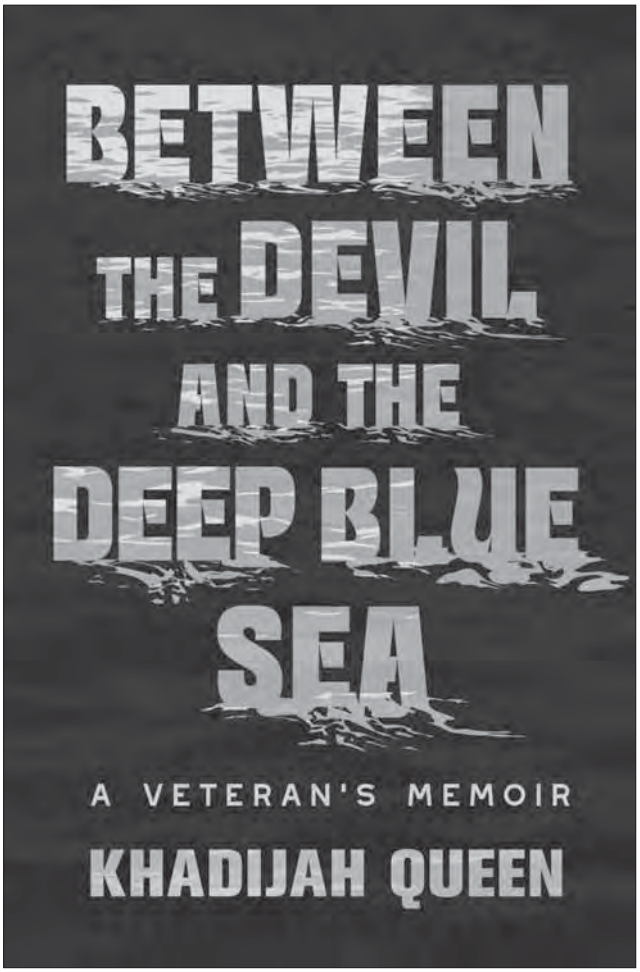
Alcoholism, drug abuse, no money, problems came like storms and when those problems forced her to drop her classes, she decided to join the Navy. A few years of service, she knew, and her college education would be free.

Happily, Boot Camp wasn't so bad.

There were a handful of Black recruits and personnel who held Queen up when she felt sad and they gave her hope. She learned in Navy Boot Camp that she was a leader, but she wasn't fully ready for it. She wanted to serve on a submarine and once there, she tried to just do her job but her white male shipmates made it difficult.

She endured their hazing and sexual harassment. She endured their racism and juvenile jokes. She endured a noose left laying on her study manuals.

Less than six months aboard, she says, "my anger had become a living thing, and even though I didn't want it, I kept that anger close. It leapt ahead of me when it had to."



Prepared to be stunned.

From the first few pages to this books' roaring end, Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea grabs readers by the throat and doesn't let go. You plainly see author Khadijah Queen's need to get away from near-poverty; it paces like a lion in a small cage. You'll cringe at her maturity that doesn't quite go far enough because you've probably been there, too. When she's about to get in trouble for speaking her mind or because she's impatient, you'll squirm, knowing what's coming. Authentic language puts you in uniform. Tragedy will hurt your heart. So will some of the people in this book when you learn what happens to them, but the story would be lesser without the rich presence of each of them and without Queen's no-nonsense-ness, her boiling impatience, and her profanity-laced honesty.

Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea author courtesy Marco Giugliarelli for the Civitella Ranieri Foundation, 2023

Veterans may have some things to say about this one-of-a-kind book, as will feminists, and neither of them, nor you, should miss it. Start Between the *Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* and it'll keep your head down good.

Dance Empire...continued from page 11

One of her tracks even held the number one spot on the Digital Radio Tracker for eight weeks straight.

And she's not slowing down. She recently secured a production studio space where she'll film content, music videos, and even host tour rehearsals.

Balancing Family and Fame

Spyda shares life with her husband, John Clarke, and their blended family of five children, including a niece they've raised since she was one.

She's honest about the challenges of balancing marriage, motherhood, and business.

"It's not easy. But in a family business, everyone has to understand the mission. Other cultures pass things down — we can too, but we have to be intentional about it."

The Mindset that Built It All

When asked what advice she gives young women who want to turn artistic gifts into a global brand, Spyda doesn't hesitate.

"You have to change your mindset. If you can't block out negativity, you won't make it. Talent isn't enough — this business is 90% business. If your head and your house aren't in order, your gift won't take you far."

She warns against self-sabotage. "Your body is your temple. Don't taint it. Don't diminish it. Love it, nourish it, and keep it ready for the opportunities you're working toward."

What's Next

Spyda's calendar is packed — grand openings, competitions, showcases, and community events at all six locations. But she still sees herself as just getting started.

"Every time I think I'm done, God adds something bigger. I've checked so many boxes on my goal list — but my work isn't done."

Her story is proof that the dreams we dare to chase can outgrow the limits we once imagined.

From a little girl in the projects to a woman building an international arts empire, Spyda has danced every step with purpose. And she's making sure thousands of young people learn the same steps — not just for the stage, but for life.

Public Bid Advertisement (Electronic Bidding)

State of Ohio Standard Forms and Documents

1130-25-372-1
Space Replacement/Consolidation
One-Stop Student Services Renovation – Phase 1 MacKinnon Hall
The University of Toledo
Lucas County, OH

Bids Due: August 26, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. through the State's electronic bidding system at https://bidexpress.com

EDGE Participation Goal: 5.0% of contract of the contract sum with EDGE-certified business(es).

Domestic steel use is required per ORC 153.011.

Contract	Estimated Cost
General Contract	$4,000,000.00
Alternate M-1	$150,000.00

And any proper combination submitted on electronic Bid Form

Pre-bid Meeting: August 12, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. – Main Campus, Plant Operations Building - Room 1000, The University of Toledo, 2925 East Rocket Drive, Toledo, OH 43606

Walk-Through: Immediately following Pre-Bid.

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

More Info: Hasenstab Architects, Inc., Ben Rantilla, 330-434-4464, brantilla@hasenstabinc.com

PUBLIC NOTICE
CITY OF TOLEDO
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION REPORT
for
2024 Program Year – July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025

The City of Toledo (COT) is directed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to notify the general public of the undertakings, activities, and accomplishments completed in and at the close of each Program Year through a Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). The CAPER provides an assessment of the federally funded programs administered by the COT's Department of Housing and Community Development: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG), HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), Neighborhood Stabilization Programs (NSP), and Lead Hazard Control & Healthy Homes Grant.

The Draft CAPER will be available for review beginning **Wednesday, August 27, 2025**, on the website of the following entities:

Department of Housing and Community Development
One Government Center, 18th Floor
Downtown Toledo, Jackson & Erie Streets
website: https://toledo.oh.gov/departments/housing-community-development

Office of the Mayor
One Government Center, 22nd Floor
Downtown Toledo, Jackson & Erie Streets
website: https://toledo.oh.gov/government/mayor

Clerk of Council
One Government Center, 21st Floor
Downtown Toledo, Jackson & Erie Streets
website: https://toledo.oh.gov/government/city-council/

The Fair Housing Center
326 N. Erie Street
Toledo, Ohio 43604
website: www.toledofhc.org

Lucas Metropolitan Housing
424 Jackson Street
Toledo, Ohio 43604
website: www.lucasmha.org

Toledo Lucas County Homelessness Board
1220 Madison Avenue
Toledo, Ohio 43604
website: www.endinghomelessnesstoledo.org

Toledo-Lucas County Public Library
325 Michigan Street
Toledo, Ohio 43604
website: www.toledolibrary.org

Lucas Co. Board of Developmental Disabilities
1154 Larc Lane
Toledo, Ohio 43614
website: www.lucasdd.info

A Public Hearing on the Draft CAPER is scheduled as follows:

Thursday, September 4, 2025, 5:30 p.m.
City Council Chambers, 1st Floor
One Government Center, Toledo, OH 43604

The City of Toledo will also receive comments from the public in writing beginning **Wednesday, August 27, 2025**, through **Wednesday, September 10, 2025,** at the following address:

CITY OF TOLEDO
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
2024-2025 CAPER
ONE GOVERNMENT CENTER, SUITE 1800
TOLEDO, OHIO 43604

The City of Toledo supports the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you would like to request a reasonable accommodation, please contact the Office of Diversity and Inclusion ADA coordinator at (419) 245-1198 or submit a request online at toledo.oh.gov/ada.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: STRATEGIC PLANNING SERVICES

The Mental Health & Recovery Services Board (MHRSB) of Lucas County invites proposals from interested parties with expertise in performing strategic planning services for the MHRSB's next three-year strategic plan. Proposals are to be delivered no later than 5:00 p.m. ET on September 26, 2025. All questions should be submitted to sspinelli@lcmhrsb.oh.gov by September 1, 2025. Responses will be posted on MHRSB's website. Details regarding the project deliverables and submission criteria are located on the MHRSB's website: http://www.lcmhrsb.oh.gov/publicnotice/.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Lucas Metropolitan Housing (LMH), located in Toledo, OH is seeking experienced applicants for the following position(s): **Chief Financial Officer.** Please email a one-page cover letter, a two-page resume, a listing of three professional references, and salary expectations to both Stan Quy, President / Principal of The Organizational Leadership Edge at SQuy@cox.net and Jessica Quy, TOLE Administrative Assistant at jessicaquy79@gmail.com. The deadline for applications is Friday, August 29th, at 5:00PM Central Time. This is a Section 3 covered position. HUD recipients are encouraged to apply and are to indicate on the application if you are a LMHA Public Housing client or Housing Choice Voucher Program participant. Persons with disabilities are encouraged to apply. Equal employment opportunity shall be afforded to all qualified persons without regard to age, race, color, religion, religious creed, gender, military status, ancestry, disability, handicap, sexual orientation, genetic information or national origin.

LUCAS METROPOLITAN HOUSING

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) MISSION POINT APARTMENTS, L.P. CONSTRUCTION MANAGER AT RISK (CMAR)

Mission Point Apartments, L.P & Lucas Metropolitan Housing (LMH) will receive proposals for a **Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR) – Mission Point.** Received in accordance with law until **August 29, 2025, at 3:00 PM ET.** For documents: www.lucasmha.org; 424 Jackson Street., Toledo, OH 43604; or 419-259-9438 (TRS: Dial 711). Bidders are required to meet Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity requirements as described in Executive Order #11246. This contract opportunity is a Section 3 covered contract, and any Section 3 Business Concerns are encouraged to apply.

LUCAS METROPOLITAN HOUSING

The Scott Alumni Reunion

The Truth Staff

Once again, Scott High School alumni came out to celebrate their experiences at the school and with their school mates during the annual Alumni Weekend this past weekend.

On Friday the members of the 1950s and 1960s classes met at the Blue Gill Fishing Club; the 1970s alumni met at the Golden Rule and the 1980s and 1990s at what used to be the Lighthouse.

"We try to give every generation their space to reconnect," said organizer John Glover during a conversation with The Truth in the days leading up to this year's weekend reunion.

A brunch and bingo on Saturday led to the Black Affair, an evening event where everyone dresses in black. The event's purpose is to raise money for Scott seniors headed for college.

However, the weekend's signature event, as always, is the Sunday picnic at Detwiler Park.

"We started at Ottawa Park," Glover said, "but it got so big we couldn't go back. We had to move to bigger spots like the GM Powertrain Park—and now Detwiler."

And it certainly is big!!

The picnic has grown to immense proportions as alumni set up tents, grills, tables and chairs in order to connect with classmates. This past weekend's picnic seemed to stretch forever at Detwiler.

Many of the alumni came early in the morning to set up, a few set up tents the day before. The picnic may outgrow Detwiler in the next few years.

The Fourth Annual Glass City JazzFest

The Truth Staff

The fourth annual Glass City JazzFest, a free event that brought out an enthusiastic audience to hear performers from all around the world, took place this past Saturday at the Glass City Metropark.

The intense weekend heat notwithstanding, the festival proceeded on schedule and the musicians performed spectacularly.

Toledo's own Jean Holden opened the afternoon entertainment in her inimitable style of blending jazz, blues and R & B to the delight of many in the audience who arrived early just to hear her.

Holden was followed by Otonowa, a Japanese jazz quartet which fuses traditional Japanese folk melodies with contemporary jazz. Otonowa tours internationally with a message of healing and cultural connection.

Next up were RiShon Odel & The 5th Element, a genre-defying group blending jazz, funk, gospel and soul, led by bassist, composer and producer RiShon Odel.

Then came Straight Ahead, an all-female jazz ensemble from Detroit which weaves bebop, funk, Latin and blues with various jazz styles.

From Brazil came the Vinicius Gomes Quintet and special guest SongYi Jeon. Composer and guitarist Gomes leads the group which features compositions that blend modern jazz with Brazilian rhythms. SongYi Jeon is a South Korean-born, Switzerland-based vocalist who helps to create a lush, cross-cultural performance.

Completing the lineup was Grammy-nominate bassist Brian Bromberg. Smooth jazz, straight-ahead funk and fusion have been the hallmarks of his extensive career.

"We were thrilled," said Cheryl Catlin after the event. Catlin and her partner Hugh Ross, who served as MC for the festival, are the principals of the Great Lakes Jazz Society, the organizing entity. This was the fourth year of the JazzFest and arguably the most successful one yet.

Catlin and Ross were delighted with how the day, and the preceding week of jazz at different locales, went. "People showed up in the scorching heat," said Catlin. She noted that she and Ross were also impressed with the increased diversity of the crowd, with all ages, and families. "Most of all we were pleased with the musicians and the performances," she added.

In addition, noted Catlin, most of the food vendors sold out and the product vendors were very happy with how their sales went during the day.

Following the day's performances at the Glass City Metropark, an enthusiastic audience joined a number of the festival performers, local performers and hosts Ramona Collins, a veteran jazz vocalist, and Ross at the Assembly American Brasserie in the Downtown Hilton, for a post-festival jazz jam.

This was the first year for the Jazz Jam and Catlin believes that it was so successful that it will continue to be an important part of the event

The Glass City JazzFezz was actually the culmination of a full week of musical treats for Toledoans who love jazz.

The Toledo Jazz Week opened on Monday, August 4, with a performance by Leslie Deshazor, a classically trained violinist from Detroit, at the Assembly American Brasserie. Dshazor combines her classical roots with jazz and R&B soul.

On Tuesday, Lori Lefevre & The Toledo School of the Arts Jazz Vocalists brought their show to Middlegrounds Metropark. Lefevre is a seasoned jazz vocalist who has graced the Midwest jazz scene for over 30 years.

Keith Bernhard & More Jazz Messengers performed on Wednesday at the Red Room of the Toledo Club. Bernhard was the last house drummer at the former Murphy's Place Jazz Club.

On Thursday night, the Jerome Clark Trio held for at Club 1343 on Avondale Avenue and, the crowd was standing in line well in advance of the performance, said Catlin. Detroit guitarist Clark and his trio focus on jazz standards and reimagined standards.

To close Jazz Week, on Friday Gene Parker & Damen Cook performed at the Glass City Metropark.