The Sojourner's Truth

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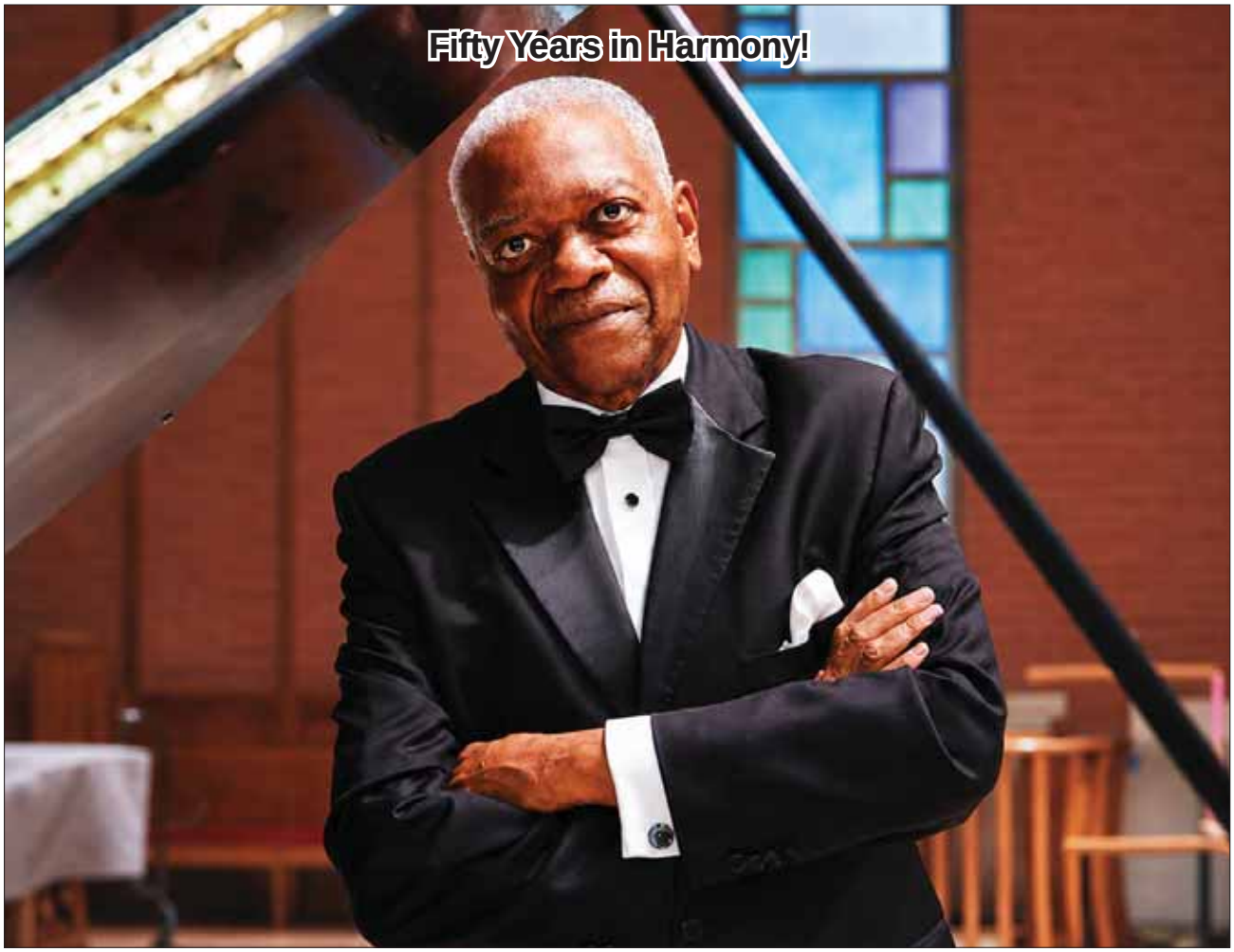

Clarence Smith's Community Chorus Keeps the Music of Black History Alive

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Thank You, Toledo!





During this season of giving, the Toledo Public Schools family would like to thank everyone who supported our students and staff on Election Day.

With the passage of Issue 9, Toledo voters have reaffirmed their commitment to TPS schools and the students we serve. This investment in our programs helps TPS maintain important academic and career tech standards while continuing to provide opportunities for students throughout our community.

Your support means something to every student, from the kindergartener learning their ABCs to the high school senior preparing for graduation. It sends a clear message that Toledoans believe in our students and are committed to their educational success.

TPS would like to recognize the volunteers and donors who gave their time, resources, and energy to this campaign. From financial contributions and community walks to speaking engagements and grassroots outreach, every effort helped make the passage of Issue 9 possible.

As we look ahead, we are proud to be part of a community that continues to invest in its schools and its future. We look forward to sharing all that is happening across the district.

Thank you for believing in our students. Thank you for supporting TPS. Thank you, Toledo!

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What if the Mayor Leaves?



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

The Truth Contributor

…not just a seat at the table, but to be a real priority.

- Brittany Packnett Cunningham

As Governor-elect Amy Acton builds her cabinet, Toledo's mayor says no one has offered him a job in Columbus. Still, the joint is already jumping with talk of who calls the shots at City Hall if he goes.

Specifically, Wade Kapszukiewicz told WTOL that Acton "hasn't offered me anything yet" (emphasis added), but that if she does, "of course I will listen." His office also added that he and Acton "speak often." Notice what he did not say: that he would turn it down, or that they haven't talked. Offers tend to follow conversations.

If he leaves for greener pastures, Council President Vanice Williams takes the reins. Then voters decide who keeps them. That is where the fight begins.

Who Can Win It?

Toledo has seen this before. When Mayor Michael Collins died in 2015, Council President Paula Hicks-Hudson stepped in, and she made history as the first African American woman to lead the city. She came prepared, with a law degree and years on council. Voters gave her a term of her own, and she led a field of seven. Two years later they chose Wade Kapszukiewicz, and Hicks-Hudson carried her talents to Columbus and built a statewide career in the Ohio House and now the Ohio Senate, with a "reputation for intelligence and political savvy."

Her story shows how our mayoral succession process works. When

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The Sojourner's Truth

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Community Calendar

November 20
Food Giveaway: Canaan Manifested Word Outreach Center; 4 pm; First come, first serve

November 21
Bethesda Christian Center Church Community and food pantry giveaway; 11 am to 2 pm

November 22
Turkey Giveaway: Frederick Douglass Center; 1 pm

November 26
Thanksgiving Day!

December 7
IMA First Monday: 1 pm; Mt. Nebo Baptist

The GOP Reap What They Sowed

By Lafe Tolliver, Esq

Guest Column



The resounding victory by the Democrats in the midterm elections was jaw dropping and is full of consequences for the nation and for the sycophantic GOP party that slobbered over themselves in fulfilling every wish of Darth Vader…a/k/a: Donald Trump.

I think at some point in time, Trump realized that he had the feckless GOP members under his shoe like a piece of sticky gum that will not come off and he acted accordingly with a lot of barking and name calling.

Of course the spineless GOP members, never known for their courage to stand up to a good con job or the outrageous grifting of Trump & Family, simply turned their heads while Trump and Musk and others (to be named in a soon-to-be congressional investigation) pilloried the government and lay a wrecking ball to the internal mechanisms of core constituent services.

What is in the spotlight is how a P.T. Barnum type, like Trump, was able to dazzle and wow his political goobers into believing any of his promised rot. But…they believed and they fell hard when Trump lied to their faces about being a populist and was in-it-to-win-it for them.

The tomfoolery coming from the White House has to be measured in five gallon containers of pure hokum but yet those willing to believe a lot…a lot of lies…went for it and now the expected finger pointing starts with everyone trying to clean up their fallen dignity after being hoodwinked by a consummate con artist.

Space does not allow for the dozens of GOP goobers, some with purportedly educated minds, who voluntarily drank the Trump poison water and even wanted more! Why? The power and perks of being a power broker and having access to money and influence was too much of an irresistible aphrodisiac to pass up.

So, in turn we get an administration that was choking on its own ignorance, foolishness and lack of political savvy as they tried to deflect and blame anyone else but themselves.

History will record this painful period of political rot and the immense toll it took on people's lives as they tried to make ends meet but were stood up at the altar.

When the GOP apologizers meet the media with their sharp questions, their best response is to say no comment because nothing except craven greed and the cacklings of a clown car of woefully incompetent advisors and cabinet member… that will be the real story.

Needless to state, the way that the country voted was one of, "throw out the bums!"

The upcoming congressional investigations into Hegseth and a host of other losers will show that Trump was the glue that held together this bunch of losers.

With such bold election results, the Democrats need to have a bold and progressive platform, spell it out in large capital letters for all to see and run

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Black Voters Demanded Affordability. The House Just Delivered a Bipartisan Answer.

By Hazel Trice Edney

Guest Column



Hazel Trice Edney

Black Americans stood in long lines on Election Day to send Washington a message about the cost of living. Anyone who has watched rent, groceries and electric bills climb knows why. But the deeper squeeze is a slow drain on a family's ability to build wealth, and the data shows it follows Black people from youth all the way into old age.

Black families start behind, with a median net worth almost $300,000 less than White families. The Federal Reserve's latest survey puts the White median at nine times the Black median, the widest ratio since 2016. Retirement savings are where that gap festers. In 2022, only 34.7 percent of Black households held a retirement account, compared with 61.7 percent of White households.

Even among Americans earning $75,000 or more, 77 percent of Black respondents have saved for retirement, compared with 87 percent of non-Black respondents. Black families across the nation are saving from a lower starting line, with less family wealth to cushion a setback. And when an emergency or a life expense does knock, the retirement account is often the first to pay for it. In one national survey, 29 percent of Black respondents with workplace plans had taken a hardship withdrawal, compared with 15 percent of non-Black respondents.

No institution understands this better than the Black church. Last fall, when the Rev. Kevin Lamár Peterman was installed as pastor of Nineteenth Street Baptist Church, the oldest Black Baptist congregation in Washington, DC, the celebration belonged as much to the mothers and fathers in ministry standing behind him as to the young pastor stepping forward. They were handing off a baton they had carried for decades. But a relay depends on runners who can afford to stop running. Many who gave their lives to the pulpit, the choir room and the church kitchen will retire on 403(b) plans that federal law has left frozen in time.



PHOTO/MODEL OF THE WEEK

Expressions | VIRGILIO BAKER | VIDEO PRODUCTION | Millennium | INFUSE NETWORK

KYRA — Model of the Week

Article written and Photography By: Virgilio Baker

This week's Model of the Week is Kyra, who modeled locally out of Starbound Model & Talent.
In 2025, Kyra traveled to Paris for IMTA — the International Modeling & Talent Association — where models meet and have the opportunity to be signed with major modeling agencies all over the world.
From Toledo to Paris, Kyra is one to watch.
Photo by Virgilio Baker, taken at Studio 734 in Lambertville, Michigan as Kyra prepared for her trip to Paris.

"And look at this photograph. A headshot this strong is a working tool, not just a pretty picture — casting directors decide in seconds, and a photograph like this one stops them. This is the kind of image that gets a model called in, and getting called in is how paying work begins."

Why sign with an agency?

An agency opens doors one model can't open alone — the right castings, real clients, contracts handled, and a career guided by people who know the business. Kyra's road from Toledo to Paris is what representation makes possible. Ready to be next? Expressions International Model Management is rebuilding its roster: 419-514-1284 - expressionsmodels@gmail.com. Sessions at Studio 734 and on location.

The 403(b) is the retirement plan of churches, charities, schools and nonprofit hospitals, institutions where people serve at a sacrifice in pulpits, classrooms and clinics. Under current law, outdated securities rules generally confine 403(b) plans to mutual funds and annuity contracts, while 401(k) plans can offer more.

These rules increase the cost of saving for the people with the least room to spare. Workers with 401(k) plans, and even members of Congress through the federal Thrift Savings Plan, can use a lower-cost tool called a collective investment trust, or CIT. Vanguard estimates that for a median worker earning $74,000, the cost gap adds up to $23,000 to $28,000 in forgone retirement savings over the course of a 40-year career. For a family with little to spare, that difference could have been a down payment on a house, a child's tuition or a few more years of dignity in retirement.

Congress has a chance to give that security to Black families who need it most. This week the House passed the Retirement Fairness for Charities and Educational Institutions Act, which would allow 403(b) plans to offer CITs. Republicans and Democrats wrote it together, and members of both parties voted for it by an overwhelming margin of 295 to 128. The White House has said it "urges its enactment." It now moves to the Senate, where it is led by Katie Britt, a Republican from Alabama, and Raphael Warnock, a Democrat from Georgia and senior pastor of Atlanta's Ebenezer Baptist Church. Warnock has said the bipartisan bill will "help ensure more workers can retire with dignity." Twenty more senators have signed on, including eight Democrats.

Some critics, including longtime champions of Black families, have raised concerns that the securities law changes would benefit Wall Street middlemen and plan consultants at savers' expense, and that fees need clearer disclosure. I share the instinct to protect savers. But CITs are not an experiment. They have served 401(k) participants for decades, and the bill carries safeguards. The administration notes that access is limited to plans with fiduciary protections and has pledged to work with the SEC and Labor Department on "clear disclosure of the fees and features."

The real inequity is making workers who serve others pay more than their peers for the same retirement. This economic injustice must end.

The Black church has long known how to sit at a table with people who vote differently and still get the work done. A pastor from Georgia and a Republican from Alabama are doing it now. The House just did it too. Now the full Senate should join them. The pastors, teachers and nurses waiting on this bill have never asked which party a lawmaker belongs to. They ask only that the retirement they have earned not shrink because of a rule written for another era.

Former Democratic Gov. L. Douglas Wilder, America's first elected Black governor, recently gave an anecdote that applies to successful bipartisan strategy. Recalling his days as a Virginia senator and as a governor who Financial World magazine said ran the best-managed state in the nation for two years in a row, Wilder told an audience that his success was largely due to his ability to work with legislators from a different political party.

He said, "I didn't recognize any aisle. I didn't see an aisle to reach across. I saw a senator. I saw a delegate. I saw a person."

Hazel Trice Edney is editor/publisher of the Trice Edney News Wire.

A Community Conversation: "Suffering in Silence"

By Dawn Scotland

The Truth Assistant Editor

Picking Up The Pieces, a behavioral health organization in partnership with Creating a Brighter Tomorrow, hosted "Suffering in Silence: A Community Conversation" in recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month on Wednesday, October 28, at the Mott Branch Library.

The event featured five expert panelists to help to break the silence surrounding domestic violence, to learn the signs, to access resources, to start conversations and to promote healthy relationships in the community.



Willie Eaton and Tyrone Riley



Moderator Monica Yvonne



Panelist LaShanna Alfred, MSW, LISW-S

October was Domestic Violence Awareness Month, In the United States:

• Over one in three women (35.6 percent) and one in four men (28.5 perc**ent) in the US have experienced rape, physical violence and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime.**

• An average of 24 people per minute are victims of rape, physical violence or stalking by an intimate partner in the United States — more than 12 million women and men over the course of a single year.

• Just under 15 percent of women (14.8 percent) and four percent of men in the US have been injured as a result of intimate partner violence that included rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner. (source: thehotline.org.)

Picking Up The Pieces is an organization with a mission to empower individuals and families through compassionate, comprehensive behavioral health services that promote mental wellness, recovery, resilience, independence and lasting positive change.

Their vision is to build stronger individuals, healthier families and more resilient communities through accessible behavioral health services, education, advocacy and community partnerships. (Source: pickingupthepiecesohio.com/)

Picking Up The Pieces Community Liaison Tyrone Riley said, "October is the national domestic violence awareness month. And we wanted to do something in recognition of national domestic violence in our community.

And that's why we're doing it here at Mott Branch Library right here in the community, so that the community can come out, voice their opinions, and their thoughts and hopefully even get healed."

Attendees were able to get questions answered on how to prevent, help and assist those involved in domestic violence issues as well as resources for healing from direct abuse or from loss of a loved one.

Panelist for the event included Gloria Mathis, J.D. (Lucas County Prosecutor's Office), Rebecca Facey, J.D. (Chief Prosecutor, Toledo Municipal Court), Rev. Robert Bass, EdD. (Director of Fatherhood Forge, Zepf Center), Rena Ramsey (Case Manager, Family and Child Abuse Prevention Center) and LaShanna Alfred, MSW, LISW-S (Trauma & Relationship Therapist). The event was moderator by attorney Monica Yvonne.



Suffering in Silence panelists





Panelist Gloria Mathis

"People are suffering in silence", commented Riley, "and if domestic violence goes untreated, it has a number of ways to reveal itself. And especially with children. You don't know exactly how they're going to come out of this situation.

We know that parents have a tendency to be resilient, but we need to make sure that our children are resilient as well, so that they can be healthy adults and break this cycle of domestic violence."

To learn more about the organization visit pickingupthepiecesohio.com.



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Fifty Years in Harmony: Clarence Smith's Community Chorus Keeps the Music of Black History Alive

From a small gathering of 15 singers in 1976 to five decades of performances across Toledo and beyond, Clarence Smith has built more than a choir. He has helped preserve a musical inheritance, one song at a time.

By Asia Nail

The Truth Reporter

Some music makes you tap your feet. Other music reaches somewhere deeper. It can take you back to your grandmother's living room, a Sunday morning in church, or a moment in history you never personally experienced but somehow recognize in your soul.

And sometimes, all it takes is one voice.

Then another. Then an entire chorus.

For 50 years, the **Clarence Smith Community Chorus** has used the power of music to tell stories, preserve Black history and bring people together. What began with approximately 15 singers in 1976 has grown into a Toledo cultural institution, performing everywhere from neighborhood churches to some of the region's most distinguished musical stages.

This December, the chorus celebrates its golden 50th anniversary with a Christmas concert that promises more than familiar holiday melodies. It offers an opportunity to experience a living piece of Black history.

A Song Worth Saving

The idea began with a simple desire. Clarence Smith, then a music teacher working in three public schools, wanted to establish an adult choir. Conversations with a friend who pastored the former Grace Presbyterian Church led to an opportunity to bring that vision to life at the church's community center.



But Smith had another purpose close to his heart.

Growing up in a musical family, he developed a deep appreciation for Negro spirituals. His father, Clarence R. Smith Sr., was a gifted singer and pastor. His mother, Thelma, sang around the house and played piano. His sister Irma Jean Smith Peters was an accomplished gospel pianist and singer, while his brother Gregory also pursued music academically.

At Scott High School, music teacher David Carter further nurtured Smith's appreciation for choral music and spirituals.

By 1976, Smith recognized something troubling. Gospel music had become increasingly prominent in Black churches, while the spirituals that carried generations of history were being performed less frequently.

He wanted to make sure those songs did not disappear from the musical landscape.

"We started with a small group of about 15 people," Smith recalls. They first

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Fifty Years... continued from page 6

"We started with a small group of about 15 people," Smith recalls. They first gathered in April 1976, began rehearsing that fall, and performed their first concert in October.

The rest, as they say, became history.

More Than Notes on a Page

To understand the importance of the chorus, one must understand the music it was founded to preserve.

Negro spirituals are more than beautiful melodies. They are among the most powerful cultural expressions left by enslaved Africans in America. Their lyrics captured sorrow, longing, resistance, faith and an unshakable belief that suffering would not have the final word.

Consider the familiar spiritual "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot." Its words paint a picture of deliverance, with the chariot symbolizing a journey toward freedom and the biblical Jordan River representing passage into a better place. Over generations, some have interpreted the chariot and Jordan as references to the Underground Railroad and the journey across the Ohio River, which separated slave states from free territory. While historians have not established that these lyrics were definitively coded directions, the interpretation reflects the powerful connection between spirituals, faith and the longing for freedom.

Then there is "Down by the Riverside," also known as "Ain't Gonna Study War No More." With its lively rhythm and memorable refrain, the song carries a message of peace, laying down weapons and releasing the burdens of conflict. Its repeated promise to put down the sword and shield transforms a simple melody into a declaration of hope. Together, these songs reveal how spirituals could hold both the longing to be free and the dream of a world where people no longer had to live under the weight of violence and oppression.

Some African American work songs also accompanied the physical demands of labor, including railroad construction. Imagine workers moving heavy rails beneath the Southern sun, the scrape of steel, the pounding of spikes and the steady rhythm of men working together. A leader calls out, and the others respond. Call and response helped coordinate their movements while creating a shared rhythm in exhausting conditions. Though work songs and spirituals were distinct traditions, both demonstrate how music helped Black people express themselves, find connection and endure circumstances that were often designed to break them.

Smith wants younger generations to understand that history, but he also wants audiences to recognize something universal within it.

He explains that spirituals offer a rare window into what enslaved people experienced and, just as importantly, what sustained them.

"The messages that were so important during that time period are still important in this time period," he adds.

People still struggle. They still need encouragement, faith and something to hold onto when life gets heavy.

That is part of the beauty of this music. Its roots are deeply African American, but its message of perseverance reaches beyond racial boundaries.

The chorus keeps that message breathing.

Fifty Years of Making Music Together

Preserving tradition never meant staying in one musical lane.

Around 1980, Smith began expanding the chorus's repertoire to include Broadway, jazz and popular music. He wanted to give singers with different musical backgrounds opportunities to share their talents.

And Toledo got to hear the results.



Clarence Smith



The chorus at rehearsal



The chorus has performed with the Toledo Symphony Orchestra, Toledo Opera, Toledo Jazz Orchestra and other respected organizations. It has participated in productions of Aida and Porgy and Bess, performed with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra during a Black Music Symposium at the University of Michigan, and welcomed local musicians, university ensembles, church choirs and school groups to its programs.

For Smith, collaboration has always been central to the mission.

It is about showcasing local talent, creating artistic opportunities and reminding the community that music is something people can build together.

Over the decades, the chorus has performed in countless churches and venues, growing to approximately 45 to 50 members at its largest.

The stages have changed. The musical styles have expanded. But the purpose remains.

The Man Behind the Music

Smith's journey as a teacher and director has been shaped by the people who taught him long before he ever stood in front of his own choir.

He remembers piano teacher Jessie Kyle, whose strict lessons left an unforgettable impression. During his first lesson, a mistake earned him a tap across the knuckles with her famous metal ruler. He went home determined never to return. His mother encouraged him to try again, and he continued studying with Kyle until he was about 16.

Then there was David Carter, his mentor at Scott High School, whose influence extended far beyond music.

Clarence Smith eventually returned to Scott as its choir director, spending approximately 16 years teaching students and developing young musicians.

Looking back on five decades of leading adults, he recognizes that working with people brings both joy and challenges.

"People are people," he says. "And when they come, they bring their whole self to it."

For Smith, the experience has been a blessing. His natural inclination toward teaching has allowed him to do what he loves while giving others a place to discover and share their gifts.

A Christmas Concert That Moves You

If Smith has one expectation for audiences, it is that they leave feel-

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The Truth

FINANCIAL



NANBPWC Maumee Bay Club's Entrepreneurship Workshop

By Dawn Scotland

Assistant Editor

The Maumee Bay Club of NANBPWC, Inc. hosted "Entrepreneurship: Let Your Present Income Build Your Future" on Wednesday, November 11 at 11:30 a.m. at the Local 12 UAW Hall on 2300 Ashland Ave. The event featured six expert panelists who spoke to the community about ways to make their money work for them.

Maumee Bay Club presented an engaging program with local community entrepreneurs designed to open up new opportunities, share strategies for becoming self-made, and help build a financial legacy portfolio. The free event on Veterans Day included lunch and free resources.

Marsha Hill, coordinator of the event remarked, "This event is a part of our yearly community service…each of [the panelists] today are experts in their fields, and each of them are very committed to extending themselves to educate our community on creating a second stream of income."

She continued, "because pensions are not existent anymore. For young people who are right now working for a living wage to make their money work for them, it would be good for them to be in attendance at our workshop."



The panelists included Erik Johnson (Ivy Entrepreneur Institute), Olivia Holden (Assets Toledo), Ebony Carter (VZN Management), Rickie Willis (Huntington National Bank) and Rob Pasker (Pasker Real Estate and Auctions). TaTiana Cash, news anchor at WTOL11, served as mistress of ceremonies for the event. Each panelist spoke for 15-20 with five minutes for question and answers.

The Maumee Bay Club of NANBPWC, Inc. is a dynamic group of educators, business owners, corporate executives and other professionally licensed women committed to improving the quality of life for the citizens of Lucas County. The Maumee Bay Club has a proven record of developing quality programming. Since 1983, their efforts have focused on educational excellence, supporting entrepreneurial opportunities, issues affecting youth and young adults, and economic empowerment for all citizens.

The Maumee Bay Club exists to promote the interests of business and professional women, to provide charitable activities to enrich the community, and to provide engaging programming to address the needs of youth and young adults in the community. The Maumee Bay Club's signature program is the HBCU College Tour. For more than 20 years the organization has taken a select group of Toledo Area High School students to visit Historically Black Colleges and Universities all over the country. (source: www.maumeebayclub.org)

To learn more visit their website www.maumeebayclub.org or social media pages @MaumeeBayClub

The National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc. founded in 1935, emerged as a national non-profit organization in light of the need to promote and protect the interests of women business owners and professionals; to serve as a bridge for young people seeking to enter business and the professions; to improve the quality of life in the local and global communities; and to foster good fellowship. (source: nanbpwc.org)



Marsha Hill, event coordinator



Panelists and event committee



Rob Pasker, Olivia Holden, Rickie Willis, Ebony Carter, Erik Johnson



Maumee Bay Club members Pattie Posten, Trevor Black and Dr. Brenda Holsey





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The Small Business Networking Opportunities & Connections Event

Special to The Truth

Toledo-area small business owners, entrepreneurs and aspiring business leaders were able to attend Small Business Networking Opportunities & Connections, a free community networking event on Thursday, November 12, at the Glass City Enrichment Center on Front Street.

The event enabled local businesses not only to network with one another but also to interact with government agencies, community organizations, and economic development partners to forge connections, share resources and explore opportunities that support small business growth and entrepreneurship.

"Strong local economies are built through relationships, access to opportunities, and collaboration. When we bring businesses, community organizations, and resource partners together, we create pathways for entrepreneurs to grow, build capacity, and contribute to the economic vitality of our region," said Crystal Harris Darnell, director of Engagement for Lucas County.

Harris Darnell organized the event in recognition that small businesses play a vital role in strengthening local economies and creating jobs.



Crystal Harris Darnell







Participating organizations included the Ohio Department of Transportation, Lucas County, Metroparks Toledo, LISC Toledo, the University of Toledo APEX Accelerator, the Black Wall Street Community Development, the Ohio Department of Development Minority Business Assistance Center, Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce, Northwest Ohio Latino Alliance, Ohio Business Growth Alliance, Assets Toledo, Ohio Minority Supplier Development Council, Toledo African American Chamber of Commerce, and Women of Toledo.

Attendees had the opportunity to discover potential contracting, procurement and business development opportunities; connect directly with groups and agencies seeking to engage small and local businesses; learn about technical assistance, business coaching and resources to assist business growth; build relationships with entrepreneurs, business leaders and community partners; explore opportunities for collaboration, partnerships ans long-term economic

Trayvone Mathis: An Architect Making Plans to Aid Small Businesses

By Fletcher Word

The Truth Editor



Trayvone Mathis

There aren't many licensed Black architects in the Toledo area, or in the United States for that matter. Only about two percent of licensed architects in the US are Black, and in Toledo there is only one, according to Trayvone Maurice Mathis. And according to Trayvone Mathis, he would be that one.

Mathis, a Toledo native and the founder and principal at the Sav'Ayn architecture firm, earned his license in July, after a number of years working as an apprentice, a designer and a project manager for other architectural firms. Those years of experience have already pointed him in the direction his firm will be taking. Now, says Mathis, he has "a lot of latitude to help small businesses."

"Before I was licensed, a lot of my clients were businesses that really couldn't afford a licensed architect, especially Black-owned businesses; I will be giving back to that client base that gave to me."

Mathis's focus is on commercial architecture, especially multi-location development. Helping small businesses to open and to expand is a key element of his vision for the future. Already as a designer and licensed architect, he has worked with banks and chains such as Walmart in their expansion projects, he notes. He wants to work with small businesses in much the same manner.

"Small businesses don't understand how to expand," he says. "We can help them expand because we can manage the rollout."

That's the difference that Sav'Ayn can make. "It's a simple model with a powerful impact in our community's well being; in our community's well being," he adds.

Mathis's dream to become an architect began at a relatively young age. As a young athlete, a boxer, he had the opportunity to travel around the country with his squad. On one such occasion, he saw an A-Frame house with a glass front. He was so impressed with the look, he asked his coach how one could acquire such a structure. His coach suggested he learn how to build it.

On his return to Toledo, and Start High School, he did just that. He entered the architecture and trade class and started designing, and started winning competitions. Upon entering college, Bowling Green State University, he spent five years working as an intern at SSOE Group.

He opened his own business, Sav'Ayn ("because I'm from the savannah") in 2017, and after earning his architecture license this past summer, began a partnership with an architect in the Washington, D.C. area and a designer in Indiana. They are licensed to practice in Ohio and Wisconsin and are capable of operating in six or seven other states as well, he says.

As an architect, he also envisions setting up a business accelerator to provide startups with ideas and providing them with expertise to help them grow. And he is willing to establish unpaid relationships to make that vision work, since most startups would not have the funds to pay an architect.

Mathis's plan to aid small businesses is to offer one pro bono package a year and three discounted packages to small businesses to aid in the design/building/architecture needs.

"The biggest obstacle to owning a successful business, is not oppression or barriers that are external, it's the knowledge and experience that you need behind you to learn how to navigate the road … a lot of the community doesn't encourage us to have the financial knowledge/credit knowledge. But there's a path forwards for real business ownership for people who are serious about it and that is what Sav'Ayn is here to spread. It's in our best interest for as many people as possible to learn how to start a business, how to maintain a business, how to scale up."

The long-range goal is to manage major store rollouts. "We will be taking a small store to the next level and ack as the program manager, an accelerator in the community, a place where small businesses can come to get help to level up," he says of where Sav'Ayn will be in the next decade or so.

Let's Talk About Money: Knowledge, Conversations and Generational Wealth

By Keva Sturdevant

The Truth Contributor

I'm a native of Toledo, Ohio, who, after graduating from high school, I decided to take a chance and move to Washington, D.C. in 1986 (following my high school sweetheart who was already living there). Looking back, that decision became one of the most defining experiences of my life.

My journey in Washington was extraordinary. Honestly, I wish everyone could experience the opportunities I encountered. Washington was a place where the streets were paved with opportunity. Jobs were plentiful, there were professional relationships to build, powerful people to meet, and doors that could open simply because you were willing to walk into a room and introduce yourself. Those rooms led me to major Wall Street Firms such as Merrill Lynch and Morgan Stanley.

But what I learned during those years went far beyond professional advancement. I learned how money works, how relationships can help you get where you're trying to go, and how important it is to surround yourself with people who are willing to share their knowledge and experiences.

There's another side to that, though. Relationships shouldn't be just about what someone can do for you. They should also be about what you're willing to do for someone else. I've always believed that when we share information, create opportunities and help one another move forward, everybody wins! This led to my departure from the corporate world in 2008, to hang out my own shingle and focus my financial planning practice on the everyday working person.

I am the founder of KS Summit Consulting, LLC and I bring more than 30 years of practical experience in the financial planning arena. Over those years, I've had the opportunity to work with individuals, families in various tax brackets. I've also had the privilege of providing financial wellness to the employees of the NFL and hosted a radio show titled "Healthy, Wealthy & Wise." While I am honored to have experienced being in rooms I'd never thought I'd be, what brings me the most joy is helping a client bring their financial dreams to life.

Why Financial Education Matters To Me

I've learned that one of the greatest obstacles to building wealth isn't always a lack of money. Sometimes, it's a lack of information, access and the confidence to ask the right questions.

I have witnessed countless times how an average person can accumulate wealth over time. How do they do it? They work with a trusted professional who will take the time to fully understand where they are trying to go financially and build a blueprint to get them there.

Because I didn't grow up with a lot of money. My family did the very best they could for me and I never went without, and I wouldn't trade that foundation for anything. But as I grew older and began navigating the financial world, I came to understand that there was so much about money that everyday working people simply weren't being taught.

And that's something I've never forgotten and there is one thing I know for certain is that every day working people deserve access to the same quality of financial information and guidance that is often available to those who have already accumulated wealth.

Too often, people are making important financial decisions without having all the information they need. Not because they aren't capable of understanding it, but because no one has taken the time to explain their options, answer their questions or help them develop a strategy that makes sense for their lives.

That's something I care deeply about changing.

I believe that with the right information, proper guidance and a willingness to take action, people can make meaningful progress toward their financial goals. Whether you're trying to get out of debt, prepare for retirement, protect what you've worked hard to build or create a financial legacy for your family, you deserve to understand your options.

My goal is to help make that information more accessible and more empowering. I want my readers to know that financial success isn't reserved for a select few. You are capable of accomplishing far more than you may realize, and you don't have to figure everything out on your own.

Money touches nearly every chapter of our lives. From that first paycheck to buying a home, raising a family, sending children to college, preparing for retirement, or thinking about what we'll leave behind, our financial decisions have consequences that can last for generations.

And those decisions deserve thoughtful attention.

I am particularly passionate about generational wealth because I believe we have an opportunity to change not only our own financial futures but also the futures of our children and grandchildren. That begins with education, planning, and a willingness to do things differently.

What readers can expect from my monthly column.

My goal is to bring you relatable, easy-to-read, educational conversations about money. We'll talk about managing cash flow, reducing debt, getting your financial house in order, preparing for retirement, understanding investment risk, paying for college, protecting what you've worked hard to build and creating generational wealth for your children and grandchildren.

Every article will have one purpose: to give you information that helps you make more informed financial decisions. I don't believe financial conversations have to be complicated to be meaningful. And I don't believe anyone should feel that their financial goals are beyond their reach simply because they don't know where to begin.

So our first discussion, in the December16 issue of The Truth, will focus on getting your financial affairs in order. In January the topic will be – retirement is more than just a number. And in February we will have a conversation about your relationship with money.

I look forward to our time together each month.



Keva Sturdevant







Perryman....continued from page 3

many people run, one can win with a small slice of the vote. The real test comes when the process narrows down to two candidates. In my view, three groups decide that in Toledo: the unions, the business community, and the Black community. Win two, and you have a chance. Win all three, and you are mayor.

Who Is in the Mix

Williams would start with the seat in hand and a lot of ground to cover. She would have to win over all three groups, and fast.

Other names are flying around town. Councilman Sam Melden comes up first, with talk that the political establishment has been grooming him as Wade's heir apparent. Whether he wants the job, no one I trust can say. He also works for TARTA, and one source says that giving up council and that paycheck for the mayor's salary might not add up. But power has led people to do things that don't add up on paper.

Lucas County Commissioner Pete Gerken is well known, highly capable and deeply influential. He also has critics who have not forgotten old and current fights.

Then there is County Commissioner Anita Lopez, who ran for mayor in 2013 and finished third in the primary. She came to that race with a long record. An attorney, she started at the Toledo Fair Housing Center and later directed the city's purchasing and contract compliance office. Voters made her county recorder in 2004, then county auditor in 2006, the first woman to hold that job. In 2024, she became the county's first Latina commissioner, appointed and then elected. Supporters point to her ties to business, unions and the Black community.

None of the potential candidates is talking. Some may be waiting to see whether the mayor's phone rings.

Why the Seat Matters

The mayor's office is the most powerful job in Lucas County. The mayor runs the administration and makes most of the day-to-day decisions. Council controls the purse strings, but the mayor decides how the city runs. Whoever holds it shapes housing, policing, jobs, and how Toledo competes for families deciding where to live.

Who Gets the Spotlight?

The mayor says there is nothing to discuss, and he may be right. But ambitious candidates are already counting, and voters should count too.

After the 2020 election, Brittany Packnett Cunningham said organizers of color were working so their communities could have "not just a seat at the table, but to be a real priority." That is our question from here on: What do we get for delivering our support? If the answer is not policy, a budget line, resources, and equity, we are not interested.

The community will decide who gets this office. The seat belongs to those who show up.

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

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Tolliver...continued from page 3

with it as if their pants were on fire.

The damages, both seen and unseen, that was done to so many institutions including the military and public services will be astounding once the evidence is gathered and told to the American people.

Spineless people such as Marco Rubio and JD Vance who both did a dramatic about face when first talking about Trump and then dramatically reversing course for their chance to grab the golden ring of being a possible presidential candidate, should be publicly shamed out of public office.

Elon Musk should be denied any entry into any federal contracts and access to any governmental records for his starring role in trying to buy the Texas election with hundreds of millions of dollars.

I trust that the mainstream media reporters and podcasters will regain their footing and not give Trump an inch of room with the tough questions he needs to answer. Don't let him hide behind a lot of huff and puff.

Intimidate him and demand answers and when he tries to duck and hide, search him and ask the same questions again.

It will be quite interesting to see how Trump deals with a Democratic congress and if he repeatedly uses his veto powers to even block beneficial legislation that will improve the lot of the MAGA base.

Todd Blanche, the supplicant head of the DOJ, is already trying to head feint the democrats into believing that if they mount investigative oversight against Trump and others, he will deem it criminal behavior! Go figure.

Contact Lafe Tolliver at lafe5x@gmail.com



Fifty Years....continued from page 7

ing something.

He doesn't want concertgoers sitting stiffly in their seats, afraid to breathe between notes. He wants them comfortable, welcomed and fully immersed in the experience.

He has a philosophy he shares with his singers: The music must communicate. It must reach people.

And this December, there will be plenty to experience.

The anniversary Christmas concert will feature talented chorus members and soloists, special guest vocalist Jean Holden, and the Sylvania Community Orchestra. The program will also premiere a newly commissioned arrangement of a spiritual titled *Hold the Wind (Don't Let It Blow),* arranged by Dr. Brandon Waddles, a college professor, conductor and former music director of the touring production of *The Wiz.*

The chorus will also continue one of its longstanding traditions: inviting the audience to join in a Christmas sing-along.

So don't be surprised if a room full of listeners suddenly becomes a room full of singers. A little harmony, a familiar melody and the sound of people singing together can make even the biggest room feel like home.

Smith hopes guests leave ready for the holidays, carrying that Christmas feeling long after the final note fades.

"They ought to be looking for someplace to hang up Christmas lights when they get home," he says with a laugh.

The celebration also looks ahead. The chorus is already preparing for its spring concert, which will feature the Toledo Symphony Chamber Orchestra.

And for anyone who has ever considered singing, Smith has another invitation: the chorus is always looking for additional singers.

Fifty years is a remarkable achievement. But perhaps the most beautiful part of Clarence Smith's story is that he isn't treating this anniversary like a final curtain call.

He is still making room for new voices.

Because Black history isn't only found in textbooks, monuments or photographs hanging on a wall. Sometimes it lives in the voices of ordinary people

... continued on page 13

Arlington: An African American History by William A. Blair

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

The Truth Contributor

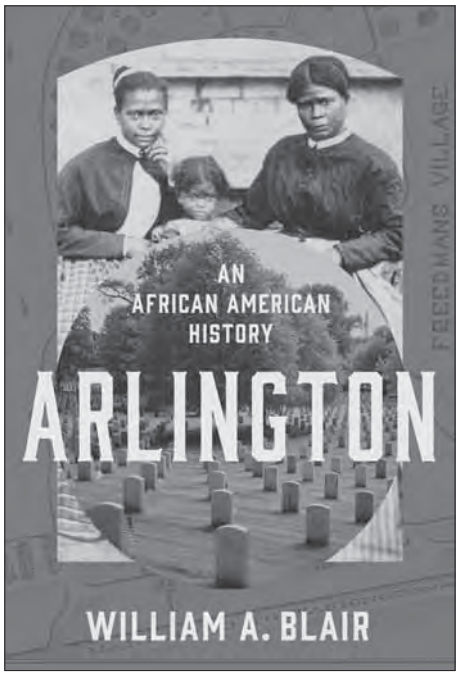
c. 2026
University of North Carolina Press
$27.95
246 pages

The tombstones line up at attention, like the soldiers beneath them once did.

Thousands of fallen warriors, in fact, lay as far as you can see in this hallowed place, on these hallowed grounds. Arlington National Cemetery is known for honoring its dead. And as in the new book ***Arlington: An African American History*** **by William A. Blair,** it was once a home for the living.

In the year 1802, following the death of George Washington, the great man's adopted grandson, George Washington Parke Custis moved his household to the top of a bluff near Washington, DC. The 1100-acre tract there was only part of what Custis had inherited; at age 21, he'd received thousand of acres, and somewhere around 200 slaves.

He brought fewer than half of them with him to that land, later called Arlington.



Once the house was built, Custis set about running a "gentleman's farm that allowed the owner to dabble in a variety of agriculture pursuits," mainly crops of vegetables and flowers grown by the "unfree" people there. These were people who lived, ten at a time, in cabins of up to 350 square feet, and who worked in either Custis's fields or his house. Custis was said to be a loose manager, allowing certain small liberties for his slaves, careless with paperwork and money management.

When Custis died, his property passed to his children; his son-in-law, Robert E. Lee, became the executor of Custis' estate, which was messy. By then, rumors claimed that Custis's "unfree" people were to be freed, but the courts denied Lee's efforts and there was a rebellion. Lee reportedly ordered a whipping for three people who tried to escape.

That story, true or not, continued to follow Lee after the Civil War.

By then, a thriving community had been established on Arlington grounds, a secure home for former slaves, refugees, their families, and a resting place for their dead, who lay today in a segregated section in hallowed ground.

In both his introduction and his final words, author William A Blair mourns the loss of history on Arlington's grounds, and the wrong done to the people who toiled there. You will, too, when you read Arlington: An African American History.

While this is absolutely an account based in fact, documents, long-done interviews and public record, Blair's narrative often feels like a novel, as he makes the "unfree" people at Arlington come alive, starting decades before their emancipation. Readers are given a good timeline for their everyday lives, and for Freedman's Village, which came later and is now little more than dust. The outrages that happened to make it so are still vivid in Blair's telling, and the rest of the story, one that takes us almost to the twentieth century, will make you sad.

If you're planning a visit to Arlington National Cemetery soon, read this book before you go, for a more-rounded visit. Or if you enjoy lesser-told tales in history, *Arlington: An African American History* should get your attention.

Fifty Years....continued from page 12

who refuse to let a beautiful tradition fade away.

It lives in the spirituals our ancestors sang, the melodies passed down through families, and the people who keep showing up to sing them.

For five decades, Clarence Smith has helped Toledo hear that history.

And the music is still playing.

Celebrate 50 years of music and Black history with the Clarence Smith Community Chorus on December 5 at Friendship Baptist Church! Get concert details and tickets here





PUBLIC NOTICE

The City of Toledo announces the availability of federal funding for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), and HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) for the 2027 Program Year (July 1, 2027 - June 30, 2028), subject to the availability of funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

For all CDBG-, ESG-, and HOME-funded projects that include construction, rehabilitation, or other covered labor, projects selected for funding will be reviewed by the City's Purchasing Division to determine whether the following requirements are applicable based on the final project scope, cost, and funding sources:

• Prevailing Wage and Labor Standards: Requirements may include the Davis-Bacon and Related Acts (DBRA), Ohio Revised Code Chapter 4115, and applicable provisions of the Toledo Municipal Code.
• Performance Bond: Where required, the performance bond must equal 100% of the construction contract amount.
• Project Labor Agreement: Projects may be subject to the Project Labor Agreement requirements of Toledo Municipal Code § 187.12(d).

Applicants should account for all applicable requirements above when developing their proposed project budgets. Selected applicants/subrecipients will be responsible for compliance with all requirements determined applicable to their awarded projects.

CDBG Applications will be accepted with a funding priority for the following programs/activities:

Programs/Activities
Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Areas (NRSAs)
• Housing Preservation
• Adaptive reuse of existing structures for housing
• New Housing Construction (if performed by a Community Based Development Organization (CBDO))
• STEM Center
• Urban Agriculture

Housing Preservation (non-NRSAs)

Public Service
• Youth Programs
• Food Pantries
• Health Services
• Legal Services
• Community Gardens

Eligible applicants: 501(c)3 organizations, other nonprofits, government agencies, and certified Community Based Development Organizations (CBDOs). **New applicants must have participated in or be registered for the Toledo Neighborhood Capacity Building Institute and attended the CDBG or ESG application workshops with the Department of Housing and Community Development.**

NOTE: Special consideration will be given to Public Service and New Construction activities in the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Areas (NRSAs) when implemented by a Department of Housing and Community Development certified Community Based Development Organization (CBDO).

ESG/CDBG applications from Homeless Service Providers will be considered, with funding prioritized for the following project components.

Project Components
Access and Prevention (AP)
Emergency Shelter (ES)
Rapid-Rehousing (RRH)
Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)
Transitional Housing (TH)
Street Outreach (SO)

REGISTRATION AND ATTENDANCE AT THE MANDATORY APPLICATION MEETING IS REQUIRED TO APPLY FOR FUNDING AND RECEIVE THE APPLICATION LINK:

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
(for Non-Homeless Service Providers)
Friday, January 8, 2027
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Toledo/Lucas County Public Library
Large Glass Community Room
325 N. Michigan Street
Toledo, OH 43604

Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)
(for Homeless Service Providers)
Friday, January 8, 2027
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Toledo/Lucas County Public Library
Large Glass Community Room
325 N. Michigan Street
Toledo, OH 43604

Open office hours will be available for CDBG general questions for NEW APPLICANTS ONLY as follows:

Wednesday, January 20, 2027, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Department of Housing and Community Development
One Government Center, Suite 1800
Downtown Toledo, Jackson & Erie Streets

THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING CDBG AND ESG APPLICATIONS IS FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2027 AT 4:45 P.M.

HOME applications will be accepted from certified City of Toledo Community Housing and Development Organizations (CHDOs) and non-CHDOs for the following projects that demonstrate a gap in financing, address the City of Toledo's affordable and special populations' homeownership needs, and leverage HOME funds with other funding sources.

Projects
Construction/Rehabilitation of Homebuyer Units (CHDO)
HOME Owner Rehabilitation Program Management

HOME NOFA Workshop
Friday, January 22, 2027, 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Zoom Link: https://toledo-oh-gov.zoom.us/j/84005002713

THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING THE HOME APPLICATION IS FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2027 AT 4:45 P.M.

COMPLETED APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED THROUGH ZOOMGRANTS

FOR CDBG/ESG: For additional information, please contact Monica Adams, Community Planning and Development Grants Manager, at Monica_R.Adams@toledo.oh.gov

FOR HOME: For additional information, please contact Steven Powell, Housing Manager, at Steven.Powell@toledo.oh.gov

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
FIRE SYSTEMS TESTING, INSPECTIONS, AND MAINTENANCE SERVICES
RFP26-R011

Lucas Metropolitan Housing (LMH) will receive proposals for **Fire Systems Testing, Inspections, and Maintenance Services in accordance with RFP26-R011.** Received in accordance with law until **November 23, 2026, at 3:00 PM EST.** 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

Beta Gamma Chapter's Calla Lily Educator's Award Luncheon

The Truth Staff

The members of Phi Delta Kappa Sorority, Inc, Beta Gamma Chapter of Toledo Ohio, held their annual Calla Lily Educator's Award Luncheon on Saturday, November 7, at the Heatherdowns Country Club, and six local educators were honored for their contributions to the community. Three of the six were presented with the esteemed 2026 Calla Lily Award.

The program began with the procession of the honorees before the mistress of ceremony, Julie Flowers, opened the proceedings. Lunch was served after the greeting from Jacqueline Quinn, president of the Beta Gamma Chapter, and the invocation by Lera Doneghy.

This year's honorees are Amerah Archer, PhD; Carmen Nathaniel; Michelle McCaster; Jenai Hicklin; Kimberly Barnett; Marguerite Dunston.

Archer is an educational leader, entrepreneur and community advocate dedicated to educational equity, leadership development and wellness. She is the founder of Eden & Co, co-founder of empower Her Legacy, Inc, and deputy executive director in Detroit Public Schools. A former Toledo Public Schools administrator, she holds a PhD in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Toledo.

Nathaniel is an early childhood educator and co-founder of Cardan Montessori Center. Cardan now serves more than 80 children and has earned Ohio's highest Step Up To Quality Gold Rating.

McCaster's Groomed for Greatness empowers girls in grades 1-5 through mentoring, reading and math readiness, etiquette and character development. College tours, cultural experiences and international services projects broaden their horizons.

Hicklin is a community leader, ordained minister and mentor with more than 30 years of service to youth, families and underserved communities. She founded New Leaf Group in 2015 to address food insecurity and to empower youth through basketball camps and STEM programs.

Barnett is a second and third grade teacher at the Old West End Academy with more than 27 years of service in education. Her leadership extends to school committees, colleague support and mentoring young women as a volunteer with Young Women of Excellence Advisor at Ella P. Stewart Academy for Girls.

Dunston is an Intervention specialist and Special Education Resource teacher at TPS with more than 25 years of classroom experience. She helps students build positive behaviors, achieve academic goals and recognize their potential through individualized instruction and strong student-family partnerships.

The Beta Gamma Chapter, in addition to honoring six educators, also presented several other special awards. Two scholarships, in the amount of $1,000 each, were presented to college students Liah Spearman and Kennedy Powell.

Three Gamma Beta sorors – Amerah Archer, Kimberly Barnett and Michelle McCaster – were named 2026 Calla Lily Award winners.

Linda Collins, Julie Flowers and Tina Hall, event committee members, offered closing remarks.

National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, Inc. (NSPDK) is a nonprofit, educational sorority founded by eight educators desiring to establish a sisterhood among teachers and promote the highest ideals of the teaching profession. NSPDK was the idea of Gladys Merritt Ross, who, on Good Friday, March 30, 1923, convened a group of young teachers from Jersey City Normal School in Jersey City, New Jersey to discuss the idea of forming a sorority.

The eight founders are Gladys Merritt Ross (Mother Founder), Julia Asbury Barnes, Ella Wells Butler, Marguerite Gross, Florence Steele Hunt, Edna McConnell, Gladys Cannon Nunery and Mildred Morris Williams.



Honorees Michelle McCaster, Amerah Archer, PhD, Carmen Nathaniel, Marguerite Dunston, Jenai Hicklin, Kimberly Barnett



Scholarship recipients Liah Spearman and Kennedy Powell with Beta Gamma officers



Beta Gamma sorors



Beta Gamma Xinos and Kudos Club Ushers

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The Realtists' President's Ball

By Fletcher Word

The Truth Editor

The Greater Toledo Realtists Association held their fifth annual banquet on Saturday, November 7 at the Gesu Sullivan Center, a black tie event featuring a catered dinner, open bar, casino tables, raffles & prizes and the recognition of an outstanding community leader.



GTRA Presisdent DeLisa Moore receives City Council recognition Plaque from Councilwomen Cerssandra McPherson and Vanice Williams



Toledo Urban Federal Credit Union staff, officers and associates

The realtists were joined by community leaders, elected officials, business owners – almost 300 guests – virtually all spectacularly dressed befitting the occasion.

Rhonda Whitty and Chris Keller served as MC's for the event and guided the guests through an evening designed to recognize and honor not only the community leader but the realtists themselves who are striving to make an important economic impact in the community.

"A little grace, a little glam and a whole lot of gratitude," said GTRA President De'Lisa Moore of the feeling so many attendees shared of the evening's event.

The evening was a celebration of what the realtists have accomplished in the few short years since the group was resurrected after several decades of inactivity. Those accomplishments include not only their individual growth as brokers within the real estate industry but also the efforts being made by the group to increase homeownership within the greater Toledo area.

George Thomas, president of the Fair Housing Center – one of the sponsors of the evening's event – praised the GTRA for their commitment to improving homeownership. "Everything in your life is powerfully affected by your home," he told the attendees. "I thank the realtists for everything you do … realtists are getting people into homes."

The star of the evening, the honoree, was Suzette Rushing, executive director of the Wayman Palmer YMCA. Rushing was honored for all she has done to help the community at large, in particular such programs as the Y's food pantry.

Several realtists were also recognized for their efforts. Keyana Grace received the Rising Star Award; Blair Johnson was named the 2026 Realtist of the Year; Deborah Riley-Jackson was given the Community Champion Award; James Mann received the Spirit of GTRA Award and Eric Cree the Outstanding Volunteer Award.

The realtists' President De'Lisa Moore also introduced the new slate of officers and board members for the next year: President-elect Faye Smith; First Vice President-Elect Caitlyn Stuart; Secretary-Elect Brandy Blanco-Levally; Treasurer DeLise Simmons; Sergeant-at-Arms-elect Carmen Richardson and Chaplain Rhonda Whitty.

The new board of directors will include: Somica Alexander; Director-Elect Kyera Grret; Deon Davis; Alma Fesh; John Frank; Chris Keller; Sena Mourad-Friedman; Debbie Riley-Jackson and Neaira Williams.





Theresa M. Gabriel and DeLise Simmons





Lance and Arlinda Self_ Alicia and Nate Lawson



Presentation to Suzette Rushing



State Reps Josh Williams and Elgin Rogers



Suzette Rushing (center in red and black) and colleagues