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MISSISSIPPI STILL RUNS A DEBTORS PRISON



Operated like a Modern- Day Slave Plantation

It appears to be the only state where people are jailed while they work to pay off court-ordered debts. Mississippi's infamous Parchman Farm was modeled after a slave plantation. African Americans are disproportionately registered and punished, page 3.

Dr King, sports and music!

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There was a time when the aspiration of most Black Americans was either sports or music, as other vocations were closed or limited at best. As the old saying goes, if life deals you lemons, make lemonade. So, blacks like Joe Louis, Jackie Robinson and Berry Gordy ran with what they had to work with.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. understood the importance of instilling pride in the black communities just as Justice Thurgood Marshall did, preceding Dr. King's rise in the civil rights movement. Marshall – who was called "Mr. Civil Rights" – would invite blacks down to the courthouse to witness him

looking whites in the eye (a no-no at the time) and questioning them unabashedly.

Although Dr. King was not athletic, he was fascinated in 1947 when Jackie Robinson broke the racial barrier in major league baseball. Later, when Robinson began to speak out about civil rights, Dr. King, who by then had become the leader of the movement, supported Robinson stating, "[Robinson]... a pilgrim that walked in the lonesome byways toward the high road of Freedom. He was a sit-inner before sit-ins, a freedom rider before freedom rides." He also said, "Jackie Robinson made my success possible. Without him, I would never have been able to do what I did."



Dr. King understood the power of unions

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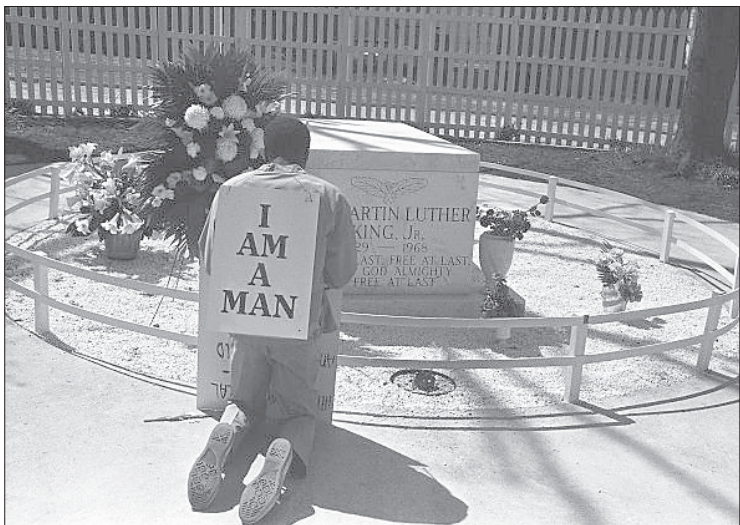
On what would have been his 91st birthday, we celebrate the towering legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.—his moral force as a faith leader, his devotion to nonviolent resistance and, of course, the sacrifices he made to end legalized segregation in the South.

But there is an often-overlooked aspect of his work: Dr. King was one of his era's most fearsome champions of working people coming together to organize, build power and improve their lives. Here is how he put it in a speech to the Illinois AFL-CIO convention in October 1965:

The labor movement was the

principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress. Out of its bold struggles, economic and social reform gave birth to unemployment insurance, old age pensions, government relief for the destitute, and, above all, new wage levels that meant not mere survival but a tolerable life.

Dr. King understood the union difference—the way that a voice on the job and a seat at the table empowers workers of all races. It means a bigger paycheck at the end of the week. It means better health benefits, so you can afford to see a doctor when you're sick. It means security in retirement when your working days are done. It means the basic dignity and respect you deserve.



"Through advertising, public events, partnerships and digital and traditional media, we are embarking on a nationwide effort to let everyone in the country know about the upcoming 2020 Census and encourage them to respond online, by phone or by mail," said Steven Dillingham, director of the Census Bureau. (Photo: iStockphoto / N

Census officials kick off \$250M ad campaign in Washington

By Stacy M. Brown, NNPA Newswire Senior Correspondent

The U.S. Census Bureau unveiled its \$500 million "Shape Your Future. Start Here," 2020 ad campaign on Tuesday, January 14, in Washington, D.C.

Nearly \$38 million – or approximately 16 percent – of the paid media budget is earmarked toward African American and black audiences.

The "Shape Your Future. Start Here," tagline is geared to helping underscore the notion that people can shape their future by respond-

ing to the 2020 Census.

At a news conference at Arena Stage in Washington, D.C., Census officials revealed that they would have more than 1,000 ads that target a range of demographics in 13 different languages. Those ads are projected to reach 99 percent of U.S. households.

"The 2020 Census is here and like we say in the ad: 'Across America, we all count,'" Steven Dillingham, director of the Census Bureau, stated at the news conference.

"The 2020 Census is your census, and its success depends on you. It's a once-in-a-decade

chance to inform how billions of dollars in funding are allocated for critical public services like hospitals and health care clinics, schools and education programs, roads and bridges, and emergency response for the next 10 years," Dillingham stated.

He continued: "Through advertising, public events, partnerships and digital and traditional media, we are embarking on a nationwide effort to let everyone in the country know about the upcoming 2020 Census and encourage them to respond

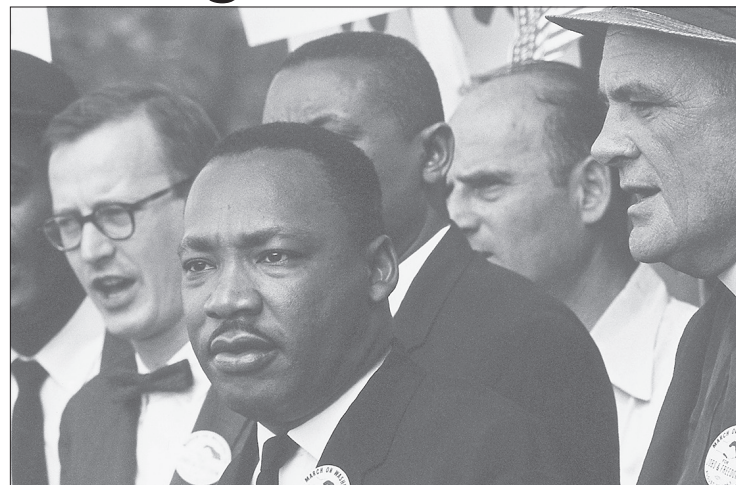
Continued on page 10

Renewing Martin Luther King's dream by renewing our minds

By Dr. Kelvin "Kelly" Wright

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind," a scripture reading from Romans 12:2.

Transformation is something the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Junior was in pursuit of. He was seeking to fulfill his God given dream to help lead all people to the promise land of true brotherhood. On this national holiday we observe the birthday



of Martin Luther King Jr., a drum major who followed the drumbeat of a different drum. He did not follow the world's cadence of anger, discord and violence but chose to operate in the unforced rhythm of God's grace to take a stand against racism, militarism, injustice and poverty. He sought to serve others in his quest to achieve equality in civil and economic rights for Black Americans, along with a demand for criminal justice reforms.

In 1963, I remember as a child sitting at home in Hagerstown, Maryland with my mother and grandmother in our living room watching a network news report on the March on Washington for Jobs and Justice. The report showed Dr. King delivering what would become a speech literally heard around the world and echoed throughout history, "I

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Blacks make up majority of inmates in Mississippi's debtors prison

By Stacy M. Brown,
NNPA Newswire Senior
Correspondent

Mississippi – a state described as having been suffocated by its history of racial prejudice – appears to be the only state where people are jailed while they work to pay off court-ordered debts.

An investigation led by The Marshall Project and the nonprofit Mississippi Today discovered that hundreds of Mississippi residents – the majority being black – were sentenced to the state's little-known restitution center.

"Basically, we discovered, Mississippi was running a modern-day debtors prison," reporters Anna Wolfe and Michelle Liu, wrote of their investigation.

With Mississippi's long and documented history of racism, the 14-month investigation found that African Americans are disproportionately punished – it's infamous state penitentiary known as Parchman Farm was modeled after a slave plantation.

Black people are overrepresented at restitution centers, accounting for 49 percent of inmates, compared with 38 percent of the state's population, the investigation found.

More than 60 percent of people in prison in Mississippi are black.

"The American legal system captures the poor and black and twists them in conundrums that punish them beyond any criminal act," Attorney Kisha A. Brown, founder of Justis Connection, told NNPA Newswire.

"As a black person, we have less access to legal resources than our white counterparts, and this has dire consequences on our physical and financial security," Brown stated.

The Mississippi investigation began on what Wolfe and Liu called an unlike tip: a woman in state prison was also working at McDonald's – and not voluntarily.

The reporters then found Dixie D'Angelo, a woman with court-ordered debts of \$5,000 because



she damaged a friend's car. "She had been sentenced to something called a restitution center, where she worked four different restaurant jobs to try to earn enough to pay off her debts and get out of jail," they stated.

Ultimately, Wolfe and Liu found that hundreds of people were in similar situations.

They said they met with inmates and their employers across Mississippi, beginning at fast-food restaurants around Jackson, traveling to the Mississippi Delta and the Gulf Coast.

Half the people living in the centers had debts of less than \$3,515. Though in arrears on fines and court fees, many didn't need to pay restitution at all – at least 20 percent of the more than 200 people discovered in the investigation was convicted of drug possession.

However, inmates spent an average of nearly four months – and up to five years – at the centers, working at low-wage, and sometimes dangerous jobs, like slaughtering chickens or gutting catfish at processing plants.

Private citizens also hire them to work as handymen and landscapers at their homes.

Inmates found that their costs continued to balloon since they had to pay for room and board at the centers, transportation to their jobs, and medical care.

"They didn't get paid much," the investigators wrote in their report. "Between 2016 and 2018, workers at the centers made an average of \$6.76 an hour in take-home pay."

When inmates can't get jobs, sometimes for medical reasons,

they sit in the centers, accruing \$330 a month in room and board costs, according to the investigators.

Further, just a quarter of all money earned by the inmates went to pay restitution, with the remainder going to the corrections department and the courts. In some cases, the courts added unrelated debts, such as child support. One man's charge for meth possession turned into debt totaling \$72,500, the investigation found.

Mississippi officials declined to comment.

"Debtors prisons are an effective way of collecting money – as is kidnapping," Cliff Johnson, director of the MacArthur Justice Center at the University of Mississippi, told investigators.

"But there are constitutional, public policy and moral barriers to such regime," he stated.

The American people "would be horrified if they knew of just how many laws still exist which send poor people to prison over their inability to pay fines, court costs, and related expenses," Matt C. Pinsker, an adjunct professor of the Homeland Security & Criminal Justice Department at the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs at Virginia Commonwealth University, told NNPA Newswire.

"It is a tragedy and absurdity that we still essentially have debtors prisons here in the United States of America," Pinsker stated.

To view the full report, including the extensive data acquired by The Marshall Project and Mississippi Today, click here.



States sue to stop changes to Food Stamps Program

NorthStarNewsToday
(TriceEdneyWire.com) –

Fourteen states and the District of Columbia have filed a federal lawsuit to prevent the Trump Administration from cutting off nearly 700,000 Americans from participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program under new, more restrictive guidelines they have proposed that will take effect later this year.

The lawsuit filed by the state attorneys general seeks a preliminary injunction to prevent the rule from going into effect on April 1, 2020.

The lawsuit challenges a U.S. Department of Agriculture rule that would limit states' ability to extend SNAP or Food Stamp benefits. The changes propose a three-month time limit for SNAP benefits for jobless individuals 18 to 49 who are not disabled or raising children.

In addition, the coalition charges that the rule undermines Congress' intent for SNAP and that the USDA violated the federal rule-making process.

New York, California, Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, Oregon, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia and the District of Columbia are coalition members.

The states sued the United States Department of Agriculture and George Perdue III, the department's secretary, in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

On July 24, the Trump Administration proposed changing the way states calculate who is eligible to receive SNAP benefits.

The federal government pays the full cost of SNAP benefits but shares the cost of administering it on a 50-50 basis. According to the Department of Agriculture's proposed rule, people with a gross income of \$16,000 or with assets of more than \$2,500, would no longer qualify for SNAP benefits.

SNAP benefits provide the largest nutritional safety net, feeding 37 million Americans. People who are SNAP eligible receive \$127 or about \$1.39 per meal in SNAP benefits.

Nearly 9 million African Americans receive food stamps each month, which is 25 percent of the black population, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a Washington, D.C., progressive think tank that analyzes federal and state budget policies.

"Denying access to vital SNAP benefits would only push hundreds of thousands of already vulnerable Americans into greater economic uncertainty," said New York State's Attorney General Letitia James.

The states argued that the Trump administration's proposed changes:

- Contradicts statutory language and Congress's intent for the food-stamp program

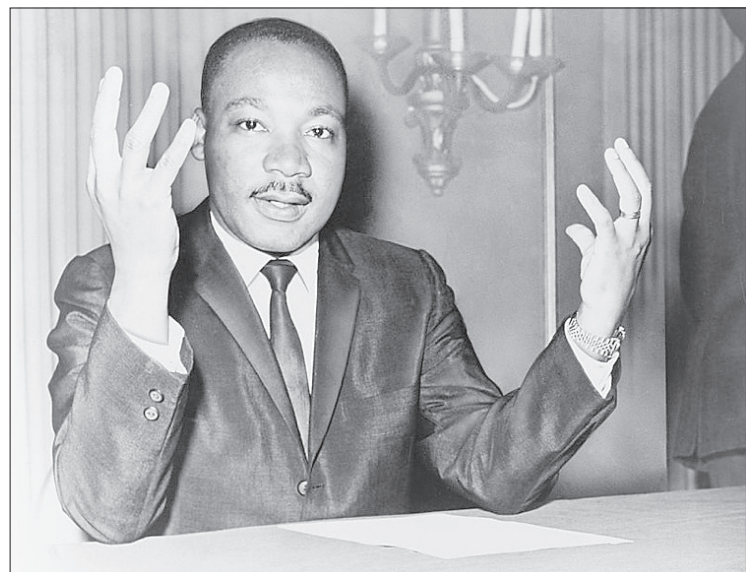
- Raises health care and homeless costs while lowering economic activity in the states

- Amends the law for arbitrary and capricious reasons

- Violates the federal rule-making process

The SNAP benefits program was established in 1964. Congress amended the program in 1996 to encourage greater workforce participation among recipients.

Upon MLK holiday week, struggle against violence, for economic justice, racial equality undermines Black leadership



Dr. King's plea for unity appears to be the answer

By Hazel Trice Edney

– As America paused on Monday, January 20, to commemorate and reflect on the life and principles of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the three most essential aspects of the revered civil rights leader's work – economic justice, racial equality and strategic non-violence – remained among the foremost civil rights issues across America.

Moreover, despite talk by civil rights leaders, organizations and activists, African-Americans have

yet to unify enough to significantly impact public policies or attitudes that lead to tangible change.

"It is essential to American survival," said Marc Morial, president/CEO of the National Urban League, a foremost civil rights organization with an economic agenda. "This issue is an issue of morality, an issue of historic positioning. An issue that has to touch each and every person, each and every institution, because ... we have to get it right."

Speaking during a forum at Johns Hopkins University last year, Morial, according to the university's Hub News, said that 400 years after the beginning of slavery and more than 50 years since the civil rights movement, America is bare-

ly turning the corner on its historic racism. And what's more, even civil rights leaders are still trying to figure out how best to make impact.

In his final days, Dr. King not only articulated his vision for economic empowerment, racial parity and peace, but he gave the strategy of unity as the key to achieving them all.

"We've got to stay together and maintain unity. You know, whenever Pharaoh wanted to prolong the period of slavery in Egypt, he had a favorite, favorite formula for doing it. What was that? He kept the slaves fighting among themselves. But whenever the slaves

Continued on page 5

Left launches bid to unify Sanders, Warren camps

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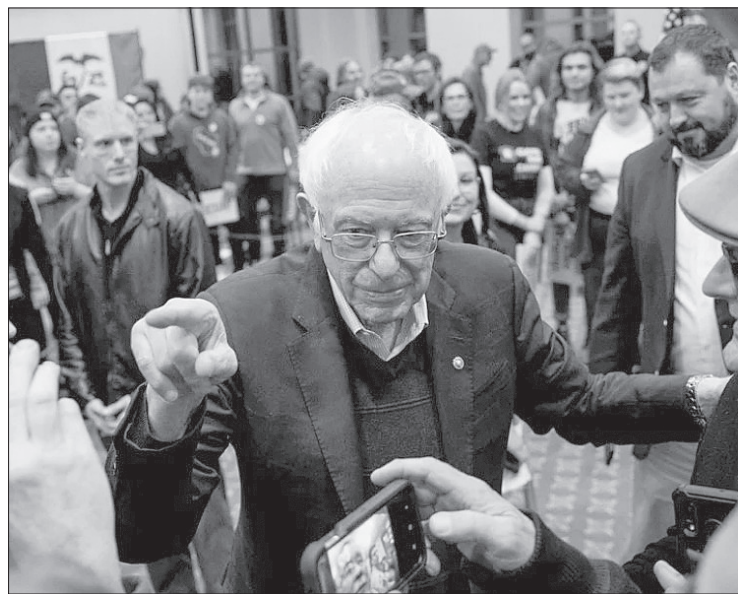
Alarmed by the burgeoning feud between Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, a coalition of progressive groups moved Thursday to de-escalate tensions between the two candidates' supporters, encouraging them to instead rally against moderate Democrats.

Launching what they called a "Progressives Unite 2020" campaign, the political action committee Democracy for America and 17 other groups pledged to "focus our fight for the nomination against candidates supported by the corporate wing, instead of fighting each other."

The effort reflects the desperation of many progressive Democrats to move past the sparring that has erupted in recent days between supporters of Sanders and Warren — and that flared again on Wednesday.

That evening, CNN released audio of a tense exchange between Sanders and Warren after the conclusion of the last presidential debate, on Tuesday in Iowa.

"I think you called me a liar on national TV," Warren told Sanders on stage, referring to a back-and-forth in which Warren accused Sanders of privately telling her a woman couldn't win the presidency, which he denied.



Stephen King speaks on diversity.

PhiladelphiaObserver.com

You know, maybe all the white Hollywood insiders just need to keep diversity's name out their mouths and just yield the floor to the writers, directors, and actors of color who actually have to deal with the lack thereof.

Iconic author Stephen King took to Twitter on Tuesday and came dangerously close to traveling in the footsteps of Tim Burton, who defended the lack of non-white actors in his films by saying "Things either call for things, or they don't," and, more recently, filmmaker Terry Gilliam,

who threw a whole hissy-fit over the prospect of Hollywood diversity.

King got up early in the morning to weigh in on the lack of diversity in this year's Oscar nominations by tweeting, "As a writer, I am allowed to nominate in just 3 categories: Best Picture, Best Adapted Screenplay, and Best Original Screenplay. For me, the diversity issue—as it applies to individual actors and directors, anyway—did not come up."

"That said..." he continues, "I would never consider diversity in matters of art. Only quality. It seems to me that to do otherwise would be wrong."



Ethiopia stops foreign adoptions

By Victor Omondi

Africa has been a destination continent for most foreigners not only for its beautiful scenery but also for its black children available for adoption. While other tourists visit Africa to have a nice time on the sandy beaches, some come to look for black children to absorb them into their families.

Unfortunately, this is no longer going to be allowed. Despite recording one of the highest numbers of adoptions within a decade, the government of Ethiopia is no longer going to allow foreigners to take in Ethiopian children. The ban has already been affected, and as we speak, no more adoptions by foreigners are taking place in Ethiopia.

While adoption has become popular across the globe, there are fears that it largely contributes to human trafficking. We've had cases of African children taken into some countries illegally by their foreign parents.

For instance, in 2016, Denmark banned adoptions from Ethiopia, claiming a lack of data on the origins of children adopted from the country could facilitate trafficking. Some countries have also laid down stringent rules for the international adoption process to avoid cases of human trafficking in the country. As such, the number of international adoptions may decline in the coming years.

As of March 2019, the US had already suspended adoptions from Ethiopia, supporting

the countries ban on foreign adoption. According to the Ethiopian government, it's the state's responsibility to take care of vulnerable children through the state's children's services. Even so, we aren't quite sure if the arrangement is sustainable as there are already many vulnerable children in the country.

The US is one of the countries that has been affected by the ban on international adoption. Annually, the US-based adoption agencies process thousands of adoption requests, connecting vulnerable African children with their foreign parents. However, ever since the ban, the numbers have subsided, and a negative trend is expected in the coming years.

St. Louis' top prosecutor files unprecedented lawsuit citing the city's racist conspiracy to block her criminal justice reform

St. Louis first Black female top prosecutor Circuit Attorney Kim Gardner is suing the city and the city's police union for what she calls a racist and coordinated conspiracy to get her out of office.

Gardner's complaint, filed in the Eastern District of Missouri on Monday, also cites the Ku Klux Klan Act of 1871, accusing city officials of violating the law meant to combat white supremacist organizations. Her suit marks the first time a local elected prosecutor has taken the police union to court over race-based civil rights violations.

"This isn't about Kim Gardner," she told ABC News' "Nightline" in a recent interview. "This is about certain individuals within these organizations that have gone beyond unprecedented amounts of coordination to stop



the will of the people. I had no choice but to act for the will of the people because they want me to fight for what's right."

"It's about the people, and that's why we have to fight," Gardner added. "Enough is enough."

As the city's first Black woman

top prosecutor, Gardner has made criminal justice reform a top priority. She put a diversion program in place for non-violent offenders struggling with drug addiction, and her office no longer prosecutes low-level marijuana crimes, according to the outlet.

Upon MLK holiday week, struggle against violence, for economic justice, racial equality undermines Black leadership

From page 3

get together, something happens in Pharaoh's court, and he cannot hold the slaves in slavery. When the slaves get together, that's the beginning of getting out of slavery. Now let us maintain unity," King said in his final speech on April 3, 1968, the evening before he was assassinated. "It's all right to talk about streets flowing with milk and honey, but God has commanded us to be concerned about the slums down here and his children who can't eat three square meals a day. It's all right to talk about the new Jerusalem, but one day, God's preacher must talk about the new New York, the new Atlanta, the new Philadelphia, the new Los Angeles, the new Memphis, Tennessee."

Nearly a half million Black people have been killed in street violence since the FBI began compiling the stats in the early 1970s. This does not count police violence against African-Americans.

Despite recent Nielsen reports of Black spending power having risen to \$1.2 trillion annually, African-Americans still remain at rock bottom of racial group wealth.

According to Forbes, White households have 86 times more wealth than Black households and 68 times more than Hispanics.

Racial disparities in every category—including economics, criminal justice, health, and education—can be laid squarely at the feet of

systemic racism, which are racial attitudes, policies and practices intrinsic across organizations, corporations and even government agencies that negatively affect racial equality.

Civil rights leaders and heads of major organizations, such as Morial, admit they have yet to even jointly come close to the goals for which they aim. In a June 2019 column reflecting on the new Poor People's Movement, headed by Dr. William Barber II, the Rev. Jesse Jackson of the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, says next steps must be broad in order to achieve sweeping change.

"This is not a time for incremental change, but for fundamental transformation of our priorities and our direction," Jackson wrote as he praised the "Moral Budget" of the Poor People's Movement. "The budget details large reforms — from automatic voter registration, a living wage, health care for all, quality education from pre-k through college, investment in clean energy and modern infrastructure. It details how these and other reforms can be easily afforded by fair taxes on the wealthy and corporations and by ending our effort to police the world."

More specifically, Jackson, a foot soldier who worked alongside King, agrees with King that people unifying for specific action will be the key to progress. "Ending the policy of violence on the poor at home cannot be

achieved without challenging the costly endless wars and constant arms buildup that only make us less secure. It understands that change will come not from the top down, not from our corrupted big money politics, but from the poor, the worker, people of conscience coming together to revive our democracy and to change our course."

Jackson concluded, "Across the country, working and poor people are beginning to move. If this movement can continue to grow, it will transform our politics. And it is the only force that can."

Leaders of Black civil rights organizations would tick off a list of achievements since they were founded—especially the historic National Urban League, Rainbow/PUSH, and NAACP. But Dr. King's wisdom went far beyond maintaining one's own civil rights organization from year to year. Perhaps his most relevant saying in this regard was within his "Letter from the Birmingham Jail" to other Black leaders who were trying to call him an "outsider" and tell him to stay in his place.

King, as President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, wrote the ultimate response: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

Moment of Truth for Danny

From page 16

of those men and then being laughed at by Errol Spence upon proposition of a 2020 fight. Garcia has so many things to prove to not only the boxing world, but himself and his team as well, and it starts with a dominant showing this Saturday in Brooklyn against Ivan Redkach.

Ivan Redkach a tough Ukrainian who has taken up residence in Boxing's current capital of Oxnard, California looks to finally notch a win against a big opponent. Redkach's biggest bouts came against Tevin Farmer and John Molina Jr. who dominated the welterweight from the Ukraine. Two of Redkach's four career losses were from a knockout by his opponent neither of which had the power of a Garcia. Danny Swift Garcia has a knack

for working the body and wearing his opponents down. His last fight against Adrian Granados must have felt like he had been through several 15 round fights with the punishment he took in seven rounds before the referee had mercy on him and counted Granados out after picking himself up off the canvas several times. Garcia's footwork which has always been what limited his career's ceiling will not matter against an opponent the likes of Redkach, whom he should get past easy. This is however an audition for 2020 and if Danny Garcia wants to get anywhere near a date with Errol Spence, Manny Pacquiao, or a rematch with Shawn Porter, he better show out in Barclay's in front of his home crowd.

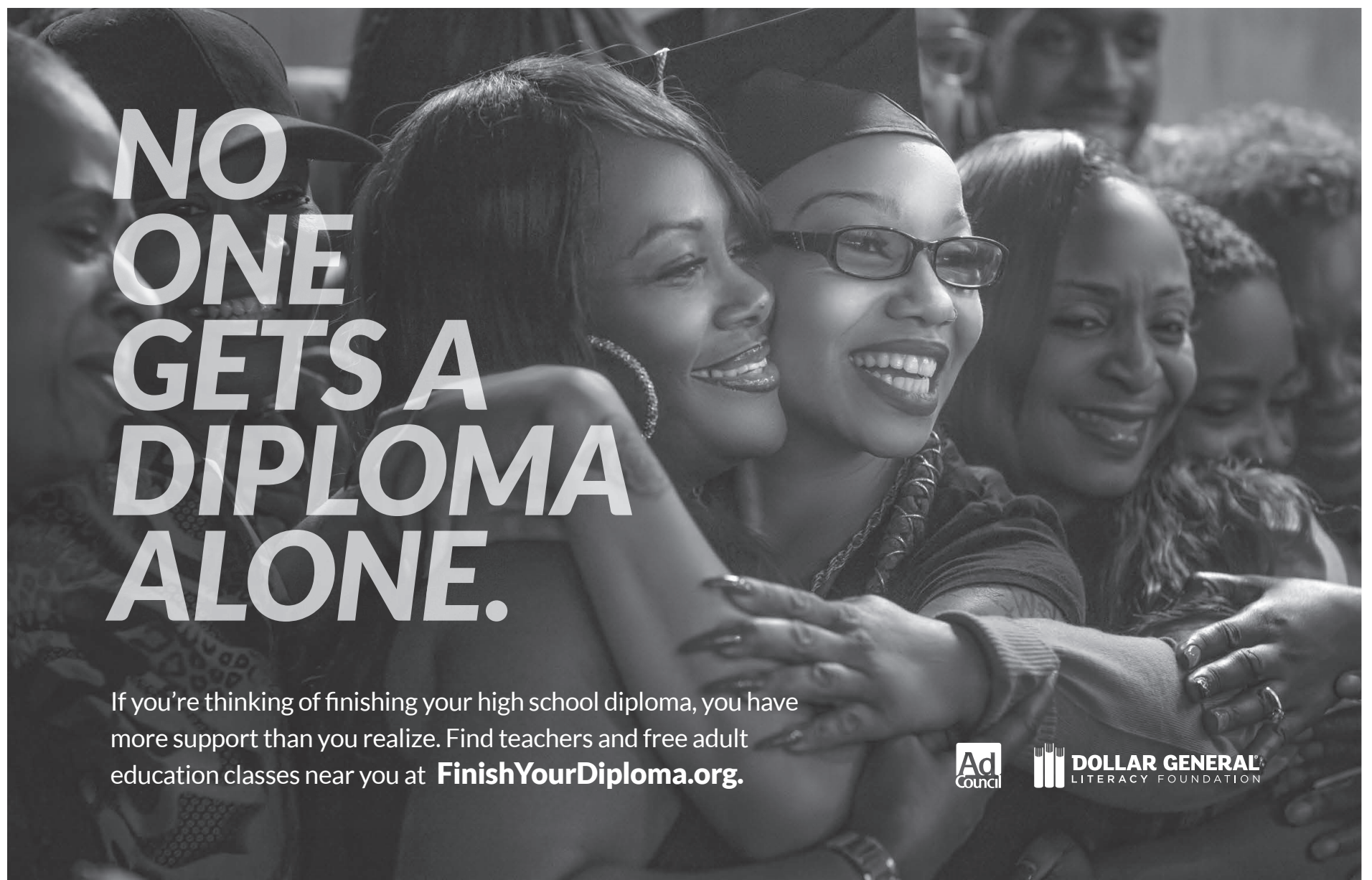
The New York Beacon sees Danny Garcia by 5th round stoppage.

Kyrie's Head Scratching Comments

From page 16



younger that are still improving. Add Indiana center Domantas Sabonis (23) and Miami center Bam Adebayo (22) and that's even more young talent in the East. Not to mention Giannis Antetokounmpo (25), who is headed toward a second-straight NBA MVP award. What's the real problem with Kyrie's comments? Irving is

a confident and articulate black man who is unafraid to speak his mind, and that is something that the media criticizes consistently. Do we want to hear the truth from Irving, or do we want bland, politically correct prose like that of Yankees great Derek Jeter? Kyrie will always speak his mind and will be courageous telling his truth. He is not concerned with how it is received.



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Editorial

Philadelphia Observer

Is Dr. King's dream being denied or deferred? Disparities in Housing Perpetuate Racial Wealth Gap



By Charlene Crowell (TriceEdneyWire.com) –

Once again, the only federal holiday honoring a person of color has been celebrated across the nation. The 38-year span of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life continues to be remembered and revered. Since his tragic death, time has shown he was also prophetic.

"Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability but comes through continuous struggle," said Dr. King. "And so, we must straighten our backs and work for our freedom. A man can't ride you unless your back is bent."

From voting rights to desegregation in public accommodations, transportation and employment, Dr. King's Baptist cadence resonated with a generation to champion what was wrong, and to also speak up for what is right. In that noble pursuit, he came in 1964, the youngest person to become a Nobel Peace Prize Laureate.

Yet in 2020, much of the hard-won rights championed by Dr. King are under attack by the very governments charged to enforce both laws and regulations. Especially for Black America, rollbacks of much-needed programs jeopardize access to basic life needs such as nutrition, safe water, legal justice, and housing itself.

The irony is that the enactment of the historic 1968 Fair Housing Act followed less than a week after Dr. King's assassination in Memphis. Hence, as we honor Dr. King, we are also called to continue progressive efforts to better include all of the Americans whom historically have been locked out or left out when it comes to housing: people of color, women, families, people with different

physically challenged and all who still suffer the insidious nature of housing discrimination

As the number of homeless Americans now number more than 560,000, Congresswoman Maxine Waters, Chair of the U.S. House Financial Services Committee (HFSC) has added homelessness and homeless prevention to her committee's 2020 priorities.

"Homelessness affects the very fabric of our communities," noted Ms. Waters. "When I speak to families in my district who are dealing with homelessness, I see the toll this housing insecurity is taking on them, including their children, who can't concentrate in school because they're sleeping in a car at night... We need to do more if we are going to address the rental housing and homelessness crisis: we need to preserve the affordable housing that we have, and we need to increase investments in programs that develop new housing or provide rental aid. We know what the solutions are to this problem; we just need the political will and resources."

While lawmakers debate the appropriate federal commitment to affordable housing, consumers are increasingly financially challenged to keep a roof over their heads.

For the past 30 years, the National Low Income Housing Coalition has annually published Out of Reach, that tracks the cost of rental housing across the nation. According to its 2019, report, the average monthly fair market rent for a two-bedroom or one-bedroom rental home is \$1,194 and \$970 for a one-bedroom unit.

"[L]ow wages, wage inequality, racial inequities and a severe shortage of affordable rental homes leave too many vulnerable people unable to afford their housing," states the report. An average renter must work 52 hours per week to afford a modest two-bedroom apartment

Consumers seeking to transition from renters to homeowners face another daunting challenge. According to the National Association of Realtors in December 2019, the median existing-home price for all housing types in October was \$271,300, up 5.4 percent from November 2018 (\$257,400),

as prices rose in all regions. That means a 10 percent down payment for a median-priced home would require \$27,130. Moreover, a 20 percent down payment, which would remove the added cost of private mortgage insurance would be double in cost—\$54,260.

According to calculations by the Center for Responsible Lending (CRL), nationwide it would take 14 years for a prospective homebuyer earning the national median income to save a 10 percent down payment for a median-priced home. But for Black and Latino households earning the median income, the number of saving years expands to 21 and 17 years respectively to amass a 10 percent down payment on that same-priced home.

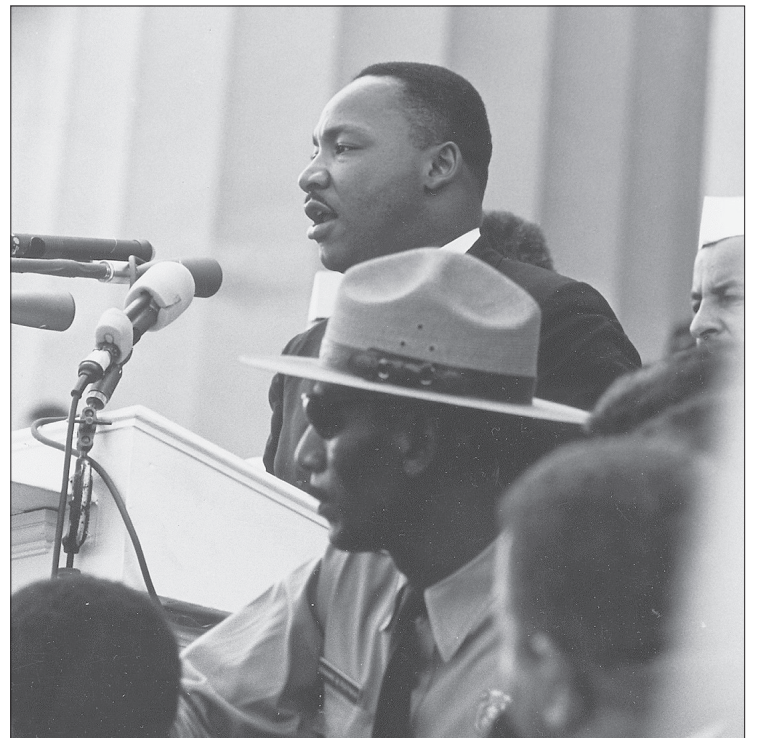
"When the president asks, what do African-Americans and minorities have to lose? How about affordable, quality housing and a shot at the American dream," queried Congressman Emanuel Cleaver in a January 9 Politico article.

Ample research documents how far the nation has yet to travel when it comes to housing, homeownership, and the still-widening racial wealth gap.

A new report released days before the 2020 King holiday, States with the Most Racial Progress (January 2020) by WalletHub.com names and ranks states with the best and worst disparities in housing segregation, as well as wealth and employment. This research found that DC (District of Columbia), Illinois, Louisiana, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin were each among the 10 states with the worst housing segregation. When wealth and employment were ranked by state, these same states along with Minnesota were also among the worst ranks of the nation.

"Volumes of research have shown that when people from diverse backgrounds are together in school, neighborhoods, or workplaces everybody wins," said Meera E. Deo, a law professor with Thomas Jefferson School of Law and one of the report's authors. "Making the unfamiliar more familiar means everybody wins."

"An obvious advantage of living in an ethnically diverse city is increased intergroup contact,"



added co-author Kelln Li, a Ph.D. and assistant professor of sociology at California State University's Dominguez Hills campus. "Such interaction might happen at various layers of the city: among students in school, or neighbors living on the same street."

"Thanks to this opportunity to get to know people who are unlike us, research has shown reduced prejudice, stereotypes, or negative attitudes across people of different ethnic or cultural background," concluded Dr. Li.

Comments by the St. Louis Fed Center for Household Financial Stability would appear to have reached similar conclusions through its independent findings as well.

"We find that families who are thriving tend to be white, college-educated and/or older," said the St. Louis Fed. "We find that families who are struggling tend to have one or more of these characteristics: black or Hispanic; no four-year college degree; and/or younger. We also find that many families across the board are striving for more economic security."

For these reasons and others, it does not make sense for the Trump Administration to suspend rules and data mapping tools that alert communities to potential fair

housing violations. Yet on January 6 HUD proposed suspending its Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) rule that provides HUD program participants with a planning framework and data tools to enable them to take meaningful actions to overcome historic patterns of segregation and foster inclusive communities free from discrimination.

This year, it would be prudent to ask, 'What happened to the Dream Dr. King had to make America's promises of freedom, justice, and equality – true for all peoples?' And its corollary, 'What are we prepared to do about it?'

"Discrimination in housing is not a thing of the past, it is ongoing and real," observed Nikitra Bailey, an EVP with the Center for Responsible Lending. "Low-income communities and communities of color now more than ever need the government to provide them with critical tools to combat discrimination in housing and the insidious harms that result. Instead we have seen HUD, under the current Administration, do the opposite."

Charlene Crowell is the Center for Responsible Lending's communications deputy director. She can be reached at charlene.crowell@responsiblelending.org.

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Help keep flu out of the classroom, protect your family from illness

By Alicia Rohan, UAB News

School classrooms are a breeding ground for bacteria and germs. Teaching children about the flu and other contagious diseases starts at home but should continue at school as well.

"Children are very observant and hear about the flu in conversation, on the radio and on the television," said Jennifer Ponder, Ph.D., chair of the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Education Department of Curriculum and Instruction. "It is important that caretakers and educators continue those conversations to create healthy hygiene habits in children. In order to succeed in the classroom, a child needs to be healthy and present, so starting good hygiene early on will increase their chances of success."

Ponder suggests that educators create a classroom environment where children are in charge of taking care of their space. This

includes teaching cleanliness and strategies to disinfect spaces and protect germs from spreading, such as using a disinfecting wipe to clean all desks and surfaces on a daily basis.

"There are resources for educators to help teach kids about proper hygiene," Ponder said. "Finding ways to incorporate hygiene and the flu into your lesson plan makes learning fun and will resonate with younger children more."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has a resource for educators to incorporate hygiene and the flu into their curriculum, "Teaching Children About the Flu." Activities include:

Sing "If You Are Happy and You Know It, Scrub Your Hands" while washing your hands to ensure that students wash for the appropriate amount of time.

Model how to wash your hands with the appropriate amount of soap.

Cough or sneeze in their elbow/sleeve if tissues are not available.

Simulate how germs spread by using a drop of unscented lotion and a pinch of glitter. Make a fist with glitter in it, then open the hand to show how glitter spreads. The teacher touches another child's hand to show how the glitter spreads easily. Use a paper towel to wipe off the glitter. The glitter is hard to get off, showing how easily germs spread from person to person.

Parents can do their part to help keep germs out of the classroom. Ponder suggests parents send hand sanitizer, paper towels, tissues and disinfectants to help keep the classroom clean. When a child is running a fever, coughing or sneezing excessively, lethargic, or showing other symptoms of the flu, keep them home. If symptoms persist, call your pediatrician.

"Parents should be talking to children about the flu and flu symptoms," Ponder said. "Reiterate what they are hearing at school, on TV and from their friends. Use these



Renewing Martin Luther King's dream by renewing our minds

From page 2

Have A Dream."

It was a dream that set into motion the transformation of race relations in America. Dr. King's leadership in the non-violent struggle for civil rights earned him the distinction of being called a "drum major for justice, a drum major for peace."

But to his four children, he was simply known as "daddy."

Dr. King was mindful of his children when he delivered his famous address, "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

Dr. King's youngest child, Bernice King, has followed in her father's footsteps, becoming an ordained minister and continues his legacy. She believes that her dad's dream for his children to be judged by the content of their character has, in many ways, become a reality. She says, "new generations of people have benefited greatly because of the dream but we still have more work to do."

King recently talked to me about her reflections of her father. Her dad's incredible contribution to the world, she explained, is a result of his extraordinary faith in God. As I talked with her, she told me that everything her daddy did, came out of his personal commitment to Jesus Christ.

King recalls how her dad's

deep faith helped him overcome the pressures from leading the non-violent struggle for Civil Rights, particularly when the burden became too heavy to bear: "I remember in the beginning when he was about to give up because he got a call that threatened to blow up his home where my mom and my sister were. He was in the kitchen and just before midnight, he told God; I'm at the end of my powers. I'm just down here trying to do right. Why do I have to deal with all of these evil and wicked people? Why are people so mean-spirited? Why can't people understand goodness and the good works we're trying to do? Why is there so much hate?"

King continued that her dad had grown weary and felt he could not continue; he was at the end of his rope. She explained to me; "It was at that point that he said he heard the voice of God say; 'Martin Luther King, Junior! Stand up for justice! Stand up for righteousness! And I will be with you until the end.'"

Essentially, Dr. King went through what I refer to as a "Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane" moment. King was facing the very real threat of death for seeking to do what was right in the eyes of God. He knew in the eyes of man, if he would continue to carry his cross of love for humanity, the very depravity of mankind could crush him and his family. But from that encounter with God in his

kitchen, his extraordinary faith compelled him to keep moving forward with his noble cause, even in the face of death.

Scripture tells us when we encounter adversity as King surely did, "We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. Therefore, we do not lose heart."

Of her daddy's accomplishments, Bernice humbly says, "It's emotional to know that you're connected to a man who had such a great impact on this world. It's a humbling experience to know that he's my dad."

Dr. King, a dedicated Baptist minister with brilliant oratory skills, the academic prowess of a scholar, and the wisdom of a prophet, faithfully and courageously challenged America to embrace his dream of a better, stronger and united America. I asked Bernice how we have gone astray in fulfilling that dream.

"It goes back to economics and spirituality. Those two issues I think are very critical. And the whole fervor of materialism in our society and self-centeredness has taken us away. And so, instead of people focusing on God first and everything else next, we've reversed those priorities. So, our values and our priorities are off."

She adds; "Daddy talked about this in 1967. He forewarned that if we're not careful, we will become a "thing" oriented society and not "people centered" and all of

these different crises are going to emerge. And that's what's been happening."

With that, King's daughter acknowledged how the world has shattered her daddy's dream. She points out how we are still confronted with poverty, crippling illiteracy, poor education, and senseless violence. "You think about what happened in Newtown, Connecticut. I mean that should have jolted us like nothing else. We saw 6-year-olds losing their life so senselessly. I'm thinking about Chicago and all of those young people who are killing each other. What has happened to a society that has turned away from that kind of situation and not realize this speaks to who "we are" as a nation and a cancer in our society. The situation with Trayvon Martin, everyday there are several Trayvon Martins; not in the black community but in the Hispanic/Latino communities and other communities.

Were he living today, Dr. King would listen to politicians, civil rights and faith leaders agitate, bloat, instigate and aggravate. Then he would seek to elevate, motivate and demonstrate God's view for healing the painful wounds of the past and bridge the deep divide with the bonds of reconciliation.

In 1963, as he sat in a Birmingham jail, he wrote about becoming an extremist to deal with the extreme issues of hate and division.

He advised Americans to become more like Jesus as an extremist in love — "your enemies, bless them that curse you, pray for them who spitefully use you."

His daughter says, "One of the most important traits in unconditional love is the capacity to forgive. It's very easy to become bitter. It's very easy to become angry. It's very easy to want to take revenge or retaliation. We must have the capacity to have the mentality that says by destroying them; part of me is being destroyed because they're part of my humanity."

"My dad lost his life but look at what the world has gained. Even though he didn't make it to see that Promised Land he talked about and everybody hasn't made it to this Promised Land he talked about but there are people that are benefiting from the life and ultimate sacrifice that he made."

Reflecting on King's legacy, we would serve ourselves well if we could follow his example of spiritual depth, courageous leadership and unselfish service. Like King, we must seek transformation by the renewing of our minds. Let us remember that Dr. King did not conform to the culture of hate but followed the pattern of love. He said; "I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear." Let's continue the King dream and legacy by boldly and courageously spreading God's love, freedom and peace.

On the scene

Screen Actors Guild Awards still *sagging* in diversity!



Jamie Foxx, Jennifer Lopez, Alex Rodriguez



Danai Gurira, Brad Pitt, Lupita Nyong'o

By Audrey J. Bernard

LOS ANGELES, CA — The 26th Annual Screen Actors Guild Awards (SAG) honoring the best achievements in film and television performances for the 2019 season voted on by active members of **SAG-AFTRA** was simulcast live on TNT and TBS on Sunday, January 19, 2020, at 8 p.m. from the legendary **Shrine Auditorium**. Once again the event showed a lack of diversity and people of color went home empty-handed, namely **Mahershala Ali**, **Cynthia Erivo**, **Jharrel Jerome**, **Lupita Nyong'o**, **Jennifer Lopez**, **Calib McLaughlin** and **Jamie Foxx**; except **Sterling K. Brown** who won as part of the best ensemble in a comedy series for the *Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*. Ironically, the big winner of the evening was **Bong Joon Ho's** critically acclaimed South Korean film, *Parasite*, which became the first foreign-language film ever to win the best ensemble prize. Other highlights of the evening included the presentation of the well-deserved Life Achievement Award to iconic actor **Robert De Niro** by **Leonardo DiCaprio**; and fan favorite **Brad Pitt** who won best supporting actor for his excellent work in *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*. (Photos by Getty Images for SAG Awards) For complete list of winners go to: **2020 SAG Awards**



Mahershala Ali, Jharrel Jerome



Brad Pitt



Robert De Niro



Daveed Diggs



Danai Gurira



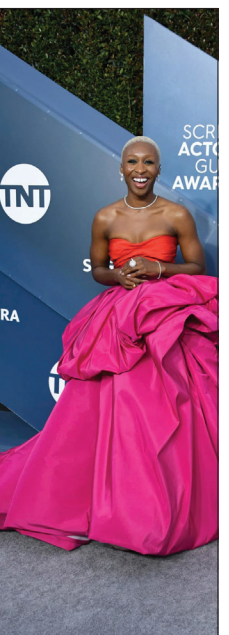
Sterling K. Brown



Lupita Nyong'o



Merrin Dungey



Cynthia Erivo



Calib McLaughlin



Amanda Brugel

A chat with Bryan Stevenson and Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

Posted By Don Thomas

WarnerMedia, The Brookings Institution and Hutchins Center for African and African American Research at Harvard University hosted a conversation and screening of "Just Mercy" on Fri, Jan., 11, 2020 at the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C.

Directed and co-written by Destin Daniel Cretton, the film tells the true story of Attorney Bryan Stevenson, played by Michael B. Jordan, and his fight to defend Walter McMillian, played by Jamie Foxx, a man wrongfully convicted of murder and sentenced to death.

The program included remarks by the Rev. Al Sharpton, Founder/ President of National Action Network and the host of Politics Nation seen weekends on MSNBC TV, Glenn Hutchins, co-chair of Brookings Board of Trustees, AT&T board member and founder of the Hutchins Center at Harvard and Andrew Reinsdorf, senior vice president of government relations of WarnerMedia.

Prior to the screening, there was a conversation between Bryan Stevenson, author of "Just Mercy" and executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Professor and Director of Hutchins Center for African and African American Research at Harvard University.

"I've always believed that if



(L-R) Glenn Hutchins, Bryan Stevenson, Rev. Al Sharpton, Tonya Lombard, Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (Photos: Rachel Noerdlinger)

more people saw what I see on a regular basis, they'd want the same thing I want, a criminal justice system that is more reliable, just and fair. I'm excited that this film gets people closer to the inequality in our system and I hope it motivates them to get involved," said Stevenson.

"On behalf of all of us, it is an honor to help shine a light on the issues highlighted so powerfully in 'Just Mercy.' The awareness sparked by this film and the work of the Equal Justice Initiative, including the participation here tonight of Mr. Stevenson, Professor Gates and Reverend Sharpton, is part

of a much larger dialogue about criminal justice reform in America," said Hutchins.

"Brookings is very proud to stand alongside WarnerMedia and the Hutchins Center for African American Research in support of this tremendous film and all that it represents. "Just Mercy"

tells a story that we as Americans must learn and must heed, and it is my sincere hope that it brings much-needed attention to many of the systemic issues – particularly those associated with race and criminal justice – impacting our nation today," said John R. Allen, Brookings President.



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Study finds Black students are being crushed by student loans more than any other race

PhiladelphiaObserver.com

A recently released report from the Center For American Progress shows that Black students are suffering more than almost any other demographic in the United States when it comes to student loans, particularly those who have taken out loans for graduate school.

Students of all races across the United States have racked up more than \$1 trillion in student loans, and the number continues to rise.

But the crisis is affecting Black people in dangerous ways, sad-

ding a generation of students with loans they may never be able to pay back.

Ben Miller, vice president for Postsecondary Education at the Center for American Progress, wrote a lengthy study of the current student loan problem, highlighting the difficult position many Black teenagers and young adults are facing.

Miller's report said the country's student loan crisis is having a particularly dangerous effect on Black communities looking to higher education as a way out of entrenched poverty.



Houston's Amanda Edwards could be Texas' first Black woman U.S. Senator

PhiladelphiaObserver.com

Amanda Edwards is on a mission to become the next Democratic U.S. Senator from Texas, replacing Republican incumbent Sen. John Cornyn. But she's also vying to become the state's first Black woman to hold the post.

"I recognize that there are women, there are girls, there are a multiplicity of folks who are looking at me as I am attempting

to crack this glass ceiling," Edwards says during an interview with theGrio.

"I know that that means for them, they are investing their energy," Edwards continues. "They are investing their dreams, and so [it's] not something that I overlook. It helps me to stay motivated and to understand that what's at stake extends far greater and far beyond just me and me becoming the next senator."



Eminent domain: Activists join Atlanta homeowners to protest eviction from the city

PhiladelphiaObserver.com

In the wake of Monday, a group of 50 protesters outside Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms' office staged a sit-in demanding she rise to the occasion and address what they say is an affordable housing crisis that's looming the city. The protesters have linked the current controversy over the Peoplestown park development with the affordable housing cri-

sis in the city, the bigger issue, and failure on the part of Mayor Bottoms to reach the goals set regarding this issue.

The protesters took to the streets to criticize the use of eminent domain by the city to seize properties in Peoplestown for public use, alongside high eviction rates. They want Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms to allow Peoplestown residents in the city to retain their homes

and not be evicted by eminent domain to build a park and retention pond.

"The big issue here is Atlanta's very toxic approach to development," said Tim Franzen, who sits on the board of the Housing Justice League, an organization that works to preserve affordable housing and prevent gentrification. "We continue to have these big developer deals shoved down our throats."

Census officials kick off \$250M ad campaign in Washington

From page 2

online, by phone or by mail.

"And we are extremely committed to reaching those people who are historically undercounted.

The communications campaign includes television and radio commercials, digital, social media and print advertising and messaging on billboards and at bus stops.

The Census' massive public education effort encourages participation among multicultural and hard-to-count populations with ads in English and 12 other languages: Arabic, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog and Vietnamese.

During the conference, several samples of the video advertisements were previewed.

In one video, children were featured teaching adults how to count their forms. The ad aims to curb the routine undercounting of children.

In another ad that's specifically geared to African Americans called "The Mural," Census officials highlight a desire for an accurate count in the black community.

"Taking the 2020 United States Census impacts how funding flows in our communities for many programs and services," the

ad notes. "Because when a community comes together, anything is possible."

The ads will run on television, radio, the internet, newspapers, magazines, billboards, and various special events.

Bureau officials said there are three main phases of the campaign: Awareness, Motivation, and Reminder. The first began on Tuesday, January 14, the day of the news conference, and will run through March.

The Motivation phase will highlight how easy it is and the benefits of completing the Census, which can be done online, by telephone or through the mail.

During the Reminder phase, officials plan to mount a campaign that points out the urgency to count everyone with as many as 500,000 census takers and other employees swarming the nation seeking to collect data from all residents.

Census officials emphasized the importance of digital for the campaign.

About 29 percent of the paid media portion of the ad budget is allocated toward digital and social media channels; only television, at 39 percent, has a larger allocation. Johnson noted that as many as 65 percent of people are expected to complete the Census online this year.

The 2020 Census is billed as

the most extensive collection of statistical information on everyone who lives in the United States and is required by the U.S. Constitution.

Responses to the 2020 Census will shape how more than \$675 billion in federal funding is distributed to local communities.

The U.S. Census Bureau's goal is a complete and accurate count and, utilizing paid media is a critical component of the campaign, officials stated.

In spreading ad dollars, the U.S. Census Bureau has decided against advertising in the Super Bowl this year after previously running ads in 2010 and 2000.

"It isn't an efficient spend of taxpayers' dollars," Alex Hughes, a census program director at VMLY&R, which is handling the campaign, told reporters.

"The work, research and dedication that has gone into this campaign is unmatched to that of any previous censuses," stated Kendall Johnson, executive director of the communications contract for the Census Bureau.

"Our outreach is multifaceted with a heavy focus on increasing response among groups that are historically undercounted. And it's based on the most extensive research ever conducted to understand both what motivates people to respond to the census and what prevents them from responding," Johnson stated.



Creation of new currency faces setback as six countries object

(GIN) –

French-speaking countries will have to put the cork back in the champagne bottle after six member countries of the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ) comprising Nigeria, Ghana, Gambia, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, have rejected the adoption of 'Eco' as the name of the proposed single currency for West Africa.

At a special meeting, five English speaking countries in West Africa in the Nigerian capital Abuja met on Jan. 15 and put the kibosh on adopting the Eco as African common currency as desired by mostly, French-speaking states.

In their communique announcing the decision, Nigerian Minister Zainab Ahmed said that more time, more meetings and more consultations needed to be held, "as if 45 years was not a long enough time for talks," said an obviously frustrated Simon Ateba,

manager of Today News Africa.

Only a month ago, Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo announced they were migrating from their currency, the CFA Franc, to become the Eco and discontinue use of the currency linked to former colonial ruler France.

The communiqué issued by the mostly English-speaking countries "noted with concern, the declaration by His Excellency, Alassane Ouattara to unilaterally rename the CFA Franc as "Eco" by 2020."

Initially, the Ghanaian government called the move to Eco "a welcome decision, which Ghana warmly applauds. It is a good testimony to the importance that is being attached not only to the establishment of a monetary union but also to the larger agenda of West African integration.

"We, in Ghana, are determined to do whatever we can

to enable us to join the Member States of UEMOA, soon, in the use of the ECO, as, we believe, it will help remove trade and monetary barriers, reduce transaction costs, boost economic activity, and raise the living standards of our people."

When the leaders met in June 2019 there was an agreement to adopt the common currency in principle. However, Pres. Ouattara's sudden announcement that the former French colonies and Guinea-Bissau had already drafted details of the deal and set a timescale appears to have caught counterparts off guard.

"The question now is whether the two groups will be able to repair the breach and work together to drive forward the single currency project," Sanyade Okoli, CEO of Lagos-based Alpha African Advisory told CNBC. w/pix of Nigeria's naira

Love triangle dooms prime minister of Lesotho's government career



(GIN) –

Citizens of Lesotho looking forward to some good news about their country to go viral, are instead watching the tragic story of the prime minister, his first and second wife, unfold.

It's been called an African "Game of Thrones" and has Lesotho's 80-year-old prime minister, Thomas Thabane, walking the plank since his latest wife became a key suspect in the murder of his prior wife in June 2017.

42-year-old Maesiah Thabane is the woman he married a little over two months after the slaying of his first wife, Lipolelo. Police have issued a warrant for Mrs. Thabane's arrest, and she's on the run.

Thomas Thabane was inaugurated prime minister two days after his second wife, Lipolelo, was shot at the age of 58. There was a legal battle between Lipolelo and Maesiah over who should be recognized as Thabane's rightful wife.

The killing was initially blamed on unidentified gunmen. But this month details emerged that implicate both Thabane and Maesiah, his third wife, in court documents filed by Lesotho's police commissioner as he

successfully fought his sudden suspension by Thabane. One is a letter linking Thabane's phone to the scene of the crime.

Motlamelle Kapa, associate professor of Political Science at the National University of Lesotho, observed that "the country was in trouble" with Thabane at the helm. "There was no effective leadership, the ministers were delinquent and nobody was putting anyone in order or holding them accountable for their actions."

The opposition this week said it would organize protests if Thabane doesn't resign within seven days, while a faction within his All Basotho Convention also urged him to step down. While awaiting news of the appearance of Maesiah or the resignation of Thabane, visitors to this mountainous country of about 3 million can enjoy its natural beauty, diamond and mohair exports and conical straw hats.

The government is now pushing for the establishment of plantations of cannabis — long used by as medicine by the native Basotho people — to supply the burgeoning global medical cannabis industry. w/pix of T. Thabane and the Obamas

South Africa's Rastafarians demand justice after local businessman dies in police custody

Newyorkbeacon.com

Rastafarians in South Africa's Wellington township are demanding police accountability following the in-custody death of a local businessman and father.

Jan de Bruin, 48, allegedly died at the hands of police last

month after cops raided his home looking for drugs, South African outlet Independent Online reported. Family members said police assaulted de Bruin and others inside the home after he asked to see a search warrant.

The local man was taken into custody, where he later died. Now the Rasta commu-



nity is calling on police for answers.

"We call for an urgent investi-

gation of Wellington police station where Jan de Bruin died in custody," activist Ras Hein Scheepers

told a crowd of protesters Sunday after marching to their local police precinct.

Golden Globe awards blackout — travesty or testament?

By Nsenga K. Burton,
Ph.D., NNPA Newswire
Entertainment and Culture
Editor

Many cultural critics and pundits were in an uproar over the shutout of black talent at the 2020 Golden Globe Awards held Jan. 5. The Golden Globes are voted on by the Hollywood Foreign Press, which is a non-profit organization composed of journalists, photographers and media professionals who report on the entertainment industry.

Last year actress/director Regina King took home a Golden Globe for Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role for *If Beale Street Could Talk* and Best Performance by an Actress in a Limited Series or Motion Picture Made for Television for *Seven Seconds* (Netflix). Maher-shala Ali won for Best Performance by an actor in a Motion Picture for *Green Book* in 2019.

These were the awards despite the tremendous amount of black talent on and off-screen in 2019 in major motion pictures like *Black Panther* and *BlackKkKlansman* and a litany of amazing performances in front of and behind the small screen on network and cable television.

Black folks fared even worse at the 2020 Golden Globes not taking home one statue, even with compelling television and film like *The Last Black Man in San Francisco* (A24), *Black and Blue* (Screen Gems), *Queen & Slim*, *Raising Dion* (Netflix), *American Gods* (Starz), *Southside* (Comedy Central), *Pose* (F/X), *Dear White People* (Netflix), *Claws* (TNT), *Snowfall* (F/X), *When They See Us* (Netflix), not to mention outstanding web series like *Giants* and *Pillow Talk*.

Suffice it to say the Golden Globes still aren't feeling Black talent, so why are audiences so invested in this show and others?

Black talent being shut out of the Golden Globes is not just a travesty but also a testament to the power of the work and the narratives being told that challenge the status quo. Why folks assume that awards shows invested in the same media industries that continue to perpetuate and recycle the vilest stereotypes of black identity and behavior would somehow acknowledge the stories, performances and behind-the-scenes work that challenges dominant ways of thinking about Black people on and off-screen is befuddling.

Black folks aren't the only historically marginalized group snubbed by the Golden Globes. No women directors were nominated for any directing awards this year.

Only five women have ever been nominated for directing in the 77-year history of the Golden Globes. Most recently was Ava DuVernay (*Selma*) in 2015; Barbra Streisand (*Yentl* and *The Prince of Tides*), Jane Campion (*The Piano*), Sofia Coppola (*Lost in Translation*) and Kathryn Bigelow (*The Hurt Locker* and *Zero Dark Thirty*). How is it possible for Greta Gerwig (*Little Women*) and Lulu Wang (*The Farewell*) and Ava DuVernay (*When They See Us*) to not be nominated this year?

It is entirely possible in an industry that has yet to catch up to a century of overlooking and further



Historically, the Golden Globes and similar award shows have not been good at identifying, acknowledging or rewarding black talent, much like the entertainment industries themselves

marginalizing members of historically disenfranchised groups. There is a reason Black showrunners and filmmakers like Shonda Rhimes and Kenya Barris are moving to Netflix. They want to tell compelling stories and have power over final edits that don't dilute the power of their prose by elevating the feelings and needs of White viewers over all others.

According to the University of Southern California's Inclusion in the Director's Chair Study, only 4.9 percent of top films were directed by women in Hollywood 2007-2019. Twenty percent of Netflix's 53 U.S. films was directed by women in 2019. Of the 4.9 percent of women directors in Hollywood, less than 1 percent were directed by women of color.

Netflix has also aggressively diversified its staff to reflect the changing demographics of society while Hollywood slowly makes hiring changes through pipeline programs with abysmal full-time job conversions.

The Farewell actress Awkwafina made Golden Globes history by becoming the first performer of Asian descent to win a Golden Globe award in a lead actress in a musical or comedy, which is a triumph in some ways, but could also be considered a travesty with the amount of influential and amazing work that has come from people of Asian descent on-screen and off-screen in the United States and abroad.

Mainstream award shows like The Golden Globe Awards, The Academy Awards, The BAFTA Awards aren't really for us and were not created with Black talent

in mind.

Black talent will continue kicking down doors in Hollywood and telling stories as members of the Hollywood establishment and outside of the Hollywood establishment, which is how change is created.

Historically, the Golden Globes and similar award shows have not been good at identifying, acknowledging or rewarding black talent, much like the entertainment industries themselves.

Change is slow but sure, but there is no need to be a glutton for punishment. Tune into the NAACP Image Awards, the African American Film Critics Association Awards and the BET Awards if you want to see a greater representation and acknowledgement of black talent in the entertainment industry that is actually celebrated and rewarded.

Hope springs eternal but to continue hoping mainstream awards shows will give a damn about Black talent and audiences is an exercise in disappointment. The overlooking of black talent by mainstream awards shows is a travesty, but it is also a testament to the power and influence of the work by black writers, directors, producers and performers. To reflect the sentiment of a favorite internet meme — make it happen, clap for your damned self and keep it moving.

This article was written by Nsenga K. Burton, Ph.D., entertainment and culture editor for NNPA/Black Press USA. Nsenga is also founder & editor-in-chief of the award-winning news blog The Burton Wire, which covers news of the African Diaspora. Follow her on Twitter @Ntlelectual.

Getting the last laugh, Mo'Nique finally has another stand up comedy special

PhiladelphiaObserver.com

To the chagrin of the many detractors who continue to write her off, Mo'Nique has rebounded in a big way.

The Academy Award, Golden Globe and NAACP Image Award-winning funny woman will host her first stand-up special in almost 10 years.

On Friday, Showtime announced that Mo'Nique & Friends: Live from Atlanta will air Feb. 7 at 10 p.m. ET/PT.

Filmed at the Variety Playhouse in Atlanta, the hour-long special—executive produced with her husband/manager Sidney Hicks—features a variety of talented newcomers including Prince T-Dub, Just Nesh,



Tone-X and Correy Bell alongside veteran comedian Donnell Rawlings (of Chappelle's Show fame).

This is great news for diehard fans of the once super-sized comedienne who had a white-hot career during the early to mid-aughts with a hit TV show, best-selling books, sold-out comedy tours and films that were successful at the box office.

Cardi B pops off on Trump supporter after announcing interest to enter politics



PhiladelphiaObserver.com

Conservatives and Trump supporters have apparently been giving Cardi B heat ever since she announced interest to one day pursue a career in politics.

We previously reported, Cardi let

her fans know in a series of tweets over the weekend that she wants to be a politician.

"I think I want to be a politician. I really love government even tho I don't agree with government," she tweeted. "Like I was watching war documentaries. No matter how many weapons a country have you need people! How are you trying to go against a country and possibly start a war when this country lacks patriotism? I barely see people claiming they LOVE being American."

In response, one Trump supporter replied to Cardi on Twitter with an edited version of the Grammy winner's comments

Cardi replied to pro-Trump Twitter user Mindy Robinson with, "Sis your lips ashy and you barely have none ...Leave me alone," Cardi responded, adding "let's keep sweet OK....don't want to dog walk you" —

'Beat my idol': Coco Gauff beats Venus Williams in first round of Australian Open

PhiladelphiaObserver.com

Cori "Coco" Gauff beat Venus Williams in the first round of the Australian Open on Monday at the Margaret Court Arena in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. Fifteen-year-old Gauff beat the seven-time grand slam champion 7-6 6-3, which makes her second time defeating Williams.

The first was last year at Wimbledon, but this time the teen said she was in a different head space since she wasn't used to playing in front of so many people in 2019.

"I definitely was more confident this time," she explained. "I think I was used to playing on big courts, so the crowd, I guess the size of the crowd didn't startle me as much as last time. Definitely a bit more positive coming into this match."



According to ESPN, Gauff has become just the fourth woman in the past 30 years to win six or more major matches before turning 16.

After the Florida native defeated the 39-year old Williams, she thanked the local crowd for giving her a lot of support.

"I just want to say thank you guys. You guys were chanting my name and I only thought that would happen at the U.S. Open," she stated. "To hear that here in Australia means a lot to me."

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Reel

By Audrey J. Bernard

Bad Boys for Life shatters box office with \$73.4M take



Bad Boys For Life Theatrical Poster

Sony Pictures Releasing has one of the biggest hits this year with the release of its action packed comedy *Bad Boys for Life* starring the original Bad Boys **Will Smith** and **Martin Lawrence** who are back together for one last ride in the highly anticipated movie. Produced by Smith, **Jerry Bruckheimer** and **Doug Belgrad**, the third installment of this action comedy crushed the North American box office by exceeding all expectations with a \$73.4 million opening over the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday weekend.

Bad Boys for Life was worth the wait! The movie with its thumping score is filled with all the things fans love about this franchise – riveting action, luxury cars, crazy car chases, stunning scenic shots, wild stunts, side-splitting laughter, pulsating music and raucous content. Audiences are finding it hard to remain seated because of all the excitement on the screen. And



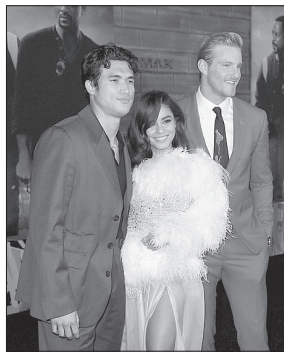
Will Smith, Jerry Bruckheimer, and Martin Lawrence attend the premiere of Columbia Pictures' Bad Boys For Life at TCL Chinese Theatre on Tuesday, January 14, 2020, in Hollywood, California



Chairman of Sony Pictures Entertainment's Motion Picture Group Thomas Rothman, Will Smith, Doug Belgrad, Martin Lawrence, and CEO of Sony Pictures Entertainment Tony Vinciguerra



Chance The Rapper & wife



Charles Melton, Vanessa Hudgens, Alexander Ludwig



Jerry Bruckheimer, Linda Bruckheimer



Joe Pantoliano

Motion Picture Soundtrack executive produced by Grammy nominated multiplatinum artist, music executive, innovative influencer, mogul, and mega-producer **DJ Khaled** who architected a powerful package for **We The Best Music Group's** first-ever soundtrack. Khaled energizes the culture with this diverse and dynamic collection in honor of the film with brand-new music from the likes of **Black Eyed Peas, Nicky Jam, Daddy Yankee, Meek Mill, City Girls, Rick Ross, Rich The Kid, Jaden Smith, Buju Banton, Pitbull**, and more. "It's been incredibly fun working with our Sony partners, We The Best Music and Epic Records, to assemble an all-star roster of artists for a new chapter in the Bad Boys franchise," said **Spring Aspers**, President of Sony Pictures' Music. "I'm excited for audiences around the world to see the new iteration and hear its electrifying soundtrack." (Photos by Alexander Tamargo/Getty Images for Sony Pictures Entertainment)

this Smith-Lawrence juggernaut is filled with surprises that will leave you thinking that there might be another film in the works!

SYNOPSIS: Bad Boys Mike Lowrey and Marcus Burnett are back together for one last ride in the highly anticipated *Bad Boys for Life*. Burnett (Will Smith) is now a police inspector and Lowrey (Martin Lawrence) is in a mid-life crisis. They reunite when an Albanian mercenary, whose brother they killed, promises them an

important bonus. The movie also stars **Vanessa Hudgens, Alexander Ludwig, Charles Melton, Paola Nunez, Kate Del Castillo, Nicky Jam, and Joe Pantoliano.**

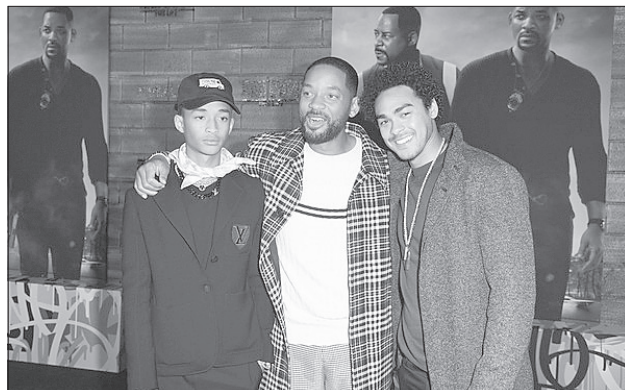
DEETS: Directed by **Adil El Arbi, Bilall Fallah**; produced by **Jerry Bruckheimer, Will Smith, Doug Belgrad**; screenplay by **Chris Bremner, Peter Craig, Joe Carnahan**; story by **Peter Craig, Joe Carnahan**; based on characters **George Gallo**; music by **Lorne Balfe**; cinema-

tography **Robrecht Heyvaert**; edited by **Dan LeENTAL, Peter McNulty**; production companies **Columbia Pictures, 2.0 Entertainment, Don Simpson/Jerry Bruckheimer Films, Overbrook Entertainment**; distributed by **Sony Pictures Releasing** on Friday, January 17, 2020, to amazing reviews and box office gold!

MUSIC: **We The Best Music Group** and **Epic Records** recently unveiled the anxiously awaited *Bad Boys for Life Original*



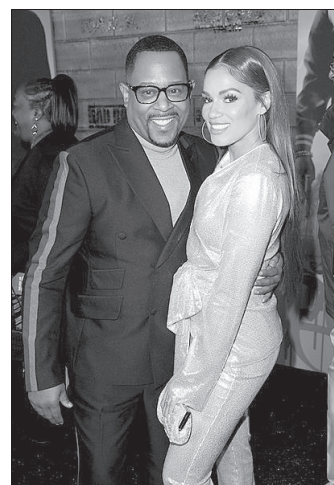
Adil El Arbi, Chairman of Sony Pictures Entertainment's Motion Picture Group, Will Smith, Jerry Bruckheimer, Martin Lawrence, Bilal Fallah



Jaden Smith, Will Smith, Trey Smith



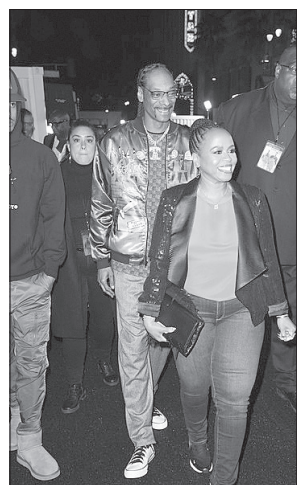
T-Pain, Martin Lawrence, Will Smith



Martin Lawrence, Roberta Moradfar



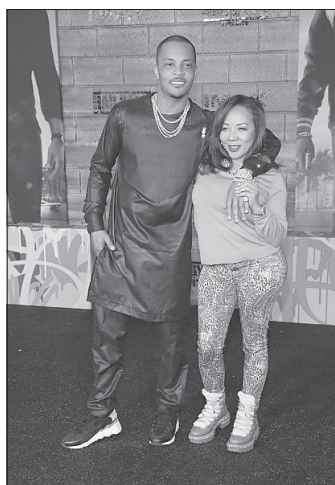
Vanessa Hudgens



Snoop Dogg, Shante Broadus



Tiffany Haddish



T.I. & Tiny



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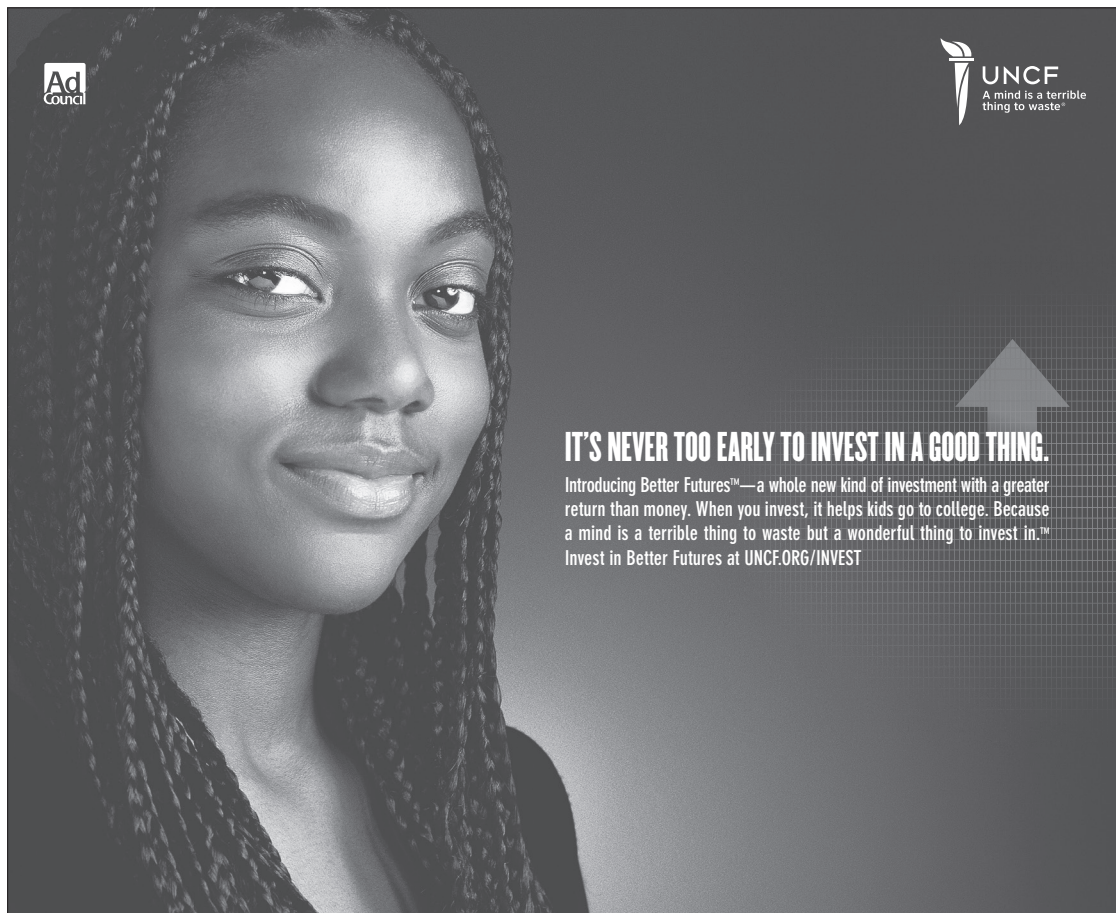
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Sports



**Andrew
Rosario,
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Editor**

Knicks End Three Game Losing Streak

By Derrel Jazz Johnson

The New York Knicks ended their three-game losing streak in a big way, beating the Cavaliers in Cleveland 106-86 on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. day this past Monday. They faced the western conference's best team, LeBron James and the Los Angeles Lakers yesterday before hosting the Toronto Raptors and Brooklyn Nets. Marcus Morris returned after missing five games, but rookie RJ Barrett replaced him on the sidelines after suffering an ankle injury against the Phoenix Suns at Madison Square Garden last week.

Barrett is the future of the Knicks, and throughout a losing season, his progression, along with the growth of second-year center Mitchell Robinson, are two of the few bright spots for the franchise this season. Barrett will be looking to get back on the court sooner than later. With the trade deadline approaching, should the Knicks look to unload forward Marcus Morris? Would they be able to get anything better than a late first-round pick in the 2020 NBA Draft? Knicks President Steve Mills and Knicks General Manager Scott Perry are working the phones to get the best value for the veteran forward.



Garcia At The Crossroad of his Career
Photo: Special to the NY Beacon

Moment of Truth for Danny

By Joshua Garcia

Philadelphia's own former welterweight champion Danny 'Swift' Garcia will take his favorite stage Saturday night at Barclays Center in Brooklyn. Whether it is the abundance of Puerto Rican fans that flock to support their guy or the fact it's a mere 90 miles from his home, Garcia will look for any advantage in what is being widely promoted as a comeback fight to exhibit what he has been working on since his only bout of 2019.

Leading into Danny Garcia's

2017 calendar of scheduled fights team Swift couldn't have been more excited for the future with a 33-0 record. Since however, Garcia has gone 2-2 over that time span and has lost not only his titles but also his reputation and standing in a sport which quickly forgets contenders who fall short.

Once believed to be in the conversation with an Errol Spence, Shawn Porter, and Keith Thurman, the 147 pound weight class sped past Garcia, after losing to two

Continued on page 5

Kyrie's Head Scratching Comments

By Derrel Jazz Johnson

Kyrie Irving landed himself in the hot seat for, get this, for simply telling the truth. Irving came under fire for expressing that, even when former NBA MVP and two-time NBA champion Kevin Durant returns, the Brooklyn Nets would still be one or two pieces away from contending for an NBA title. When Irving and Durant signed with the Nets, many

assumed the franchise would become title contenders in the 2020-2021 NBA season when Durant returns. But this isn't the same weakened Eastern Conference that LeBron ruled for eight seasons. The Celtics, with forward Jayson Tatum (21) and guard Jaylen Brown (23) and Philadelphia, with point guard Ben Simmons (23) and center Joel Embiid (25) both have duos 25 or

Continued on page 5

It Should Be Super



Jimmy and San Fran Look For another Title
Photo: Special to the NY Beacon

Andrew Rosario

For second week in a row, the Kansas City Chiefs come from a double digit deficit to take out the Tennessee Titans earning them a trip to Super Bowl LIV (54) after their 35-24 victory. The Chiefs "D" held Titans running back Derrick Henry to only 69 yards after he ran for more than 180 yards in the previous 2 playoff games. KC's QB Patrick Mahomes (last year's league MVP) stayed hot throwing for 294 yards, 3 td's adding an electrifying 27 yard td

run when it looked like he would be sacked for a loss. Kansas City will be making their 3rd Super Bowl (the first in 50 years) appearance and it will be the first time in 15 years that head coach Andy Reid will be leading his team. Reid last took the Philadelphia Eagles to the big game only to lose to the New England Patriots in 2005.

They will face the San Francisco Forty Niners who handled the Green Bay Packers earlier in the season. Sunday was no different. The 9ers jumped out to a 27-0 lead as they coasted to their 7th

Super Bowl in franchise history with their 37-20 over Green Bay. Little known 9ers running back Raheem Mostert ran for 220 yards and 4 touchdowns as their offensive line mauled the Packers defensive front line. Mostert's claim to NFL fame up to that point was being cut by 7 different teams. San Fran's QB Jimmy Garoppolo threw for only 77 yards completing 6 of 8 passes. The Niners will be looking for their 6th Super Bowl Championship.

Super Bowl LIV (54) will take place Sunday, Feb. 2nd at Hard Rock Stadium home of the Miami Dolphins 6:30pm est. The National Anthem will be sung by Demi Lovato and the halftime show will be performed by Jennifer Lopez and Shakira.



Mahomes Leads KC to Miami
Photo: Special to the New York Beacon

Forty Seconds of Work For Conor

By Andrew Gutman

Forty seconds. That's all the time it took for Conor McGregor needed to knockout Donald Cerrone at UFC 246 on January 18 at the T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas and remind the world why he's the most notorious fighter in the game.

McGregor opened the fight by missing with a big left hand. He clinched with "Cowboy," and threw a series of vicious shoulder strikes into the American's eye and nose. He then stunned Cerrone with a head kick and promptly put him away with five strong left hands. It was the first time in his career that Cerrone didn't land a single strike. The fight happened so quickly that you could watch it in the time it takes to brew a cup of Keurig coffee.

Fans are praising McGregor, not just for his performance but also for how he's conducted himself lately. During the media circus the week prior to the fight, the "Notorious" abandoned his typical Rage-Against-The-Machine-meets-frat-bro energy and approached the event as confident but calm, focused, and wholly respectful of Cerrone. After the fight, he strutted across the cage to hug Cowboy's grandmother, Jerry Cerrone.

From striking a senior citizen in a Dublin bar last April to now embracing old ladies, this moment marked McGregor's metamorphosis into Good Guy McGregor. He'll kick you in the face, but then he'll hug your gam-gam.

McGregor has been referring to his 2020 return as a "season," stating that he'd like to stay as active as possible. "Any one of these mouthy fools can get it," he told UFC Commentator Joe Rogan in his post-fight interview. "I'm back, and I'm ready."

UFC President Dana White has been vocal about



Conor Trying To Shed Bad Boy Image
Photo: Special to the NY Beacon

his desire for McGregor to fight current Lightweight champ, Khabib Nurmagomedov, who tapped out the Irishman in the fourth round of their 2018 bout. The rematch is likely, but this win over Cerrone, while stunning, did little to improve his stock.

By all accounts, McGregor, a 3-1 favorite, was supposed to put Cerrone away. In contrast to Khabib, who out-wrestled McGregor handily, Cerrone's style matched up perfectly with Mystic Mac's. The point: As impressive as this win is, it was a tune-up, and how McGregor will fare against top tier talent after more than a year out of the cage is still very much in question—but it's one we're all looking forward to having answered.