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Philadelphia *Observer*

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PhiladelphiaObserver.com

Vol. 28 • No. 8

February 25 – March 3, 2021

DC CHURCHES SUE PROUD BOYS OVER RACIST VANDALISM



Rev. Ianther Mills puts up new sign in front of Asbury United Methodist Church after an initial sign was destroyed. This second sign was also destroyed. PHOTO: Hamil Harris/Trice Edney News Wire

**The churches have been challenged to be more proactive
in fighting racism, pg3**

Senate confirms diplomat Linda Thomas-Greenfield as Ambassador to United Nations

(Reuters) –

The U.S. Senate on Tuesday confirmed President Joe Biden's nominee, veteran diplomat Linda Thomas-Greenfield, to serve as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, adding a key member to his national security team nearly a month after her confirmation hearing.

The 100-member Senate backed Thomas-Greenfield by 78 to 20 to be Washington's representative at the world body and a member of Biden's Cabinet, comfortably exceeding the simple majority needed.

All of the no votes came from Republicans.

Thomas-Greenfield, 68, is a 35-year veteran of the Foreign Service who has served on four continents, most notably in Africa.

Republicans who opposed her nomination focused on a 2019 speech she gave that some said was favorable to Beijing. Thomas-Greenfield and her supporters pushed back, citing her decades as a diplomat seeking to increase U.S. influence and counteract China's.

At her confirmation hearing in late January, she stressed the importance of U.S. re-engagement with the 193-member United Nations in order to challenge efforts by China to "drive an authoritarian agenda."

China has been working to gain greater global influence in a challenge to traditional U.S. leadership, often by providing loans to developing nations in Africa and elsewhere that tie them closer to the Beijing government.

"Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield has a long history of expressed opposition to China's use of debt trap tactics and its increasingly malign presence in world governance bodies," Democratic Senator Bob Menendez, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said as he urged support.



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Rev. Ianther Mills puts up new sign in front of Asbury United Methodist Church after an initial sign was destroyed. This second sign was also destroyed. PHOTO: Hamil Harris/Trice Edney News Wire

“The Black church v. the Proud Boys.”

DC pastors say racist vandalism to their churches is part of deeper problem

By Hamil Harris(TriceEdneyWire.com)

The pastors of two Washington DC churches who had their “Black Lives Matter” signs destroyed by right wing groups; including the Trump-supporting Proud Boys, said healing racist attitudes among White believers is harder to fix than replacing signs.

In December Black Lives Matter signs were destroyed in front of the Asbury United Methodist, the Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church and two other churches.

The race tainted violence was sparked by supporters of former President Trump and Right Wing groups that included the Proud Boys. It revealed a much deeper racial divide among peo-

ple of faith.

On Super Bowl Sunday, Rev. William Lamar, pastor of the Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church and Rev. Ianther Mills, pastor of Asbury United Methodist, talked about their plight during journalist Richard Prince’s monthly Journal-isms Roundtable entitled, “The Black Church vs. the Proud Boys.”

“American Christianity is the carrier of white supremacy,” said Rev. William Lamar, whose congregation on January 4th joined the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law in filing a lawsuit in the D.C. Superior Court. The suit seeks to hold the Proud Boys, its leadership and certain of its members accountable for the vandalism.

“White supremacists like the Proud Boys, would rather see the country burn than to see it united together under justice and freedom for all,” said Kristen Clarke, president and executive director of the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law in a statement.

“Our lawsuit aims to hold those who engage in such action accountable. We are proud to represent Metropolitan A.M.E. which has a long history of standing against bigotry and hate and whose courage and determination to fight back is a beacon of hope for the community.”

Rev. Mills said the incident has opened a discussion within her church regarding the state of race relations in their church. “We are being more than proactive. “I have really been inspired by the bishops and particularly the Southern Bishops.”

African Americans are only six percent of the demographics of the United Methodist Church in the United States,” Mills said. “But With the death of George Floyd the church really stepped up to do more than the usual do a study, have a task force or something like that.”

Mills added, “Everyone has been challenged and confronted

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Democrats introduce sweeping immigration legislation, offering 3 to 8-year path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants

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Congressional Democrats are moving forward with the campaign promise of overhauling America’s problematic and oft-maligned immigration system.

On Thursday, Rep. Linda Sánchez (D-Calif.) and Sen. Bob Menendez (D-Pa.) introduced the U.S. Citizenship Act of 2021, a measure that would provide the nation’s 11 million undocumented immigrants a path to citizenship. At least 619,000 undocumented Black immigrants could benefit.

Under the proposal, Dreamers (undocumented immigrants brought to America as children) and some farm workers would qualify for expedited citizenship within three years, as would people who have Temporary Protected Status because conditions prevent them from returning to the countries they migrated from. The Trump administration, in comparison, sought to end TPS for nationals of Haiti, El Salvador, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua and Sudan.

The Democrats’ plan would also offer other undocumented immigrants an eight-year path to citizenship, without the fear of deportation, and prioritize keeping families together.



The bill is backed by President Biden, who during the election promised to remake the nation’s immigration system so as to reflect America’s “highest values,” following what he called the suffering under the misguided policies of the Trump administration.

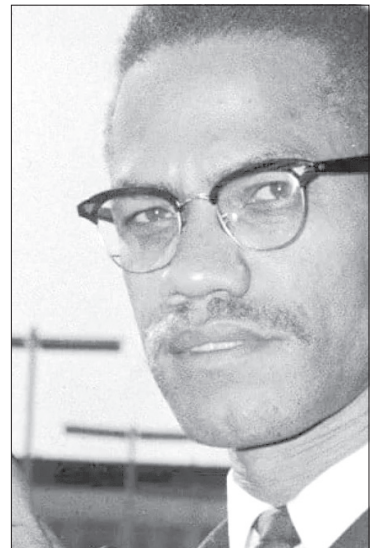
New evidence points to NYPD, FBI conspiracy in Malcolm X assassination, lawyers say

“So, what we’re trying to do is talk about restorative justice as lawyers — try to pursue relentless justice,” Attorney Ray Hamlin says

Lawyers representing Malcolm X’s estate are requesting his case be reopened in light of new evidence that may reveal that the New York Police Department and Federal Bureau of Investigation conspired to have him killed.

According to ABC News, the family and attorney of former undercover NYPD officer Ray Wood disclosed that they recovered a death bed confession letter in November 2020. The letter allegedly states that the NYPD and the FBI conspired to insure the killing of Minister X, who was gunned down in Harlem’s Audubon Ballroom during a speech in 1965.

Wood’s family stated that in the letter, he wrote that it was his responsibility to have X’s security detail arrested in the days prior to his scheduled appearance at the Audubon. This would ensure that



security would not be sufficient to stop the gunmen from killing Malcolm X.

Despite three men from the Nation of Islam being convicted of killing the civil rights icon, attorney Ben Crump, three of Malcolm X’s daughters and Wood’s family are hoping the case will be reopened in light of the discovery of this letter.

Georgia prosecutors open investigation into Trump’s call to Secretary of State

By Stacy M. Brown, NNPA Newswire

Georgia prosecutors have opened a criminal investigation into Donald Trump’s phone call to Georgia’s secretary of state Brad Raffensperger. During the call, the former President asked him to “find” the votes he needed to overturn the state’s election results.

“All I want to do is this: I just want to find 11,780 votes, which is one more than we have. Because we won the state,” Trump said to Raffensperger during the call.

The transcript of the phone call played a prominent role in the House of Representatives’ second impeachment of the 45th president and is expected to play a central role in the Senate trial.

Fulton County, Georgia District Attorney Fani Willis promises to look into Trump’s actions following the now infamous Jan. 2 telephone call.

“Anyone who commits a felony violation of Georgia law in my jurisdiction will be held accountable,” Willis said in a statement last month.

“Once the investigation is complete, this matter, like all matters, will be handled by our office based on the facts and the law.”

During his Jan. 6 rally that led to the deadly insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, Trump told his supporters about the phone call.

“In Georgia, your secretary of state, who — I can’t believe this

guy is a Republican. He loves recording telephone conversations,” Trump told the large gathering. “You know, that was a — I thought it was a great conversation, personally. So did a lot of other — people love that conversation because it says what’s going on,” he bellowed. “These people are crooked.”

According to the “Articles of Impeachment Against Against Donald John Trump,” with closing endorsement by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, “... President Trump, by such conduct, has demonstrated that he will remain a threat to the Constitution if allowed to remain in office, and has acted in a manner grossly incompatible with self-governance and the rule of law. President Trump thus warrants impeachment and trial, removal from office, and disqualification to hold and enjoy any office of honor, trust, or profit under the United States.”

The resolution cites the call to Raffensperger urging him to “find” enough votes to overturn the state’s election results.

“We cannot allow this unprecedented provocation to go unanswered,” House members said in a statement.

“Everyone involved in this assault must be held accountable, beginning with the man most responsible for it — President Donald Trump. We cannot begin to heal the soul of this country without first delivering swift justice to all its enemies — foreign and domestic.”



Wood's purported death bed letter was delivered to three of Malcolm's daughters – Qubillah, Ilyasah, and Gamilah, pictured here with Attorneys Benjamin Crump, Ray Hamlin and Paul Napoli along with Reggie Wood, whose relative, NYPD Officer Ray Wood, allegedly confessed in a deathbed declaration letter.

Shabazz family unveils possibly new evidence in Audubon Ballroom slaying of Malcolm X.

By Stacy M. Brown, NNPA Newswire

Almost 56 years to the Feb. 21, 1965, assassination of Malcolm X, the slain leader's daughters and a noted civil rights attorney are shining a light on those whom they believe are responsible for the heartless murder.

The group gathered on Saturday, Feb. 20, at the old Audubon Ballroom – since renamed The Shabazz Center – with lawyers Ray Hamlin and Paul Napoli and Reggie Wood, whose relative, NYPD Officer Ray Wood, allegedly confessed in a deathbed declaration letter.

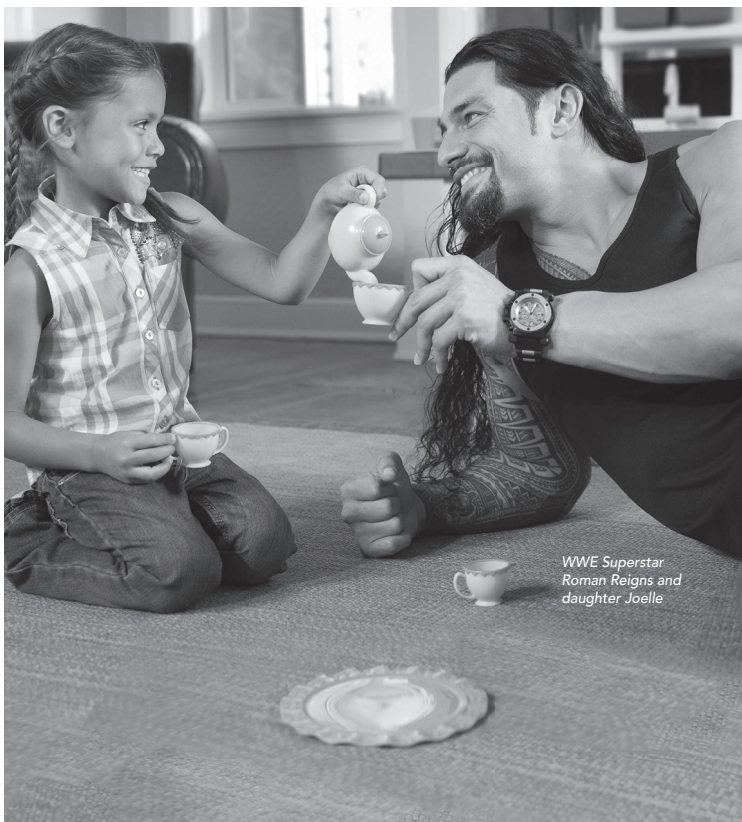
The gathering occurred in the same venue as the assassination and just one day before the heinous crime's anniversary.

The new allegations focus on Officer Wood and a conspiracy against organized civil rights groups that he said had been perpetrated by the New York City Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigations.

Reggie Wood alleges that authorities conspired to assassinate Malcolm X in Harlem.

"Ray Wood, an undercover police officer at the time, confessed in a deathbed declaration letter that the NYPD and the FBI conspired

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President Biden taps Meharry Medical College President for COVID task force

By Stacy M. Brown, NNPA Newswire

Meharry Medical College President and CEO Dr. James Hildreth has been named by President Joe Biden as a member of his COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force.

Dr. Hildreth, the renowned immunologist and academic administrator and Meharry's 12th president, sat on the U.S. Food and Drug Administration board that approved the first U.S. coronavirus vaccines.

"I am honored to be chosen by President Biden as a member of the COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force. We are facing one of the largest challenges in the history of our nation," Dr. Hildreth wrote in a statement.

"COVID-19 has killed hundreds of thousands of Americans, and if adequate steps are not taken, this number will continue to grow. As we have seen, COVID-19 does not discriminate, it does not respect borders, and it does not behave according to our timelines," Dr. Hildreth added.

The United States has reported more than 27.2 million cases of the virus, and the death toll is nearing 470,000.

Immediately following his Jan. 21 swearing-in, President Biden issued a national strategy for the COVID-19 response and pandemic preparedness.

"For the past year, we could not turn to the federal government for a national plan to answer prayers with action – until today," President Biden stated.

He then issued a 200-page report outlining a national strategy

to beat the pandemic.

The President called it a comprehensive plan that starts with restoring public trust and mounting an aggressive, safe, and effective vaccination campaign.

"It continues with the steps we know that stop the spread like expanded masking, testing, and social distancing. It's a plan where the federal government works with states, cities, Tribal communities, and private industry to increase supply and administer testing and the vaccines that will help reopen schools and businesses safely," President Biden remarked.

"Equity will also be central to our strategy so that the communities and people being disproportionately infected and killed by the pandemic receive the care they need and deserve."

The President further noted that defeating the pandemic would take Congress providing the necessary funding, and families and neighbors continuing to look out for one another.

He said the country would need health care providers, businesses, civic, religious and civil rights organizations, and unions all rallying together in common purpose and with urgency, purpose, and resolve.

"We will need to reassert America's leadership in the world in the fight against this and future public health threats," President Biden asserted.

Dr. Hildreth noted that the virus has had the largest impact on communities of color, among Black and brown Americans with underlying health conditions.

"Without our immediate attention and a national, organized



effort to fight this virus, we will be dealing with its impact for years to come," Dr. Hildreth remarked.

"As the President of a historically Black medical school that was founded to eradicate health disparities between majority and minority communities, this work is a focus for me and my institution. I am committed to working with our national leadership to develop cohesive plans that will address these silent killers – illnesses like COVID-19 that impact our most vulnerable populations at alarming rates," Dr. Hildreth stated further.

"We must address the pandemic together. I am confident that President Biden's heightened focus on the pandemic will accelerate testing, treatment and vaccinations nationwide – proven strategies that will work to mitigate the virus and protect our people.

"I look forward to working with my esteemed colleagues on the Task Force to restore health, wellbeing and stability to all of America."

An open letter to President Biden: Black people and the pandemic

By Glenn Ellis(TriceEdneyWire.com) –

Dear President Biden: It's no secret to any of us that Black Americans have carried a disproportionate burden throughout every stage of the pandemic. As you undertake the daunting task of leading the efforts to lift all Americans out of the grips of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are all prayerful for your success in accomplishing your goals.

Knowing that you are surrounded by truly capable people informing you on the impact that COVID-19 has on the Black community, I would like to, respectfully, share perspectives as seen and experienced by those of us "on the ground".

In addition to the weekly readers of this column in the Black press, who have used this information to make better, and more informed, decisions about staying safe, healthy, and most importantly, alive during the past year; my hope is that this modest insight and perspective will find value in informing the policies and guidelines that you put forth.

My motivation for writing this letter resulted from my concern on the current issue of vaccine hesi-



From homeless encampments to the working poor—mostly people of color who are not able to work from home and must take public transportation to work—President Biden is facing a pandemic that has disparately hit Black Americans. PHOTO: Roy Lewis, Trice Edney News Wire

tancy in Black people. This is a far bigger issue than many prefer to acknowledge. Our society, particularly the medical establishment and public health officials, has pigeon-holed vaccine hesitancy into a neat little package, called The Tuskegee Syphilis Study.

First of all, Mr. President, it wasn't truly The Tuskegee Syphilis Study, it was the United States Public Health Service (PHS) Study of Untreated Syphilis in the Negro Male at Tuskegee. Big, big difference.

President Biden, PHS was the predecessor to today's Depart-

ment of Health and Human Services (HHS). This wasn't a mad scientist in a basement conducting cruel experiments in the dark of night. This was the United States government.

These are the same Black folks who thought they could trust and depend on the government to protect us all from unscrupulous medical practices or behaviors that rob individual autonomy, allowing people to be in charge of their own lives, and to have the freedom to make one's own

Continued on page 12

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Editorial - Opinion

How democracy reform protects Black political power

By Ben Jealous

The 2020 elections taught us that our democracy is both strong and fragile. This is the time to shore it up with the For the People Act that is now waiting for action by Congress.

Voters showed the strength of our democracy by showing up in record numbers to cast ballots to defeat an incumbent president. And voters in Georgia, led by Black voters, made history by electing a progressive Black preacher and Jewish filmmaker to the U.S. Senate.

What makes our democracy strong is that people spent years organizing and building the capacity to educate and motivate voters.

We also saw that our democracy is fragile. A president who did not want to give up his power

spent weeks enraging his supporters with lies about the election. He tried to bully state officials to manufacture enough votes to overturn the election. He pressured members of Congress and his own vice president to trash the Constitution. And he urged his supporters to come to Washington and fight to keep him in power. We all saw how that turned out—with a noose on the Capitol lawn, Confederate flags in the rotunda, and members of Congress and their staff hiding in fear for their lives.

The impeachment trial also showed both our strength and fragility. The House of Representatives voted to impeach the president for inciting an insurrection, and a clear bipartisan majority of the U.S. Senate voted to convict him. But most Republican senators refused to defend democracy and hold Trump accountable

for threatening it – and that will encourage extremists to turn to violence again.

And now we see Republican state legislators trying to make it harder for people to register and vote. Already this year, they have introduced more than 100 bills to restrict voting.

That's why we need to take the same kind of energy that we put into the elections and turn it toward getting the House and Senate to pass the For the People Act.

The first part of the For the People Act is a version of the Voter Empowerment Act that the late Rep. John Lewis championed for the last 10 years. It would encourage online and same-day registration—and preregistration for youth who will reach voting age by Election Day. It would encourage trust in the election process with paper ballots and recounts.

Other parts of the For the People Act would restrict the power of big money in politics. And it would take on the kind of cynical partisan redistricting that state-level Republicans have used to give themselves far more power in state legislatures and in Congress than they deserve based on their share of the vote.

Voter suppression, gerrymandering, and big money are all tools being used by right-wing leaders who fear the inclusive multiracial and multiethnic democracy we are building. They are willing to weaken democracy if it will maintain their ability to hang onto power even though they are a shrinking minority.

We must not let them. Erecting barriers to try to keep Black people from voting is an ugly part of our past that we must make sure is not part of our future.

Ben Jealous serves as president



of People For the American Way and People For the American Way Foundation. Jealous has decades of experience as a leader, coalition builder, campaigner for social justice and seasoned nonprofit executive. In 2008, he was chosen as the youngest-ever president and CEO of the NAACP. He is a graduate of Columbia University and Oxford, where he was a Rhodes Scholar, and he has taught at Princeton and the University of Pennsylvania.

“The Black church v. the Proud Boys.”

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whether you are a liberal or a conservative or a moderate in the United Methodist Church... The churches have been challenged to take more proactive steps in terms of fighting racism, at my annual conference pastors have been challenged to preach or teach about racism monthly and the people have been asked to confront their own biases.”

Susan Corke, Intelligence Project director for the 50-year-old Southern Poverty Law Center, also on the conference, said, “Hate groups became more difficult to track amid COVID.” She said they have also migrated to online networks.

“America needs to find humility and honesty right now. We need to build a better democracy,” said Susan Corke, who started her new job with the SPLC just a few days before the insurrection at the U. S. Capitol.

“What I am saying to white evangelicals is that I am clear that your God is not my God and I am clear that you have no advancement or my flourishing,” Lamar said. “I have an investment in your advancement, but I’m not going asleep with you in the room.”

Lamar said that historically, “The church baptized and gave theological language to White supremacy... What happened with the proud boys is as made in America as a Buick or a Chevrolet. It is the distinct way of viewing African-Americans as disposable and subhuman.”

Lamar said that on January 6, an older White woman was pushed by a man with her MAGA regalia to the steps of his church. “She told his Chief of Security we are here because we hate niggers.”

Lamar explained, “They dress it up with words like liberty, justice, and freedom. It doesn’t mean that... This is a purgatory language, ‘liberty, justice, freedom,’ but it doesn’t mean that.”

During the 2020 Presidential election, Lamar said Black church leaders played a significant role in terms of voter turnout across the country and particularly in Georgia and South Carolina.

“There is not one or two persons speaking for the Black church, and to me, that is a healthy thing,” Lamar said. “It is more diffuse there are more people on the front line organizing, and today African-American church leaders are in constant contact.”

About 70 journalists from newspapers, television outlets, and veteran journalists took part in the roundtable. Many wanted to know about the church leaders’ plans going forward.

“I want you to help us (get rid) of the notion that there is no coordination among the Black churches,” Lamar said. “There is not one queen of the Black church; there is not one king. There [is] much leverage and much coordination.”

Among the comments, one came from educator, economist and columnist Dr. Julianne Malveaux who said the rift between the White and Black pastors is nothing new, “It ain’t nothing but the Letter from the Birmingham Jail. White Evangelicals are next of kin to the devil.”

Retired USA Today editor Bobbi Bowman suggested that people read Dr. King’s Letter from Birmingham that dealt with racial attitudes among white religious leaders.

Shabazz family unveils possibly new evidence in Audubon Ballroom slaying of Malcolm X.

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to undermine the legitimacy of the civil rights movement and its leaders,” Crump stated.

“Without any training, Wood’s job was to infiltrate civil rights organizations and encourage leaders and members to commit felonious acts,” Crump noted in a news release before the gathering.

“He was also tasked with ensuring that Malcolm X’s security detail was arrested days prior to the assassination, guaranteeing Malcolm X didn’t have door security while at the Audubon Ballroom, where he was killed on Feb. 21, 1965.”

Wood’s purported death bed letter was delivered to three of Malcolm’s daughters – Qubillah, Ilyasah, and Gamilah.

Reggie Wood, the administrator of Ray Wood’s estate, read the letter to Malcolm’s daughters.

Ray Wood served as an undercover New York City police officer

with the Bureau of Special Services and Investigation (BOSSI).

Reportedly, he earned a reputation for infiltrating the Bronx Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) chapter under the name Ray Woodall in 1964.

According to a report in The Guardian, Wood posed as a 27-year-old graduate of Manhattan College studying law at Fordham University.

“He was soon named CORE’s housing chairman and oversaw a voter registration project,” The Guardian reported.

“Wood earned his activist bonafides by getting arrested with two others at city hall while attempting a citizen’s arrest of Mayor Wagner for allowing racial discrimination on a public construction project,” the U.K.-based newspaper published.

By 1965, Wood had been re-assigned to infiltrate a group calling itself the Black Liberation Movement (BLM) and received credit for defusing a plot to bomb the Statue of Liberty.

Three men were convicted of Malcolm X’s 1965 murder.

Talmadge Hayer, who later changed his name to Mujahid Abdul Halim, was the only one to admit guilt in the assassination.

Norman Butler, who later changed his name to Muhammad Abdul Aziz, and Thomas Johnson, later named Khalil Islam, maintained their innocence.

Aziz won parole in 1985; Islam was released in 1987, and Halim was released in 2010.

Islam died in 2009.

A Netflix documentary, “Who Killed Malcolm X?,” was released last year and featured interviews conducted by Abdur-Rahman Muhammad, an activist and investigator who said he dedicated his life to solving Malcolm’s murder.

Following the documentary’s release, the Manhattan District Attorney’s office announced it would review the case and reopen it if they found new evidence.

Manhattan District Attorney Cy Vance, Jr., could not immediately be reached for comment.

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Johnny Pacheco 85, Salsa music pioneer

By Rosemary Rossi

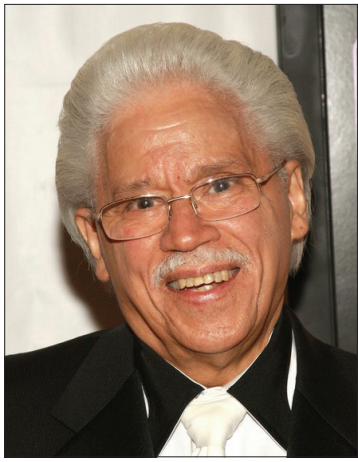
Johnny Pacheco, the Dominican-born bandleader and co-founder of Fania Records, which opened the world to Salsa music, has died. He was 85.

His wife, Maria Elena Pacheco, announced his passing at Holy Name Medical Center in Teaneck, New Jersey. No cause of death was provided.

Fania Records posted a tribute to Pacheco on Facebook, writing: "It is with profound sadness we share the news of the passing of Johnny Pacheco at 85 years old. He was one of Fania's founders and the man most responsible for the genre of Salsa music."

Born in Santiago, RD and later moving to New York as a child Johnny was much more than a musician, bandleader, writer, arranger and producer. "He was a visionary. His music will live on eternally and we are forever grateful to have been a part of his wonderful journey."

Pacheco's music career began in 1954, when he pulled together



Johnny Pacheco (NOW)

The Chuchulecos Boys band. With Pacheco on percussion, they played at social events and weddings. He later went on to play for several other bands, including Tito Puente and Xavier Cugat.

In 1958, he recorded his first album, playing congas and bongos aside Charlie Palmieri on piano on the Latin jazz album Easy Does It. After joining Alegre Records, Pacheco recorded the album Pa-

checo y su charanga. The album's success was thanks to a new dance fad at the time called the Pechanga, a brisk blend of cha-cha-cha and merengue that propelled him to worldwide notoriety.

In 1963, he and co-founded and became creative director and musical producer of a new label, Fania Records, which launched the careers of many popular Salsa artists and became known by many as the Motown of Salsa. The label's roster of Salsa musicians toured as Fania's All-Stars.

During his multi-decade career, Pacheco wrote and recorded more than 150 songs, earned nine Grammy nominations, 10 gold records and was presented with the Presidential Medal of Honor in 1996 from the then-President of the Dominican Republic, Joaquin Balaguer.

The same year he became the first Latin music producer to receive the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences Governor's Award. Johnny Pacheco is survived by his wife Maria Elena, two daughters, Norma and Joanne and two sons, Elis and Phillip.



Johnny with Celia "Queen of Salsa" Cruz (THEN)



[EDITOR'S NOTE:
Yours truly, fondly recall back in the day of Disco, several of the popular Black establishments were spinning the best R&B tracks, but whenever the DJ included the Salsa mix of Johnny Pacheco, the bros and sistas would packed the dance floor, displaying monster sexy steps as Pacheco's thrilling latin and cha-cha-cha arrangements filled the atmosphere. What made it so cool, on occasions Johnny himself would be in the middle of his devoted fans, reaching out, shaking hands while throwing down with his own fancy footwork. R.I.P. Johnny.
Don Thomas ent ed]

Serena Williams' coach says she won't retire until she wins another Grand Slam

Philadelphiaobserver.com

"I don't think she planned [retirement] for this certain moment. She's dedicated all her life to tennis since she was a kid," says Patrick Mouratoglou

Serena Williams has no plans of slowing down.

One of the best athletes of all time may have lost the 2021 Australian Open semifinal but she assured critics she is not throwing in the towel. In an interview with People, her coach reveals she has more to do.

"I don't think she planned [retirement] for this certain mo-

ment. She's dedicated all her life to tennis since she was a kid," says Patrick Mouratoglou. "So the day she will retire, she will feel like she's giving an end to 40 years of a life."

He adds, "I don't think she will stop until she at least wins a Grand Slam, because she came back to win Grand Slams. She doesn't quit."

The 23-time Grand Slam winner took a break after giving birth to her daughter in 2017.

The tennis player received a standing ovation as she was leaving the court at the end of last week's game. She waved and touched her heart, sparking

rumors that she was calling it quits.

After the game, she went to a press conference but left early and teary eyed.

"I have to believe it and she has to believe it, too. If she [doesn't], she would stop. After all she's achieved in her career, at her age, having a baby for the first time, having a family — it was an incredible effort to come back to tennis," says the coach. "Unbelievable effort. Mental effort, physical effort, so many hours to get back in shape. She would never even start that if she didn't think she was able to win a Grand Slam."





The newly redesigned 2021 Hyundai SANTA FE.

A bold reimagining with family fun in mind.

In sunshine, snow, and rain, the redesigned SANTA FE puts all other SUVs in its class to shame. Comfort and safety aside, this tech-forward SUV offers a bold design with a premium and sophisticated interior and exterior that showcases a stylish, rugged elegance. With available features like in-dash Blind-Spot View Monitor, Safe Exit Assist, Ultrasonic Rear Occupant Alert, HTRAC All Wheel Drive and a 10.25-inch full-touch infotainment screen, you can relax, knowing your family is covered and so is your style game, in or out of the city. It's so much better, together.



On the scene

Dana White, the first Black woman to run communications at a major automaker began her career at a Black newspaper

By Troy Schulz
Zenger News

As Hyundai North America's first black chief communications officer, Dana W. White knows what it is like to have two feet in two worlds.

"Growing up I always knew about the power of communication, the power of words," she said, talking about her childhood in Charlottesville, Virginia. "My grandfather, who was born in 1896, founded the oldest black newspaper in the state. I used to cut ad sheets every month and write copy and process black-and-white photos [at the paper]. The entrepreneurial spirit runs deep in me and my family."

While the weekly black newspaper, the Charlottesville-Albemarle Tribune, is gone, the family's entrepreneurial spirit lives on. "The environment I grew up in, my family, was that there was never just a pot of gold waiting for me at the end of the tunnel," she said. "It's in my DNA – to make it happen for yourself."

Dr. Ben Chavis runs the trade group for African American newspaper publishers. "The National Newspapers Publishers Association salutes Hyundai for its decision to elevate an African-American woman leader to the position of Chief Communications Officer.

In this year where the focus is on the empowerment of all women, Dana White represents and embodies the best of Black America," he told Zenger News of White.

She studied hard in college, taking the toughest courses on purpose even if they were scheduled early in the morning and required long walks across Chicago wind-chilled campus. Those courses included learning to read, write and speak Mandarin, the mostly widely used of the Chinese-language dialects. She majored in Chinese history at the University of Chicago.

After college, she moved to Washington, DC without a job and worked as an intern and a temp to pay the bills while she applied for jobs on Capitol Hill.

Now Dana White runs North American communications for Hyundai Motor Company, a South Korean car maker that builds more than half of its vehicles at its plant in Alabama and employs some 25,000 people in the United States. She joined the Zenger News advisory board in 2019.

White sees herself as a cross-cultural bridge. At Hyundai Motor North America, she is the Chief Communications Officer—a first for Korean automaker in the U.S. She oversees communications for Hyundai Motor North America headquarters and all of



Dana W. White began her professional life helping her grandfather run an African American newspaper. (Carol Larsen/Zenger)

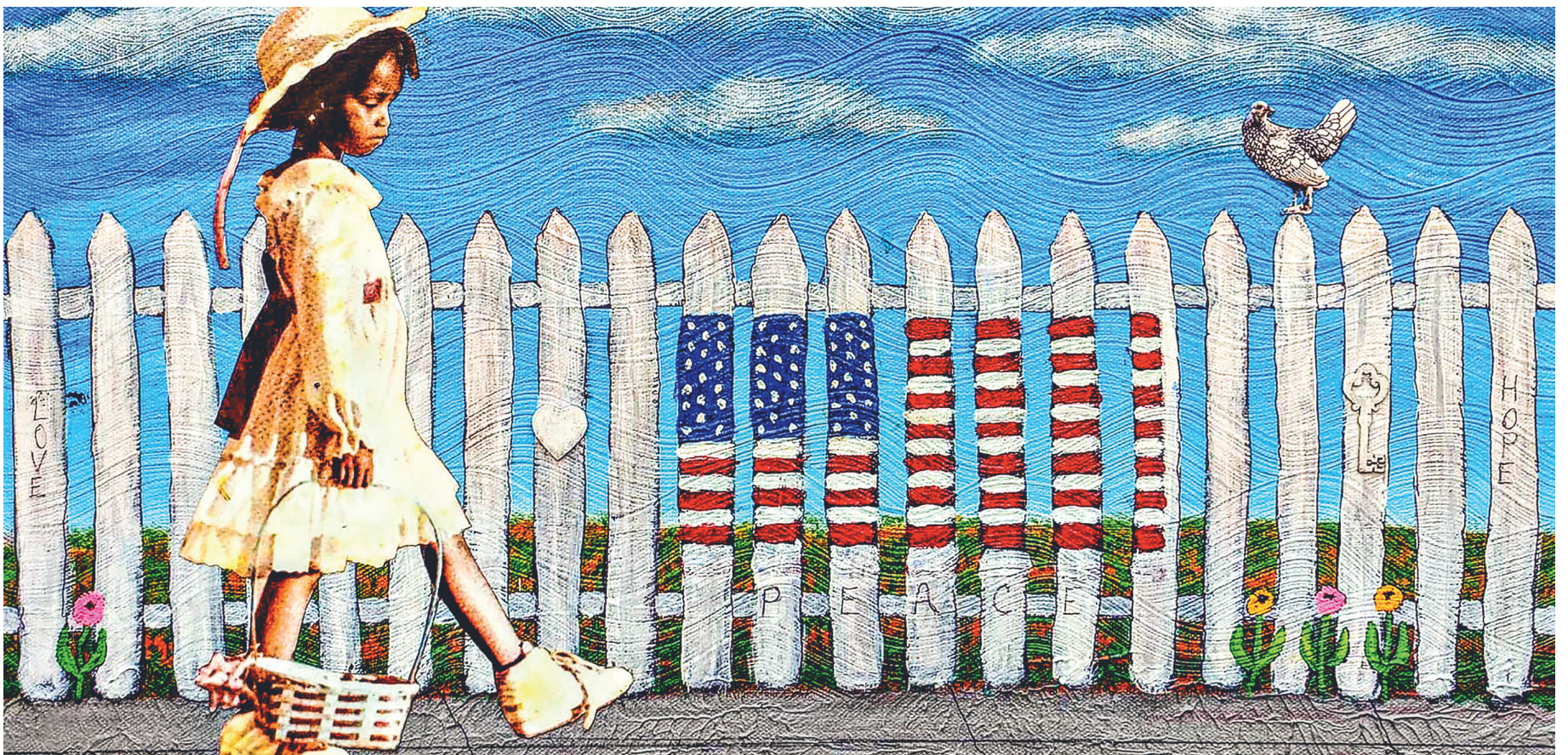
Hyundai's North America Affiliates including Canada and Mexico, Hyundai Motor Manufacturing Alabama, Glovis (Hyundai's Logistics Operations), Mobis (Hyundai Parts Operations), Hyundai Capital and the Washington, DC Office. White also has strategic oversight of Hyundai's luxury automotive brand Genesis, the first SUV for the industry's newest luxury brand.

"When I joined Hyundai a year ago, I knew I needed someone who understood decision making at the highest levels, storytelling and how to work across cultures seamlessly to deliver results. So, I called Dana," said Jose Munoz, Global COO of Hyundai Motor Company and Pres. & CEO of Hyundai Motor North America. "It's rare to find one person with all

the skills, talents and experiences that she has. And she has proven track record of success. In few short months, Dana has already made a big difference in how we operate, communicate and tell the Hyundai story."

Ultimately for White, she said her passions are education, excellence and empowerment. "I can still hear my grandfather's gruff voice saying, 'Mouse, I want you to be a smart little girl. Learn everything you can.' I think about everything he survived, all the limits placed on his life and how if he could see me now—a man who was proud to put pictures of my nursery school graduation in the paper—I know he'd say... 'So, Mouse... what's next?'"

"The thing about me is that I'm propelled by history and obsessed with the future. I'm passionate about ideas and a mission. I want to see people move forward—know their past and explore their future," she said. "It's in my family—this spirit of perseverance. I feel like they handed me a baton. They ran hard and ran fast. They carried the baton as far as they could go. Now, it's my turn to run faster and farther and pass the baton to the next generation. I say, 'When you stand on the shoulders of slaves, there's no slouching.'"



Hyundai recognizes the value of community. Learn more at HyundaiDiversity.com.

Art by Ronnie Phillips. RonPhillipsArt.com.

Hyundai Celebrates Black Excellence

The journey and societal contributions of African Americans is an epic tale worthy of retelling time and again. Their traditions and rich heritage combine for a legacy to remember. Hyundai is proud to join in on the celebration of Black History, this month and all year long. We salute contemporary Black artists like Ronnie Phillips, who firmly believes that children are the future, stating, "I like the idea of connecting images of present-day Black children to their past as a way of honoring the continuity in our culture." Hyundai and Ronnie Phillips, building upon the past together while constructing a better future for all.

Barack Obama, Bruce Springsteen to explore 'Parallel Journeys' on new podcast

Philadelphiaobserver.com

Former President Barack Obama continued to expand his slate of multimedia projects this week with the launch of a new podcast co-hosted by Bruce Springsteen.

Spotify on Monday released the first two episodes of "Renegades: Born in the USA," the title of which is a nod to Springsteen's signature 1984 hit. The first season will comprise eight episodes in total and feature the two men discussing "their lives, music, and enduring love of America—despite all its challenges."

"On the surface, Bruce and I don't have a lot in common," Obama said in a video trailer, also unveiled Monday. "In our own ways, Bruce and I have been on parallel journeys, looking for a



way to connect our individual searches for meaning, truth, then community, with the larger story of America."

"What we discovered during these conversations was that we still share a fundamental belief in the American ideal not as an act of nostalgia," he continued, "but as a compass for the hard work that lies before us."

Dr. Frederick K.C. Price, famed Bible teacher, founder of Crenshaw Christian Center passes

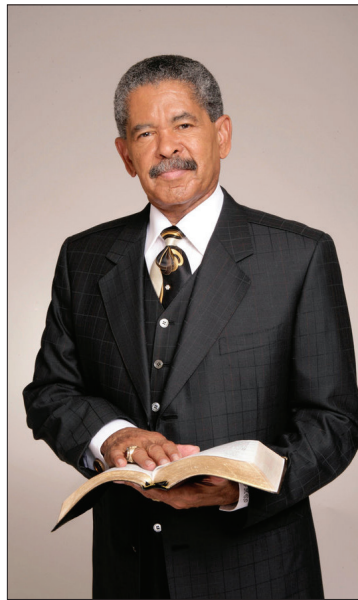
LOS ANGELES, February 22, 2021 – The family of Dr. Frederick K.C. Price announced his passing on the evening of February 12, following a brief bout with COVID-19.

The 89-year-old minister had a distinct approach to ministry as a teacher versus preacher. His aim was for people to grow in their knowledge of God, the Bible, its promises, and to apply its principles for life success, said a ministry spokesperson.

Apart from being a teacher of faith, Dr. Price was an ardent biblical scholar and author of over 50 books, including *How Faith Works*, *Golden Nuggets: A Treasury of Wisdom for Both Ministers and Laypeople*, *Integrity: The Guarantee of Success*, and many more.

Upon the founding of Crenshaw Christian Center in 1973 in Inglewood, California, Dr. Price quickly amassed a following of those hungry to improve their life circumstances through sound biblical teaching. His multiple services which were broadcast through his own established Ever Increasing Faith Ministries television ministry, accelerated growth and led to the construction of the Faith Dome, a 10,000-seat sanctuary situated in South Los Angeles which opened in 1989. With a growing presence of viewers in New York, Crenshaw Christian Center East was established in 2001.

Dr. Price is survived by his wife of 67-years, Dr. Betty Ruth Price, his four children, Angela, Cheryl,



Stephanie and Fred Price, Jr., pastor of Crenshaw Christian Center, 10 grandchildren and five great grandchildren. "He was the consummate family man, and that's one of the hallmarks of his ministry and his life," said daughter and church president, Angela Evans.

In honor of Dr. Price's legacy, an open to the public lying in repose closed casket viewing is slated for Thursday, March 4th and Friday, March 5th from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. On Saturday, March 6th, an 11 a.m. private family live streamed service will occur followed by a private family burial. The service may be viewed on EIF YouTube Channel, EIF Facebook Page, EIF website-watch now, and EIF on demand



Sidney Poitier, first Black man to win Academy Award for Best Actor, turns 94

Philadelphiaobserver.com

In 1964, Sidney Poitier made history as the first Black man to win an Academy Award for Best Actor. He was recognized for his role as a construction worker in *Lilies of the Field* (1963). This put Poitier on the path to higher levels of success and impact for years to come. Now, the world is honoring the work of the legendary icon as he celebrates his 94th birthday this year.

During an interview, Sidney shared insights on his success. "I'd like to say only that I have been very lucky in the picture business. I've been working with a degree of consistency compared to a lot of other actors, I never stopped.

The Beginning

Poitier was born on February 20, 1927, in Miami, Florida while his parents were visiting from The Bahamas. He grew up on Cat Island in the Bahamas and returned

to Miami as a teenager to live with his brother.

According to Business Insider, Poitier had a hard time finding employment in the United States. He decided to enter the army during World War II. Then, he applied to the American Negro Theatre (ANT). After receiving a rejection due to his accent, Poitier spent time learning how to read and study his craft. Six months later, he was accepted into ANT. He worked as a janitor in exchange for acting classes. After taking advantage of various production opportunities with ANT, Poitier made his Broadway debut in *Lysistrata*.

Poitier's Work Changed Hollywood

Poitier is known for breaking down color barriers in the motion-picture industry, gaining recognition as the nation's first Black movie star who redefined how African Americans were

portrayed on television.

Poitier became the center of many headlines. In a 1968 article, *Variety* noted Poitier's mature character development that was "a million light-years beyond" racial stereotypes of such earlier roles as the 1959 "Porgy and Bess."

The Bahamian actor rose to success as the nation's biggest film star in 1967, according to *Vanity Fair*. He dominated the Hollywood box office with three successful films: *To Sir, with Love*; *In the Heat of the Night*; and *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*. Despite the civil unrest that was hovering over the country during that time, Poitier earned a spot as one of the most loved actors in Hollywood.

Over the years, Poitier has made a name for himself as an actor, producer, and director. Although there are still barriers that exist in Hollywood, Poitier has opened the door wider for others to follow. He's been an example of what's possible in Hollywood.



Sgt. Major Christian Fleetwood, Medal of Honor recipient, unsung Civil War hero

By Stacy M. Brown, NNPA Newswire

Educated and ambitious are terms most historians use to describe Christian Abraham Fleetwood, born free and Black in Baltimore in 1840.

History, however, has cemented this relatively unknown Civil War hero as valiant.

After graduating as class valedictorian from Pennsylvania's Ashmun Institute – later renamed as Lincoln University – Fleetwood started The Lyceum Observer, the first Black-owned newspaper south of the Mason-Dixon Line.

According to the United States Department of Defense archives, Fleetwood joined the Union Army just seven months after President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation.

He was assigned to the 4th U.S. Colored Infantry and quickly rose to the rank of sergeant major. "About a year later, he would earn the Medal of Honor," Defense Department archives noted.

On Sept. 29, 1864, Fleetwood's infantry fought near Chaffins Farm, a large open bluff between Richmond, Virginia, and the James River.

Union Gen. Ulysses S. Grant ordered troops to attack northward from the river to capture the city.

"During the battle, Union soldiers overwhelmed defenders inside Fort Harrison and captured

the strategic area of New Market Heights, where Fleetwood's brigade was sent to fight," Defense Department historians wrote.

They continued: "At first, they were repelled, but they were eventually able to take the hill with the help of reinforcements. During the fight, two flag bearers from Fleetwood's unit were shot. While one soldier picked up the regimental colors, Fleetwood picked up the U.S. flag. According to the Medal of Honor citation, Fleetwood 'bore them [the flag, or 'colors'] nobly through the fight.'"

He was 23 and the highest-ranking Black man to commit actions that would earn him the Medal of Honor.

Born in Baltimore to Charles and Ann Maria Fleetwood, both of whom were free African Americans, Fleetwood was first educated in the home of his father's employer, sugar merchant John C. Brune.

According to the Library of Congress, Fleetwood was honorably discharged from the U.S. Army in 1866 and settled in Washington, D.C., where he was employed by the federal and district governments and was active in musical organizations and as a battalion commander with the D.C. National Guard.

"Christian Fleetwood became an icon for a lot of African-Americans and for a lot of white folks



Sgt. Major Christian Fleetwood, Medal of Honor recipient in the American Civil War for having "Saved the regimental colors after eleven of the twelve color guards had been shot down around it." Sgt. Major was the top rank allowed to a colored soldier at that time. (Photo: Unidentified photographer-Library of Congress exhibit/via Wikimedia commons)

in the United States because he achieved so much," Glenn T. Johnston, Ph.D., chair of Steven University's humanities and public history department, told WBAL-TV in a 2019 interview.

As did other African American soldiers, Fleetwood achieved a lot, yet they remain relatively unknown, Johnston stated.

"I believe we have decades, if not over a century of historians who chose not to pay much attention to that."

Elizabeth Keckley, Thirty Years a Slave, Four Years in the White House

By Stacy M. Brown, NNPA Newswire

A Black woman's memoir published 153 years ago still tops Amazon's books sales chart.

"Behind the Scenes or Thirty Years a Slave, and Four Years in the White House," by Elizabeth Keckley, currently stands as the 24th most popular book in Amazon's category of U.S. Civil War Women's History.

The historical work was perhaps the bluntest and most controversial of its era. Keckley detailed her life as a slave who purchased her freedom and then worked in the White House for two U.S. first ladies – Mary Todd Lincoln, the wife of President Abraham Lincoln, and Varina Davis, the wife of President Jefferson Davis.

A seamstress to both Davis and Lincoln, Keckley practically lived in the White House during the Civil War.

Because Keckley made her close relationships with the Lincolns so public, the reaction nearly ruined the Lincolns' reputation and almost destroyed Keckley's life.

In the 166-page memoir, Keckley recalls an intimate scene between President and Mrs. Lincoln after learning their son, Willie, had died in 1862.

"I assisted in washing him and dressing him, and then laid him on the bed when Mr. Lincoln came in. I never saw a man so bowed down with grief," Keckley wrote.

"He came to the bed, lifted the cover from the face of his child, gazed at it long and earnestly, murmuring, 'My poor boy, he was too good for this earth. God has called him home. I know that he is much better off in heaven, but then we loved him so. It is hard, hard to have him die.'"

Immediately after President Lincoln's 1865 assassination, Mary Todd Lincoln sent for Keckley.

According to WhiteHouseHistory.org, when Mrs. Lincoln was later "drowning in debt," she reached out to Keckley to assist in selling off her wardrobe and other items to raise money.

Because the auctions failed to solicit any funds for Lincoln, Keckley reached out to prominent African Americans for assistance, including asking leaders in the Black church to take up offerings for her former boss.

"She even asked Frederick Douglass to take part in a lecture to raise money, although the lecture ultimately did not come to fruition," the White House historians wrote.

The book was not well received by Lincoln or the American public. Whites turned on Keckley for disclosing conversations and her relationship with Mrs. Lincoln.

Mostly, they claimed it violated social norms of privacy, race, class, and gender.

"Her choice to publish correspondence between herself



and Mary Lincoln was seen as an infringement on the former first lady's privacy," historians wrote.

Keckley addressed her critics in the preface to her memoir:

"If I have betrayed confidence in anything I have published, it has been to place Mrs. Lincoln in a better light before the world. A breach of trust – if breach it can be called – of this kind is always excusable," Keckley penned.

"My own character, as well as the character of Mrs. Lincoln, is at stake since I have been intimately associated with that lady in the most eventful periods of her life. I have been her confidante, and if evil charges are laid at her door, they also must be laid at mine, since I have been a party to all her movements," she added.

Keckley continued: "To defend myself, I must defend the lady that I have served. The world has judged Mrs. Lincoln by the facts which float upon the surface, and through her have partially judged me, and the only way to convince them that wrong was not meditated is to explain the motives that actuated us."

Born in Dinwiddie County, Virginia, in 1818, Keckley endured years of beatings and sexual assault as a slave. She bore her slave master's child, George, and was then given away to her owner's daughter, who moved her to St. Louis.

Keckley learned the art of dressmaking and, in 1852, married James Keckley, whom she believed was free.

Before her marriage, she negotiated a \$1,200 price to buy her freedom but discovered she couldn't raise the money for herself, her son, and her husband.

However, customers to her small seamstress shop loaned Keckley the money to purchase freedom for her and her son, and in 1860, she moved to Washington, D.C.

"She left Washington in 1892 to teach domestic skills at Wilberforce University, but ill health forced her to return and spend her final years in the Home for Destitute Women and Children, which she had helped to establish," historians wrote.

Elizabeth Keckley died in 1907 after suffering a stroke.

Spacecraft named in honor of Black woman 'Hidden Figures' mathematician

Philadelphiaobserver.com

NASA mathematician Katherine Johnson is one of the nation's hidden figures. She made history as one of the first Black women to work as a NASA scientist.

In 1961, Johnson calculations put the first U.S. astronaut in space, Alan B. Shepard. For over 30 years, she used her math capabilities to transform the possibilities of space travel.

On February 20th, a space station supply ship named after Katherine Johnson launched to the International Space Station, celebrating the 59th anniversary of John Glenn's historic orbit around the Earth. Johnson played a crucial role in verifying the mathematics needed to make the launch possible.

"It's our tradition to name each

Cygnus after an individual who's played a pivotal role in human spaceflight, and Mrs. Johnson was selected for her hand-written calculations that helped launch the first Americans into space, as well as her accomplishments in breaking glass ceiling after glass ceiling as a Black woman," said Frank DeMauro, vice president and general manager at Northrop Grumman said on February 19th, according to Space.com.

NorthropGrumman named the NG-15 Cynus spacecraft, the S.S. Katherine Johnson, in celebration of Black History Month.

Making of a 'Hidden Figures' Mathematician

Johnson was born on August 26, 1918, in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia. Her incredible math skills were evident as a young child, allowing her to take an accelerated path in her



academic studies. She enrolled in college at an early age, took every math course available, and received mentorship from multiple professors. According to NASA, Johnson was mentored by the third Black person to earn a Ph.D. in mathematics, professor W. W. Schieffelin Claytor.

In 1937, she graduated with bachelor's degrees in Mathematics and French. She was only 18-years-old. After graduation, she followed in her mentor's footsteps as a teacher. Johnson landed a job teaching at a Black public school in Virginia. Then, she became the first Black woman to attend graduate school at West Virginia University in Morgantown.

The National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA) hired Johnson as a research mathematician in 1953. The organization became NASA in 1958. Her work was instrumental in Alan Shepard's mission Freedom 7, John Glenn's orbital mission, and Apollo 11's flight to the moon.





By Victoria Horsford

What's going on

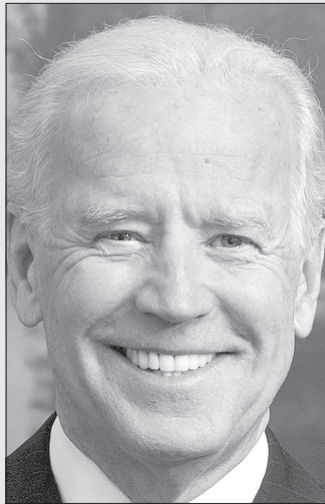
THE NATION

President Joe Biden wants his \$1.9 trillion recovery plan signed by March before the benefits from the December 2020 stimulus expires. The \$1.9 trillion really falls short of what the nation needs for a speedy recovery. It was good to watch the President in action last week during the Texas crisis. He called FEMA like a general would call up troops for a disaster. What a contrast in governance between him and 45. The Capitol riots hearings begin today in the US Senate.

Republicans are seriously talking about retaking the House and US Senate, which is hard

to believe. They are constantly in warfare with each other and directionless. Next year there are 34 US Senate races in contention. Why would anyone vote for disruptors, which is that they are good for in Congress. Democrats must start fielding candidates for those seats ASAP.

About 28 states are considering changing the voting laws, again another strategy to suppress the Black vote. See what happened last year. Democrats can do that again and take back the seats they lost last year. This year is re-districting time. The state houses are important.



Joe Biden

COVID UPDATES

Stories run rampant about new NYC Covid vaccination sites; but people complain about their inability to get appointments. Large venues in Brooklyn like Medgar Evers College are being used by city and state as vaccination locations. There seems to be lots of pop-ups sites across the city. Check with local Walgreens and Rite Aids to see if they have vaccine inventory.

Heard weeks ago about Florida Governor Ron DeSantis' Covid19 vaccine rollout in Tallahassee. Black churches were vaccination centers and procedures worked with clock like precision. Not so, in other parts of Florida where according to

media reports last weekend, the only areas getting the vaccines were red areas, specifically more affluent ones. Perhaps Tallahassee was the exception because it is the state Capital. It seems that GOP governors all over the nation are playing politics and directing the vaccines to red zones. Hope that Stacey Abrams is going to run for Georgia governor next year. Cannot allow GOP to steal election from her twice

Something is happening. Daily numbers of people being inoculated and increasing and the COVID positivity rates are traveling south. Something is working with Pfizer and Moderna.



Stacey Abrams

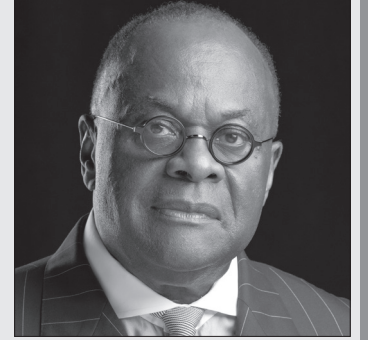
ARTS/CULTURE

TIME MAGAZINE'S Next 100 Most Influential People are a motley crew of artists, climate scientists, politicians and more. Some of the Black Influentials include vocalist Doja Cat; Britt Bennett, author of "The Vanishing Half," a novel about passing and the color line; Davido, Nigerian Afrobeats musician; Amanda Gordon, poet/model; Actor Rege-Jean Page; fashion designer Telfar Clemens; Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett, the scientific lead of the Vaccine Research Center's coronavirus team at the US National Institutes of Health. She and her team have been central to the development of the Moderna mRNA vaccine; and US Senator from Georgia Rev. Dr. Raphael Warnock.

BOOKS: FOUR HUNDRED SOULS: A Community History of African Americans, edited by Professors Ibram X Kendi and Keisha N. Bain, is a compendium of stories by 90 writers about 400 years of the African American experience.

Dr. Kendi writes frequently on race, his latest HOW NOT TO BE A RACIST has hovered on NYT best seller list for more than a year.

African American theologian Rev. Franklyn Richardson's new memoir WITNESS TO GRACE: A TESTIMONY OF FAVOR, is a meditation on life and God. In book's epilogue, he writes "COVID19 provoked questions," some of which he deftly answers. A household name in national and



Rev Franklyn Richardson

international religious, business and civic circles, Rev Franklyn Richardson is the Senior Pastor at the Grace Baptist Church in Mt. Vernon, New York. This eminently readable book has dominated best seller lists all winter

Spelman College, America's premier women's HBCU, will house archives of African Voices Magazine with its organizational records. Its historical documents from REEL SISTERS and community works will be available for Spelman, posterity and broader audiences. Spelman also houses author/filmmaker Toni Cade Bambara's works. African Voices Communications is a Brooklyn-based non profit arts and culture organization which engenders literature, art and film and which was founded in 1992 by Carolyn Butts, its Executive Director. Today, the organization is the umbrella for African Voices Magazine, published quarterly; AV Reading and Performing Services; Reel Sisters of the Diaspora Film Festival and Lecture Series; and Get Your Read On.

An open letter to President Biden: Black people and the pandemic

From page 4

choices about how and whether to receive healthcare. It should be reasonable to expect that there would be hesitancy in this population. After all, it's not about whether the vaccine is safe. This is about institutional mistrust.

Instead of convincing Blacks that this vaccine is safe, maybe we should be looking at medicine's behavior in the treatment of Blacks for more than 400 years. Maybe the medical and public health establishment could benefit in their strategy to address vaccine hesitancy by acknowledging that Blacks have not had a single collectively positive experience with the healthcare system—in more than 400 years.

A consideration for you, Mr. President, is that rather than funding and supporting initiatives that always approach this problem from a point of doing community education on how safe the vaccines are and parading respected Black people in front of the media getting their vaccination, why don't we provide human and financial resources to medical education? Why can't we look at medical education curriculum, so that we are producing a workforce of medical professionals who are

aware of the historical origins of structural racism in medicine in this country? Do we really understand not having paid time off to receive the vaccine? Most vaccine sites are only open during business hours in the work week. What healthcare infrastructure is in place for those in marginalized communities (hit disproportionately harder) while they recover from COVID hospitalizations?

The inequitable Internet access across the country to currently register online for vaccines, demonstrates the systemic disadvantage that many Blacks and others in marginalized communities are facing to get a vaccine. This same pattern is reflected, racially, with the unsuccessful attempts at transitioning to online learning for the children and youth in the public schools in these same communities throughout the pandemic.

Currently, with the overwhelming demand for potentially lifesaving vaccines, and in light of known well-documented research that shows disproportionate gaps in Internet access, the public health officials are encouraging Americans to register online to receive the vaccines. But how are we going to insure equitable access for all?

Then, there's the issue of face masks. According to Nielsen, a retail tracker, medical masks have seen a 319 percent surge in national sales over the last month compared to the same time last year. How can communities with already-existing high rates of poverty afford to maintain an adequate supply of face masks to protect themselves and their families?

No one thought about the cost associated with wearing face masks for those folks in urban and rural areas with high poverty rates, like mine, Philadelphia, the poorest major city in America. We give out condoms, but don't think about making face masks available to people.

There's also the hidden issue in the affordability of face masks for the black market that has developed with inferior products that offer little to no protection. Entire communities across the nation, trying to do the right thing are made vulnerable to becoming infected, all because they are poor, and in most cases Black. Merchants are profiteering on fear, and higher prices mean only the more affluent can afford, not only face masks; but hand sanitizer, cleaning supplies, and other essential items necessary to stay safe during this pandemic. Again, we give away condoms

for free. Why can't we make face masks as readily available?

I also worry about the pervasive chronic conditions. What precautions are in place to protect people with chronic conditions as we watch the primary care network in this country? What is the "national strategy" for chronic disease management, while we fight the pandemic? Is any agency or department responsible for making sure that there's information or guidance for people to know whether to take their insulin prior to or after a vaccination? Should they eat first? How should they alter, if at all, their medication schedule? I should also point out that there are almost 2 million Americans who are completely or mostly homebound, while another 5 million have limitations in daily functioning that makes it hard for them to leave their homes. What about them?

Finally, Mr. President, there's the escalating suicide rate among our children and young people.

In Black communities, the resulting social isolation and the "vicarious trauma" of police violence bombarding their minds daily, leaves us with an estimated 15 million children and adolescents in need of therapy from mental health professionals, according to the

American Psychiatric Association.

However, there are just 8,000 to 9,000 psychiatrists treating children and teenagers in the United States. There was an average of upwards of a 20 percent increase in the demand in 2020, alone. This figure is probably much higher, since many people are underreporting and avoiding hospitals because of COVID-19.

In December, the Congressional Black Caucus issued a report showing suicide attempts by Black adolescents rose 73 percent between 1991 and 2017. White youth do still die by suicide at higher rates than Black youths, and Black children under 13 are still twice as likely to die by suicide than their White counterparts.

We can do better on all of this. We must do better. We're rooting for you and your leadership, President Biden.

Glenn Ellis, MPH is a Visiting Scholar at The National Bioethics Center at Tuskegee University and a Harvard Medical School Bioethics Fellow. He is author of Which Doctor? and Information is the Best Medicine. Ellis is an active media contributor on Health Equity and Medical Ethics. For more good health information visit: www.glennellis.com

National Geographic 'Genius: Aretha' biopic stars Cynthia Erivo

Posted by Audrey J. Bernard

National Geographic and double Oscar nominee Cynthia Erivo ("Harriet," "The Color Purple") revealed during the network's TCA session the highly anticipated premiere date and official series trailer for the multiple Emmy award-winning anthology series **GENIUS: ARETHA**. From 20th Television and Imagine Television, this new season will premiere in the U.S. on the channel with double-stacked episodes across four consecutive nights, beginning on Sunday, March 21, at 9/8c. The premiere episodes will be available the next day on Hulu, culminating in a celebration of Aretha Franklin's birthday, with all eight episodes available to stream by Thursday, March 25.

Additionally, National Geographic's ongoing podcast series **THE MAKING OF** released the first of three **GENIUS: ARETHA** themed episodes, which features in-depth interviews with individuals who are both in front of the camera and also those behind the scenes. The latest episode features **GENIUS: ARETHA**'s cinematographer Kevin McKnight, costume designer Jennifer Bryan and choreographer Dondraico Johnson. They discuss the process of recreating and honoring key and iconic moments in Aretha Franklin's life that will be covered in **GENIUS: ARETHA**. **THE MAKING OF** podcast is hosted by the celebrated entertainment journalist Stacey Wilson Hunt and is available to stream on Apple, Spotify, Stitcher and other podcasting platforms.

GENIUS is National Geographic's critically acclaimed anthol-



(L) Aretha Franklin, played by Cynthia Erivo, in National Geographic's GENIUS: ARETHA. (R) Aretha Franklin performs onstage at the Elton John AIDS Foundation Commemorates Its 25th Year And Honors Founder Sir Elton John During New York Fall Gala at Cathedral of St. John the Divine on November 7, 2017 in New York City. (National Geographic/Richard DuCree) / Dimitrios Kambouris/Getty Images)

ogy series that dramatizes the fascinating stories of the world's most brilliant innovators and their extraordinary achievements with their volatile, passionate and complex personal relationships. This third season will explore Aretha Franklin's musical genius and incomparable career, as well as the immeasurable impact and lasting influence she has had on music and culture around the world. Franklin was a gospel prodigy, an outspoken civil rights champion and widely considered

the greatest singer of the past 50 years, receiving countless honors throughout her career. **GENIUS: ARETHA** will be the first-ever, definitive and only authorized scripted series on the life of the universally acclaimed Queen of Soul.

Without knowing how to read music, Franklin taught herself to play the piano; at the young age of 12, she began to record songs and sing on gospel tours with her father. She signed her first record deal at age 18 with Columbia

Records. In 1966, she moved to Atlantic Records, where she recorded many of her most iconic songs. In 1979, she began a 40-year friendship and partnership with Clive Davis, which produced a number of hit songs, including the highest charting and best-selling song of her career, "I Knew You Were Waiting (For Me)," a duet with George Michael. The legendary singer is one of the world's bestselling musical artists of all time, with more than 75 million records sold globally during her

career. Her voice was identified as a "natural resource" by her home state of Michigan.

The previously announced cast includes triple threat Tony-, Emmy- and GRAMMY Award-winning Erivo as Aretha Franklin who will be performing many songs from Franklin's rich catalogue; the Emmy-winning Courtney B. Vance ("The People v. O.J. Simpson: American Crime Story") as Aretha's father, C.L. Franklin; Malcolm Barrett ("Timeless," "Preacher") as Ted White, Franklin's first husband and business manager; David Cross ("Mr. Show," "Arrested Development") as legendary music producer Jerry Wexler, who guided Franklin as she developed into a confident singer and commercial success; Patrice Covington ("The Color Purple," "Ain't Misbehavin'") and Rebecca Naomi Jones ("Oklahoma!," "The Big Sick") portray Erma and Carolyn Franklin, respectively, as Aretha's sisters and frequent background singers, who supported and collaborated with their famous sibling; Steven Norfleet ("Watchmen," "Dynasty") as older brother Cecil Franklin, who stepped in as Aretha's manager following her divorce from Ted White; veteran actress Pauletta Washington ("Beloved," "She's Gotta Have It") as Aretha's nurturing and loving paternal grandmother, Rachel; Omar J. Dorsey ("Queen Sugar") as James Cleveland; Marque Richardson ("Dear White People") as King Curtis, Kimberly Hébert Gregory ("Vice Principals") as Ruth Bowen; and introducing Shaian Jordan as young Aretha Franklin, aka Little Re.

Tia Fuller continues legacy of women in jazz

Posted By Don Thomas

Born in Aurora, Colorado, Saxophonist Tia Fuller grew up in a family of musicians. Her father, Fred, is a professional bass player, her mom, Elthopia, is a singer, her sister, Shamie, is a pianist and brother, Ashton, is a drummer. She graduated from Spelman College magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music and earned a Master's

degree in Jazz Pedagogy and Performance (summa cum laude) from the University of Colorado at Boulder.

In celebration of Black History Month, Fuller kicked off her "Talk to Tia" Instagram Live series (@tiafuller1) with special guest trumpeter Arnetta Johnson. The bi-weekly conversations will target current and post-graduate students and cover a variety of topics, including transitioning from college to the "real world" and the ups and downs of a working musician.

"While there is so much more I'd like to accomplish in my career, I'm really focusing this year on investing in future musicians and advocating for more awareness of women in jazz. As an artist, I never wanted to just make music. My dream is to contribute to the culture in a way that ensures that jazz will thrive for generations to come," says Fuller.

Also in the works is a "Black Girls Rock" virtual roundtable for Berklee

students. Fuller is also working on her next album with plans on a late Fall or early 2022 release. Grammy-nominated Fuller is more than a talented composer/bandleader and educator. She is a visionary. A cultural innovator keeping the tradition of women in jazz alive, and her latest achievement is proof of that.

The award-winning recording artist served as the sound behind the music of animated character (Dorothea Williams) the sassy saxophonist (voiced by Actress Angela Bassett) from the Pixar film "SOUL" Fuller, a professor at Berklee College of Music in Boston, is continuing her mission of music education and women's empowerment with an online master class, an Instagram Live series and a new album. Tia has more than earned her status as one of the jazz industry's most accomplished artists.

Her career includes touring with Beyoncé, appearing in a national ad campaign for women's retailer J. Jill, gracing the covers of *Downbeat* and *JazzTimes*, and a feature in *Vanity Fair*.

Tia never misses an opportunity to highlight the women pioneers of jazz who came before her: 20th century women like Tenor Saxophonist Viola "Vi" Burnside, Alto Saxophonist Vi Redd and Pianist Mary Lou Williams, or contemporary artists such as Bassist Esperanza Spalding, Pianist Geri Allen, and Drummer Terri Lyne Carrington.

These women make up the legacy that Fuller is dedicated to promoting awareness of. In 2006, Fuller was selected to join Beyoncé's all-female band and traveled the world performing as part of the I AM ... Sasha Fierce and Beyoncé Experience World Tour. She also became a featured soloist on the Beyoncé Experience DVD (Me, Myself and I), I AM Yours I DVD and appeared on several major television shows, including the Today Show, Good Morning America, The Oprah Winfrey Show, BET Awards, American Music Awards, Grammy Awards and as a featured soloist with Beyoncé for President Obama at the White House.

Fuller has recorded five full-length albums, including her most recent *Diamond Cut*, which earned her a Grammy nomination in 2019 in the Best Instrumental Jazz category, the second ever female solo artist to achieve this. In April 2019, she received a call from Pixar who was looking for a musician to play a "badass" saxophone player for an animated film.

An Los Angeles flight and six-hour recording session later, (Dorothea) was born. Released on Christmas Day 2020, *SOUL* has grossed more than \$71M to date. With so much success under her belt, Fuller has her eyes set on mentoring and nurturing the next generation of musicians. She is launching a subscription-based online saxophone education series entitled "The Sax Loft" with



Saxophonist Tia Fuller (Photo: Jerri Madison)

celebrated, Grammy-winning saxophonists Jeff Coffin (Dave Matthews Band) and Kirk Whalum. The online course will feature

tutorials and techniques to enhance a player's improvisation and solo skills as well as master classes by world-class saxophonists.

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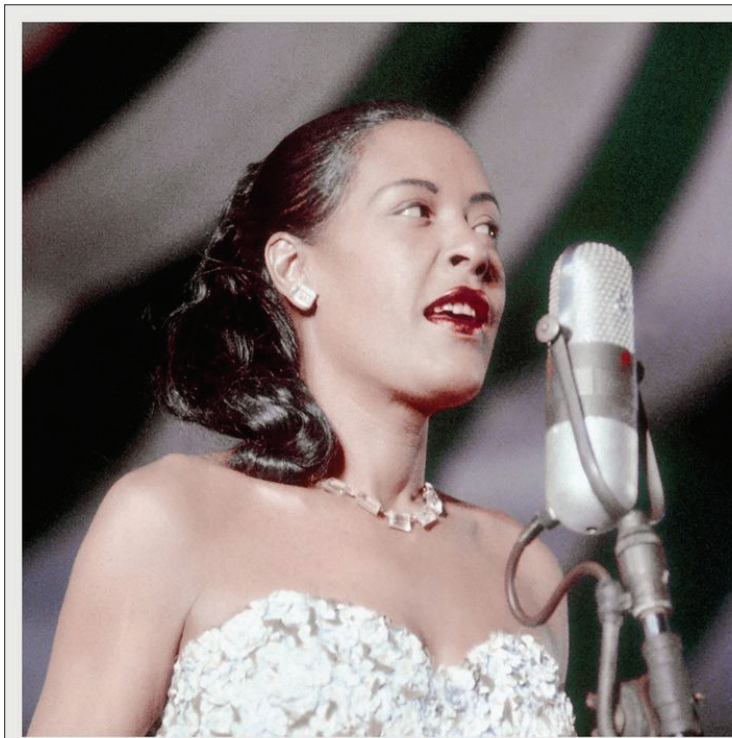
Andra Day to receive Breakthrough Performance Award for her striking portrayal of Billie Holiday in 'The United States vs. Billie Holiday' Lee Daniels-directed film

By Audrey J. Bernard

Three-time Grammy Award-nominated singer and actress Andra Day, 36, will receive the distinguished Breakthrough Performance Award from the Palm Springs International Film Awards for her staggering performance in the film "The United States vs. Billie Holiday" directed by Oscar winner Lee Daniels, which is an intimate tale of a civil rights trailblazer whose defiance through music helped usher in the civil rights movement. Daniels explained the importance of bringing this story to light. "She was really dogged by the government for singing 'Strange Fruit' and they really, really — they came for her," he said. "So to me, she kicked off the civil rights movement as we know it to be, and I had to do it. I had to tell her story."

"The United States vs. Billie Holiday" takes place in the 1940's in New York City where the federal government targeted Holiday following the release of her 1939 civil rights protest song "Strange Fruit," in a growing effort to escalate and racialize the war on drugs, ultimately aiming to stop her from singing her controversial and heart-wrenching ballad.

"Few jazz vocalists are more beloved than Billie Holiday, and Andra Day brings Holiday and her iconic voice back to life through a sympathetic and nuanced portrayal that sheds new light on the U.S. government's role in seeking to muzzle a homegrown legend," said Festival Chairman Harold Matzner. "In her impressive feature



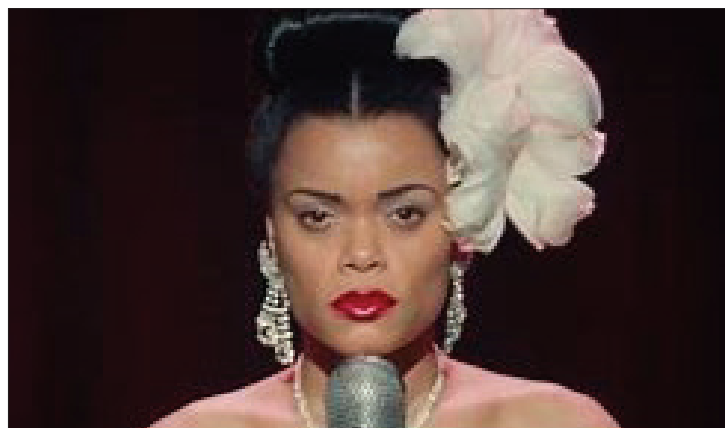
Andra Day (R) stars as Billie Holiday (L) in the film "United States

film debut as an actress and her first leading role, it is our honor to present the Breakthrough Performance Award to Andra Day."

The role marks Day's first major acting performance which she does not take lightly out of a sense of accountability to Holiday. "I didn't want to be a stain on Billie Holiday's legacy," Day said. For Day, Holiday was "the woman that helped me to own my voice, to make sure that whatever it is that I'm creating affects people, that it's intentional." To get inside Holiday's skin, Day made some

major lifestyle changes. "It took me forever to get improper," Day said. "I did start smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol and being more sexual." Her efforts garnered a Golden Globe nomination for Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture-Drama!

The cast also includes Trevante Rhodes, Garrett Hedlund, Natasha Lyonne, and Da'Vine Joy Randolph. The film will premiere on Hulu on February 26, 2021. (Photo Credit: © Takashi Seida / Courtesy Hulu)



Andra Day stuns as Billie Holiday



Andra Day in scene from film

Sports



**Andrew
Rosario,
Sports
Editor**

Another Mexican Champion

By Joshua Garcia

For all of Boxing's faults from its scoring from judges and failure to provide the match-ups fans clamor for, it is still the sport which can produce the most intriguing and awesome results. In no other sport can a tremendous favorite entering a contest be handed such a brutal ending, and it was witnessed yet again in a place all too familiar with it.

Although not in the big arena, and without fans, the MGM Grand showcased another amazing result for the ages last Saturday night when Miguel Berchelt and Oscar Valdez stepped through the ropes. The entirety of fight week was spent focused on the Champion Miguel Berchelt, who was seen as a mismatch for Oscar Valdez. A two-inch height and reach advantage combined with Berchelt's attacking style which earned him the name "Scorpion" in Spanish, were responsible for the surge in money being shelled out on him at Vegas sportsbooks.

All of that changed when the fighters showed at the MGM for the weigh-in Friday afternoon. A visibly weak Berchelt who barely made the 130 lb maximum, jumped off the stage and ran to food, a sign of a fighter who starved and struggled to make weight. Following the scales, the tide began to change around Berchelt.

As the opening bell rang, Oscar Valdez led by Trainer of the Year Eddie Reynoso embarked on the toughest test of his undefeated 27-fight career, being the small man in the 130-pound division. Valdez started with a stiff left jab that found Berchelt's face regularly, causing it to trickle blood as early as the second round.

While Oscar Valdez continued

to annoy and assault Berchelt with the jab he began to mix in his other shots behind it, making them all the more effective. Focusing on the stopping or even slowing the jab, Miguel Berchelt began to take hooks and uppercuts from the powerful and quick Valdez. Berchelt's perceived advantage of reach became a downfall as Valdez used his quick footwork to step into and throw hooks while stepping out to avoid any kind of counter from Berchelt. An obvious tactic gained by his work with Eddie Reynoso.

In the fourth round Valdez took his opportunity when it came, striking Berchelt's left temple completely throwing him into a dance reminiscent of a newborn deer. Berchelt was saved by the ropes but was visibly out on his feet as the referee started the 10-count against him.

Surviving would become the theme of the night for Miguel. Following round four, he endured shot after shot to making it several more frames to round 10. Already dropped to the canvas twice in rounds four and nine, Oscar ended the night with one of the most vicious knockouts you will ever see.

When asked how Oscar Valdez pulled off such a large upset, not in beating Berchelt, but in the fashion he did so, he credited his doubters. A day before fight night Valdez's idol, legend Julio Cesar Chavez picked his opponent to win, as well as the President of Mexico face timing with Berchelt before the fight to show his support. Without the backing of his President or his idol, Valdez became only the fourth Mexican boxer in history to win championships in both the 126 and 130-pound division. A 27-0 undefeated champion and superstar in the making.



Valdez Silences Doubters
Photo: Special to the Philadelphia Observer



Another Grand Slam For Naomi
Photo: Special to the Philadelphia Observer

Naomi Stays On Top

By Andrew Rosario

When the Williams sisters began their tennis career, trained and guided by their father Richard, the sport had very little successful players of color they could look up to. The great Arthur Ashe became the first African American to win a Grand Slam. He had long been retired and ultimately lost his life to the Aids disease as a result of a blood transfusion before the Serena and Venus took up tennis. Long before Ashe, Althea Gibson was the first woman of color to win Wimbledon in 1956. Both Williams were aware of the history of Ashe and Gibson. They set their own path becoming two of the best women players in the history of tennis. As a little girl, Naomi Osaka idolized Serena Williams. Little did she know, her father Leonard Francois from Jamaica, would take a page out of the Richard Williams book and molding Naomi into the world class champion she has become.

2018 introduced Naomi to the sports world but not in the way she wanted. Facing Serena Williams who was vying to win her 24th Grand Slam, Osaka took out Serena in a dominating two sets 6-2, 6-4. The match was marred by Williams being penalized by the chair umpire causing the fans to turn on Osaka booing when she was introduced as the U.S. Open Champion bringing her to tears. To her credit, Williams embraced Osaka imploring the crowd to "let's not boo anymore."

Since then, Naomi Osaka proved she would not be a one-hit wonder. She won the Australian Open in 2019 and the U.S. Open in 2020 despite the tournament taking place during the Coronavirus/Covid19 pandemic with no fans in attendance. To prove that her win against Serena was no fluke, Osaka faced Serena in the semi-final round in last week's Australia Open. After a very shaky first 3 games of the first set, Naomi righted herself winning the first

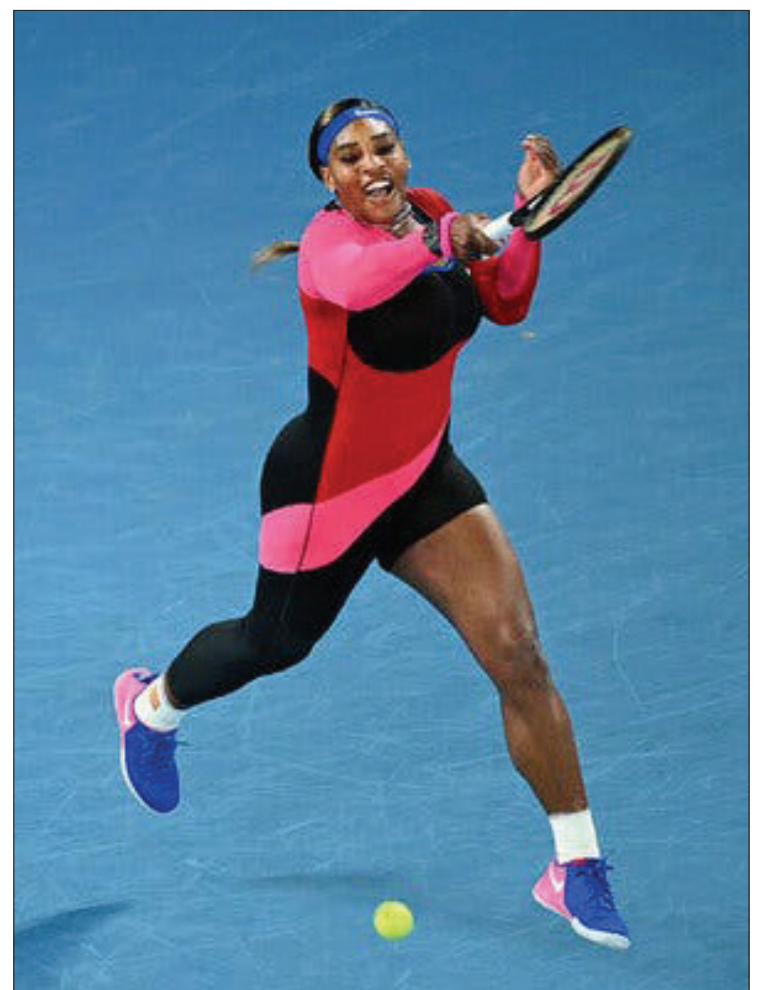
set 6-3. She followed it up winning the second set 6-4 once again denying Williams a chance at making history in her quest to win her 24th Grand Slam title. Naomi's job was not complete.

Facing American Jennifer Brady, it only took 77 minutes for Naomi to add another Grand Slam title to her resume in the 6-4, 6-3 Australian Open victory. The tournament was played with fans in attendance unlike the last Grand Slam Osaka played in. "I didn't play my last Grand Slam with fans so just to have this energy it means a lot," Osaka said. "Thank you so much for coming. I feel like play-

ing a Grand Slam is a super privilege right now and it's something I won't take for granted. Thank you for this opportunity."

It had been a very long time between Althea Gibson and Arthur Ashe who put African American tennis players on the world stage. Richard Williams took the mantle and saw Serena and Venus dominate the sport for years. The torch has been passed as Leonard Francois molded his daughter Naomi in the shape of the Williams sisters.

The result has been Grand Slam victories with many more to come.



Serena Still Searching For 24th Grand Slam
Photo: Special to the Philadelphia Observer