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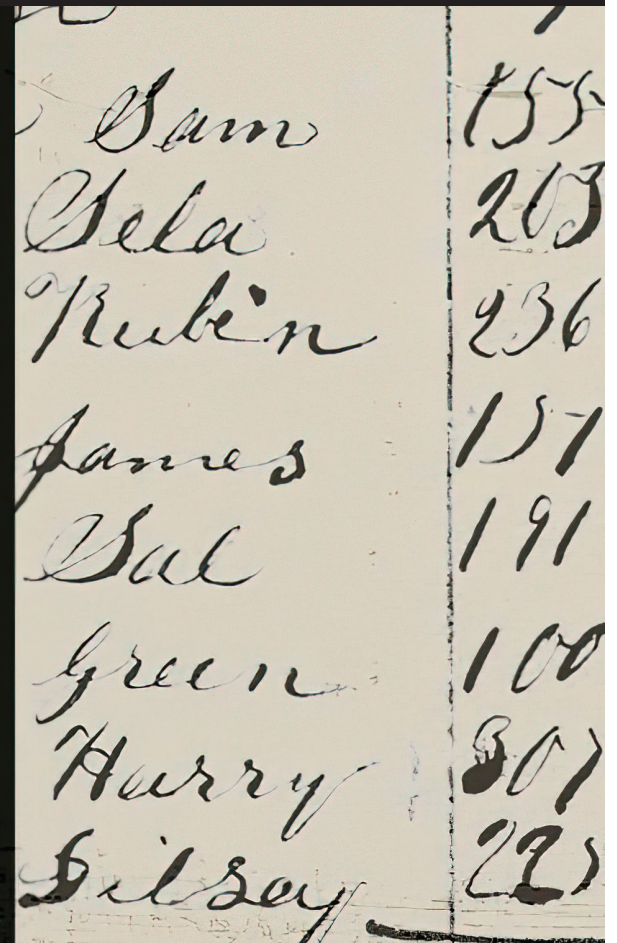
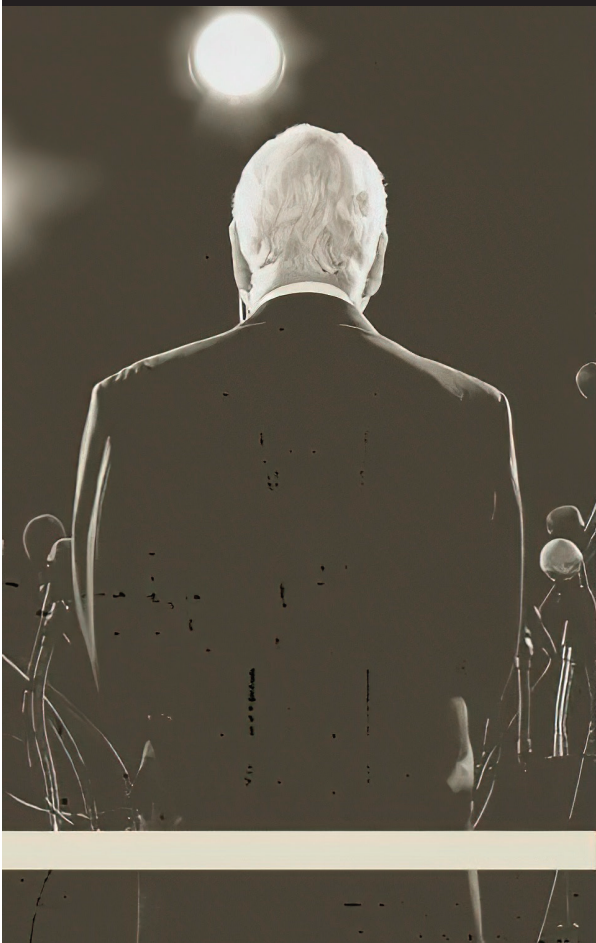
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REVEALED POLITICAL ELITES ARE DIRECT DESCENDANTS OF SLAVE OWNERS, REUTERS

congressmen
living presidents
governors
Supreme Court justices



Henry Louis Gates explains the significance of this information is not to place blame, but to show how closely linked we are to the institutions of slavery, pg3



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Ancestral connections: Political elite's ties to slavery revealed

Among the 536 members of the last sitting Congress, Reuters found that at least 100 have ancestors who were slaveholders.

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire



Recent research conducted by Reuters has shed light on the genealogies of America's political elite, revealing that a significant portion of members of Congress, living presidents, Supreme Court justices, and governors are direct descendants of ancestors who enslaved Black people.

Among the 536 members of the last sitting Congress, Reuters found that at least 100 have ancestors who were slaveholders.

Furthermore, over a quarter of the Senate, or 28 members, can trace their families back to slaveholding ancestors.

This spans Democratic and Republican lawmakers, including influential figures such as Republican Senators Mitch McConnell, Lindsey Graham, and Tom Cotton, as well as Democrats Elizabeth Warren, Tammy Duckworth, and Jeanne Shaheen.

The examination also revealed that President Joe Biden and every living former U.S. president, except Donald Trump, have direct connections to slaveholders.

That list includes Jimmy Carter, George W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and even Barack Obama through his white mother's lineage.

Additionally, two of the nine sitting U.S. Supreme Court justices, Amy Coney Barrett and Neil Gorsuch, have ancestors who were involved in enslavement.

The research conducted by Reuters also delved into the gubernatorial level, revealing that in 2022, 11 out of 50 U.S. states had governors who were descendants of slaveholders.

Eight governors hail from states that formed the Confederate States of America, which fought to preserve slavery.

Among them, Asa Hutchinson, the former governor of Arkansas, and Doug Burgum of North Dakota are seeking the Republican nomination for president.

According to Reuters' findings, at least 8% of Democrats and 28% of Republicans in the last Congress had ancestral ties to slaveholders.

This disparity reflects the historical strength of the Republican Party in the South, where slavery was concentrated.

South Carolina, where the Civil War began, exemplifies the familial connections between lawmakers and the nation's history of slavery.

Every member of the state's delegation to the last Congress has ancestral ties to slavery.

Sen. Tim Scott, a Republican presidential candidate, and Rep. James Clyburn, a prominent Democrat, both have ancestors who were enslaved.

All seven white lawmakers

from South Carolina in the 117th Congress are direct descendants of slaveholders, as is the state's Republican governor, Henry McMaster.

The unveiling of these ancestral ties to slavery comes at a time when the legacy of slavery is under renewed and intense debate.

The investigation by Reuters emphasizes the ongoing relationship between America and the institution of slavery, particularly among those who influence the country's laws.

Henry Louis Gates Jr., a professor at Harvard University specializing in African and African American Research, emphasized in an NBC News interview that identifying these ancestral connections is not about assigning blame but recognizing the close link between lawmakers and slavery.

Gates stated that it served as an opportunity for individuals to learn and for the American people to gain a deeper understanding of their shared history.

The Reuters analysis goes beyond previous documentation of ancestral ties to slavery by focusing on the most powerful officeholders of today, many of whom have taken

Continued on page 6

President Biden salutes black press, amplifies its importance during convention in Nashville

This week, during the NNPA's annual convention, which celebrated 196 years of the Black Press of America, President Biden appeared via video to deliver remarks to mark the occasion.

By Stacy M. Brown, NNPA
Newswire



This week, during the NNPA's Annual Convention, which celebrated 196 years of the Black Press of America, Biden appeared via video to salute the NNPA and its member publishers on the occasion.

"Congratulations to the Black Press of America for celebrating 196 years of serving communities across our nation," Biden stated in the address which aired on July 1.

"Ida B. Wells once said, the way to right wrongs is to turn the light of truth upon the wrong. That's the sacred charge of a free press. That's the charge African American publishers have pursued for nearly two centuries," Biden continued.

"With every story you publish, you make our democracy stronger. Thank you for what you do to turn the light of truth wherever your work leads you. Thank you."

President Joe Biden has always maintained that the Black vote pushed him over the top in his 2020 election victory over Donald Trump.

And it's never been lost on the president that the pivotal day in his campaign occurred in Charleston, South Carolina, on Feb. 26, when he sat down for a live roundtable interview with Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr., the president and CEO of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), the trade

association of the more than 200 African American-owned newspapers and media companies.

Joining Chavis at that campaign-turning event were dozens of Black Press publishers and media company owners, and the livestream of that event, followed later in the day by an endorsement from Democratic South Carolina Rep. James Clyburn, catapulted the once slumbering candidacy all the way to the White House.

Continued on page 6

As some seek to conceal the history of slavery, what to the white man is June 19th?

NEWS ANALYSIS
(TriceEdneyWire.com)

It was in the Dred Scott Decision issued on March 6, 1857, that Chief Justice Roger Taney of the U. S. Supreme Court solidified the viciously racist lens through which many White Americans historically viewed Black people: He said, "[Black people] had for more than a century before been regarded as beings of an inferior order, and altogether unfit to associate with the white race, either in social or political relations; and so far inferior, that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect; and that the negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit. He was bought and sold, and treated as an ordinary article of merchandise and traffic, whenever a profit could be made by it."

Because enslaved people were viewed as nothing more than merchandise, they were not only tortured by whippings, lynching, castrations, and burnings alive, but these cruelties were often documented in photographs with White men, women and children

standing smugly and smiling beside their maimed bodies.

The perpetrators even joyously shared their depravities by making the pictures into postcards that they mailed to friends and associates around the country, as displayed in the book, "Without Sanctuary."

Centuries later, as leaders of states such as Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida attempt to hide the evils perpetrated against Black people during and since enslavement, upon Juneteenth, 2023, the clearest evidence of the evils of racism and White supremacy is what they themselves and historians documented in Supreme Court decisions, on post cards in photographs on signs such "Negroes for Sale" and in history books.

These are the reasons that the national Juneteenth celebration of freedom is so very bittersweet. Although America has experienced its first Black president, its first Black vice president, its first Black attorney general and Blacks on the U.S. Supreme Court, the nation has yet to fully recognize the evils of slavery and the affects the shameful institution still has on the people of this nation - Black and White.

And so, just as Frederick Douglass asked the famous question in 1852, "What to the slave is your Fourth of July?", the question must now be asked and answered, "What to the White man is June 19th? Of course, not all White people are to blame for the evils of enslavement. And yet, those who remain silent as others such as DeSantis continue their assault on truth, are just as guilty as those who avert their eyes as the spirit of those evils and the deeds perpetrated by those evils remain rampant.

So, in as much as Juneteenth - in a nutshell - celebrates the victory of freedom won largely by Black Union soldiers over Confederates who fought to maintain slavery, the question must continuously be asked, What now to the White man is June 19th? The following are a few answers to be considered.

It is an opportunity for those who have consciously or unconsciously averted their eyes, to wake up and join the celebration of freedom; It is an opportunity for them to teach their children the truth about enslavement of Black people and about the fight for freedom. It is a day for racists and White su-



According to the Library of Congress, this is an escaped slave named Gordon, also known as "Whipped Peter," showing his scarred back at a medical examination in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. PHOTO: Library of Congress

premacists to repent of their ways and to forever join an army for justice. And, as stated by President Joseph Biden, who declared the day a federal holiday, it is a season to "breathe new life into the very essence of America - to make sure all Americans feel the power of this day and the progress we can

make as a country; to choose love over hate, unity over disunion, and progress over retreat. Choosing to remember history, not erase it; to read books, not ban them - no matter how hard some people try."

Just for the Record is a periodic column by Trice Edney News Wire publisher, Hazel Trice Edney.



Riots in France were fed by racism, police brutality and the law

(GIN) –

Tens of thousands of police clashed with young protesters after a teenager of North African descent was shot and killed at point blank range by officers during a traffic stop.

A funeral was held for Nahel M., age 17, in the Paris suburb of Nanterre as police made more than 700 arrests nationwide. It was the worst social upheaval in France in years.

The protest ended with police firing tear gas and cars being set on fire.

The teen's murder was caught on videos and contradicted the initial police report. The videos shared online show two police officers leaning into the driver-side window of a yellow car before the vehicle pulls away as one officer fires into the window. The videos show the car later crashed into a post nearby.

The driver died at the scene, the prosecutor's office said. This led the prosecutor, Pascal Prache, to conclude that "the conditions for the legal use of the weapon were not met" in the shooting.

The police officer has been placed in provisional detention, according to the prosecutor's office.

The incident provoked the headline: 'France faces a George Floyd moment' – "as if we were suddenly waking up to the issue of racist police violence," observed writer Rokhaya Diallo. "This naive comparison itself reflects a denial of the systemic racist violence that for decades has been inherent to French policing."

Meanwhile, continued Diallo, "the number of cases of police brutality grows relentlessly every year. In France, young men perceived to be black or of North African origin are 20 times more likely to be subjected to police identity checks than the rest of the population... Why would we not feel scared of the police?"

"In 1999," continued Diallo, "our country, the supposed birthplace of human rights, was condemned by the European court of human rights for torture, following the

sexual abuse by police of a young man of North African origin. Now, after the death of Nahel, a UN rights body has urged France to address "profound problems of racism and racial discrimination" within its law enforcement agencies.

More recently, in December 2022, the UN committee on the elimination of racial discrimination denounced both the racist discourse of politicians and police ID checks "disproportionately targeting certain minorities".

Despite such overwhelming findings, our president, Emmanuel Macron, still considers the use of the term "police violence" to be unacceptable... Yet I fear that the focus is being placed on an individual police officer instead of questioning entrenched attitudes and structures within the police that are perpetuating racism. And not a single one of the damning reports and rulings has led to any meaningful reform of the police as an institution.

Worse, a law passed in 2017 has made it easier for police to shoot to kill without even having to justify it on the grounds of self-defense. Since this change in the law, the number of fatal shootings against moving vehicles has increased fivefold. Last year, 13 people were shot dead in their vehicles.

"Whatever our age, many of us French who are descended from postcolonial immigration carry within us this fear combined with rage, the result of decades of accumulated injustice.

"This year, we mark the 40th anniversary of the murder of Toumi Djaidja, a 19-year-old from a Lyon slum, who became the victim of police violence that left him in a coma for two weeks. This was the genesis of the March for Equality and Against Racism, the first antiracist demonstration on a national scale, in which 100,000 people took part.

"The crimes of the police are at the root of many of the uprisings in France's most impoverished urban areas", said Diallo said, "and it is these crimes that must be condemned first."

Supreme Court widely castigated for striking down Affirmative Action

By Hamil R. Harris and Barrington M. Salmon

U. S. Supreme Court: Front row, left to right: Associate Justice Sonia Sotomayor, Associate Justice Clarence Thomas, Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr., Associate Justice Samuel A. Alito, Jr., and Associate Justice Elena Kagan. Back row, left to right: Associate Justice Amy Coney Barrett, Associate Justice Neil M. Gorsuch, Associate Justice Brett M. Kavanaugh, and Associate Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson. PHOTO CREDIT: Fred Schilling, Collection of the Supreme Court of the United States

Defying more than 45 years of legal precedent, the United States Supreme Court – in a widely-expected ruling – declared that colleges and universities can no longer consider race in their student admissions, ending decades of an affirmative action push in higher education.

The court, dominated by far-right conservative Republican judges, voted 6-2, against the admissions program at Harvard University and 6-3 against admissions policies at the University of North Carolina. The majority opinion, written by Chief Justice John Roberts, asserted that both institutions violated the 14th Amendment's Equal Protection Clause, thus rendering their programs unlawful.

This is the second time in two years, that the super-majority Republican court has reversed almost 50 years of precedent on an issue that had gone a long way toward leveling the uneven playing field for non-white students in higher education. The ruling –



which came after a decades-long effort by Republicans – is out of step with the 63 percent of Americans who in a May AP/NORC poll-support Affirmative Action.

Reaction was swift and fierce, particularly from two liberal justices who rebuked the idea posited by the majority that programs designed to offset racism by increasing racial diversity are themselves racist.

"Gulf-sized race-based gaps exist with respect to the health, wealth, and well-being of American citizens. They were created in the distant past but have indisputably been passed down to the present day through the generations," said Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson in a blistering 29-page dissent. "Every moment these gaps persist is a moment in which this great country falls short of actualizing one of its foundational principles – the 'self-evident' truth that all of us are created equal..."

Jackson sparred with Justice

Clarence Thomas, who during oral arguments said college admissions have become a "zero-sum game" in which Asian students "suffer because of an outdated overcorrection by courts during the civil rights era."

"This is not 1958 or 1968. Today's youth do not shoulder moral debts of their ancestors," added Thomas while criticizing Jackson personally.

"As she sees things, we are all inexorably trapped in a fundamentally racist society, with the original sin of slavery and the historical subjugation of Black Americans still determining our lives today," Thomas wrote.

One section of Jackson's dissent that caught fire on social media was her savaging of the court majority.

"With let-them-eat-cake obliviousness, today, the majority pulls the ripcord and announces 'col-

Continued on page 6

Wagner Group—believed to have planned coup against Putin—is deeply involved in parts of Africa

Wagner Group soldiers in the Central African Republic. Yevgeny Prigozhin, leader of the Wagner Group. **Special BlackMansStreet. Today (TriceEdneyWire.com)**

The Wagner Group, a mercenary Army with business connections, nearly reached Moscow in what many believe was a coup attempt to oust Russian President Vladimir Putin before abruptly turning around last week.

But the Wagner Group has been involved in several African countries since 2017, according to the Council on Foreign Relations.



The council added that in January 2023, the U.S. government called Wagner Group a "transnational criminal organization."

The Wagner Group, which is led by Yevgeny Prigozhin, is active in the Central African Republic, Libya, Mali, and Sudan. The Wagner Group has supported African governments in combatting rebel groups.

Approximately 1,000 troops in the Wagner Group are located in the Central African Republic to defend the government of President Faustin-Archange Touadera against rebel attacks in the capital city of Bangui. In return, Wagner



has unrestricted logging rights and control of the Ndassima gold mine, according to the Council on Foreign Relations.

Wagner forces also fought the Libyan National Army during the 2019 Tripoli campaign during which they were accused of extrajudicial killing and planting land mines in civilian neighborhoods. In Mozambique in 2019, the Wagner Group fought against the self-proclaimed Islamic State in the northern Cabo Delgado province.

And in Sudan, Wagner is training troops to protect mineral deposits and to suppress dissent against President Omar al-Bashir.

The Wagner Group is involved in Africa to make money and to build diplomatic support the United Nations. The Wagner Group has an estimated 5,000 members in Africa. The mercenary group is made up of former Russian soldiers, convicts, and foreign nationals.

Former Maryland police chief sentenced to eight life terms on arson charges after setting fire to homes, cars of people he believed slighted him

Philadelphiaobserver.com

The former Laurel, Maryland, police chief will spend the rest of his life in a prison cell after he was found guilty of setting fire to several homes and cars of people he believed wronged him.

Davis Crawford, 71, was convicted of eight counts of attempted first-degree murder, three counts of first-degree arson and one count of first-degree malicious burning in March, according to WTOP News.

He was sentenced to eight life terms in prison plus 75 years for fires he set in 2017 and 2018. In 2021, Crawford was arrested for setting fires between 2011 and 2020 in three counties. The counties he set the fires in were Howard County, Frederick County, and Prince George's County. He was convicted of the cases against him in Howard County that included three house fires and one car fire between March 2017 and September 2018.

Crawford served as a major in the Prince George's County Police Department, chief of the District Heights Police, and chief of the Laurel police department before resigning in 2010.

"What he did was really ugly, and he deserves every second of the sentence that has been imposed upon him," said Howard County State's Attorney Richard Gibson in a statement to WTOP.

Police discovered it was Crawford with security footage of some of the fires. Investigators noticed that the fires were started by similar methods and



by a person wearing the same clothing in each video.

According to WTOP News, police searched Crawford's home in January 2021 and discovered a "target list" of the victims, who include government or law enforcement officials, as well as a relative and two of his former doctors, police said.

There was a racial animus behind at least one attack. NPR reports one entry on his target list said "White Privilege." Prosecutors said Crawford's wife had been removed from a special advocate program when she disputed the concept of white privilege during training, and in retaliation, Crawford set a car on fire at the program director's home.

"To boil it down to its core, each of the fires was in response to a perceived relatively minor slight that most people would just ignore, dust off," Gibson said to WTOP.



Kevin Roth, 30, was arrested and charged with aggravated assault after he followed a Black woman to a gas station, rear-ended her car, pointed a gun at her and called her racial slurs. (Photo: YouTube/ABC 13 Houston)

Texas woman tried to escape road rage incident over a red light by going to a public place; suspect followed her, pointed a gun, yelled racial slurs

Philadelphiaobserver.com

A road rage incident quickly escalated into a dangerous ordeal for a Black Texas woman who felt threatened after a man followed her to a gas station, pointed a gun at her, rear-ended her car and called her racial slurs.

Surveillance video captured 30-year-old Kevin Roth following a woman into a gas station convenience store in Harris County, Texas, while aiming a handgun at her.

Local station ABC 13 Houston spoke exclusively with the victim, who chose not to release her identity. She said she was in her car sitting at a red light. Roth was right behind her in his vehicle. When the light turned green, Roth honked at her. She honked back, and that's when she saw him pull out his gun while he was driving. He rear-ended her too then began following her.

She told ABC 13 that's when she "took off" and sped to a "gas station in a public area."

"I had already seen that gun in the car. So I didn't want to just pull over like a regular car accident," the victim said.

She pulled into a Phillips 66 gas station, got out of her car and ran into the store. Surveillance video shows Roth closely following the woman and pointing the gun right at her back.

Surveillance video from a Phil-

lips 66 gas station in Harris County, Texas, shows 30-year-old Kevin Roth pointing a gun at a woman and following her into the gas station convenience store. (Photo: YouTube/ABC 13 Houston)

Even when she tried to leave the store, Roth followed her out and tried to take the keys out of her car. Then she says he got back in his car and hit her car again, presumably to keep her from leaving the station. The woman said Roth then started shouting racial slurs at her.

"I honestly didn't think he would pull a gun out in public and chase me. He was like, 'Get on the ground right now!' He could have shot me. He was aiming a gun. I could tell he was kind of scared himself," the victim said. "He was shaking his hand. That's why I was scared. 'I'm scared because you're scared.' He could have done anything to me just out of fear," she said.

Deputies arrived at the station soon afterward, and confiscated the gun. They arrested Roth and charged him with aggravated assault with a deadly weapon.

"My heart was just racing. When the police got there, I was just like in tears," the alleged victim said.

Roth was later released on a \$25,000 bond. The Harris County Sheriff's Office said he hadn't been charged with any prior offenses, other than minor traffic violations.

Three white CEOs whose racist behavior got their companies in major trouble

Philadelphiaobserver.com

Nationwide — Several CEOs have created scandals recently after making racist remarks or taking discriminatory action. Former CrossFit CEO Greg Glassman was forced to resign after making statements targeting George Floyd and Black Lives Matter. "I'm stepping down as CEO of CrossFit, Inc., and I have decided to retire," Glassman said in a statement. "I created a rift in the CrossFit community and unintentionally hurt many of its members."

McDonald's CEO Chris Kempczinski caused a scandal by commenting on the tragic death of a black girl by saying "parents failed those kids." Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot's office released a statement criticizing the CEO for "victim shaming" and Kempczinski apologized for his statements. The discriminatory behavior of Ryan Marshall, the CEO of PulteGroup, resulted in a lawsuit against him and the company after former employees revealed evidence of a PulteGroup executive who "openly waved" a noose in front of employees, including at least two who were Black, while warning them "not to hang themselves."

PulteGroup released a statement describing the



allegations as "reprehensible," but former PulteGroup employee Richard Turnbow stated that CEO Ryan Marshall not only knew about the "noose incident," but covered it up and terminated the black employees that blew the whistle.

"Ryan Marshall has fired just one of the players in the racist and discriminatory scheme our lawsuit made public," said Turnbow. "He also has not sent me or my fellow litigants an apology. We lost our employment because we were targeted, lynched, harassed, and terminated or chased from PulteGroup. The Atlanta office is a mess and it's run by the CEO. The buck starts and stops with him."

Parents outraged at students who posted pictures in Blackface, claimed it was to celebrate different cultures

Philadelphiaobserver.com

Pine-Richland School District is investigating two middle school students for posting racist photo of themselves in Blackface.

The two students posted a photos of themselves posing with the black paint on their faces in a bathroom at Pine-Richland Middle School in Gibsonia, Pennsylvania.

(Left) Two middle students posing in blackface in school's bathroom. (Middle) Front of

Pine-Richland Middle School. (Right) Another student posing in blackface. (Photos: @KDKVATV/ Youtube screenshot)

The photo was taken during field day activities on June 1 during their last week of school. Parents says that it is a time when students celebrate different countries and paint their faces, according to KDKA. One of the photos taken was captioned, "Drip."

Russell Patterson, a Black parent, has three children in the Pine-Richland School District and

says his eighth grade daughter made him aware of the photos.

"I was shown the picture by my daughter, and she was pretty upset by it," Patterson said to KDKA. "And it's pretty upsetting in general that this is still going on."

A school district spokesperson sent the following statement to KDKA on June 8.

"The district is aware of a racist photo involving two Pine-Richland Middle School students that is completely inappropriate and offensive. This photo taken in a bathroom



occurred during field day activities yesterday. We appreciate that students and parents brought it to our attention this afternoon. The building administrators are conducting an investigation and will take appropriate next steps consistent with the Discipline Code."

"Pine-Richland School District values a school culture that is safe,

supportive and welcoming for all students. We are opposed to racism in any form and the actions of these students. It is our goal to strengthen a positive culture for every student at Pine-Richland. The foundation of learning is established in a safe and supportive environment," the statement went on to say.

Editorial - Opinion

Time to act on crime, violence, police reform in America

By Andrew M. Cuomo and Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.
Written by Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.



America 2023: tumultuous times. Yes. Yet, amidst the greatest domestic challenges of American history, our nation has attempted to respond to the challenges through transformative public policy initiatives that have moved America toward a more perfect inclusive union.

Today there are new challenges to be sure, but also there are ongoing battles that have yet to be won. There are civil rights struggles and conditions that harken back to the 1960s that still abuse people of color every day, that still deny justice, equality and opportunity for all.

There's an old saying: The first step to solving a problem is admitting it — and the first step can be painful.

There is still gross inequity in our education system, between rich school districts and poor districts. There is still inequality in access to healthcare, employment, to financial credit and there is a basic violation of civil and human rights in our criminal justice system.

Misguided pseudo-progressive policies such as "defund the police" and soft on crime procedures are literally contributing to the killing of hundreds of Black people and

other people of color every day across America.

The truth is, crime is out of control in this country, especially in too many of our cities. While many choose to turn a blind eye, it is people of color who are the majority of the victims: People of color account for 73 percent of rape victims; 72 percent of robbery victims; and 80 percent of felony assault victims; and 68.7 percent of the people in prison are Black and brown and 44% percent of the people killed by police in the United States are Black and brown.

We do need police reform and reform of the entire justice system.

One: we need to change the culture and premise of policing. Our basic police system was designed in the mid-1800s — a different time and place. Today, it's estimated that less than 10%

of police officers' time is actually fighting violent crime. We need a different vision, we need to rethink how we police — 911 calls signal an emergency, and we need more specialized and better trained emergency responders for different needs: domestic violence, substance abuse, mental health, homeless issues, gang problems as well as violent crime in progress.

Second: We need dangerous guns off the streets and all guns away from dangerous and mentally ill people. By far, most gun crimes are committed in urban areas with handguns.

We need to reduce not increase concealed weapons in our cities.

We need to keep guns out of the hands of anyone under 21.

We need to fill gaps in the background check system so it's universal and nationwide.

And we need to bring back the assault weapons ban because weapons of war have no place on our streets or in our communities. Assault weapons enable the horrific mass shootings that continue to plague our country.

Third: We need to reduce recidivism. The vast majority of violent crimes are repeated by a small number of people who keep hurting others over and over.

Fourth: We need to have more effective alternatives to incarceration, safer jails, but dangerous and repetitive violent people must be taken off the streets to protect all Americans, and in particular for the most vulnerable who are disproportionately victimized by violence and crime in Black and brown communities.

Fifth: We have to stop over criminalizing petty, non-violent acts. 80 percent of crimes are for misdemeanors, and many are petty non-violent acts. And some charges are deliberately vague and are subject to discretion that can be abused by police, like loitering, vagrancy, trespass, or failure to pay a fine. In fact, some of the most horrific examples of police abuse occurred when a minor crime arrest escalated: Eric Garner killed for selling loose cigarettes; Rodney King beaten within an inch of his life for speeding; George Floyd killed for a bad \$20 bill; Al-

ton Sterling killed for selling CDs; Philando Castile killed for a broken taillight; and, Michael Brown killed for jaywalking.

We believe that the time to act is now. These specific categories of civil rights have been violated for too long and the time to make a difference is surely too short. As a nation we cannot afford to remain silent about extremists' hatred, violence, crime, and the fear-filled deterioration of American cities and towns.

This is for us a sense of urgency and civic responsibility. We have decided to work and act together, and to speak out publicly with recommended commonsense solutions to crime, violence, guns, and police reform that we know the majority of the American people support.

Andrew M. Cuomo, American lawyer who served as the 56th Governor of New York from 2011 to 2021, Chair of the National Governors Association, U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, and former Attorney General of New York.

Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr, President and CEO of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), Executive Producer/Host of The Chavis Chronicles on PBSTV stations across the nation; former Executive Director and CEO of the NAACP, and today serves as a National Co-Chair of No Labels.

President Biden salutes black press, amplifies its importance during convention in Nashville

From page 3

Dr. Chavis and outgoing NNPA Chair Karen Carter Richards, praised the President for recognizing the importance of the Black Press of America.

"The NNPA is especially honored to hear directly from President Joe Biden for his continued support and advocacy of the importance of the Black Press of America," Chavis stated. "As we celebrate 196 years of the Black Press, it's always gratifying and encouraging to have the support of the President of the United

States. In the wake of the recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions on civil rights, the Black Press rededicates our journalism to be a clarion voice for freedom, justice, equality, and equity."

Richards who is the publisher of the Houston Forward Times, also thanked the President.

"To have the President of the United States take the time out to be a part of our convention is of course special," Richards said. "But, it's also a testament to just how vital the Black Press remains. Collectively, as Black publishers and Black business owners, we are

stronger than ever and the President's message reinforces that."

Newly elected board chair Bobby Henry, publisher of the Westside Gazette in Florida, added, "That message from President Biden to the association was one that signifies that he remains true to his pledge to value the role African Americans play and have played in this country. Further, acknowledging the role that the Black press plays in reaching our people and those sympathetic to our plight remains a critical component of the 2024 electoral strategy."

Ancestral connections: Political elite's ties to slavery revealed

From page 3

stances on race-related policies.

The comprehensive research provides a broader and more detailed perspective on the extent of these leaders' connections to America's "original sin."

It also explores the personal and significant implications for lawmakers and prominent officials as they confront the realities of their own family's involvement in slavery.

The research focused on direct lineal descendants rather than distant cousins. c

The sources analyzed included Census records, tax documents,

estate records, family Bibles, newspaper accounts, and birth and death certificates.

To ensure accuracy, board-certified genealogists reviewed each case linking a contemporary leader to a slaveholding ancestor.

While the Reuters examination provided a valuable understanding of the ancestral ties between the political elite and slavery, it's further acknowledged that the records available may not capture the full extent of those connections.

Many records have been lost or destroyed over time, leading to the possibility of an undercount.

Supreme Court widely castigated for striking down Affirmative Action

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orblindness for all' by legal fiat," Jackson said. "But deeming race irrelevant in law does not make it so in life. And having so detached itself from this country's actual past and present experiences, the Court has now been lured into interfering with the crucial work that UNC and other institutions of higher learning are doing to solve America's real-world problems."

Although the toppling of the law was expected, a wide spectrum of observers were left angry, distraught and frustrated.

"My frustration is the feeling of powerlessness and being unable to press a button to make things better. If I could, I would," said James Haywood Rolling, Jr., chair of Arts Education at Syracuse University since 2007. "This outcome was set up by the fools who couldn't play chess well enough to not get Donald Trump elected. He had no interest in governing... folks allowed him to get the levers of power. There will be reverberations that will affect people we love and will continue to."

Michelle Marks-Osbourne, a Christian minister, scholar and an

equity expert, echoed Rolling's displeasure.

"I am upset but I expected nothing more from this court. Just to know that this self-loathing man who spoke Gullah Geechee knows he has received so much affirmative action and voted in the manner he did," she said. "I'm pissed, not pissed. I wrote on Facebook: 'Dear Black students, HBCUs are waiting ...'"

Little will change for African Americans until the composition of the court shifts, Marks-Osbourne said.

"It's not until the (high) court

changes that this harm will stop. Alito and Thomas are two oldest on court. It's a waiting game," said Marks-Osbourne who grew up in Harlem but now lives in North Carolina. "I am aware that the court struck the law down based on race not gender. If it did, white women would be screaming because they are the beneficiaries of the most affirmative action."

While encouraging universities to double down on new ways to promote opportunity, Damon Hewitt, president and executive director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under

Law, lamented the far-reaching impact the court's decision will have on already disadvantaged prospective students.

"Through a tortured interpretation of the law, history, and current-day reality, today's decision threatens to make higher education less accessible, less equitable, and less attainable for students of color," said Hewitt in a statement. "While seemingly leaving existing precedent undisturbed, the majority's logic will make it more difficult for all

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June is African American music appreciation month!

Viviane Faver

The United States has celebrated African-American Music Appreciation Month in June since 1979. Aside from June, which is dedicated to appreciating African-American musicians, composers, singers, and songwriters for their contributions to American culture, the month also honors the history and rich African traditions that gave birth to different styles of music. These styles include disco, house music, techno, rap, hip-hop, jazz, rhythm and blues, among many others. African-American Music Appreciation Month is a time to celebrate creative inspiration and acknowledge the impact of African-American music on generations of performers and music lovers. Black music covers a wide range of topics, including tales of slavery and racism, the fight for fundamental human rights, and the expression of heritage and values through lyrics, making it significant for the African-American community.

Although President Jimmy Carter designated June as Black Music Month in 1979, it was not until 2000 that the presidential proclamation for the month was signed. In 2009, President Barack Obama renamed the month from Black Music Month to its current name, African-American Music Appreciation Month. In 1998, Dyana Williams, a renowned journalist and community activist, attempted to submit a petition to hold a Black Music Month event at the White House during President Bill Clinton's term. However, she was informed that an event would not be possible without a presidential proclamation. Nevertheless, Williams, with the help of Congressman Chaka Fattah, lobbied for legislation, and two years later, June was officially declared as Black Music Month.

The intention behind the designation of African-American Music Appreciation Month is to recognize the significant impact of Black music both domestically and internationally, as elements of it are adopted by people worldwide to express themselves. Additionally, during the 1970s, Black music gained traction in signing to music labels, with many label heads recognizing its commercial value.

African-American music encompasses sacred music, one of the earliest forms of African-American music in the U.S., which highlights gospel themes and Black Christian values. Blues and R&B relay ideas of homeland and racial integration, while hip-hop, rap, and rock and roll have quickly gained popularity worldwide, appealing to the youth



across different cultures.

African-American music is not merely music but an integral part of American history. As mentioned earlier, the efforts of African-American musicians have given birth to several newer genres of music such as jazz and rap, which have redefined America's cultural landscape throughout the last century. These genres have played a vital role in uniting generations during times of national struggle, and they have also become essential to the Civil Rights Movement. Furthermore, the beats and sounds of these genres have influenced other genres such as rock, soul, gospel, swing, be-bop, and boogie-woogie. Famous rock bands like The Rolling Stones and The Beatles credit blues and jazz as major influences on their music. In fact, many of Elvis Presley's songs were originally performed by Black artists. More recently, funk, Motown, and hip-hop have also been influenced by African-American performers who introduced new

dancing and singing styles to these genres. Throughout the month of June, music lovers come together to celebrate African-American Music Appreciation Month, embracing diversity, inclusivity, and the impact of the community on shaping cultural conversations in modern America.

I interviewed two great artists for this article, each with different stories about how they became passionate about music and made it their career.

Carolyn, also known as DJ SugarFree BK, started collecting records when her parents first gave her birthday money. She began babysitting and cutting grass for pocket change in Kentucky, where she grew up. "My grandmother, her cousins, and my aunts were also influential, as well as Bo Diddley for being a Southern Renaissance man and collaborating with women in the early days of rock and roll."

She used to secretly play her brother's guitar when he was not home but never talked about it. Everyone in her family was musical, so she took it for granted. "When I moved to California, I started singing casually at parties with some friends. We formed an a cappella group and then got asked to sing backup for some thrash funk bands. This made me think about studying voice and eventually playing guitar. Once I started writing songs and performing at open mics, I felt the need to return to New York. I was into shoegaze, Manchester rave music, and drum machines, and the scene there was more folk-oriented unless you had a band, which I did not. I got back to New York and began busking in the subway, where I met many musicians who I am still friends with to this day, such as 'Ill' Will Fulton (Shiner Massive), Monk Washington (The Baddroidz), Simi Stone, and more. After I modeled in a photo shoot for VIBE magazine, the stylist assistant Karen Levitt came to one of my shows at ABC No Rio. She brought along her friend Gre-

gor (DJ Olive), and he invited me to sing during one of his ambient DJ sets. From that party, "WAVE," I met Raz Mesinai (Badawi), and later Gregor formed we(tm), with whom I also recorded. So, even though I started with electric guitar and a drum machine (solo), it led me to this underground electronic world. Now I have gone full circle, having been in post-punk bands (Bachslider) and blues punk bands (The 1865) along the way."

DJ SugarFree's biggest inspiration was the film "Mahogany." The Supremes and Diana Ross significantly influenced her, and she remembered crying when her mom told her they had broken up and that Diana went solo. That film made her want to be a fashion designer, which she pursued for a while, and later she joined an electronic rock band in Italy. "Long before we formed our band, The 1865, Sacha Jenkins coined me as The Diana Ross of Shoegaze."

According to DJ SugarFree, when she started as a musician, writing songs and teaching herself guitar while playing around with an early Dr. Rhythm drum machine, it was very liberating. She learned how to put songs together and make music inspired by artists she was listening to at that time in the early '90s, such as a lot of 4AD groups like Throwing Muses and The Cocteau Twins. Vocally, she was studying classic jazz singers like Sarah Vaughan. "Something clicked in me when Bjork went solo, and P.J. Harvey was doing these intense interviews. I took a trip from The Bay Area to Seattle and heard so many indie solid women being played on the radio, and I felt a calling to try my

hand at pursuing music seriously. I could relate to the writing styles of all these artists, but at the time, I didn't really see any other contemporary black women making the kind of music I had in my head. Many years later, thanks to my friend Samantha Hollins, I learned about Tina Bell (Bam Bam)."

Matthew Snow, a jazz bassist/composer from New York, performs some of his own compositions with his creative jazz sextet and leaves a significant mark on the jazz world with this debut recording. The instrumentation, which is a hard bop group without a trumpet, tenor sax, or piano, and the melodies offer a fresh spin on the straight-ahead jazz tradition. "My route for getting started as a musician is a little unconventional. I was born and raised in New York and got started pretty late. I joined my first band at around 15 years old. It was a garage band, and I ended up playing bass because it was a necessary function in the band. I had an intense connection with music, especially jazz. Jazz was something that I first heard from my grandfather's records, and I developed a deep affection for listening to old recordings."

In college, he had the opportunity to learn upright bass and play with the Queens College Symphony Orchestra. His biggest inspiration for playing jazz music is the challenge of creating a complete sound for people to listen to. "Also, my favorite recordings that are fun to listen to. I try to create that experience within a live performance context."

June is African American Music Appreciation Month! -The New York Beacon



Supreme Court widely castigated for striking down Affirmative Action

From page 6

students to have a fair shot at getting the quality education they deserve, especially America's most marginalized students. This Court is clearly on the wrong side of history."

Republicans like former President Donald Trump, House Speaker Kevin McCarthy and former Vice President Mike Pence applauded the ruling.

"I'm grateful to see the conservative majority that we have built

on the Supreme Court of the United States bring an end to most of affirmative action. We want to live in a color-blind society," said Pence, during an interview in Kyiv, Ukraine Thursday. "There may have been a time, 50 years ago, when we needed to affirmatively take steps to correct long-term racial bias in institutions of higher education, but I can tell you that as the father of three college graduates, those days are long over."

Pence also said he's grateful

too, "that the Supreme Court took us one step back to that America that will judge every man and woman on the content of their character and on their own achievement and leave race out of the consideration of admissions to higher education."

Affirmative Action supporters chastised the court's radical right majority and rebuked Republicans' hypocrisy and dishonesty.

"America doesn't look like it looks by mistake. Old Miss

doesn't look like the way it does by mistake, Princeton doesn't look like the way it does my mistake," said Dr. Eddie Glaude, Chair of the Center for African American Studies and the Chair of the Department of African American Studies at Princeton University. "It's the result of deliberate policy. And if we're going into a world where we're not defined by racial inequality then we have to be as deliberate in dismantling it as we were in creating it. Declaring

color-blindness is not being deliberate."

Glaude said America is in the midst of relitigating the 1960s and extremist Republicans in high places are rolling back all the considerable gains of marginalized sections of American society over the past 60 years.

"We're relitigating the world that was created as a result of the Black freedom struggle, as a

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On the scene



By Audrey J. Bernard

Harrison Ford returns for the fifth and final time as the legendary hero archaeologist Indiana Jones in Walt Disney Pictures and Lucasfilm Ltd. "Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny" directed by James Mangold. The long-awaited fifth installment of the Indiana Jones series finds our globe-trotting archaeologist off on his final adventure. Set in 1969, Indy (Harrison Ford) is ready to retire when his estranged goddaughter Helena Shaw (Phoebe Waller-Bridge) comes back into his life — drawing him into a race to find a mystical dial before Nazi scientist Jürgen Voller (Mads Mikkelsen). Ford is joined by a rich cast including Phoebe Waller-Bridge ("Fleabag"), Antonio Banderas ("Pain and Glory"), John Rhys-Da-

Harrison Ford. The Fedora Hat. The Leather Bomber. The Whip. It's Indy!

vies ("Raiders of the Lost Ark"), Shaunette Renee Wilson ("Black Panther"), Thomas Kretschmann ("Das Boot"), Toby Jones ("Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom"), Boyd Holbrook ("Logan"), Olivier Richters ("Black Widow"), Ethann Isidore ("Mortel") and Mads Mikkelsen ("Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore"). Directed by James Mangold ("Ford v Ferrari," "Logan"), the film is produced by Kathleen Kennedy, Frank Marshall and Simon Emanuel, with Steven Spielberg and George Lucas serving as executive producers. John Williams, who has scored each Indy adventure since the original "Raiders of the Lost Ark" in 1981, is once again composing the score.

They don't make movies like "Indiana Jones" anymore, and stars like Ford are in a unique class by themselves. Ford is ageless and his acting skills are matchless whether he's jumping out of vehicles or running from moving objects. He kept the excitement at an all-time high and I was thrilled to see him tackle his role with distinction! Plus, he's easier on the eyes than ever before. His ruggedness is so appealing and amps up his sexuality, and stellar star status!

Walt Disney Pictures hosted a lavish red carpet premiere Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at

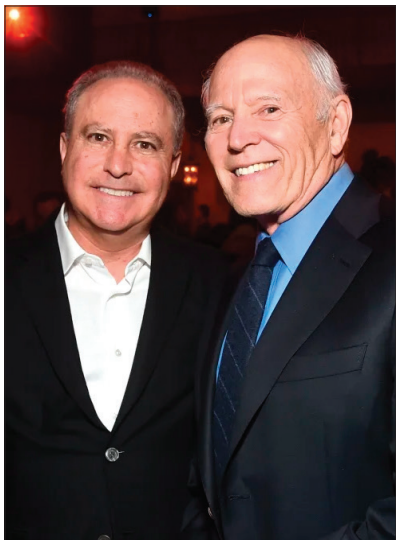


Cast of "Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny" at red carpet premiere at Dolby Theater in Hollywood, California on June 14, 2023

the famous Dolby Theater in Hollywood, California. Adoring fans lined the streets and many donned Indy's trademark fedora and leather bomber to show their love and loyalty. Also, joining Ford at the premiere was his wife, actress Calista Flockhart, and co-

stars Phoebe Waller-Bridge, Mads Mikkelsen, John Rhys-Davies, Toby Jones, Boyd Holbrook, Olivier Richters and Ethann Isidore. Also, director/writer James Mangold; producers Kathleen Kennedy, Frank Marshall and Simon Emanuel; executive producers Steven

Spielberg and George Lucas; Composer John Williams, and many more. The film was distributed by Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures nationwide on Friday, June 30, 2023, to cracking reviews. (Photos by Getty Images for Walt Disney)



Disney co-chairman Alan Bergman and Frank Marshall



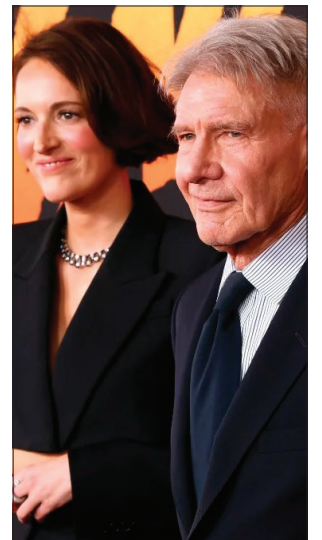
Disney president Bob Iger and Steven Spielberg



George Lucas and his wife, Mellody Hobson



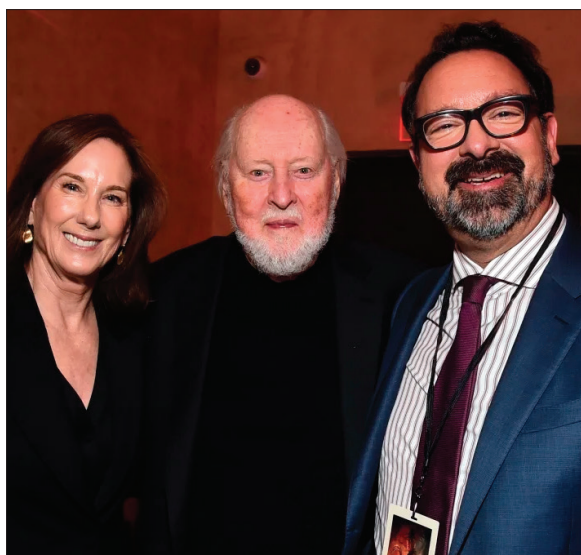
Harrison Ford and George Lucas



Phoebe Waller-Bridge and Harrison Ford



Harrison Ford with wife Calista Flockhart



Kathleen Kennedy, legendary composer John Williams and James Mangold



Mads Mikkelsen, Harrison Ford, James Mangold and Phoebe Waller-Bridge



Shaunette Renee Wilson and Harrison Ford

On the scene



Caribbean culture month at the White House Haiti Embassy

Caribbean culture during heritage month

Posted By Don Thomas

By presidential decree, the month of June was declared Caribbean Heritage Month within the United States by President Joe Biden. During the month, the accomplishments and the dreams of millions of people of Caribbean origin was being celebrated, and network television provided coverage.

Since the start of June, several networks have carried features on various parts of the Caribbean, some highlighting tourism, cuisine, music, dance, authors and other cultural triggers of the region. ABC Television carried a feature on Jamaican dancehall jaw dropper Spice articulating her journey in music, and defining her version of the difference between reggae and dancehall.

"Dancehall is a very bold and expressive type of music", Spice told ABC News, her indigo hair matching the color of her jacket. "Dancehall is dancing a lot, gyrating the waistline, it is a high tempo, high energy soundbox vibe", Grace Hamilton, a/k/a Spice added.

On FOX 5, the Caribbean spotlight fell on Jamaica-based Josef Bogdanovich, the CEO of

Downsounds Records and the chairman of Summerfest Productions sharing information on the world's greatest reggae festival, Reggae Sumfest. The lion's share of the television focus on the region has come from PIX 11, where the station has carried features on Jamaica, Barbados, French St. Martin, Anguilla, Antigua & Barbuda, and more to come from the Dominican Republic.

Cultural tourism dominated the conversations. In the case of Jamaica, one of the guests was Tourism Minister Ed Bartlett who spoke to the allure and the diversity of the island. "Our people are our most iconic attraction in Jamaica, and hospitality is in our DNA. 42% repeat business tells the story, and every other visitor you see on the beach has been to Jamaica at least once before," Bartlett added.

Reggae Artist Chino McGregor and Son of Reggae Icon Freddie McGregor also appeared on the Jamaica segment, performing his single "Never Change" while telling the American television audience about the upcoming Reggae Sumfest music festival to be held in Montego Bay in Jamaica.

"In orchestrating some of

the segments, one element was important to me was to capture as much of the diversity of the region as we could, incorporating English-speaking islands, but not excluding the French and the Spanish siblings with their colors, their vibrancy and their gastronomy," Dave Rodney, media marketing specialist revealed.

And from the island of Jamaica, PIX 11, in its push for cultural diversity also carried a feature on Jamaican Writer Andrew Minott with his new book Prove 'Em Wrong, a celebration of biological and adoptive fathers, despite numerous challenges. Minott is a cousin of Jamaican music icon Sugar Minott.

Other participants in the

wave of Caribbean publicity were Antigua & Barbuda's Tourism Minister Charles Max Fernandez, the president of the French St. Martin Tourist office Valerie Demaseau, Alison Ross, senior vice president of the Portfolio Marketing Group representing the island of Anguilla and celebrity Caribbean chef Renee Blackman.

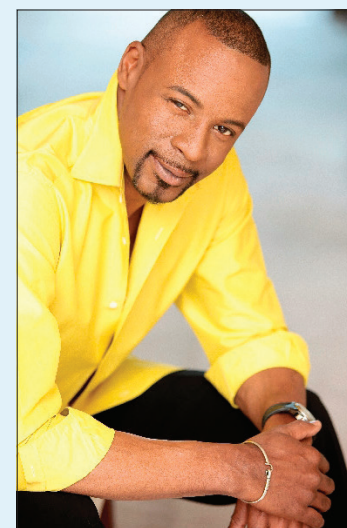
28 Legends Unite for St. Jude Hospital

Skip Martin couldn't help feeling like he had to do something. Between the pandemic and civil unrest, it was obvious to the Grammy Award-winning singer and trumpeter (from The Dazz Band & Kool & the Gang) that people were hurting.

Skip first turned to "People Get Ready," the iconic Curtis Mayfield song that, he says, "resonates the momentum of hope. This song has been covered by musicians from Bob Marley to Aretha Franklin to Bob Dylan. You can hear Mayfield's influence in this song."

It was in the spirit of collaborations like "We Are the World" that led Skip to ask his musician friends to be part of this. "And 28 of them said yes out of love. Collectively, there's power in numbers. I embarked on a project that took on a life of its own. The world needs to hear what's in this song right now. This is about us coming together with a goal to change something. Even a mindset," states Skip.

"This is easily the most profound project in my life," says Skip. "Because it ain't about me. This is about us."



"People Get Ready" won 2023 EMMY Award. Song benefits St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital

Laurence Fishburne had Angela Bassett's back while filming 'What's Love Got To Do With'

Philadelphiaobserver.com

Angela Bassett is opening up about how Laurence Fishburne stood up for her while shooting the Oscar-nominated film "What's Love Got to Do with It."

In honor of the 30th anniversary of the film, Bassett sat down with *Variety* to reflect on what it was like working on the film that garnered her a Golden Globe win and an Academy Award nomination for Best Actress.

Bassett was an up-and-coming actress at the time and was excited to star as Tina Turner in her official biopic. The movie provided visuals to many of the traumatic experiences Turner endured while married to Ike Turner and revealed in her autobiography "I, Tina."

One unforgettable scene in the biopic showed Ike sexually assaulting Tina inside a recording studio. Bassett recalls the long 16-hour day shoots the cast and crew were working and how they would spend the day reshooting the most minuscule scenes.

She didn't want that for the assault scene but didn't feel she could speak up to director Brian Gipsen because she was a "new actor." But leave it up to Fishburne, who started acting as a child in films like "Cornbread, Earl, and Me" and kept up his onscreen appearances throughout the 70s and 80s.

By 1993, Fishburne was the veteran on set, and as an established male actor, he felt more comfortable speaking up to the British director and serving as a voice for Bassett, who was just getting started.

"He was strong, he was respect-

ful. He could bring order and he had discipline. When things got out of hand, as they did, he could bring some stoppage and clarity to the moment," Bassett explained. "We literally worked 16-hour days on the smallest of things, like cutting a ribbon."

Leave it to Fishburne, who started acting when he was a child in films like *Cornbread, Earl, and Me*, and maintained his onscreen appearances throughout the 1970s and '80s. By 1993, Fishburne was the veteran on set.

When it came to the harrowing assault scene, Bassett "wasn't willing" to shoot it "over and over," and decided to talk to Fishburne about it. She didn't feel she could speak up about it to British director Brian Gipsen because she was a "new actor" just getting started in the business. Fishburne felt more comfortable speaking up to Gipsen and serving as a voice for Bassett. But first he listened.

"SO LAURENCE ASKED ME, 'HOW MANY TIMES YOU WANT TO DO THIS?' AND I LOOKED AT HIM, HE TOOK MY HAND AND I SAID, 'FOUR OR FIVE,'" BASSETT RECALLED.

"And then he told the director, like, 'Hey man, we're just going to do this four times. So let's make sure we get the cameras right and we're going to keep them outside of the studio.'"

Bassett remembers, "And whereas I could not, as an up-and-coming actor to this white male British director, Laurence could say, 'I think we got it. We got it.' And then we could all go home and get some rest to be ready for the next day."



Longtime educator creates phonics program teaching kids to read in 40 hours

Philadelphiaobserver.com

A Black educator is making learning to read as easy as counting to three for Black students in America.

Rosa Higgs, a Black educator with more than 50 years of experience, created the Phonics workbook series *Read in 40* to teach Black students to read at or above grade level. The program boasts that it teaches students to read in 40 hours, *Black News* reported. According to *Black News*, Higgs said, "Everyone that I teach learns to read above grade level in 40 hours or less, and that is why I chose the name." The educator added, "When my kids complete *Read in 40*, they can read over 90% of the words in the *American English Dictionary*. And reading is like riding a bike."

Higgs has received a great amount of support. Actor, film director, and political activist Danny Glover said about the phonics program: "The *Read in 40* workbooks will surely jostle the foundation of education and cognitive sciences. They're an educational triumph in language arts of the first order." ACCORDING TO *BLACK NEWS*, Berkeley NAACP's President Mansour-Id Deen awarded Higgs the Most Valuable



Teacher Award for Excellence in Literacy Instruction. Deen said, "Ms. Higgs was the only volunteer educator who taught scores of students at our offices during this pandemic."

Each of her students learned to read beyond grade level. Transitioning from in-person to online teaching was smooth with her supplementary YouTube lessons. "Higgs' program produces the most outstanding reading materials with the greatest, fastest results," according to Deen.

Supreme Court widely castigated for striking down Affirmative Action

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result of the women's movement, as a result of the gay liberation movement and the court is clear where it stands on these issues," said Glaude, during an MSNBC interview Thursday.

Anika Trahan said she is left infuriated by the ruling.

"I'm not surprised, but still very angry," said Trahan, an IT Program Manager with a private company based in Silicon Valley. "The leaning of the court is what it is. But, given the information that has been disclosed in recent months about Clarence's and his wife's goings-on, makes his concurrence in this that much more bitter a pill to swallow. Additionally, and beyond the nefarious actions of this one justice, the level of willful ignorance of his own ascension via Affirmative Action is so ... I can't even find the words for it."

Observers fear that eliminating race as a factor in college admissions will inevitably lead to a considerably smaller pool of applicants if the past is any indicator. In the nine states that have barred race in consideration of admissions to their public colleges and universities, there has been a precipitous drop, said

Georgetown University Law Professor Paul Butler.

"We've already known the dramatic and negative impact this will have from the nine states who outlawed diversity in college admissions," said Butler during an MSNBC interview. "A brief presented to the court shows that Black student representation will go down to 2 percent. They overturned one of the most successful racial justice policies of all time."

Butler said America is at risk "of returning to those old days when Blacks, Latinx and Native folks, who built this country, (will be) shut out of the opportunity to learn at some of our countries elite educational institutions."

President Joe Biden expressed his disappointment while adding his voice to widespread criticism of the ruling.

"The Supreme Court is not normal. They have done more to unravel basic rights and basic courts than anytime in recent history," he said. "They are so out of sorts with the basic value system of the majority of the American people. Across the board, the majority of the American people do not agree with the decisions they're making. Their value system and respect for institutions is different."

Derrick Johnson, of the NAACP, was more forceful.

"Today the Supreme Court has bowed to the personally held beliefs of an extremist minority. We will not allow hate-inspired people in power to turn back the clock and undermine our hard-won victories," said Johnson, the legacy organization's President & CEO in a statement. "The tricks of America's dark past will not be tolerated. Let me be clear—affirmative action exists because we cannot rely on colleges, universities, and employers to enact admissions and hiring practices that embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion ..."

Justice Sonia Sotomayor was defiant, warning her colleagues that this issue would not simply disappear, arguing forcefully too that the court is "entrenching racial inequality in education."

"The majority's vision of race neutrality will entrench racial segregation in higher education because racial inequality will persist so long as it is ignored," the court's only Hispanic member said. "Despite the Court's unjustified exercise of power, the opinion today will serve only to highlight the Court's own impotence in the face of an America whose cries for equality resound."

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Ponder this

Little brown boy, I loved you so



By Hazel Rosetta Smith

President Joe Biden issued a proclamation recognizing June 2023 as Black Music Appreciation Month, stating Black music is “intricately woven into the tapestry of our Nation.” Furthermore, the President said, “For generations, Black music has conveyed the hopes and struggles of a resilient people – spirituals mourning the original sin of slavery and later heralding freedom from bondage, hard truths told through jazz and the sounds of Motown during the civil rights movement, and hip hop and rhythm and blues that remind us of the work that still lies ahead.”

Former President Jimmy Carter created the appreciation month in June 1979, noting that it “celebrates the African American influences that comprise an essential part of our nation’s treasured cultural heritage.”

As the month comes to its end, I am thinking about Tupac Shakur and what he meant to me. On June

7, 2023, Tupac Amaru Shakur, legendary rapper, poet, and actor was honored posthumously with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in the recording category.

Tupac was born in Harlem, though he lived in Oakland, California during his height of fame. At the early age of twenty-five, he was murdered in a drive-by shooting in Las Vegas. A case that has run cold.

Some may know young Tupac performed on the stage of Harlem’s iconic Apollo Theatre. Many may not know that his talent was revealed as an actor at the age of twelve under the tutelage of Harlem’s renowned director Ernie McClintock at the Afro-American Studios’ 127th Street Repertory Ensemble Company.

It was 1984 and the company was in rehearsal for the upcoming season, featuring the legendary actor Minnie Gentry in Lorraine Hansberry’s play, “A Raisin in the Sun.”

I remember it well. A lanky boy, with a twinkle in his eye and a mischievous grin, started showing up at the studio with his cousin, who was a member. We were introduced to Tupac, his mother Afeni Shakur, and his younger sister,

Soon enough, Tupac began positioning himself at the side of the stage, quietly mimicking the actors. He had memorized the entire script, line by line.

Just as opportunities can come along unexpectedly, the young boy preparing to take on the character of Travis in the play had to pull out and McClintock announced that Tupac would be taking over the role.

As a member of the acting



Teenage Tupac

company, I had close contact with Tupac, running lines with him after rehearsals, and enjoyed listening to his assurance that he was meant to be great. I still cherish those

special moments.

On Tupac’s thirteenth birthday, we surprised him with a party. My gift for him was thirteen one-dollar bills (good spending money back

then) rolled and tied with a ribbon, presented in a box marked treasure. Tupac laughed and laughed as he lifted each dollar.

When I asked him what he would do with thirteen dollars, without any hesitation, he placed his treasure box into his mother’s hands. He was thoughtful, kind, and loving to his little sister, but his mother was everything and then some to him, that was clear to everyone.

When Afeni announced that she was taking her children south, hopefully away from the throes of problems in New York City, we were heartbroken knowing we would miss Tupac’s rise to fame. We believed in him, and he proved us right. He was talented, with an innate gift of onstage presence.

I followed his career, the numerous movies, and the music, the good and the ugly. I was not pleased with the language in some of the lyrics, but I understand that he was destined to express his inner thoughts. I did not like the thug life tattoo across his body, yet his face always looked the same to me, like a man-child in dangerous casting.

I will always remember Tupac as a boy looking for a better day. I never thought the “better day” would lead to his destruction. I hope he knew it was true when I told him, little brown boy, I loved you so. [Hazel Rosetta Smith is a journalist, playwright, and artistic director for Help Somebody Theatrical Ministries. Contact: misshazel@twc.com and online www.hazelrosettasmith.com] (Archive Photos: HSTM)



Tupac’s Birthday Treasure Box



Tupac (seated left) with cast of “A Raisin in the Sun”

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LLF mourns the loss of Varnell Harris Johnson

Posted By Don Thomas

The Living Legends Foundation (LLF) is saddened to announce the passing of Varnell Harris Johnson, LLF President and veteran music executive. Widely respected for his music business acumen and mentorship, "VJ," affectionately known by his peers passed away on Wednesday, June 21, 2023 of congestive heart failure. He was 76.

Johnson had a broad and varied career as a senior executive in record promotion, marketing, A&R, and management, including 15 years at Capitol Records and its related labels, and working with an array of successful R&B, jazz, funk, hip-hop, and gospel acts. During his tenure as President of the Living Legends Foundation, Johnson expanded its membership and reach, and helped oversee the organization's star-studded 30th-anniversary awards and fundraising gala in October 2022. Known as an executive whose vision and leadership produced results, he was honored by the LLF with the Chairman's Award in 2017.

"This is a major loss," says David C. Linton, Chairman of the Living Legends Foundation and a close personal friend. "At the time he broke into the industry, he was able to work in every aspect of the business. Varnell was one of the first Black executives to have total autonomy within the label system. He not only signed some great artists, but he also hired other Black executives and molded so many of our careers. He had a lot of 'firsts' in his career. He was always caring, he promoted women, and you could

always call him for advice – he was that great link."

"He was the quintessential record man," adds Jacqueline Rhinehart, LLF Vice-President and marketing professional. "He was a straight shooter and someone who was great at maintaining relationships at all levels of the industry." She recalls that Johnson remained in contact with many of the artists he worked with over the years, speaking frequently with Ron Isley, Frankie Beverly, and Valerie Simpson. "He never lost his role as an influencer – it wasn't reliant on what job he held at what label," Rhinehart concludes.

Ray Harris, a founding member of the Living Legends Foundation, remembers Johnson as an esteemed colleague who came out of an influential regional music market, Philadelphia, where the promotion people had a strong camaraderie, one that continued through smack-talking, shop-talking marathon card games at such annual conventions as the Jack The Rapper Family Affair and the Black Radio Exclusive conference. "He was a people person, a good person to know," notes Harris, also a veteran record promotion executive. "And I have such a deep appreciation for him because he got on board with the Living Legends Foundation right from the beginning. The organization grew substantially thanks to his participation and leadership. He was always a voice of common sense, wisdom, and calm, and we're going to miss that voice."

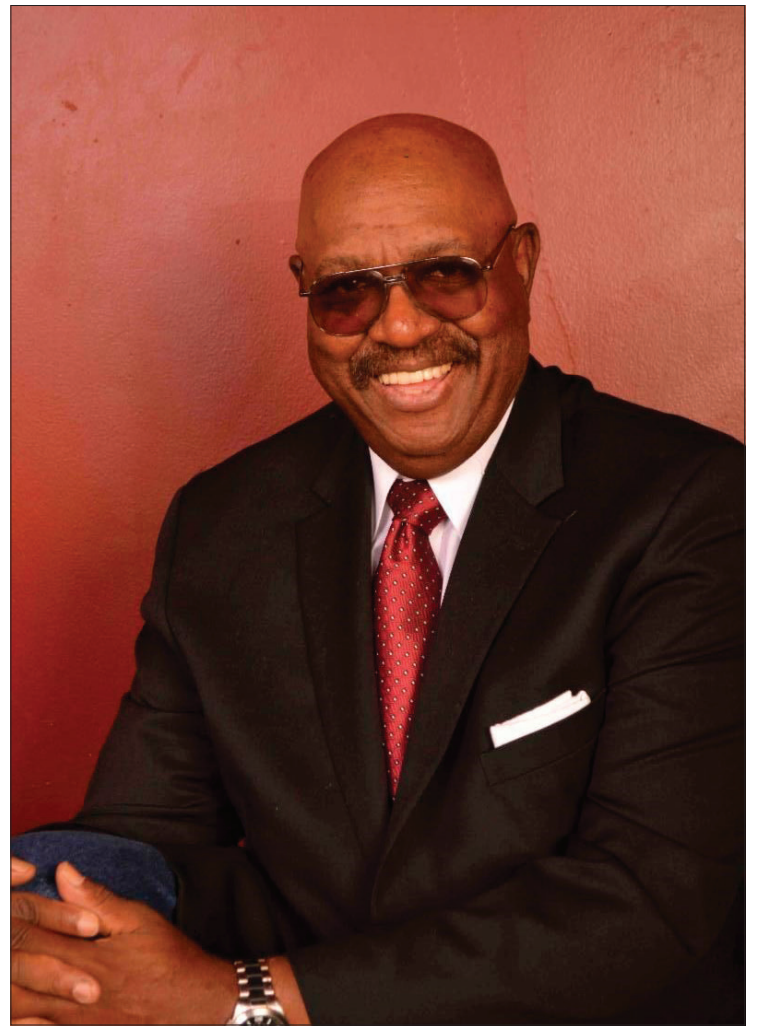
Johnson is credited by many for recruiting several Black executives,

including many women, into key positions in the industry. He was also noted for his ear for talent, playing an unsung but essential role in bringing the late Tina Turner to Capitol Records as a solo artist after her break with Ike Turner. He also worked closely with Southern soul group Frankie Beverly & Maze, whose decision to record their first live set, 1980's Live In New Orleans, earned the group its fifth gold album. Johnson's relationship with the Isley Brothers was so strong that when he left Elektra for Island Records, the group jumped labels to continue working with him. Recognizing the impact and influence of gospel music among Black record buyers, Johnson also played a key role in establishing the Verity Records division while serving as Vice President at Jive/Zomba in 1994.

A native of Philadelphia, Varnell Harris Johnson attended Simon Gratz High School where he played football and basketball. He graduated at the age of 16. To get out of the neighborhood, he enlisted in the Army at 17 and served in the Vietnam War as a combat medic. After his honorable discharge, he attended and graduated from Temple University with a degree in marketing and advertising. He credited fellow promotion man Harold Childs, a Philadelphia neighbor, with influencing his decision to pursue a career in the recording industry. After a stint as a gofer at A&L Record Distributors, where he made numerous label contacts, Varnell quickly became general manager for Philly Groove Records. He was then hired as East Coast Marketing/Promotion Director by Oscar Fields, the vice president and general manager at GRC, working with acts including Brass Construction, War, and Enchantment.

His success in that role led him to be hired in 1979 as general manager for the newly formed R&B Music division at EMI/United Artists in Los Angeles, working with R&B, jazz, and funk acts including Ronnie Laws, Melba Moore, Noel Pointer, George Clinton, Earl Klugh, War, Switch and many others. He then moved to parent company Capitol Records as vice president of A&R, working with René & Angela, A Taste of Honey, Maze featuring Frankie Beverly, George Clinton, Freddie Jackson, Natalie Cole, Peabo Bryson, Roberta Flack, Tina Turner, and Ashford & Simpson.

In 1984, Johnson relocated to the East Coast; he was then named Vice President of Promotion & Marketing at Capitol's jazz-oriented Manhattan/Blue Note Records division. There, Johnson worked his magic with such artists as Dianne Reeves, Bobby McFerrin, Phyllis Hyman, The O'Jays, and Shirley Jones. In 1992, Jive Records President, Barry Weiss hired Johnson over to the label as Vice President of Marketing and Promotion to work with R. Kelly, A Tribe Called Quest, KRS One, and Aaliyah, among others. A move to



Elektra Records as Executive Vice President later that year found him working with Keith Sweat, Kut Klose, and Ron Isley.

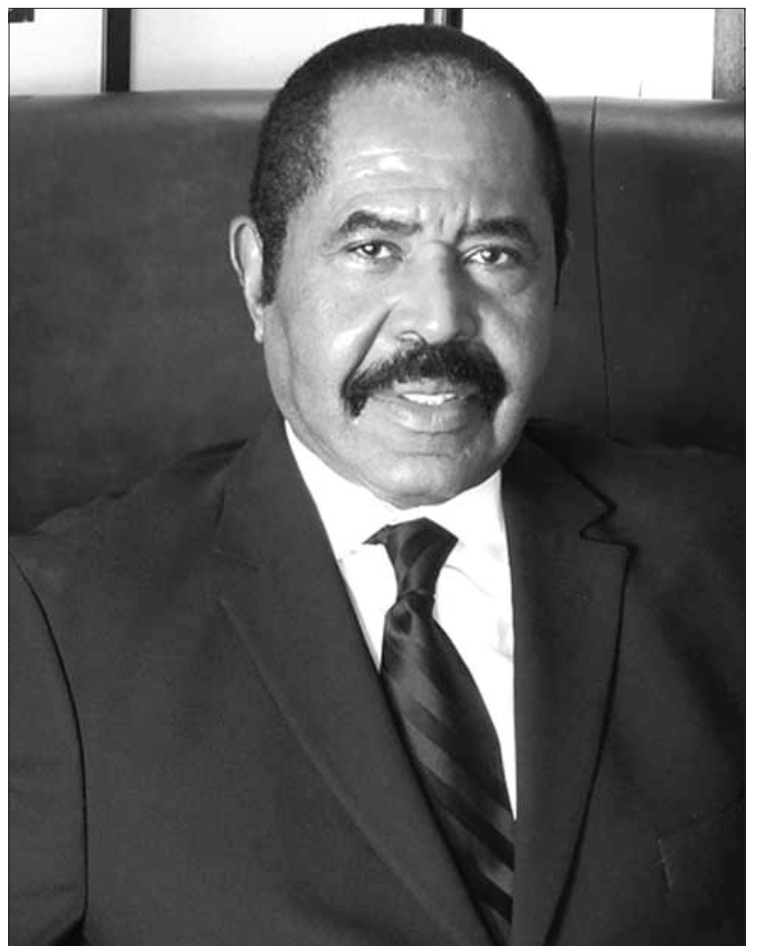
When he was offered the position as senior vice president and general manager at Island Records' Black music division, he took it, bringing along the Isley Brothers from Elektra and polishing the trajectories of Dru Hill, Karen Clark Sheard, Kelly Price, and others. After his storied career at major record companies, Johnson continued to offer his extensive expertise via his own consulting firm Junes Entertainment Inc., working with

established recording artists.

A resident of New Jersey and an avid golfer, Johnson is survived by his wife Darlene, son Varnell, (nicknamed "June"), and daughter Tracey. "You know, we define a legend as someone who made an impact," continues LLF Chairman Linton, currently program director of Jazz 91.9 WCLK Atlanta. "Varnell opened the door for others, he continued to break stereotypes and prove that, given the opportunity, Black executives can shine. Varnell was a legend. The impact he had on our industry and our culture is indelible."



Jacqueline "Jackie" Rhinehart



Ray Harris

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