

# HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY!



## The Dallas Post Tribune

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SERVING THE BLACK COMMUNITY WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOR SINCE 1947

February 11 - 17, 2021

# CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY: The Wilmington Ten, Fifty Years Late

By Stacy M. Brown, NNPA Newswire Senior National Correspondent@StacyBrownMedia

Wilmington, North Carolina, is known today for its vibrant riverfront with three colorful island beaches and southern hospitality, major contributors to the port city's bustling tourism.

However, Wilmington's past paints a picture of a much different city.

While things may be different in today's Wilmington. It was not that long ago that Wilmington, like too many other southern cities, still condoned the region's ugly racist culture and practices.

More than a century after America's Civil War had ended, on Feb. 1, 1971, a young minister named Benjamin Franklin Chavis, Jr., arrived in the city.

Chavis was sent to Wilmington by the United Church of Christ from their Commission on Racial Justice. A local pastor of a Black Church, Rev. Eugene Templeton,

requested help from the United Church of Christ.

Chavis, a disciple of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., helped students organize a more effective boycott, targeted against White high school administrators who were resisting the desegregation of their schools and classrooms and who also refused demands to honor Dr. King, who was assassinated just three years earlier.

One year after King's murder, the city had just three high schools. Two of them, New Hanover and Hoggard were all-White, and the third, Williston Industrial High School, was reserved for the city's Black high schoolers. Williston was a source of community pride and was ranked among the best high schools in North Carolina — Black or White.

Following federally mandated school desegregation in 1969, local



With sentences that ranged from 15 years to 34 years, Chavis, Patrick, and the eight others of the Wilmington Ten were ordered to serve a combined 282 years in prison.

administrators changed the status of Williston Industrial High School from a high school to a junior high school. Williston's Black students and teachers would be reassigned to New Hanover and Hoggard.

However, when they

arrived at their new schools, African Americans endured name-calling, racially motivated physical attacks and other threats. Incidents of rioting and arson, in protest of the decision to integrate, occurred almost daily.

In response to tensions,

members of a Ku Klux Klan chapter and other white supremacist groups began patrolling the streets. They hung an effigy of the White superintendent of the schools and cut his phone lines. Street violence broke out between them and Black

men who were Viet Nam veterans. Students attempted to boycott the high schools in January of 1971.

Chavis and a group that became known as the Wilmington Ten, argued

Continue Ten Page 2

## IN MEMORIAM: Keeping the Legacy of Legendary Supremes Star Mary Wilson Alive

By Stacy M. Brown



"I was extremely shocked and saddened to hear of the passing of a major member of the Motown family, Mary Wilson of the Supremes," Motown founder Berry Gordy wrote in a statement emailed to NNPA Newswire shortly after 2 a.m. Tuesday. "The Supremes were always known as the 'sweethearts of Motown.' Mary, along with Diana Ross and Florence Ballard, came to Motown in the early 1960s.

Mary Wilson was a friend to the Black Press of America, a neighbor to the world, and the radiance she exuded never seem to fade. At 76, the Supremes legend is gone too soon.

Wilson died suddenly late Monday, Feb. 8, at her home just outside of Las Vegas.

"I was extremely shocked and saddened to hear of the passing of a major member of the Motown family, Mary Wilson of the Supremes," Motown founder Berry Gordy wrote in a statement

emailed to NNPA Newswire shortly after 2 a.m. Tuesday."

Gordy emphasized, "The Supremes were always known as the 'sweethearts of Motown.' Mary, along with Diana Ross and Florence Ballard, came to Motown in the early 1960s. After an unprecedented string of number one hits, television and nightclub bookings, they opened doors for themselves, the other Motown acts, and many, many others."

Continue Mary Page 4

## 'Judas and the Black Messiah' makes personal impact on cast

By JAMIA PUGH



This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Daniel Kaluuya in a scene from "Judas and the Black Messiah." (Warner Bros. Pictures via AP)

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The stars of "Judas and the Black Messiah" found their own lives transformed as they immersed themselves in the story of Black Panther leader Fred Hampton.

Daniel Kaluuya said "a different me showed up" to the set when he was playing the magnetic Chicago-based activist, who was just 21 when he was killed by

police in a 1969 raid. Dominique Fishback's conversations with Hampton's then-fiancee Akua Njeri taught her "who I wanted to be the most." And LaKeith Stanfield said he struggled through self-doubt and panic attacks while portraying an FBI informant who betrayed Hampton.

The film, co-written and

Continue Judas Page 5

## Aunt Jemima Brand Gets a New Name: Pearl Milling Company

By Dee-Ann Durbin



Aunt Jemima is making her last batch of pancakes.

Quaker Oats said Tuesday that its Aunt Jemima brand pancake mix and syrup will be renamed Pearl Milling Company. Aunt Jemima products will continue to be sold until June, when the packaging will officially change over.

Quaker Oats, a division of PepsiCo Inc., had announced last June that it would retire the Aunt Jemima brand, saying the character's origins are "based on a racial stereotype." The smiling Aunt Jemima logo was inspired

by the 19th century "mammy" minstrel character, a Black woman content to serve her white masters. A former slave, Nancy Green, became the first face of the pancake products in 1890.

Quaker Oats bought the Aunt Jemima brand in 1925 and had updated the logo over the years in an effort to remove the negative stereotypes. But in the cultural reckoning that followed last summer's BlackLives Matter protests, Quaker decided

Continue Aunt Page 4



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# EDITORIAL PAGE

## Congresswoman Johnson Announces Two Federal Vaccination Sites to Serve North Texas

*Decision comes following a letter from Congresswoman Johnson to FEMA Administrators requesting increased federal investment in Dallas County vaccination efforts*

**Washington, D.C.** – Wednesday, February 10, Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (TX-30), Dean of the Texas Congressional Delegation, released the following statement after the announcement by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) of two new federally supported vaccine sites in the DFW Metroplex.

“The COVID-19 vaccine is the only way to

bring an end to this pandemic. I have been working tirelessly with the White House, as well as with local and state leaders, to bring as many shots to our region as quickly as possible,” said **Congresswoman Johnson**. “That is why I am pleased that FEMA has announced this morning the establishment of three federally supported vaccination sites – two of which will directly serve North Texas. These sites will be

critical in expanding access to vaccines for underserved and marginalized communities.”

The federal operations, expected to begin the week of February 22<sup>nd</sup>, will provide an increase of thousands of shots per site. One site will be located at Fair Park in Dallas, and the other will be at AT&T Stadium in Arlington. Registration details for each site will be announced in the coming days.



*Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (TX-30) House Committee on Science Space & Technology United States House of Representatives*

### Mavs’ Cuban relents on anthem after NBA reiterates policy

**DALLAS (AP)** — Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban relented Wednesday and the national anthem will be played before home games this

season after the NBA reiterated its “longstanding league policy” to include the song.

The league’s initial reaction to Cuban’s decision

was to say teams were free to conduct pregame activities as they wished with the unusual circumstances created by the coronavirus pandemic. Most teams

don’t have fans at home games.

But the NBA abruptly reversed course with Cuban’s decision reverberating around the country.

Continued **Ten** Page 1

for Black history courses, respect for King and all Black people and equality.

Tensions continued to mount, with the Ku Klux Klan and other White supremacists firebombing buildings and shooting at Black students.

One incident in particular would become a defining event in this period of Wilmington’s history: The firebombing of Mike’s Grocery Store, a White-owned business in the heart of Wilmington’s Black community.

On Feb. 6, during an uncharacteristically frigid night for a southern city like Wilmington, the popular neighborhood grocery was firebombed. As police and firefighters arrived on the scene, gun fire could be heard above the siren squeals and activity.

Firefighters responding to the fire, alleged that they were shot at from the roof of the nearby Gregory Congregational Church. Chavis and several students had been meeting at the church. Sniper fire, which was intended for the Wilmington Ten’s members, struck a police officer.

As the gun fire continued, one of the Wilmington Ten, Marvin “Chilly” Patrick, was shot as he placed himself between the source of the sniper’s fire and Chavis, successfully preventing Chavis from being shot.

According to the February 1971 edition of “This Month in North Carolina History — The Wilmington Ten,” the North Carolina governor

called up the North Carolina National Guard, whose forces entered the church on February 8 and found it empty. The violence resulted in two deaths, six injuries, and more than \$500,000 (equivalent to \$3.2 million in 2019) in property damage.

Chavis and nine others, eight young Black males, who were high school students, and white female anti-poverty worker, were arrested on charges of arson related to the grocery fire. Based on testimony of three young Black men (who later recanted their testimony), they were tried and convicted in state court of arson and conspiracy in connection with the firebombing of Mike’s Grocery.

At trial, all ten defendants were provided defense counsel by the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice. However, it was later established that the prosecutors conspired against the defendants by paying witnesses to falsely identify Chavis and the other Wilmington Ten members — who were the actual targets of the White supremacists’ sniper’s fire — as arsonists, and for the subsequent assault on law enforcement officers.

Additionally, chief prosecutor Jay Stroud feigned sickness following jury selection when it became apparent that ten African Americans would be seated on the jury, leading to a mistrial. A second trial, whose jury included only two African Americans, resulted in a guilty verdict for all ten defendants.

With sentences that ranged from 15 years to 34 years, Chavis, Patrick, and the eight others were ordered to serve a combined 282 years in prison.

In 1977, Amnesty International cited the Wilmington Ten case as the first official case of political prisoners in the United States. Within a year, the London-based human-rights group declared that the Wilmington Ten were “prisoners of conscience who were not arrested for the crimes for which they were charged, but because of their political work.”

The New York Times published an article noting that Amnesty International’s declaration about the Wilmington Ten outraged some and embarrassed others — especially after Amnesty International was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1977.

“Soon the charge was repeated and amplified by the American Ambassador to the United Nations, Andrew Young, who contended in an interview with a French newspaper that the United States harbored ‘hundreds, perhaps thousands’ of political prisoners,” The Times reported. Young added, “The Wilmington Ten, for example, are innocent.”

“Mr. Young later apologized for the remark about hundreds or thousands of political prisoners, but he still says, privately, that the charges against the Ten were ‘trumped up,’” noted the Times.

The Wilmington Ten spent nearly a decade in prison before federal appellate courts overturned their convictions in

December 1980, citing prosecutorial misconduct.

Timothy Tyson, a North Carolina historian and visiting professor at Duke University, told CNN he was given the Wilmington Ten prosecutor’s handwritten notes before 2012 when the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), United Church of Christ and NAACP called again for pardons of innocence for the Wilmington Ten.

Prior to this, the publisher of the Wilmington Journal, Mary Alice Thatch, had petitioned the NNPA to launch a national campaign for a pardon of innocence for the Wilmington Ten.

“It was pretty shocking stuff,” Tyson remarked.

He said the names of at least six potential jurors had “KKK Good!!” written next to them. Next to a woman’s name, it said, “NO, she associates with Negroes.”

On the back of the legal pad, the chief prosecutor, Jay Stroud, had written the advantages and disadvantages of a mistrial, Tyson said. One of the advantages was a fresh start with a new jury.

In 2012, 40 years after they were unjustly convicted, North Carolina Gov. Beverly Perdue officially pardoned the Wilmington 10.

“These convictions were tainted by naked racism and represent an ugly stain on North Carolina’s criminal justice system that cannot be allowed to stand any longer,” Gov. Perdue said at the time. “Justice demands that this stain finally be removed.”

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**Sammie Berry**  
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**"A JOURNEY THROUGH THE GOSPEL OF JOHN"**  
ST. JOHN 11:28-44  
THE RAISING OF LAZARUS  
DEMONSTRATION OF GOD'S LOVE AND POWER

BY REV. JOHNNY CALVIN SMITH

The main or chief aim of John's gospel message is to present Christ as Deity, the eternal Son of God, who became man and tabernacled on earth for a period of thirty-three years, with His earthly ministry lasting for three years. As we have surveyed this grand and superb book, two rather prominent points are emphasized throughout this gospel: (1) the Divinity of our blessed Saviour and (2) His peerless human perfections. The wonderful book of John discloses or reveals the pre-incarnate glories of Christ, manifesting that Christ subsisted in the beginning, hav-

ing fellowship with God, and that He was and is God Himself (St. John 1:1). Also, this grand gospel presents the superb union of both the Divine and human perfections of Christ united in one person. What an awesome gospel presentation we are studying!

At the outset of this passage, you will recall that Jesus had received information that Lazarus was ill, but He did not immediately come to Bethany; in fact, upon receiving the news, He remained two days where He was. By remaining where He was, Christ will demonstrate that His princi-

ple purpose was to manifest God's glory (St. John 11:4). When our Lord arrived at Bethany, His tender compassion for Lazarus' sisters will be profoundly shown as He beheld the grieving sisters. In verse 28, Martha informs her sister that the Master had arrived and that Jesus called for her. In Martha's judgment, she felt that Mary would be benefited and blessed by hearing the life-changing words of Christ (St. John 11:25-6). In contemplating the sorrowing condition of both sisters' hearts, it would greatly benefit us when bereavement strikes our family in

knowing that Christ's life-changing words bring comfort.

Upon hearing that Jesus had arrived in verse 29, Mary rises and goes forth to meet Jesus, the One at whose feet she loved to sit. With steadfast composure and tenderness, our Lord awaits the arrival of Mary, for Mary valued being in His presence! (v. 30). As Mary hastily went to meet Jesus, many of the Jews who followed her thought that she went to the grave to privately grieve (v. 31). Like her sister, Mary expresses the sentiment of her heart as she approached Jesus by saying - "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died" (v. 32). Our Lord expresses His undue concern for this grieving situation and was deeply affected by human malady (v. 33). Our Lord was so affected by this grieving situation that He asked - "Where have ye laid him? They said unto Him, Lord, come and see" (v. 34).

Although verse 35 - "Jesus wept" is the shortest verse in the bible, this verse really reveals that our Lord has a profound concern for human malady. Yes, our Lord still weeps for the sorrow and desolation that sin brought to the human experience! To some degree, the great sympathy in which the Master expressed, was demonstrated to this grieving family in the presence of Mary, for verse 36 says - "Then said the Jews, Behold how He loved him!" In verse 37, the ever present voice of unbelief was evident, for the carping critics said - "Could not this Man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?" Those who are spiritually blind are always trying to blame God!

Although Christ was deeply affected by the Lazarus situation, He acts in complete mastery of the situation (v. 38-39). With Martha being obsessed with the overwhelming crisis of the scene, Jesus directed her attention to the fact of the manifestation of God's glory, even displayed at the grave site of Lazarus (v. 40). Although Jesus had the power to raise Lazarus because of who He is, He was always subject and dependent on His Father (v. 41-42). With a triumphant command, Christ called Lazarus from the grave; thus, He demonstrated that He had power over the grave! (v. 43). At the powerful voice of Christ, the king of terror, death, must release its' prey (v.44).

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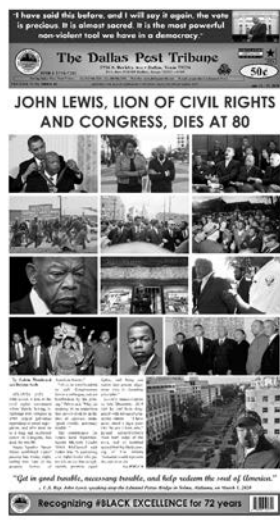
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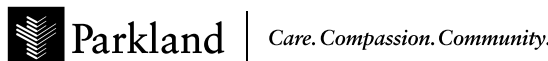
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Continued Aunt Page 1

to change the name altogether. Other brands, like Uncle Ben's rice, followed.

Quaker said Pearl Milling Company was founded in 1888 in St. Joseph, Missouri, and was the originator of self-rising pancake mix. While the brand will be new to store shelves, the boxes and bottles of syrup will still have the familiar red packaging of Aunt Jemima.

Quaker said it sought input from customers, employees and external cultural experts as it developed the new brand name.

Quaker said it is also donating \$1 million to groups that empower Black women and girls as part of the Pearl Milling Company rollout.

Continued Mary Page 1

"I was always proud of Mary," Berry Gordy concluded. "She was quite a star in her own right and continued to work hard to boost the legacy of the Supremes over the years. Mary Wilson was extremely special to me. She was a trailblazer, a diva, and will be deeply missed."

Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) President and CEO, affirmed, "On behalf of NNPA Chair Karen Cater Richards and all of the 230 African American NNPA member publishers across the United States and the Caribbean, we pause solemnly today to pay tribute and our profound respects to the living memory, legacy and cultural genius of our beloved Mary Wilson. She loved and supported the Black Press of America, and we will always love and keep Mary Wilson's transformative spirit in our hearts as the NNPA continues to publish truth to power in America and throughout the world."

In a 2020 interview on the Black Press of America's "Fiyah!" livestream program, Wilson talked about her life and

career and her long pursuit of having Florence Ballard memorialized with a United States Postal Service stamp.

"People forget that Florence Ballard not only gave us our name, but she formed the group," Wilson revealed on "Fiyah!"

"It was really Flo who formed us, and I want people to know that. I am putting together a program to get Florence Ballard a U.S. stamp, hopefully, so I want people to send their request and say something about Florence. All those hits were Florence, so when you listening to [The Supremes], it's about Flo, so I want people who listen to those songs that bring back memories, think about Flo."

A singer, best-selling author, motivational speaker, businesswoman, former U.S. Cultural Ambassador, mother, and grandmother, the legendary Mary Wilson made great strides on her inevitable journey to greatness.

As an original/founding member of The Supremes, she changed the face of popular music to become a trendsetter who broke down social, racial, and gender barriers, which all started with the wild success of their first number one song.

## DON'T QUIT

When things go wrong as they sometimes will

When the road you're trudging seems all uphill

When the funds are low and the debts are high

And you want to smile, but you have to sigh

When care is pressing you down a bit - Rest if you must, but don't you quit.

Life is queer with its twists and turns,

As every one of us sometimes learns

And many a fellow turns about

When he might have won had he stuck it out.

Don't give up though the pace seems slow - You may succeed with another blow.

Often the goal is nearer than

It seems to a faint and faltering man;

Often the struggler has given up

When he might have captured the victor's cup;

And he learned too late when the night came down

How close he was to the golden crown.

Success is failure turned inside out -

The silver tint in the clouds of doubt

And you never can tell how close you are

It might be near when it seems afar;

So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit -

It's when things seem worst that

you must not quit.

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Love of Humanity

and

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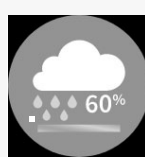
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# SPORTS/NEWS PAGE

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Thursday, Feb. 11



H - 38°  
L - 31°

Friday, Feb. 12



H - 35°  
L - 29°

Saturday, Feb. 13



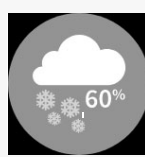
H - 29°  
L - 16°

Sunday, Feb. 14



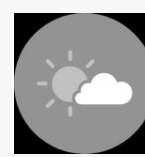
H - 25°  
L - 12°

Monday, Feb. 15



H - 18°  
L - 2°

Tuesday, Feb. 16



H - 24°  
L - 21°

Wednesday, Feb. 17



H - 40°  
L - 26°

## African American Stars Discuss

### “The Culture & Journey of the Black Baseball Player”

By Stacy M. Brown, NNPA Newswire Senior National Correspondent

Kyle Lewis of the Seattle Mariners and Devin Williams of the Milwaukee Brewers earned American League and National League Rookie of the Year Awards, respectively, in 2020, marking the first time in 36 years two African Americans won the award in the same season.

Doc Gooden of the New York Mets and the Mariners Alvin Davis were the last African American duo to accomplish that feat in 1984.

“It’s super special, man, especially with the tone of the country and the tone of the world right now...this has been going on for a while, so we’re always fighting to make our mark...give something for the community to look up to,” stated Lewis, a stud outfielder who beat out White Sox outfielder Luis Robert and Astros right-hander Cristian Javier for the award in the American League.

“So, if I have the opportunity to expand my platform in that way, or just do something that people can look at and get on there and speak well. I just take

a lot of pride in that. I know Devin does as well.”

Lewis, teammate Justin Dunn, New York Mets first baseman Dominic Smith and former manager and MLB Baseball Development Consultant Jerry Manuel participated in a discussion through “The Culture & Journey of the Black Baseball Player” powered by @MLBDevelops.

The special panel, moderated by Seattle Mariners play-by-play announcer Dave Sims, featured conversations about the group’s challenges and triumphs as Black men in both baseball and America.

When asked what needs to happen to attract more Black players to the sport, Lewis tells Sims that Baseball needs to embrace African American culture.

“Play, have fun with it, talk smack to each other,” he remarks.

“If we can embrace that a little bit in a way that just makes it more of a safe place again to where we can just enjoy one another. I think when a kid watches, the kid will see that ‘okay, they’re not disrespecting the game, they’re



playing the game hard, they’re playing the game the right way, but they’re having a lot of fun with it, and they’re really being who they are.”

Smith, who earned MVP votes in 2020 and led his teammates in Black Lives Matter protests, said tough conversations on Blacks in baseball must continue.

“Keep pushing that conversation forward with our peers, with the Front Office,” Smith determined.

“I know we (the New York Mets) just got a new owner, and they already reached out and already commended me on my

or the type of music we listen to ... me personally, I just wasn’t raised like that.”

Dunn, whom the Mets dealt to the Mariners in a 2018 deal, was asked about reactions and conversations following the civil unrest in the aftermath of the George Floyd murder in Minneapolis.

“We were fortunate enough to have a clubhouse, top to bottom, that understood. We’re a pretty tight family, and pretty close,” Dunn noted.

“Kyle and I were fortunate enough, along with all the other young African American players to have some older, veteran presence in [teammates] Dee Gordon and Taijuan Walker, who were able to speak up and have those conversations not only with our teammates, but with upper management and ownership. I know myself, and I’m sure Kyle is extremely grateful for everything the Mariners did and how open they were for having our back and giving us the ability to speak and getting our message heard.”

Manuel added how grateful he is that today’s

young African American players can speak out.

He called his rookie season in the big leagues in 1972.

“We had to stay on the different sides of the tracks. It was three Black players,” Manuel exclaimed. “We couldn’t stay where everybody else stayed. But you know what? We welcomed it.”

After his playing career ended, Manuel spent nine seasons managing the Chicago White Sox and the New York Mets.

He offered some regret for not doing more to help other Black potential managers get a shot.

“Sometimes I fault myself for not while managing, bringing someone else alongside me to take my spot. Rather than be comfortable, being the only ... I think that’s a dangerous place to be as a Black man,” Manuel relayed.

“Trying to say, well, I’m the only announcer, I’m the only this, I’m the only that. That means I have fallen into the apparatus trap. I haven’t become myself, and I haven’t brought my people with me.”

## Stacey Abrams, Black Lives Matter are Nominated for Nobel Peace Prize

By Lauren Victoria Burke, NNPA Newswire Contributor

Both Stacey Abrams and the Black Lives Matter movement have been nominated to win the Nobel Peace Prize.

The nominations represent an opportunity for either Abrams or Black Lives matter to win over even more support around the globe should they win. The Nobel Prizes have been given out since 1901 and were started by Swedish industrialist and inventor Alfred Nobel. Prizes are given out for distinguished work in Chemistry, Physics, Physiology or Medicine, and Literature.

There have been many controversies around the Peace Prize and a win by Abrams or the Black Lives Matter would likely extend the line of controversies. Past winners have included Martin Luther

King, Jr. (1964), Nelson Mandela (1993), President Barack Obama (2009), Kofi Annan (2001) and Jimmy Carter (2002).

“Stacey Abrams political activist, voter registration & voting rights advocate has set a national standard for democracy. Her political activism has resulted in a nomination for a Nobel Prize. She deserves it & would become an even bigger voting rights, VR & democracy champion,” wrote the Rev. Jesse Jackson, Sr. on twitter.

The news of the Abrams nomination arrived on the same day that Georgia Republicans launched a “Stop Stacey” group. The group was created to support current Georgia Governor Brian Kemp in his expected re-

match against Democrat Stacey Abrams. The race will be in 2022.

The defeat of former U.S. Senator Kelly Loeffler to Rev. Raphael Warnock demonstrated the strength of the Black vote in Georgia. even before Abrams announced whether she’ll run again, a sign of deep concern among Republicans about the threat she poses next year to the first-term governor.

Abrams’ efforts were so noticeable and the turnaround from red to blue in Georgia so pronounced that Donald Trump brought her up during his effort to flip the election results in 2020 his favor in Georgia.

The recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize will be announced in October.

Continued Judas Page 1

directed by Shaka King and premiering in theaters and on HBO Max on Friday, follows the intersecting stories of Hampton and street criminal William O’Neal in late 1960s Chicago. As Hampton gained national attention as the outspoken chairman of the Illinois chapter of the Black Panther Party and founder of a multi-cultural “rainbow coalition” advocating for poor Black and Hispanic communities, O’Neal was recruited by the FBI to infiltrate the organization.

The movie marks the first time the 31-year-old Kaluuya, star of “Get Out” and “Queen & Slim,” has portrayed a real person on screen.

“Reading the script and hearing his words stirred me, they moved me. ... It was almost like a call to action. I was like, yo, I’m here in the ring,” Kaluuya said. “When I really understood the stakes, the cultural stakes ... I think a different me showed up.”

Stanfield, who appeared

alongside Kaluuya in “Get Out,” delivers a twitchy performance as O’Neal, who rose to be the Panthers’ head of security and took his own life in 1990. The informant had helped the FBI sketch a floor plan of Hampton’s apartment, including where Hampton slept, before agents raided it, killing Hampton and another man, Mark Clark.

“The whole time I was kind of in conflict, the whole shoot — wondering if I was doing the right thing and if I was playing this character the right way because I wanted to give humanity. But I also didn’t want to give him too much,” the 29-year-old actor said. “I was having panic attacks on set — hands going numb just because of the level of, I guess internal contention and struggle I was going through.”

Fishback said she was “so nervous” about the responsibility of carrying on Hampton’s legacy but found a new role model in Njeri. “I learned who I wanted to be the most,” she said. “I feel like I was on the threshold of some kind of womanhood

and I didn’t know how to cross it.”

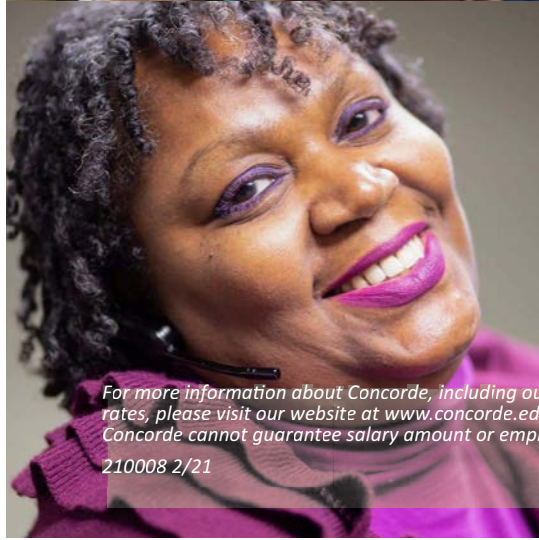
Fishback leaned into journaling and writing poetry as hobbies during the project, and requested to write a poem her character reads to Hampton in a key scene. It begins: “Like the masses, I was in awe when I first laid eyes on all the things you are.”

Seeking historical accuracy, King consulted with Hampton’s son Fred Hampton Jr. and Njeri, portrayed by Fishback in the film.

“I can’t imagine the errors and the pitfalls we would have made had they not been involved,” the director said.

Stanfield said that despite his mixed emotions while playing the character, he’s glad the film can spotlight Hampton’s story.

“Being Black in America means that your history is, by and large, misrepresented or not represented at all,” he said. “So the only way that we’re able to pass down our stories oftentimes is through storytelling. I’m grateful for that.”



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# THE HEROES WITHIN US

By **Oscar H. Blayton** a former Marine Corps combat pilot and human rights activist who practices law in Virginia.

Each February in schools across the nation, pictures of well-known Black historical figures are mounted on bulletin boards in commemoration of Black History Month.

These figures are presented to young American minds as Black heroes to be noted during the shortest month of the year, and then tucked away for the next 11 months.

As long as this annual exercise creeps along from year to year in its present form, it will inhibit the recognition of the "Black character" of America. Black History Month, as it exists today, continues the practice of "othering" Black people in America.

To make sense of this, we need to consider the nature of heroes. Heroes, like many things in our lives, are social constructs. They are created to act as building blocks in our "nation building." The hero defines who we are as a people and exemplifies our

best and most desirable characteristics. Heroes, in this sense, are not the builders of a nation; they are the building blocks of the "national spirit" or the "volksgeist" of a people.

George Washington has been so venerated as an American hero that the dome ceiling in the rotunda of the U.S. Capitol depicts his deification in a painting titled "The Apotheosis of Washington." He receives this hero worship despite the fact that he bought and sold human beings as chattel slaves. Many well-documented instances exist where he treated Black men and women as less than human.

Davy Crockett also is counted among the pantheon of American heroes even though he met his death at the Alamo in 1836 trying to preserve slavery in Texas when it was still a part of Mexico. Mexico had offi-

cially abolished slavery in 1829 and Gen. Santa Anna marched to Texas – and the Alamo – in 1836 to finally rid it of that abomination.

I will abbreviate this list by lastly naming Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee, whose statue still stands in glory in Richmond, Virginia, a city where, in 2003, condemnation of a statue erected to honor Abraham Lincoln reached a fever pitch by Confederate sympathizers.

Nations are built in the shadows of mythic heroes. White heroes who populate American mythology are legion. But they are men who are feted for slaughtering Indians, building infrastructure with Black labor under the lash and oppressing the Latinx people of our Southwest.

In the ethos of America, there has been little tolerance for heroes who promote true justice and equali-

ty. And Black folk are seldom raised up as "national" heroes because people of color are believed to have nothing to do with the building of the American spirit that most white people recognize.

Regardless of their courage or contributions to American society, Black heroes are constructed by America's dominant social class to be figures who merely pleaded for the recognition of the humanity of Black people. But this construct denies these Black icons the one defining characteristic of a hero. A true hero faces, and strives to overcome, adversity. Our greatest adversity, which is the core problem in America, is the denial of our humanity. A true Black hero does not plead for white people to stop denying our humanity. Our true heroes have faced this problem and struggled to overcome it.

Malcolm X, W.E.B. DuBois and Ida B. Wells, just to name a few, stood courageously against our greatest adversity and struggled mightily trying to end it in the face of condemnation and demonization. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., because of his courageous struggle, has been raised up as a Founding Father of the new America that can be.

But America is still a work in progress. And as we build this nation, there is still a need for new heroes. We must keep in mind that the construction of heroes is a social choice. For America to become the liberal democracy we pretend it to be, this country must admit that it has had a problem in choosing its national heroes.

It is easy for Black folk to see that America's choice of heroes is a problem. We know what kind of nation we want. And we know what kind of hero we need to bring that nation into being. We want a nation that not only allows us to live, but one that allows us to BE.

Unfortunately, it has always been the talent of the

elites of this country to shape the narrative of the political question of the day to serve their needs. And this requires a denial of the existence or severity of the problems of Black folk. For the past four centuries, Black folk have been so preoccupied with staying alive, precious few of us have engaged in the struggle to defend our right to BE.

The task before us now is to remove America's toxic heroes and to construct our own and see to it that they are given their rightful place in the pantheon of our nation.

In order to ensure that we have heroes to raise up, it is important that we all become the type of courageous, self-sacrificing person that should be honored and emulated. We have plenty of role models to go by, so we must become the heroes upon which our nation is to be built.

It is up to each of us to confront the adversity oppressing us all, be the heroes we are meant to be and make this nation what it can become.

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