

“Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed.” ~ Booker T. Washington



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SERVING THE BLACK COMMUNITY WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOR SINCE 1947

February 23 - March 1, 2023

## Mississippi Lawmakers Seek Return to Jim Crow

*Such a move would create a separate justice system for whites in an area where whites are statistically the majority. And it would happen without a single vote from any of Jackson's 80 percent Black residents for any of these officials.*

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

Mississippi's Black community is outraged that state lawmakers are moving closer to establishing a separate justice system in Jackson for whites and African Americans.

According to Mississippi Today, the proposed new law would let the state's white chief justice of the Mississippi Supreme Court, its white attorney general, and its white state public safety commissioner appoint new judges, prosecutors, public defenders, and police officers to run a new

district in the city that includes all the city's majority-white neighborhoods.

Such a move would create a separate justice system for whites in an area where whites are statistically the majority.

And it would happen without a single vote from any of Jackson's 80 percent Black residents for any of these officials.

“It makes me think of apartheid,” Jackson Mayor Chokwe Antar Lumumba said.

Three of the bill's principal backers said



Photo Credit/NNPA File

on the floor of the Mississippi Legislature that “public safety” was the bill's primary

Continue **Jim Crow** Page 4

## Roosevelt High School: The story of resilience in Dallas ISD



Photo courtesy: Dallas ISD

DALLAS — If you were to ask any Roosevelt student, past or present, what's the motto at Franklin D. Roosevelt High School of Innovation, they'd puff out their chest and proudly say, “We show pride, respect, responsibility, and have honor.” Every day, as students and team members walk through those doors, they are immediately reminded of the rich history of their school.

“One thing about Roosevelt, they always have and always will teach you about the his-

tory of our school. It is a part of the culture and that is why our main hallway is Heritage Hall,” said Principal Lakisha Thomas.

Named after the 32nd president of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt High School opened in January of 1963 as a 7th- to 12th grade campus. At the time, it was the first new Dallas ISD “Black only high school” constructed since 1939.

“First there was Booker T. Washington High School, then there was Lincoln High

School, but there was nothing for the students at Cedar Crest Elementary School or the Oak Cliff community to look forward to,” said Roosevelt Alumni President Toni Johnson.

The construction of Roosevelt High School was controversial and received widespread opposition including threats of bombings and arson from militant hate groups. A coalition of African American men from the

Continue **Roosevelt** Page 5

## Jimmy Carter 39th US president enters hospice care at home

By **BILL BARROW**

ATLANTA (AP) — Former President Jimmy Carter, who at 98 years old is the longest-lived American president, has entered home hospice care in Plains, Georgia, a statement from The Carter Center confirmed Saturday.

After a series of short hospital stays, the statement said, Carter “decided to spend his remaining time at home with his family and receive hospice care instead of additional medical intervention.”

The statement said the 39th president has the full support of his medical team and family, which “asks for privacy at this time and is grateful for the concern shown by his many admirers.”

Carter was a little-known Georgia governor when he began his bid for the presidency ahead of the 1976 election. He went on to defeat then-President Gerald R. Ford, capitalizing as a Washington outsider in the wake of the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal that drove Richard Nixon from office in 1974.

Carter served a single, tumultuous term and was defeated by Republican Ronald Reagan in 1980, a landslide loss that ultimately paved the way for his decades of global advocacy for democracy, public health and human rights via The Carter Center.

The former president and his wife, Rosalynn, 95, opened the center in 1982. His work there garnered a Nobel Peace Prize in 2002.

## A Stanford collaboration with the Department of the Treasury Admits Black Taxpayers are Targeted for Audit More than Others



Photo Credit/NNPA File

The result showed how the IRS could change its secret algorithm to make it less unfair to people of different races.

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

According to Stanford RegLab, Black taxpayers receive IRS audit notices at least 2.9 times more frequently than non-Black taxpayers and possibly as much as 4.7 times more often.

The new study included research by Daniel E. Ho, the William Benjamin Scott and Luna M. Scott Professor of Law at Stanford Law School, faculty director of the Stanford RegLab, a senior fellow at the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research, Hadi

Elzayn, a researcher at the Stanford RegLab, Evelyn Smith, Ph.D. candidate at the University of Michigan, and Arun Ramesh, a pre-doctoral fellow at the University of Chicago; Jacob Goldin, a professor of tax law at the University of Chicago; and economists in the U.S. Department of Treasury's Office of Tax Analysis.

The researchers concluded that the disparity “is unlikely to be intentional on

Continue **AUDIT** Page 4



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# EDITORIAL PAGE

## The Jim Crow Battle Against Black History

By: **Dr. John E. Warren**, Publisher San Diego Voice & Viewpoint Newspaper



Dr. John E. Warren

The current battle to remove books and any discussion about slavery and the treatment of Blacks is not new. This is what we call “Jim Crow”, now presenting himself as “James Q. Esquire”, the legislator. For those who might have forgotten, Jim Crow was often the name used to describe segregation; laws,

customs, and rules that arose in the South after Reconstruction ended in 1877. “Reconstruction” is what efforts to rebuild the South were called after the Civil War. It was an effort to put the South back together, economically, without the benefit of slavery, which had been its most precious product.

Newly freed slaves were finding ways to buy land, start farms, run for office as was the case. During Reconstruction 16 African Americans served in the U.S. Congress, more than 600 were elected to the state legislatures, and hundreds more held local offices across the South. White Southerners were not pleased with either the independence of

Blacks nor their efforts to own land, get educated and achieve, at the very least, equal status with Whites.

While we celebrate Black History month, and hopefully the resurgence of a study and appreciation for Black History, it's important that we use our knowledge of past efforts to suppress or erase us to fuel our present desire to do more and go further, collectively, than those who came before us. Whatever title the racist put on “Voter Suppression”, and the battle against “Critical Race Theory” - which most can't spell or define - we must recognize all efforts to curtail our freedom or to create a new legal

“White Zone”, as the Mississippi legislature is attempting to do, all amount to “Jim Crow” efforts under new names and titles.

The good news is that we overcame past efforts at segregation and Jim Crow laws. With the knowledge, education and skills we now have at our disposal, we, the Black People of this country, born with rights of equality guaranteed under the Constitution, will neither abandon those rights nor have them taken from us. If we look at Black History everyday, we will recognize the revised efforts to suppress or eliminate us and we will prevail.

*Where will you stand?*

## Keeping Black History In The Spotlight Is Always Our Goal

By **James B. Ewers Jr. Ed.D.**



James B. Ewers Jr. Ed.D.

During this month of February, there are a lot of people both Black and White who are celebrating Black History.

We realize the contributions that African Americans made, and we want to shine the spotlight of greatness upon them.

Many of us can remember when Black History Month was Black History Week.

As the record will show in 1986, Congress passed Public Law 99-244 which designated February as National Black History Month.

So now, we celebrate the achievements and successes of African Americans.

Because of these accomplishments, our America has become better and greater.

When you drive a car and stop at a red light, remember that Garrett Morgan, a Black man invented the stoplight.

I do muse about whether most White people know this important history fact.

Most of us know someone who has benefitted from a blood bank.

Dr. Charles Drew organized America's first large-scale blood bank.

Records show this program began early in World War II and we can say that this system originally developed by him has saved countless lives.

Education has been important to African Americans over the years and continues to this day.

Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune was the founder of Bethune Cookman College now University. It is a Historically Black College and University (HBCU) located in Daytona Beach Florida.

Other HBCUs in the state include Edward Waters University, Florida A&M University and Florida Memorial University.

These schools have produced thousands of graduates who have contributed greatly to our world.

Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune was also the founder of the National Council of Negro Women in 1935 and was a social justice advocate according to reports.

Other notable Black achievers included

Granville T. Woods who had over 55 patents, one of which was an induction telegraph system which allowed travelling trains to communicate with each other according to the Oprah Daily website.

Madam C. J. Walker was the first Black woman to become a self-made millionaire. All of us have used her hair care products.

So, in all walks of life, we have had African Americans being consistent and persistent in their pursuit of excellence.

Our history books tell us that George Carruthers, a physicist and engineer created a camera to take pictures of ultraviolet images in space.

He was awarded NASA Exceptional Scientific Achievement Medal and was inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame.

Obstacles nor circumstances could stop them from creating and developing.

When they heard no, they dug deeper and made yes happen.

Their legacies will forever be etched in the history books of America.

We will go to museums to learn more about them.

Black History is a part of American history as it should be.

That is the way it is, and

I say that with pride and conviction.

Our children and grandchildren need to know about their roots and that they stand on the shoulders of their ancestors.

For example, they know Beyonce but do they know Ella Fitzgerald and Josephine Baker?

They know LeBron but do they know Bill Russell and the Big O (Oscar Robertson)?

They know Usher but do they know Sammy Davis Jr.?

School systems across the land must infuse our history into the curriculum and have teachers actively engaged in it.

Colleges and universities must enhance their courses to include us.

If for example, a college student has a drama or acting major, they should know who Paul Robeson is.

In all our circles, we must keep pressing for recognition and respect.

Of course, on this journey for recognition, there will be those who try to thwart it.

Those forces have tried before and failed, and it will be no different this time.

They will fail again.

Our history as African Americans will always shine bright and will never lose its power.

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## II CORINTHIANS STUDY

### II CORINTHIANS 1:1-24

#### THE COMFORT OF GOD IN LIFE'S CIRCUMSTANCES

By Rev. Johnny Calvin Smith

Paul begins this wonderful epistle by introducing himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ. Both he and Timothy send greetings to the church of God at Corinth, and to all the saints in all Achaia. As usual in Paul's greetings to the various churches he wrote to, he would mention the word "grace" followed by the word "peace" (vv. 1-2). Paul proceeds further in expressing that we should render praise to God because of His comfort. It is a wonderful delight to praise the "God of all comfort" because He is always with us in all of our troubles!

As believers, we have the blessed assurance in knowing that God is with us in every circumstance of our lives, and that

fact is a source of comfort! Yes, as Christians, it is a joy to know that God stands at our side to help whenever we go through troubles (Isaiah 41:10-13; 43:2-3). However, brothers and sisters, the comfort that God provides for us is not simply for our personal enjoyment; it is given to us that we might be able to aid or help others. We go through tribulations that we might be able to minister to others! The biblical comfort that the world needs is channeled through us, God's people, as we share His word (vv. 3-4).

Paul revealed that the sufferings that he experienced were the results of his relationship to Christ. Paul's sufferings for Christ were accompanied by a

comfort that overflowed (v. 5). As Christians growing in God's grace, we ought to be willing to endure trials since we know they bring spiritual good to us personally, and blessings to others as we share with them God's comfort (v. 6). In verse 7, we are introduced to the term "partakers" which means fellowship or partner. As we continue to engage in ministry, we ought to be willing to be "partners" with Christ in suffering since this "partnership" leads to comfort and edification.

According to verses 8-11, the Apostle Paul experienced a degree of hardship in Asia that brings Paul to the end of himself. Commentators are divided over the exact nature of the hardship

Paul has reference to; however, the hardship was indeed severe! Paul believed he would die. The great pressure of this hardship was beyond his ability to endure, so that he even felt the sentence of death. Nevertheless, Paul was assured that God would deliver him from the peril of death.

Paul maintained a firm trust in God's ability to deliver, for verse 10 says: "Who delivered us from so great death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us." The prayers of the Corinthians were part of this deliverance, and Paul acknowledged that his deliverance in answer to the prayers of the Corinthians will cause many to praise God and give Him the glory He deserves (v. 11). There was a question with regards to Paul's commitment to the church of Corinth that prompted many to doubt Paul's sincerity. Paul affirmed that their conduct among the Corinthians was without censure and that Paul's letters were simple, sincere, and not in man-made wisdom but in God's grace. Paul was confident of the genuineness of the

Corinthians' conversion in view of the Day of the Lord Jesus, when they will appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ (vv. 12-14).

Paul had proposed a journey from Ephesus that would have permitted him to visit the Corinthians twice. At that time Paul hoped to go to Corinth by way of Macedonia and spend the winter with the Corinthians. However, there was a change in Paul's visit to the Corinthians. Because of this change in his itinerary, Paul's critics said that he was not reliable. Paul did not make plans in a worldly way and then change them for selfish reasons. Paul even defended the fact that in what he said was also reliable (vv. 15-17). Because of the faithfulness of God, the reliability of the message that Paul preached was also sure. Paul did not vacillate in the message that he presented nor did he vacillate in his plans to visit them. The gospel that Paul preached was a glorious, positive gospel, and it was "yea". Everything is positive in Christ - all the promises of God find their ultimate fulfill-

ment in Christ. As believers, we can testify and say "Amen" (vv. 18-20).

At the point of faith in the finished work of Christ, each believer is anointed with the Holy Spirit (I John 2:20, 27). The believer is also sealed by the Holy Spirit which is the make of ownership. The seal (the mark of ownership) confirms that each believer is identified with Christ, and that each believer is God's property (I Corinthians 6:19-20). The earnest of the Holy Spirit in our hearts is like a deposit, guaranteeing that God's promises will be consummated (vv. 21-22). In verses 23-24 Paul realized that his changed plans had caused a problem in Corinth. However, Paul affirmed earnestly that his plan in seeing them was delayed out of consideration for the Corinthians, a desire to avoid disciplinary action "to spare you". In essence, Paul did not assert his authority over the Corinthians; however, Paul stayed away so that their faith might be strengthened and that they might grow in the Lord.

*May God Bless!*



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## HEALTH

### Get Your Blood Pressure Checked. Your heart depends on it.

Hypertension is often called a “silent” disease because many people with high blood pressure have no symptoms from it and many people don’t even know they have it. Even without symptoms, high blood pressure increases someone’s risk of heart attack, stroke, peripheral vascular disease, eye disease and kidney disease.

Even though about 80% of cardiovascular disease is preventable, one person dies every 36 seconds of heart disease in the United States, according to the American Heart Association (AHA). Heart disease is also the leading cause of death in Texas, Dallas County and across the country. Regrettably, according to the CDC only 1 in 4 (24%) of people in the U.S. with hypertension have their condition under control.

Getting your blood pressure checked is the best way to know if you have high blood pressure. Parkland offers a variety of health and education checks and community resources in several neighborhoods across Dallas County. All services at the community pop-ups are at no cost to you. Visit [www.parklandhealth.org/connect](http://www.parklandhealth.org/connect) for the most updated dates, times and locations as they vary. You can also visit [www.parklandhealth.org/hypertension](http://www.parklandhealth.org/hypertension) to learn more about hypertension and how it can affect everyday life.

People should check their blood pressure regularly with their primary care doctor at routine visits. Many at risk for hypertension or who have borderline blood pressure in clinic may be recommended to also check their blood pressure at home. Once diagnosed, home measurement can also help a person track how well their medications are working and if adjustments to medications are needed. “Multiple safe, affordable medications are available to treat hypertension, but many people may need more than one medication to achieve blood pressure control. Fortunately, with proper treatment of high blood pressure, we can dramatically lower someone’s risk of heart attack, stroke and kidney disease,” said Ann Marie Navar, MD, Cardiologist at Parkland Health and Associate Professor of Cardiology at UT Southwestern Medical Center. Dr. Navar says people with hypertension should be treated to achieve a systolic blood pressure (top number) under 130 mmHg and a diastolic blood pressure (bottom number) under 80 mmHg.

Some simple adjustments in your daily routine may have huge beneficial impacts including eating healthier foods, more specifically, a low-sodium diet, moving for 30 minutes a day, managing your stress and stopping smoking.

While this may not be a cure-all, Parkland Health makes it easy to get your blood pressure checked right in your neighborhood and making simple changes in your life may significantly increase overall health and wellness

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- Continued Page 1 -

## Mississippi Lawmakers Seek Return to Jim Crow with Separate White System of Justice

goal because of worries about the crime rate in Jackson.

But Newsweek reported that some legal experts said that what the Mississippi Legislature was trying to do was a way for white conservative politicians to try to hurt the Black vote in a way that hadn’t occurred since the Jim Crow era.

Many Republican lawmakers who voted for the bill live in districts being fought over by groups like the American Civil Liberties Union because they make it harder for Black people to vote.

Bill Quigley, a retired law professor at Loyola University-New Orleans and a former lawyer for the NAACP Legal Fund, told Newsweek, “I am shocked by this.”

“I know of no other such legislation in judicial elections or selections in decades. This is not a step backward. This is a complete Olympic-level broad jump backward to Jim Crow era politics.”

Quigley said that this kind of system was “the rule for decades” in the South until the Voting Rights Act passed in 1965 and formally prohibited arbitrary rules like poll taxes and literacy tests designed to prevent African Americans from voting.

Experts stated that the latest proposal from the Mississippi Legislature would likely be unconstitutional because it has a clear racial bias, which is against the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

In 2020, Lumumba said

he wanted to make Jackson “the most radical city on the planet” by implementing policies like a universal basic income, a reformed police department, and other progressive policies.

Lumumba has been under constant scrutiny from Mississippi’s conservative establishment.

The Voting Rights Act would have helped Jackson in this case, but the U.S. Supreme Court removed many protections offered by that law.

State leaders had recently been very critical of Lumumba’s government and of the city’s liberal leanings, leading to claims that the latest move is politically motivated.

Experts said the only problem is that, unlike other states, Mississippi does not

have a clause in its constitution that says laws can’t target one group, which would make this more difficult for the city to challenge the law in court.

“In the absence of any evidence that this was done with a racial purpose—people don’t tend to do things for racial reasons as much as they used to—and so the courts kind of often will conclude that their hands are tied,” Fred Smith Jr., a scholar of the federal judiciary at Emory University, told Newsweek.

“It’s concerning to see from a perspective of democracy. While in some ways, it’s not as bad as declaring secession, it also is in the sense people’s taxes are being invested in a system they cannot democratically control.”

Continued **AUDIT** Page 1

on the part of IRS staff.”

The team’s research showed that a set of internal IRS algorithms causes racial differences in audit selection. Goldin compared them to the recipe for Coca-Cola: “It’s completely secret.”

To better understand this audit selection bias, the research team modeled the racial impact that various alternative audit selection policies might have.

The result showed how the IRS could change its secret algorithm to make it less unfair to people of different races.

“The IRS should drill down to understand and modify its existing audit

selection methods to mitigate the disparity we’ve documented,” Ho said.

“And we’ve shown they can do that without sacrificing tax revenue.”

Although there have been long-standing questions about whether the IRS uses its audit powers somewhat, Ho said it was challenging to study because tax returns are private.

The IRS’s approach to audit decisions was confidential.

That changed when, on his first day in office, President Joe Biden signed Executive Order 13985. This order requires all federal agencies to examine how their programs affect racial and ethnic equity.

To apply that order to the IRS tax return audit program, economists at the Treasury Department worked with the Stanford RegLab team to analyze more than 148 million tax returns and about 780,000 tax returns for 2014. The RegLab team used anonymous data to do the analysis.

Even with all that information, the research team found that tax returns do not ask for a person’s race or ethnicity.

So, the team adapted and improved on a state-of-the-art approach that uses first names, last names, and geography (U.S. Census block groups) to predict the probability that a person identifies as Black.

And they confirmed their racial identification results using a North Carolina sample of voter registration records. In that state, until recently, when people registered to vote, they had to check a box for race and ethnicity.

After finding that Black taxpayers were 2.9 to 4.7 times more likely to be audited than non-Black taxpayers, the team looked at why this might be the case.

They suspected that the problem lay with an IRS algorithm’s use of the Dependent Database, which flags a potential problem and generates an audit letter to the taxpayer.

Continue **AUDIT** Page 5

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# SPORTS/NEWS PAGE

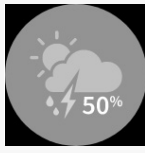
## 7 Day Weather Forecast for DFW

Thursday, Feb. 23



H - 69°  
L - 50°

Friday, Feb. 24



H - 54°  
L - 48°

Saturday, Feb. 25



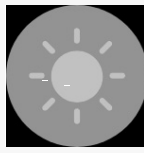
H - 60°  
L - 57°

Sunday, Feb. 26



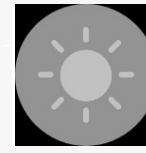
H - 72°  
L - 58°

Monday, Feb. 27



H - 69°  
L - 47°

Tuesday, Feb. 28



H - 69°  
L - 56°

Wednesday, Mar. 1



H - 74°  
L - 60°

Continued **AUDIT** Page 4

That instinct proved correct in that most racial differences were found in so-called “correspondence” audits. These audits are done by mail rather than in person.

The team also found that the IRS audits people more often who claim the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). The EITC helps low- and moderate-income people.

But claiming the EITC only explains a small percentage of the observed racial disparity.

The largest source of disparity occurs among EITC claimants. Indeed, Black taxpayers accounted for 21% of EITC claims but were the focus of 43% of EITC audits.

The racial disparity in audit rates persists regardless of whether EITC claimants are male or female, married or unmarried, raising children, or childless.

But it is most extreme for single male taxpayers claiming dependents (7.73% for Black claimants; 3.46% for non-Black claimants) and for single male taxpayers who did not claim dependents (5.66% for Black; 2% for non-Black).

Perhaps the most striking statistic is this: A single Black man with dependents who claims the EITC is nearly 20 times as likely to be audited as a non-Black jointly filing (married) taxpayer claiming the EITC.

Although the team does not know precisely what algorithm the IRS uses to choose audits, they thought of several possible reasons for high audit rates.

First, they tried an “Oracle” approach. They used a dataset called the National Research Project (NRP).

Because each tax return in this dataset was subjected to a line-by-line audit, the amount of underreported tax liability is known.

So the researchers looked at what would happen if the IRS selected taxpayers based on the known amount

of underreported tax in the NRP dataset.

The result: The racial difference in audit selection flips.

The IRS would audit more non-Black taxpayers than Black taxpayers to catch the most underreported income tax.

The team also used the NRP dataset to train a model to predict the likelihood that a taxpayer has underreported income and the magnitude of a taxpayer’s underreporting for the entire 2014 dataset.

They found that an approach focused just on the likelihood that there’s underreporting of at least \$100 would result in auditing more Black taxpayers (as was observed).

By contrast, focusing on the magnitude of underreporting (the amount of money unpaid by a taxpayer) would yield a result much closer to the oracle: More non-Black taxpayers would be audited than Black.

“The choice to focus on whether there is underreporting, as opposed to the magnitude of underreporting, is connected to broader structural sources of economic inequality and racial justice,” Smith said.

Because far more Black taxpayers have lower income, they have less opportunity to underreport substantial amounts of income, the researchers concluded.

By contrast, Smith said, “focusing audits on the amount of underreported income will disproportionately end up focusing on higher income individuals who are less likely to be Black taxpayers.”

Finally, the team wondered if the racial disparity in audits springs from IRS and congressional concerns about refundable tax credits, including the EITC and several others.

When someone claims one of these social security tax credits, they receive a refund even if they did not pay any taxes.

**Continue Audit -3.2.2023**

## Brittney Griner re-signs with Phoenix Mercury

By **DOUG FEINBERG**



*FILE - Phoenix Mercury's Brittney Griner (42) shoots over Seattle Storm's Mercedes Russell in the first half of the second round of the WNBA basketball playoffs Sunday, Sept. 26, 2021, in Everett, Wash. Griner, who was a free agent, re-signed with the Mercury on a one-year contract according to a person familiar with the deal. The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity on Saturday, Feb. 18, 2023, because no announcement has been made. (AP Photo/Elaine Thompson, File)*

Brittney Griner will be back in the WNBA this season, once again playing with the Phoenix Mercury.

Griner, who was a free agent, re-signed with the team Tuesday.

The 32-year-old Griner had said she would return to Phoenix in a social media post in December, after she returned home from her 10-month detainment in Russia. Griner had been arrested at an airport just outside of Moscow on drug possession charges a year ago and was brought home in a dramatic high-level prisoner exchange in December.

“We missed BG every day that she was gone and, while basketball was not our primary concern, her presence on the floor, in our locker room, around our organization, and within our

community was greatly missed,” Mercury GM Jim Pitman said. “We will continue to use the resources of our organization to support her, on and off the floor, and we are thrilled for her that she gets to return to basketball, which she loves so dearly. This is a special signing and today is a special day for all of us.”

The 6-foot-9 center last played for the Mercury in 2021 and helped the team reach the WNBA Finals. She averaged 20.5 points and 9.5 rebounds that season.

Griner, who was drafted No. 1 in 2013 by the Mercury, was listed Saturday on Phoenix’s roster on the WNBA website.

Since returning home from Russia, Griner has been out of the public spot-

light, with the exception of appearances at the Super Bowl, the Phoenix Open and an MLK Day event in Phoenix, where she lives.

“I do not think any of us will forget where we were on Dec. 8 when we heard BG was coming home or on Dec. 15 when she announced she intended not only to play basketball in 2023 but that it would be for the Mercury,” Mercury President of Business Operations Vince Kozar said. “And I know none of us will ever forget what it will feel like to welcome her back onto her home floor on May 21. To know BG is to love and appreciate BG, and we can’t wait to show her that in person with thousands and thousands of her biggest supporters exactly three months from today at

our Welcome Home Opener.”

She skipped a USA Basketball training camp earlier this month, but the organization made it clear she could take all the time she needed to decide if she wanted to play for the U.S. again.

The WNBA has said it will address getting Griner special travel accommodations, such as charter flights, after she signed.

“We are very cognizant of BG’s unique situation,” WNBA Commissioner Cathy Engelbert told the AP earlier this month. “We’ve been planning and we’ve been thinking it through with security experts, BG’s side, our side. We’ll find the right time to comment on it when she signs with a team.”

Continued **Roosevelt** Page 1/Photo Credit: Dallas ISD



Cedar Crest community organized to protect the campus by providing 24-hour security.

“My community quite literally fought for this school. Our grandparents stood at the front of this

school and protected it for us,” Johnson said.

As the only school for Black students in Oak Cliff,

Roosevelt carried a responsibility and always delivered. Although it seemed as if the odds were against Roosevelt, the school had a presence – in academics, athletics, fine arts, and simply showing pride as a people. Inequities only seemed to motivate the Mustangs, who have produced leaders like basketball coach Ellis Davis, numerous professional athletes, multiple fire chiefs, and a host of notable Dallas alumni.

After constant advocacy for their school, Roosevelt received over \$63 million in renovations in 2015. This makeover added over 70,000 square feet and included demolition of 75%

of the campus, complete renovations to the 1963 buildings, the addition of a new secure main entrance with an administrative suite, library, media room, fine arts wing/storm shelter, student-run restaurant, 800-seat competition gym, new athletic fields, a community garden, and new labs and classrooms to support the school’s holistic public health focus.

The school and community are ensuring that the history of Roosevelt never dies by implementing programs like “Life after Roosevelt,” Black History morning fact announcements and Heritage Hall, where one can simply take a

seat and watch a program that explains everything from 1965 to now.

“As the current principal, it is now my responsibility to make the connection from the past to the present and the investment in the future, and it makes my work so much more intentional now,” Thomas said.

The resilience of Roosevelt and the Oak Cliff community shows that there is nothing one can’t do if they are willing to fight and take a stand against inequities.

“The fight never ends, that’s how we got this school, and it feels amazing,” Johnson said.

“My Day”

# African American Women and Neiman Marcus

By Dr. J. Ester Davis (esterdavis2000@gmail.com)



Mrs. Maxine Cash in her fabulous wedding gown from Neiman Marcus in 1951.

Texas stretches 773 miles from east-to-west and 800 miles north-to-south and it's all full of fashionable African American Women who trend and reset the course of fashion.

Before my Neiman Marcus days, I actually started modeling at Davis Apparel Shop which was located for over 30 years in

South Dallas, where it was affectionately called ‘the black Neiman Marcus’. Connie and her husband, Owner and CEO, welcomed buses and car loads of black women from the DFW surrounding towns and communities, i.e., Forney, Corsicana, Buffalo, Jasper, Lindale, Marshall, Mineola, Big Sandy,

Gilmer, Longview, etc., at every Fall and Spring Fashion Week.

In Dallas during “Fashion Week” we had Davis Apparel with tons of Texas Instruments glamor girls, Dallas Cowboy wives and cheerleaders, dynamism and confidence. Houston had Diana’s Boutique with Jackie O, a daring designer with state-ly magnificent poise. Possibly one of the most influential black designers of the age. The most unforgettable times before women-of-color could try on clothes in white stores was our ability to design and sew our garments. This was a huge job trade leading into alterations, zipper repair, hemming and the polished image. The ‘Age of Harlem’ writes that the real fashion shows were held on Saturday Nights by black women with their elaborate decoration and froufrou where white designers sought to create and capture these images. But great style comes with

a personality to wear it.

In preparation for my speaking engagement at Neiman Marcus a few weeks ago, I needed help from a few fashion legends. The first thing that came to mind was the African American sensational weddings that broke through the aristocratic mold after we could physically go into high-end couture stores and try clothes on. The gown that Mrs. Cash bought for her wedding in 1951 has a very unique story that comes with it. Of course, she could not walk in Neiman Marcus and try the gown on. Her Mother-in-Law worked there. The dress was purchased and sent to Maxine Cash. “Max” told me that the dress was not her size. It was too small. To make lemonade out of lemons, she lost weight to gain entry into the gown and the rest is history.

The Neiman Marcus brand is most renown, highly respected and has maintain status in the luxu-



Ester Davis, Guest Speaker at “African American Women and Neiman Marcus” Program

ry world. The African American Woman has been a part of that legacy and stardom. In addition, Stanley Marcus, a master retailer, was accessible and ‘entertained’ women-of-color in fine style. I found a few of these early Neiman Marcus shoppers who personally knew Stanley Marcus. Despite his obvious schedule, Stanley Marcus remained busy in civic and cultural communities setting a

sophisticated tone for the other retailers that were emulating that grandeur. Years later hosting my show at Time Warner Cable, I interviewed Stanley Marcus when he donated several priceless world class items from his personal library to the public. I found him jovial and easy-to-talk to.

My favorite quote ....  
 “Make life exciting and you will live longer”.  
 Stanley Marcus.

## Rising Hollywood Star Rayan Lawrence Reflects on Hit Cable Series and the Influence of 50 Cent

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

Rayan Lawrence doesn't let his success make him arrogant.

Lawrence, who plays K-9 in the hit Starz show BMF (Black Mafia Family), is just enjoying his newfound fame as the show's new lead character.

Lawrence told the Washington Informer, “I love this, it's so cool.”

“Back in New York, I went to a fashion show, and everyone there loves K-9. Because of what we're doing with the character, everyone loves me.”

BMF tells the true story of how the Flenory brothers — Demetrius “Big Meech” Flenory and Terry “Southwest Tee” Flenory — fought their way out of poverty and the war on drugs in Detroit to become cultural and hip-hop game changers.

As the Flenory brothers build a national empire, their pursuit of the American Dream is tied in with themes of family, faith, and loyalty.

Curtis “50 Cent” Jackson, a business and hip-hop mogul, is the executive producer of the hit show. Starz just announced that it has signed on for a third season of BMF.

The aspect of family creates a great attraction for Lawrence, he asserted.

“I was raised to value family, so it's been amazing to be a part of this,” Lawrence said. “And to work with 50 Cent again. I worked with him on ‘Power,’ and I've been so excited to meet



Rayan Lawrence/Courtesy Rayan Lawrence Private Collection/NNPA Photo

him.

In the past, he has appeared as a guest on shows like Ironside, FBI, and Magnum P.I.

He said that when he was a guest on Blue Bloods, he learned a lot from the famous actor Tom Selleck.

But he also gives credit to actor and director Shiek Mahmud-Bey, who has made a name for himself onscreen and teaches actors like Lawrence through his “Char’Actors” company and “Shiek Studios.”

New York, Detroit, Arkansas, and Atlanta are all now home to Shiek Studios.

Later this year, Shiek Studios will add Shiek University, a school where people can learn how to be a director.

Lawrence said, “Shiek is my guy.”

“We've worked together for many years. When we worked on a movie together, I found him very interesting,” Lawrence said.

“A director told me about

Shiek, so I looked him up and thought, ‘Oh, I get it.’ I wanted to be a part of what he was doing, and I love the way he does his job. He helped me with auditions and gave me advice on BMF.”

Lawrence said Mahmud-Bey taught him to be true to the characters he portrays.

“I learned a lot from what he taught me,” Lawrence added.

“Be honest and sure of yourself, and be present, ready to listen and answer. That's what he said to me.”

That advice worked out well.

Lawrence said he was moved to learn more about the history of slavery while he was making the movie “Underground.”

Before the movie, Lawrence said he stayed away from those stories because they were traumatizing.

During the 2016 presidential election, Underground was being filmed.

Lawrence recalled that they filmed a pivotal scene on the day that Donald Trump was elected president.

“One of the most important scenes was shot on the day Donald Trump was elected,” Lawrence said. “We had a scene about the right to vote. It was very dramatic, and we were in Atlanta. I played an abolitionist, and I must tell you that in the scene we shot that day, I really did throw some punches. There was so much tension.”

Lawrence's first job was as a model, but he said he was bored.

He said he enjoyed acting better than being a model because as a model, “all I did was take pictures all day.”

“I started looking into characters to figure out how they thought, and I love the process,” Lawrence asserted. “After all these years, I still love the process, including going to auditions.”

BMF is filmed in Detroit, but Lawrence said he hasn't had a chance to see much of the Motor City yet.

He said, “We filmed here, and we stayed at the Motor City Casino Hotel.”

“It's a great and unique experience, but I've seen run-down houses where you can buy a house for \$900, but no one seems to take advantage of that,” Lawrence said.

“It's sad because there are many things that could be done.”

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