

To compose a country, committed to all cultures, colors, characters, and conditions of man.  
 And so we lift our gaze, not to what stands between us, but what stands before us  
 We close the divide because we know to put our future first, we must first put our differences aside.  
 -Amanda Gorman -



# The Dallas Post Tribune

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SERVING THE BLACK COMMUNITY WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOR SINCE 1947

January 28 - February 3, 2021

## In CDC's backyard, school reopening debate divides experts

By KANTELE FRANKO

Just down the road from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in a community flush with resident health professionals, the Decatur, Georgia, school system had no shortage of expert input on whether to resume in-person classes amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Scores of public health and medical professionals from the affluent, politically liberal Atlanta suburb have weighed in about what's best for their own kids' schools.

One emergency medicine doctor said initial reopening plans for the district's 5,000-plus students weren't safe enough. A pediatrician doing epidemiology work for the CDC advocated delaying. Others, including a leader of the CDC's COVID-19 vaccine efforts, argued the district could get students back in classrooms safely — and that not doing so jeopardized their development and mental health.

"The challenge for me has been trying to weigh all of these things that I'm being told by experts and non-experts alike to try to make the best decision that we can," Superintendent David Dude said. "And that's what I, and I'm sure other superintendents, have been struggling with."

Each side argued data and science supported their view in a debate over reopening schools that sometimes veered into vitriol. The division in Decatur illustrates the

challenges U.S. schools — many in communities without so much expertise — have faced in evaluating what's safe.

Health officials say there's growing evidence that children aren't the main drivers of community spread and that transmission is relatively low in schools if mask-wearing, social distancing and contact tracing is in effect. The CDC says that for schools to open safely, they and their surrounding communities must adopt prevention measures.

Without specific reopening instructions from federal and state leaders, school administrators have had to become amateur epidemiologists, Dude said.

When he first consulted privately with CDC and other professionals — who he said wouldn't speak out publicly at that point in the process because the pandemic response had been politicized — people accused him of not being transparent. When he rolled out fall reopening plans, some parents and teachers questioned whether it was safe and which virus metrics were used. When he hit the brakes on reopening, other parents got riled up, complaining about the abrupt change or how virtual schooling wasn't tenable.

Tiffany Tesfamichael, a single parent who stretched her budget to move to Decatur because

Continue CDC Page 4

## General Lloyd Austin Is First Black U.S. Secretary of Defense

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

Retired African American General Lloyd Austin is now in charge of the U.S. Department of Defense.

On Friday, Jan. 22, the Senate confirmed President Joe Biden's Secretary of Defense pick, making Gen. Austin the first African American to serve in that key strategic federal government leadership role.

"I pledge to fight hard to rid our ranks of racists and extremists," Gen. Austin pronounced during his confirmation hearings.

He also pledged to overturn several discriminatory bans on military service put in place by the previous administration.

The confirmation vote cleared by a 93-2 margin — Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah) and Sen. Josh Hawley (R-Missouri) were the lone no-votes.

One day prior, the U.S. House approved a waiver to allow for Gen. Austin's confirmation.

The decorated veteran required a congressional waiver to confirm the civilian post because he retired from active-duty service only four years ago.

Federal law requires seven years of retirement from active duty before taking on the role.

President Biden and others had previously pointed to the Congressional waiver



General Lloyd Austin, U.S. Secretary of Defense

received in 2017 by Retired Marine Gen. James Mattis, who served as defense secretary in the previous administration.

"The law that we keep waiving actually exists for a good reason," remarked Sen. Minority Leader McConnell (R-Kentucky).

"Civilian control of the military is a fundamental principle of our republic.

We emphatically do not want high-ranking military service to become a tacit prerequisite for civilian leadership posts over the Department of Defense."

Gen. Austin's confirmation cements him as one of the most prominent members of President Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris' Cabinet.

The Secretary of Defense controls the country's largest government agency, commanding troops worldwide and the Pentagon's internal workings.

The confirmation also keeps with Biden's promise to have a staff and cabinet that reflects America's

Continue Austin Page 5



Vice President-elect Kamala Harris and Doug Emhoff arrive in the Crypt of the US Capitol for President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration ceremony on Wednesday, Jan. 20, 2021 in Washington. (Jim Lo Scalzo (Jim Lo Scalzo/Pool Photo via AP)

## Inauguration fashion: Purple, pearls, American designers

By LEANNE ITALIE

Joe Biden and Kamala Harris showcased American designers at their inauguration Wednesday, and Harris gave a nod to women's suffrage, Shirley Chisholm and her beloved sorority in pearls and pur-

ple. Michelle Obama, Hillary Clinton and Laura Bush also donned hues of purple. Harris has cited Chisholm, a Democrat from New York, as an inspiration for her career. Chisholm was the first

Black woman elected to Congress and the first Black major-party candidate to run for U.S. president.

Pearls had a strong fashion showing, in line

Continue Pearls Page 5



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EDITORIAL PAGE

Disavowing Black and Brown Votes: Just say 'no more, not ever again' and push back at corporations that support rogue Republican politicians

By Allen R. Gray
NDG Contributing Writer

It was the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who said, "The ultimate tragedy is not the oppression and cruelty by the bad people but the silence over that by the good people." That is the exact stance my dearly departed mother took if I were to stand by and allow some bully to take my kid brother's lunch money. I can't help but wonder what Martin or my mother would have to say to we Black and Brown people as we stand silently by and watch as a Dirty Dozen Republican House and Senate politicians move to castoff our hard-earned vote. They are being led by Texas Senator Ted Cruz.

We frequently rail against voter suppression, but voter suppression is merely an inhibitor that can ultimately be maneuvered around. What the Dirty Dozen are aiming to do is a more sophisticated form of usurping our nation's democracy and is tantamount to treason. This group is exhibiting total disregard for a law that has been in existence since 1887, a law that dictates how Congress handles vote counting. What is even worse is their total contempt for the will of the American people and total indifference for our nation's democratic process.

This is not simply a matter of subversion it is also a matter of hypocrisy because Trump's one-time fierce foe has suddenly become his fraudulent friend. It was as soon as 2016 that Trump and Cruz were publicly attacking one another after Trump said Cruz's father helped assassinate President Kennedy, then Trump retweeted unflattering pictures of Mrs. Cruz and threatened to "spill the beans" on her. By the time Trump's deluge of denunciations had ended, he had insulted Cruz's father, his wife, and his god.

Cruz refused to take it lying down. He shot back that Trump was a "bully," "utterly amoral," "a pathological liar," as well as a "serial philanderer."

Cruz also said, "Whatever lie (Trump's) telling, at that minute he believes it."

Despite what Cruz felt about Trump in 2016—and the haranguing of Cruz's wife and father and god—the Texan seems to have awakened to a whole new and skewed reality a couple of years later. Now, the viral lies that Trump convinces himself to believe, Cruz and the Dirty Dozen and a throng of other Trump supporters believe also.

There is an adage: If you call a dog by a name long enough pretty soon he will answer to it. In this case, fraud is the name and the votes of Black and Brown Americans have become the dog. It is on this tenuous and contrived evidence that the Dirty Dozen make their stand.

The Dirty Dozen plan to



U.S. Senator Ted Cruz of Texas had once been a fierce opponent of Donald J. Trump, but in recent week's has been one of the President's staunchest allies. He is one of a "Dirty Dozen" Texas lawmakers who opposed the certification of the vote that would officially place Joe Biden in the White House, which would disregard the will of millions of U.S. voters. Greg Nash/Pool via AP

object to the certification of the presidential election results when Congress formally counts the electoral votes on January 6th, even though, their plan drew disdain from Democrats and leading Republicans alike due to there being absolutely no evidence of widespread election fraud.

Undaunted, Cruz argued that the results of the presidential election "produced a deep, deep distrust of our democratic process across the country," and he added that Congress had "an obligation to do something about that." This wasn't the only attempt to disregard the Black and Latino vote.

It was on New Year's Day that the Justice Department represented Vice President Mike Pence in a Texas courtroom as the department was seeking to bestow onto Pence the power to overturn the results of Joe Biden's presidential victory when the matter went to Congress to validate Electoral College votes. The judge flatly denied the claim and questioned whether any of those suing had "a judicially cognizable claim." Even one of Trump's head henchmen, former Attorney General William Barr, concedes that there is no cause for action as there is no fraud to be proven. Barr's opinion didn't curtail Trump from calling Georgia's secretary of state the very next day.

Trump made a direct call to Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger at 3 p.m. on Saturday and kept him on the phone for an hour. Trump urged Raffensperger to alter Georgia's election results by finding 11,780 votes, pleading with Raffensperger the way a schoolboy pleads with his date for a kiss after the prom. The secretary of state didn't find it in his heart to violate the law for Trump's sake. Still, the shouts of widespread voter fraud in Georgia are a never-ending and vicious cycle.

There have been more than 50 lawsuits filed by Trump or his cronies attempting to undo the will of American voters. All those cases were found to be unsubstantiated and they produced no evidence of voter fraud. Even judges that Trump himself appoint-

ed couldn't find enough evidence to rule in the outgoing president's favor.

The most duplicitous aspect of this entire affair lies in the understanding of what happened when Trump lost the Iowa caucus to Cruz in 2016. To no one's surprise, Trump claimed he won the caucus and accused Cruz of fraud. "What Donald does, when he loses, is he blames everybody else," Cruz contended back then.

One should remain aware that bands of negative influencers like the Dirty Dozen don't simply move without some hierarchy fueling their tank and providing justification for their actions. The Dirty Dozen do have their stable of enablers. Financial institutions are the fuel that enables these people to do their disruptive work because politicians respond to campaign contributions the way a dog in training responds to a treat. And as dogs do, corrupt politicians will sit or roll over and play dead on command—if the one holding the monetary treat orders them to do so. Some of the financial institutions waving monetary treats under Republican noses are all too familiar to us.

AT&T's flame is fueled by the major investment firm Elliott Management, which is run by Paul Singer. Singer is a billionaire Republican donor, who recently flexed his financial might and ordered AT&T's board to restructure in a way that brought much delight to Trump. AT&T isn't the only business that Blacks and Latinos tend to patronize that support—in some overt or covert way—policies that tend to hurt Black and Brown communities.

Citibank has been referred to as America's most political bank. Citibank of one of the largest American financial institutions, but the institution has garnered a reputation of being dependent on the financial leniency of government officials, who are often repaid in kind for their munificence. The relationship 220-year-old Citibank has maintained with the U.S.'s governing political party has allowed the institution to receive

financial support worth \$517 billion between 2007 and 2009, years in which Republicans controlled Capitol Hill. The relationship between Citibank and Republicans has been described as a political quid pro quo.

To be fair, Citibank/Citigroup does make political contributions to both Republicans and Democrats (whichever party serves them best). In 2008, Citibank's political contributions were made primarily to Democrats. From 2010 until the present day, though, as the tumult on Capitol Hill surged and politicians showed the worst they had to offer Citibank's political contributions have overwhelmingly favored the Republican agenda.

In 2018, for instance, Citibank made a total of 41 political contributions in the state of Texas. Republicans were the recipients of 36 of those contributions, while Democrats received only five donations.

Charles Schwab the man is sometimes confused with the Charles Schwab Corporation because the man is both founder and chairman of the company that brandishes his name. A corporation spokeswoman said, "We believe in every Schwab employee's right to contribute to the democratic process as they see fit, following their own beliefs," spokeswoman Mayura Hooper said. "Our chairman's personal political activities are his own and are separate from The Charles Schwab Corporation and its subsidiaries.

While Charles Schwab the corporation showed equanimity in their political contributions, Charles Schwab the man donated \$1 million and his wife Helen donated \$1 million to Future45, a Republican political committee that energetically advocated for the election of Trump and Pence.

By no means is the Dirty Dozen's capers the only sham that moves with the intent to usurp the voting rights of Black and Latino citizens.

Dastardly movements are often ignored and discounted as being groundless or futile. But still, the damage is had when the perception of truth is altered and then the altered reality is accepted by far too many Americans. We must keep in mind that it is sometimes not about the credibility of a fraudulent claim but rather the unadulterated gall with which the movement is made.

Now is the time for a call to arms, for someone to champion the cause of Black and Latino voters whose cries for salvation from this sort of abasement often go unheard. Where, now, is that NAACP that gave us Charles Edward

Continued Votes page 6

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 www.mountmoriahdallas.org

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**Wednesday Bible Class**  
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**Sunday Radio Broadcast**  
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**"A JOURNEY THROUGH THE GOSPEL OF JOHN"**  
 ST. JOHN 11:1-10  
 THE OCCASION OF THE SICKNESS OF LAZARUS

BY REV. JOHNNY CALVIN SMITH

As we approach this most sublime and excellent section of John's gospel, let us not forget that John's principle design is to present the excellent glories of the Lord Jesus Christ. John's design is to prove unmistakably that Jesus Christ is Deity - fully God. Up to this section, Jesus has received enormous rejection from the Jewish leaders - a rejection that will culminate in Him being placed on a cross of shame and degradation for my sins and yours. But, in this superb chapter, our blessed Lord will demonstrate and prove that He is the "Resurrection and Life" by raising Lazarus from the dead - a Christian man who had been dead for four days (v. 17).

As the scene unfolds in verses 1 and 2, we are introduced to the personnel of these verses: Lazarus, Martha and Mary; in addition, we are given the village in which they resided: Bethany - a village some two miles from Jerusalem. Also, we are introduced to the fact that Lazarus was sick; but at the outset of this story, he had not died. Jesus Christ, the matchless Son of God, will use this occasion as an object lesson to prove His great love for people, a love that is climatically proven on Calvary's Cross. What awesome love! Also, this miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead will serve as a public demonstration of the fact that Christ is God, and as God, He has the power to raise the dead (St. John 5:25, 27-29).

In verse 3, both Martha and Mary sent a message to Jesus, which was not a complaint or a rebuke, but simply to acknowledge the desperate condition of their brother whom Jesus loved. It is indeed comforting to know that our Lord still loves us in despite of our sickness. It also wonderful to know that sickness is not a token of God's displeasure with us! These sisters appealed to the only One who can do anything for human suffering.

Suffering is the result of sin; Jesus Christ is the Saviour of mankind; therefore, Jesus is the only answer to human sickness. In a time of desperate need, we can learn a lot from the decision of these two sisters: "take the source of your trouble to the only One who can handle it - Jesus Christ." Our Lord answers the appeal of the sisters by acknowledging the fact that Lazarus' sickness and even the problem that his sickness will eventuate into was perfectly known by Him and both will serve to bring glory to God. As children of God, we must come to understand that God has a purpose with regard to every detail of our lives, for even sickness is designed to bring glory to Him! Every detail of our lives is divinely ordered by the Lord - "the One who knows the beginning and ending of our existence."

In verses 5 and 6, the Lord's love for this family is mentioned, but it is explicitly manifested in His delay in coming as soon as He received the message. Again, Christ's delay in this situation was not a sign of His displeasure; but His delay was in perfect accord with His love for the Father's will and for Lazarus' family. The delay of Christ brought out the perfection of His absolute Person - He was in total submission to the Father's will. Certainly, Christ's delay was also designed to strengthen the faith of these sisters; for after incurring the experience of being bereaved, God was preparing them to receive the marvel of surpassing joy. After the child of God has gone through the rigor of suffering, the height of sublime joy will come, for the latter end of Psalm 30:5 says: "weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

In verses 7 and 8, we are introduced to the fact that our God makes an appeal for His disciples to go into Judea - a place of opposition and peril. In verse 8 we are introduced to the fact that Jesus' request caused the disciples to be perplexed, for they reminded Jesus of His crisis in Judea. In the Lord's perfect leading, He often leads us into perplexing and puzzling places in an effort to strengthen our resolve to trust Him.

Finally, in verses 9 and 10, the Lord assures His disciples that as long as one walks in God's will, no harm will be allowed until God's appointed time. As we minister for God, we need to be assured that: "no harm can come our way unless it is divinely ordered, and if it is divinely ordered, it is for our good (Romans 8:28).

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### I can't stay home but I can stay safe

Until you can receive the COVID-19 vaccine, the best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is to stay home. But not everyone can do that. Some of us have to go to work to provide for our families. Take these steps so that you don't bring COVID-19 home. Do it for your family so they stay healthy too.

**How to stay safe when running essential errands:**

- Stay home if sick.
- Use online or home-delivery services when available.
- Wear a cloth face covering when running errands.
- Practice social distancing (stay at least 6 feet away from others).
- Use hand sanitizer after leaving stores or banks.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds when you get home.
- Make a shopping list to shop efficiently.

**Picking up medications during COVID-19**

While social distancing is key to preventing the spread of COVID-19, it's also important to continue receiving medications for chronic conditions to make sure those conditions are well maintained. Follow these tips when picking up the prescriptions and over-the-counter medication you need to stay healthy and feel better.

- Limit in-person visits to the pharmacy. Use drive-thru windows, curbside services (wait in your car until the prescription is ready), mail order, or other delivery services. Do the same for pet medicine.
- Plan to order and pick up all your prescriptions at the same time.
- If possible, call prescription orders in ahead of time.
- Check with your doctor and pharmacist to see if you can get a larger supply of your medicines so you do not have to visit the pharmacy as often.

For more information, visit [parklandhospital.com/covid19](http://parklandhospital.com/covid19).

Continued CDC Page 1

of the well-regarded schools, was upset that her freshman daughter had to struggle through remote learning while neighbors citing concerns about virus spread protested against opening schools, but not against opening businesses.

"Why aren't they out here with signs protesting restaurants if they really, really mean it?" she said.

Dude ended up asking a giant committee of volunteers — many with relevant expertise, though it wasn't required — to make recommendations, including parameters for reopening and protocols to limit virus spread in classes.

## Mayor Eric Johnson announces new group will study ways to improve Dallas Police and Fire Pension System

DALLAS — Mayor Eric Johnson on Monday announced the formation of a study group that will develop recommendations to put the Dallas Police and Fire Pension System on a better path to solvency.

The mayor asked Bill Quinn and Rob Walters to put together the group of financial and pension professionals outside of City Hall to study potential solutions. Quinn is the chairman of the Dallas Police and Fire Pension System Board of Trustees and formerly served as the chair of a task force that recommended a series of changes to shore up the city's Employees' Retirement Fund — the pension system for civilian city employees — in the mid-2000s under Mayor Laura Miller.

Walters, who also served on the Dallas Police and Fire Pension System's Board of Trustees, is a partner at Gibson Dunn and the chairman of the Dallas Citizens Council.

As they develop recommendations, Mayor Johnson wants the study group to involve advisors, consultants, and institutions as they see fit.

Because the Dallas Police and Fire Pension System is governed by state law rather than city ordinance, the 85th Texas Legislature overhauled the

troubled system, which was on a fast track to insolvency, through HB 3158. The legislation passed unanimously after a protracted debate among city officials, lawmakers, police officers, firefighters, retirees, and the pension system's board.

A provision in HB 3158 requires the pension system to submit plans to achieve full funding within 30 years, based on an independent actuarial analysis, to the Texas Pension Review Board in 2024. Currently, the system is about 46% funded and is projected to reach full funding in 75 years.

The mayor hopes to reach a consensus on a path forward earlier, during the interim period before the 88th Texas Legislature, which begins in 2023.

"A shaky pension fund hurts our taxpayers and our public safety efforts. We need to be able to attract and retain the best of the best in our police and fire departments," said Mayor Johnson. "While the law says we could wait another few years to tackle this problem, we cannot afford to cross our fingers and hope for the best. It is prudent and responsible to start this process now so that we can proceed in a collaborative manner and with data guiding our decision-making."

"I am grateful to Bill Quinn and Rob Walters for taking on this critically important effort," the mayor added. "They have the experience, the wherewithal, and the selflessness to find dedicated experts who will give us viable and fiscally sound options for putting the fund back on a clearer path to solvency."

Unstable pension systems can have a significant impact on a city's operations. The Dallas Police and Fire Pension System's financial crisis in 2016 and 2017 led to an exodus of hundreds of officers and firefighters and several credit downgrades of the city's debt from ratings agencies.

HB 3158 aimed to halt the fund's collapse by increasing contributions from the city's taxpayers and from police and firefighters, restricting Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP) withdrawals and annuitizing those payments, tying future Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLA) to fund performance, raising the retirement age, decreasing the multiplier and maximum fund benefit, and giving the mayor the ability to appoint the majority of the board.

Quinn and Walters were two of the original mayoral appointees to the over-

hauled board.

"It has become increasingly clear that the pension fund needs additional support," Quinn said. "I am confident that we will make recommendations with the best interests of taxpayers and police and firefighters in mind. I am excited to be part of this effort."

"The pension rescue four years ago was an important undertaking," Walters said. "But we have much more work to do to get this pension fund where it needs to be, and I am grateful to Mayor Johnson for starting this process now and honored to be part of the effort to identify solutions."

The city now contributes more than \$150 million annually to support the fund, which serves 5,121 active members and 5,039 retirees and beneficiaries.

"Our path to solvency is very long and narrow," said Kelly Gottschalk, the executive director of the pension system. "I appreciate that Mayor Johnson wants to find solutions now to put us on a better path. He made excellent choices in Bill Quinn and Rob Walters, who know this pension fund and its challenges well and have the best interests of the city and public safety workers at heart."

## SPORTS/NEWS PAGE

## 7 Day Weather Forecast for DFW

Thursday, Jan. 28

H - 51°  
L - 40°

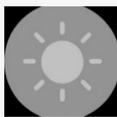
Friday, Jan. 29

H - 59°  
L - 55°

Saturday, Jan. 30

H - 66°  
L - 48°  
40%

Sunday, Jan. 31

H - 58°  
L - 41°

Monday, Feb. 1

H - 60°  
L - 47°

Tuesday, Feb. 2

H - 63°  
L - 57°

Wednesday, Feb. 3

H - 65°  
L - 52°

## Aaron lauded for grace amid racism during home run pursuit

By The Associated Press

Reaction to Hank Aaron's death from former presidents to fellow Hall of Famers to everyone who knew him followed a theme: how the one-time home run king handled the racism he faced on the way to passing Babe Ruth's hallowed record nearly 50 years ago.

Joe Carter met his childhood idol when he won the first Hank Aaron Award in 1986 after leading the majors in RBIs. By then, the All-Star slugger knew all about Aaron's legacy.

"You tip your cap to those guys, because they paved the way for guys like me. It's something I'll never take for granted. They were pioneers. Jackie Robinson. Hank Aaron. Satchel Paige. Those were guys you heard about, you knew about, and you followed them. That's who the Black community followed," Carter said Friday.

"They are heroes and legends and they played the game the way that it was supposed to be played. ... We all loved watching Hank," he said, adding: "Hammerin' Hank, man. It's definitely

a sad day."

Aaron died in his sleep at 86.

"A child of the Jim Crow South, Hank quit high school to join the Negro League, playing shortstop for \$200 a month before earning a spot in Major League Baseball," former President Barack Obama said.

"Humble and hard-working, Hank was often overlooked until he started chasing Babe Ruth's home run record, at which point he began receiving death threats and racist letters — letters he would reread decades later to remind himself 'not to be surprised or hurt.' Those letters changed Hank, but they didn't stop him," he said.

Aaron broke Ruth's record with his 715th home run for the Atlanta Braves in 1974 in former President Jimmy Carter's native Georgia.

"A breaker of records and racial barriers, his remarkable legacy will continue to inspire countless athletes and admirers for generations to come," Carter said.

Former President George W. Bush was managing partner of the



Hank Aaron holds a the ball he hit for his 715th career home run Monday night, April 8, 1974, in Atlanta Stadium against the Los Angeles Dodgers. (AP Photo/Bob Daugherty)

Texas Rangers before becoming governor in his home state and spending eight years in the White House. Bush awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom — the country's highest civilian honor — to Aaron in 2002.

"The former Home Run King wasn't handed his throne," Bush said. "He grew up poor and

faced racism as he worked to become one of the greatest baseball players of all time. Hank never let the hatred he faced consume him."

Chipper Jones, a Hall of Famer who spent his entire career with the Braves, cherished his time around the batting cage with Aaron, who remained active in the

organization long after his career ended.

"We're not only talking about a transcendent baseball player, we're talking about a transcendent person in American history," Jones said. "Jackie Robinson kind of set the stage, but Hank took it to a whole other level."

The Milwaukee Brewers, playing in the city where Aaron started and ended his big league career, said they will wear his No. 44 on their sleeves in the upcoming season.

The Atlanta Falcons and the Atlanta United paid their respects by announcing they will retire Aaron's jersey number for their 2021 seasons in the NFL and MLS.

Braves' pitcher caught Aaron's record-breaking homer in the bullpen beyond the fence in left field at Atlanta Stadium.

"That moment bonded us forever as friends and teammates," "We watched Hank shrug off the weight of the world and just keep swinging."

Former Commissioner Bud Selig reminisced of a recent visit to Washington with Aaron, whose final two seasons were with the Selig-owned Milwaukee

Brewers.

"Not long ago, he and I were walking the streets of Washington, D.C., together and talking about how we've been the best of friends for more than 60 years," Selig said. "Then Hank said, 'Who would have ever thought all those years ago that a Black kid from Mobile, Alabama, would break Babe Ruth's home run record and a Jewish kid from Milwaukee would become the commissioner of baseball?'"

Hall of Fame pitcher Tom Glavine was a minor leaguer in the Atlanta system when he met Aaron.

"When I got drafted by the Braves I didn't know a whole lot about Atlanta," Glavine said, "but I knew Hank Aaron."

Fellow Braves Hall of Fame pitcher John Smoltz celebrated every moment he spent around Aaron.

"You know, Hank was so unassuming. There is not a superstar I've ever been around that, A, went through as much as he did, both in life and in the game, and he just was a gentle guy that was there to say hello. You felt like you were in the presence of greatness every time you walked in," he said.

Continued Austin Page 1

diversity.

"I know firsthand from our time together on the [United Technologies] board that General Austin will be a wonderful choice for Secretary of Defense," former New Jersey Gov. Christine Todd Whitman tweeted.

The decorated 67-year-old has accumulated many awards and decorations, including five Defense Distinguished Service Medals, the country's highest noncombat-related military honor, and three Distinguished Service Medals; the Silver Star, the nation's third-highest award for valor in combat; and two Legions of Merit.

According to his biography, Gen. Austin began his career in the U.S. Army in 1975 as second lieutenant in the infantry and rose through the ranks to command troops in combat at the 1-, 2-, 3-, and 4-star levels.

Gen. Austin served in numerous command and staff positions in the U.S. and around the world.

These include Operation Safe Haven in Panama with the 82nd Airborne Division;

Operation Iraqi Freedom, spearheading Iraq's 2003 invasion as the assistant division commander for the 3rd Infantry Division; and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan as the commander of the 10th Mountain Division (Light).

In 2008 Gen. Austin returned to Iraq as the commanding general of the Multi-National Corps-Iraq during the period when the surge forces were drawing down under Operation Iraqi Freedom.

In 2009 Gen. Austin was named director of the Joint Staff at the Pentagon.

Following that assignment, Gen. Austin served another tour in Iraq as the commanding general of United States Forces-Iraq, responsible for the transition of all U.S. and Coalition military forces and equipment out of the country by the December 2011 deadline.

In 2012 General Austin served as the 33rd vice chief of staff of the Army, culminating his military career as the 12th commander of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) from 2013 to 2016.

As CENTCOM commander, he was responsi-

ble for military strategy and joint operations throughout the Middle East and Central and South Asia. He was also the architect and oversaw the military campaign's execution to defeat the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

He retired from the military on May 1, 2016 and is now the founder and president of The Austin Strategy Group.

Gen. Austin also worked with the President-Elect as vice chief of the Army staff when President Biden served as Vice President under President Barack Obama.

Gen. Austin would require a congressional waiver for confirmation to the civilian post because he retired from active-duty service only four years ago.

"Very good news for national security," Retired Four-Star Gen. Barry McCaffrey stated. "Ret Gen. Lloyd Austin is a towering figure in Armed Forces. Enormous global experience. Joint Staff and Army staff Pentagon. Very easy to deal with. Loved by the military. Silver Star Valor. West Point. M.A. Auburn. MBA.

Continued Pearls Page 1

with a social media campaign that had inauguration watchers donning strands in support and celebration of Harris. Nobody in attendance did them quite like Jennifer Lopez — from earrings to bracelets — as she sang "This Land is Your Land" in head-to-toe white Chanel.

Rep. Barbara Lee, a California Democrat, wore a pearl necklace owned by Chisholm herself. It was a gift from Chisholm's goddaughter.

"Because of Shirley Chisholm, I am," Lee, who is Black, posted on Twitter. "Because of Shirley Chisholm, Vice President Harris is."

The pearls Harris wore, by Wilfredo Rosado, were also a symbol of unity with her sisters in Alpha Kappa Alpha, the first African American Greek-letter sorority, said Rachel Torgerson, fashion features director for Cosmopolitan. The sorority's founders are referred to as the "Twenty Pearls." Every new member receives a badge adorned with 20 pearls.

Harris attended Howard University, one

of the nation's historically Black colleges and universities.

"There's no doubt that every part of her look today celebrates who she is, where she came from and where she hopes to lead the country. Every piece was carefully considered and packed with meaning," Torgerson said.

Like Harris, Rosado is the child of immigrants.

Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders drew fashion praise on social media for his cozy, comfortable inauguration wear: His signature beige parka and a pair of knit patterned mittens. The look earned him his own inauguration Bobblehead to mark his viral fashion moment. It's now on pre-sale for \$25 at the National Bobblehead Hall of Fame and Museum's online store.

Jill Biden wore an ocean blue wool tweed coat over a dress by American designer Alexandra O'Neill of the Markarian label. The new first lady's matching coat and dress included a velvet collar and cuffs on the coat, and a chiffon bodice and scalloped skirt on the dress. The neckline of the dress is embellished with

Swarovski pearls and crystals. The same crystals adorn the coat. The outfit was handcrafted in New York City.

Aides said Harris was dressed in Christopher John Rogers and Sergio Hudson. Both are Black designers, Rogers from Louisiana and Hudson from South Carolina. Harris' husband, Doug Emhoff, wore a Ralph Lauren suit.

Michelle Obama, a fashion icon, drew praise from fans on social media for her belted pantsuit in plum, also by Hudson.

Joe Biden wore a navy blue suit and overcoat by Ralph Lauren. It was a change from Brooks Brothers, the oldest U.S. clothier at 202. The brand has outfitted 41 of the 46 American presidents, including Barack Obama during his inauguration in 2009.

Brooks Brothers fell on hard financial times last year, when it filed for bankruptcy reorganization and announced a planned sale. Ralph Lauren has a history of nonpartisan dressing, including moments with Michelle Obama and outgoing first lady Melania Trump.

# The Ester Davis Spirit of Excellence Award

## My Day



Dr. J. Ester Davis, Instructor

**The City of Dallas Memoir Writing Class** met every Monday writing, reading and discussing current and historic moments in Dallas' history before the pandemic. In an effort to celebrate the glass brass ceiling broken by Vice President Kamala Harris and President Joe Biden, we planned the Inauguration Luncheon. Looking at the many African American women 'secret heroes', we found our 1<sup>st</sup> one.

The pint-size Mother of two cannot recall how much money she awarded nor how many students she was responsible for getting through college. All she really talks about is how much she 'loved her job' and "how much she loved her students". Her job was finding talent for the scholar-

ships, completing the paperwork, writing recommendations, awarding grant funding for students which essentially not only kept them in school but made graduation possible.

Mrs. Deborah Kelley-Hill had an "unmistakable" necessary job for many years finding money for deserving students at Paul Quinn College, a historic HBCU listed as one of the oldest in the nation. She is considered a "hero" in many American Homes.

All the students that graced her office were also 'in love with her'. She installed hope in each one and a 'can-do' attitude that in some will last a lifetime. The essence of her calling for this time in history is amazing.

After listening to her story and some from her successful students, the research was relatively easy.

As we evolved through the civil rights years, the

new laws, affirmative action, with all its turbulences there emerged groups of corporate African Americans who wanted to do more. One of the most popular was the "Committee of 100". At one time they had over 77 chapters through the United States. Dallas had a chapter and they embarked upon a mission of 'loaned executives'.

In Dallas, there were several noted 'loaned executives' at Paul Quinn. Bill Jones, who worked for Xerox Corporation, as did Marvin Robinson. Gerald Borders worked at Texas Instruments and Thomas Jefferson was at General Motors. Ray Reed, Collins Radio/Rockwall. **The Committee of 100** and their 'loaned executives' needed a link-on-campus to connect to the students. That was the couture designer job for Deborah Kelley-Hill. The 'loaned executives' served as mentors, fundraisers compliment-

ing, cultivating and increases the funds from NAACP, UNCF and the growing Fortune 500 list of growing executives. If I put things in perspective, the city fathers had already purchased over 17,000 acres and the new DFW Airport had broken ground.

Marvin Robinson and several other corporate executives reached across state lines to their alumnus, i.e., Southern University and Grambling with much needed gifts for students. At Richland College, Mrs. Hill was part of the "GED-to-College Program" that introduced more students to higher education. Richardson and Plano, Texas, were fast growing towns moving north with major federal contracts and skilled jobs.

Thank you Mrs. Hill for your unmistakable dedication. And our continued gratefulness to the City of Dallas Memoir Writing Class, its members and its support.



Council Lady Carolyn King Arnold



Mrs. Deborah Kelley-Hill

## Q&A: Rapper D Smoke takes patient walk to Grammy recognition

By Jonathan Landrum Jr.



Rapper D Smoke poses for a portrait in Los Angeles on Saturday, Dec. 26, 2020. The rapper and school teacher is nominated for two Grammy Awards, one for best rap album for "Black Habits," and one for best new artist. (Willy Sanjuan/Invision/AP)

LOS ANGELES (AP) — When D Smoke was teaching high schoolers in Southern California, the rapper still pursued his dreams of breaking through as a hip-hop artist while leaning on the encouraging phrase: "There's no expiration on realness."

D Smoke maintained that mindset as a motivator before he made a splash on Netflix's music reality TV series "Rhythm + Flow" in 2019. He won the competition, impressing judges Cardi B, T.I. and Chance the Rapper with his ability as a multi-instrumentalist and bilingual rapper who could easily switch from English to Spanish in his rhymes.

Last year, D Smoke rode the momentum from the show's success, performing alongside boxer Deontay Wilder before a heavyweight championship bout and releasing his debut album "Black Habits," which this year earned him a Grammy nomination for best rap album. He's also up for best new artist against

Megan Thee Stallion, Doja Cat, Ingrid Andress, Phoebe Bridgers, Chika, Noah Cyrus and Kaytranada.

It's been a long road toward Grammy recognition for D Smoke, but the 35-year-old had other milestones along the way. He's a UCLA graduate who taught Spanish and musical theory at Inglewood High School. He's also penned songs for Ginuwine, Joe and Jaheim, some of which he co-wrote with his brother, R&B singer SiR, who is signed to Kendrick Lamar's Top Dawg Entertainment.1}

In a recent interview with The Associated Press, D Smoke talked about the pressure of finding success outside "Rhythm + Flow," how being a teacher matured his lyrics and his thoughts on why Grammy voters nominated him and other 35-and-up rappers in the best rap album category.

**AP:** You were in your 30s with a decade of teaching under your belt, so did you ever think you were past your prime to pursue a

music career?

D Smoke: I always tell people that there's no expiration on realness. People need incredible art. Anytime you spend pursuing whatever level of success and see yourself achieving, it's time to get better. Always getting better. It didn't matter if I got a (Grammy nom) when I was 40. It's just going to be that season.

**AP:** What compelled you to learn Spanish?

D Smoke: I went to a middle school that was predominantly Latino and all my friends spoke it. That's when I told myself that I must be fluent in this. You're not going to switch languages and I'm left out. I took Spanish one, two and three at Inglewood High. While everybody was doing it to get a grade, I was already like, "I'm learning this." Then finally, when I went to UCLA, I just kept going.

**AP:** Was rapping in English and Spanish in front of Cardi B — who is also bilingual — your strategy to win "Rhythm + Flow"?

D Smoke: Everything I did on the show was strategic. That's how you approach a fight with strategy because just being tough or trying to outdo somebody will get you hurt. I'm using a fight metaphor. I knew there were lyricists on the show. I knew they could rap their (explicit) off. But the goal was to distinguish myself. I knew that was going to be memorable. By going into the later rounds, they would be like, "There he goes. That's the dude who can speak Spanish." They were going to remember me from that one performance. I knew they were going to remember that until the end.

**AP:** What was the strategy to ride the momentum after the show?

D Smoke: We knew that

we had a limited window of converting all of these Netflix fans into music fans and people who respect the craft and follow the journey outside of Netflix, because it's far longer before than what people realize. There was pressure to show that. If you look at the trajectory of artists who come off shows, their biggest success is the show. ...That was our goal to go ahead and transition from the Netflix star that people viewed me as to an artist.

**AP:** In the best rap album category, each Grammy nominee is 35-years-old and up (Nas is the oldest at 47). What are voters trying to say?

D Smoke: It opens a conversation of what our culture needs and wants. I think all the things that happened in the past year are really sobering. I think people are requiring, at this moment more than ever, music that speaks to them at a deeper level.

**AP:** Can you elaborate a little more?

D Smoke: We need mature voices in rap. We need them to be at the forefront. Of course, we're going to listen to the kids, because we need to hear them out so they feel understood. But everybody stops to listen to a voice of reason, the voice of experience and wisdom. ...I'm experienced but I'm speaking from a place of when I was 17, acting up and wild. I'm still wild, but I'm smart enough to go about my business a certain way.

**AP:** Did being a high school teacher help the maturity in your music?

D Smoke: Absolutely. I was a teacher who got to know my students. You can't really reach nobody if you're not concerned about who they are. It's an exchange. I would ask,

"What are you listen to? Put me up on what's going on." Some of it I hate, but some I would be surprised and say, "That's dope." In that exchange, you learn how music affects people.

**AP:** Is your music influenced by other West Coast rappers like Tupac, Kendrick Lamar and Nipsey Hussle?

D Smoke: I for sure borrow from them more than any other West Coast artist. Of course, I must mention Snoop (Dogg). I look up to him so much, because he's an elder in the game and still as relevant as ever. That's beautiful. That's another example of these experienced voices still being present in the culture.

Continued **Votes** Page 2

Russell and Thurgood Marshall as champions?

Where, now, is that LULAC that gave us Maria L. de Hernandez and Pedro Hernandez Barrera as champions?

Our plea to NAACP President and CEO Derrick Johnson and LULAC National President Domingo Garcia is this: Coalitions like the Dirty Dozen must be met with the same level of ferocity they use to attack the inalienable rights of Black and Latino citizens who are greatly underrepresented in the halls of Congress and the Senate.

Even without the voices of Johnson and Garcia leading the charge, there should be and are some objections we grassroots individuals can raise. It is within our ability to say "No More, Not Ever Again" to money hungry corporations that support those that move against us.

The people of Montgomery, Alabama drafted a solution to their political and social injustices created by racist systemic policies. Their plan was initiated December 5, 1995, and they dubbed it The Montgomery Bus Boycott. In its beginning, there was little effect felt by the city's establishment and the protesters had to make

certain sacrifices.

Somewhere in February, Montgomery began realizing that Blacks folks were the primary patrons of the buses. Around August, Montgomery began to realize that their finances were suffering. It wasn't until December 20, 1956, that Montgomery conceded to the protesters' demands and the will of the people prevailed.

What was good for Montgomery in 1955, is good for our monolithic money mongers today, but it will take some sacrifice on our part.

Free yourself from AT&T's long-term contract that has you shackled like an indentured servant and go with a company that understands our plight. Take your phone back to AT&T and dash it at their feet.

Close your Citibank account and cash in your annuity, then deposit those funds with a financial institution that donates dollars to those that promote our causes on Capitol Hill. Make a call to Schwab—the corporation and the man—and let that mercantile merchant know that from this point forward you've decided to let someone else grow rich from your currency.

Tell them all, "No More, Not Ever Again!"