



MILWAUKEE

COMMUNITY JOURNAL

WISCONSIN'S LARGEST AFRICAN AMERICAN NEWSPAPER



HISTORY IS MADE... TWICE!

Milwaukee city and county now have most diverse and women-dominated governmental bodies respectively!

Milwaukee's most diverse common council in city government history was sworn-in earlier this week at city hall.

The alders representing 15 districts across the state's largest city includes eight African Americans, six women, and two LGBTQ members. The council has two Latino members: Alderman and Common Council

President Jose Perez, and Ald. JoCasta Zamarripa. Mayor Cavalier Johnson was sworn in for a full four-year term.

Johnson was sworn in as interim mayor in 2021, taking the reins of the city from former Mayor Tom Barrett, who stepped down to become U.S. Ambassador of Luxemburg. In April of 2022, Johnson was elected the 45th chief executive of the city and the

first elected Black mayor in city history. The day before, history was also made at the Milwaukee County Courthouse during the swearing-in ceremony of Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors.

The board now has its first female majority in the history of county government. Of the 18 member board, 10 are women.

—Photos by Yvonne Kemp (county) and Kim Robinson (city)



Mayor Cavalier Johnson, talked about how he plans to serve the City of Milwaukee and get things moving in a positive direction during his inauguration speech.



These ladies will be holding it down on the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors (in no particular order): Anne O'Connor (District 1), Sequanna Taylor (District 5), Felesia Martin (District 7), Patti Logsdon (District 9), Marcelia Nicholson (District 10), Kathleen Vincent (District 11), Priscilla E. Cogg-Jones (District 13), Caroline Gómez-Tom (District 14), Sky Z. Capriolo (District 15), Deanna Alexander (District 18), Sky Z. Capriolo (District 15).



Johnson with Milwaukee County Sheriff Denita Ball and Milwaukee Police Chief Jeffery Norman. Publisher Mikel Holt.



Milwaukee City Treasurer Spencer Coggs (second from right, his wife, Gershia (far right) with new city comptroller Bill Christianson (far left) and his wife Molly (second from left).



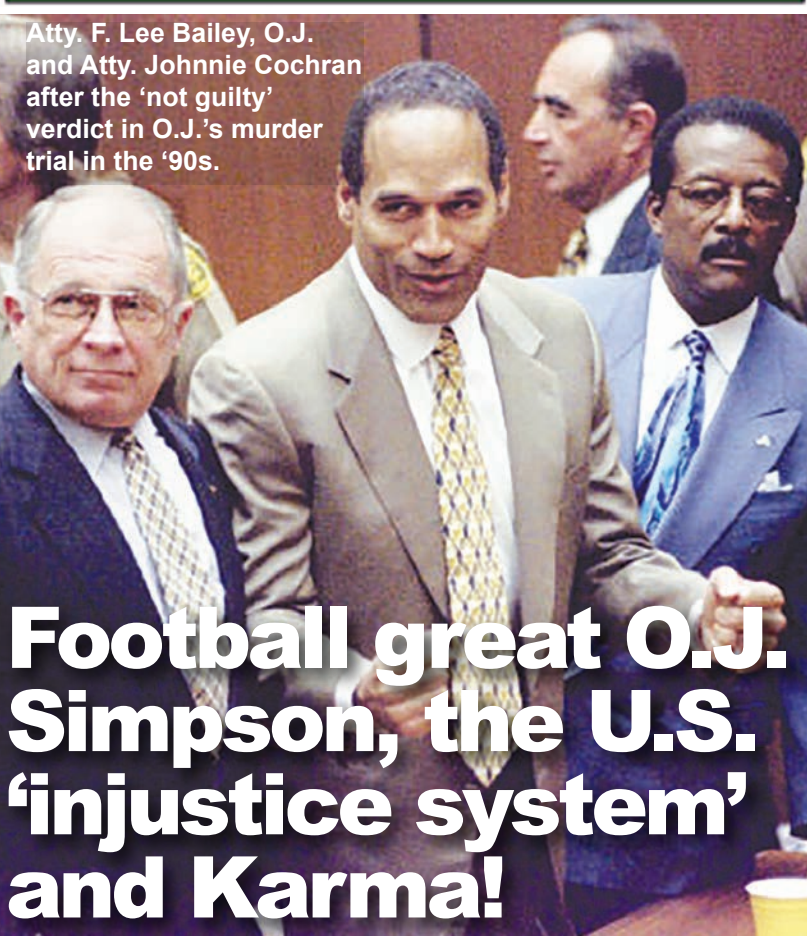
Ald. Milele Coggs addresses the audience and fellow alderpersons.



See more photos from the city hall inauguration and read Mayor Cavalier Johnson's inauguration speech in this week's WEEKEND EDITION!

SIGNIFYIN'

By Mikel Kwaku Osei Holt



Football great O.J. Simpson, the U.S. 'injustice system' and Karma!

Atty. F. Lee Bailey, O.J. and Atty. Johnnie Cochran after the 'not guilty' verdict in O.J.'s murder trial in the '90s.

I remember it as if it was yesterday. Football great O.J. Simpson's death last week brought back images of his acquittal for murdering his 'White' wife.

Then MCJ Managing Editor Tom Mitchell and I were listening to the radio in the production room when the verdict in the Simpson murder trial was rendered.

We both held our breath and as soon as the 'not guilty' verdict was announced, we let out uniformed cries of relief—or maybe joy.

Naw, that doesn't really describe it. A slap in the face to America's Injustice system?

Karma? Yeah, that best summed it up.

But the verdict drew 100 million television viewers, 90% White and pissed off!

To say White people were angry would be an understatement, and to be honest, their wrath brought sarcastic smiles to Black faces.

(White America) knew how we feel when the rich get off, while Black people get the electric chair for looking at White women, even though they were in a coma in another state when the crime was committed.

We masked that orgasmic reaction we had to the O.J. verdict and dealt with the racial aspect as a

medicating defense tactic in the trial.

A racist cop, a glove that didn't fit, and a legal team that propelled a Black attorney to national stardom. It was enough to appease the curious.

In contrast, local and national White/Majority/Mainstream media let lose a barrage of disbelief and anger that was akin to their reporting (if there was a CNN in the 19th century) of Nat Turner being exonerated for his righteous slave revolt.

Three days after the verdict was handed down, the proverbial 'other shoe dropped' when I showed up for the weekly taping of 'Sunday Insight on Charles Sykes' television show.

All eyes were on me in the 'green room' before taping. Not only was I the only representative for the entire race of Black people—hmmm—but the only person in the room who saw O.J.'s acquittal through the prism of racial kismet: 'what goes around, comes around!'

Charlie was shocked by my justification. He wasn't mad, just confused. He and millions of White Milwaukeeans, Wisconsinites, and Americans were scratching their heads and asking themselves:

'How and why was Black America applauding (in White minds) the 'WRONG' verdict?'

I tried to explain before and during the taping. But as the only brotha on the weekly panel I became a moving target for White people in Milwaukee for having and expressing a different perspective.

(As a matter of fact, I recall the time when two of our staffers had gone to a nearby emergency room after one of them had sprained their ankle on the same day of the verdict.

What was caring, empathetic and prompt service from the ER staff, quickly turned into anger and 'un-care' as the words 'not guilty' echoed throughout the facility.)

I recall several heated emails and hate letters following the show.

And an angry White man called and asked me to meet him on the south side.

Nope. I knew better than to cross Milwaukee's 'Mason-Dixon line' to meet some angry White dude. I only venture across 'the line' when I go to the airport or go to Chicago.

Decades later, my feelings are the same; I still laugh at how White America reacted to a black man (small b) murdering a White woman (capital W) and getting

away with it because he could afford to do what White people do and have done for over 200 years: hire the best defense team money can buy.

And that's why White Americans reacted the way they did: a celebrity black man (small b) crossing the invisible line...the line of privilege ('white privilege, to be exact).

Today, it's expected. Back then, it was a rarity.

What is most remarkable about this support for O.J. (if you wanna call it that), is that most of us in the Black community "DIDN'T CONSIDER 'THE JUICE' TO BE A BROTHA!"

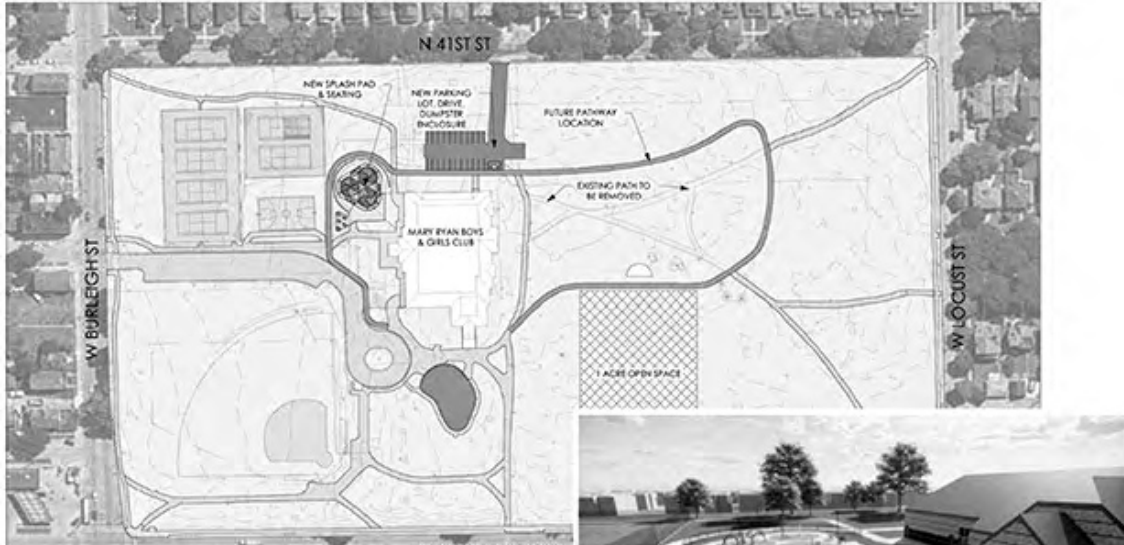
Many called him a 'Tom,' caught up in a fantasy world, dissing a beautiful Black queen (his first wife) for a White woman.

If O.J. Simpson, the football great, had killed his Black wife in a jealous rage, it would have been buried on page five of many American newspapers (nothing new in the eyes of White folks generally).

Instead, we're reliving his trial decades later, igniting the fire of the 'injustice system.'

Goodbye O.J. Too bad you couldn't bury America's racial 'injustice system' with you.

Hotep



Overhead map of the BGCGM and Sherman Park with the noted renovations that are coming soon.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee (BGCGM) is pleased to announce Sherman Park Re-Imagined, a multimillion-dollar renovation of the park which has been home to the Mary Ryan Boys & Girls Club since 1991. The project features 12 exterior park improvements and will begin phase one construction in spring 2024. Planning for the project began in 2021 with a series of community meetings and work with Milwaukee County Parks leadership, as well as County Board Chairwoman Marcelia Nicholson and County Supervisor Felesia Martin.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee Announces Multi-million Dollar Sherman Park Renovation!

"The project to improve Sherman Park has been quite a few years in the making and we couldn't be more excited that we are ready to break ground and get underway," BGCGM President and CEO Kathy Thornton-Bias said. "Sherman Park is a historical landmark, and we are proud to house our Mary Ryan Club here in the heart of this community. BGCGM is here for the long term, and we are committed to improving this space and seeing the benefits it brings to our community and the youth we serve." Along with Milwaukee County Parks, Ascension Healthcare provided significant funding to BGCGM. In addition to providing significant funding for the park renovation, Ascension Wisconsin is also expanding its free oral health program at the Mary

Ryan Clubhouse to provide free dental care to an anticipated 750 kids at the park during the summer months. "St. Joseph Hospital and Sherman Park have been longtime neighbors in this Milwaukee community, and neighbors support each other," said Ascension Wisconsin CEO Daniel Jackson. "Ascension Wisconsin is pleased to contribute to the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Milwaukee to renovate Sherman Park and to deliver more care to the people in this community, aligning with our Mission of helping all people, especially those most vulnerable." Additional funding for Sherman Park Re-Imagined includes a federal earmark recommended by U.S. Congresswoman Gwen Moore, and gifts from MacKenzie Scott and Herb Kohl Philanthropies. Phase one construction will begin with new lighting throughout the park, new pathways and a new splashpad for the community to enjoy. Completion of phase two of the project is estimated for November 2024, pending additional funding and weather. Both Sherman Park and the Mary Ryan Club will remain open while construction is ongoing. A ceremonial groundbreaking celebration is slated for Wednesday, April 24 at 11:30 a.m. About Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee (BGCGM) is one of the largest and longest youth-serving agencies in Milwaukee and the largest Boys & Girls Club in the country. With more than fifty locations in the city of Milwaukee, BGCGM provides youth ages 4-18 with safe, fun, enriching after-school and summer programming including academic support, mentorship, organized athletics, arts, and nutritious meals. Our programs strengthen academic performance, build character, encourage healthy lifestyles, and meet the basic needs of Milwaukee's youth. More than 80 percent of BGCGM's annual budget goes toward youth programming. Learn more at www.bgcmilwaukee.org.

Versiti Blood Research Institute Expansion Plans Move Forward



The Versiti Blood Research Institute (VBRI), recognized as one of the world's premier blood health research centers, submitted its expansion plans for approval to the city of Wauwatosa's Design Review Board. Located at 8727 West Watertown Plank Road, the expansion is a state-of-the-art 79,000-square-foot addition that will nearly double VBRI's research capacity, add approximately 100 new jobs and generate an estimated \$19 million in additional tax revenue for the state of Wisconsin over 30 years. The project is expected to have a total economic impact for the state of more than half a billion dollars by 2050. HGA is serving as the architect and Mortenson is the general contractor for the new facility. The first renderings of the VBRI addition were recently released to the public. Groundbreaking on the expansion project is scheduled to begin later this year with an estimated completion date in 2026. The new addition will expand the VBRI's research capacity and promote the discovery of novel, more effective, and less toxic therapies for a broad range of conditions that affect millions, positively impacting the health of

residents across the state, nation, and international community. "The expansion represents a crucial milestone for the Versiti Blood Research Institute. Renowned for our innovative and leading research and extensive knowledge of bleeding and clot-



Chris Miskel, Pres./CEO
"This initiative signifies a transformative phase where we can make a positive difference in the health and welfare of patients and families, both locally in Milwaukee and globally."
 — Chris Miskel

ting disorders, we are now broadening our focus to include blood cancers and immune system dis-

eases," said Chris Miskel, president and CEO of Versiti. "This initiative signifies a transformative phase where we can make a positive difference in the health and welfare of patients and families, both locally in Milwaukee and globally." The VBRI is nearing capacity and plans to expand its current team of 31 principal scientists to approximately 50 in the next 5-7 years. Each new scientist will bring a team of up to 10 new colleagues, exponentially increasing the research community and enhancing the culture of collaboration. This will bring the total number of researchers and staff from approximately 200 to more than 350. The expansion is a \$79 million project that will include donations and private funding. A \$10 million grant to support the project has been earmarked within Gov. Tony Evers' 2023-25 budget proposal, reaffirming the state's commitment to advancing blood health research. "Our organization is built on a foundation of collaboration, and we know we cannot write this next chapter alone," said Miskel. "The next phase of the VBRI will only be made possible through collaboration—from our research and healthcare partners to donors in our community. "We encourage everyone to join us to invest in research, invest in growth, invest in innovation, invest in hope."



MARCELIA NICHOLSON RE-ELECTED CHAIRWOMAN OF THE MILWAUKEE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Chairwoman Marcelia Nicholson was re-elected by a supermajority of Supervisors [13-5] to continue her role as Chairwoman of the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors for the 2024-2026 term during a recent board meeting. Chairwoman Nicholson issued the following statement after her re-election: "I am deeply honored and humbled by the trust my colleagues have placed in me to serve as Chairwoman of the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors for a third term," said Chairwoman Nicholson. "Over the past two terms, we have navigated significant challenges and made real progress towards realizing the County's vision of racial equity and becoming the healthiest county in Wisconsin. "As we step into the future, I am committed to continue leading this body with the guiding principles of racial equity, preparation, collaboration, sustainability, and decorum. "There is still much work ahead of us, and I am eager to continue this journey alongside my fellow Supervisors and the community I'm proud to represent." Chairwoman Nicholson made her history in 2020 by becoming the first Latina and African American woman elected Chairperson of the Board of Supervisors. Chairwoman Nicholson's previous two terms leading the County Board saw accomplishments such as the passage of a generational funding mechanism for the County earlier this year, which averted a financial crisis and pre-

vented drastic cuts to County services, authoring legislation authorizing a historic \$250,000 investment in Milwaukee's first and only Black-owned bank, authoring legislation committing \$2 million for affordable housing in the Concordia 27 development on Milwaukee's Near West Side, created paid internships with the County Board, created a Task Force on the expenditure of federal American Rescue Plan Act funds, made Juneteenth Day a holiday for county employees, and secured funding for the first summer roller skating program at Red Arrow Park. On April 2, Nicholson was elected to a fifth term as County Supervisor representing the 10th District, which includes neighborhoods to the east, west, and south of Sherman Park, the neighborhoods surrounding King Park, the Marquette University campus, and portions of downtown and the Third Ward. Chairwoman Nicholson serves on the boards of the Hispanic Professionals of Greater Milwaukee, Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee Public Museum, Wisconsin Counties Association, Clean Wisconsin, and the UW-Extension Board of Visitors. In addition, the Chairwoman serves on the Board of Directors for Local Progress, a national network that supports, connects, and unites progressive local elected officials and allied organizations. The Board of Supervisors also elected Supervisor Steven Shea as First Vice Chairperson [11-7] and Supervisor Priscilla Coggs-Jones as Second Vice Chairperson.



10th Annual Dontre Day: "From Tragedy to Triumph" At Red Arrow Park April 27

Photo of Hamilton family courtesy of Milwaukee Magazine

Dontre Hamilton's life tragically ended on April 30, 2014, at Milwaukee's Red Arrow Park. Each year the Hamilton family holds an annual day to honor Dontre's memory. This year marks the 10th anniversary, and the family has decided to turn their pain into a way to pour back into the community. Dontre Hamilton Milwaukee Film Festival has part-

nered with The Oriental Theater for the second debut of "The Blood is at the Doorstep" which will be shown on Friday, April 26th at the Oriental Theater, 2230 N. Farwell Ave., at 7 p.m. General admission is \$15; however, admission will be free to the first seventy-five attendees (first come basis). This documentary chronicles the family's journey towards justice, peace, and purpose. On Saturday, April 27th, the family will hold a community event promot-

ing peace and unity while providing resources such as job placement, housing, mental health awareness, and more. This free, family-friendly, community event will be held at from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m., at Red Arrow Park, located at 920 N. Water Street downtown across from city hall and the Marcus Center for the Performing Arts. In the event of inclement weather, the event will be held at The Women's Center, located at 3020 West Vliet Street.

WHO, WHAT WHERE, WHEN

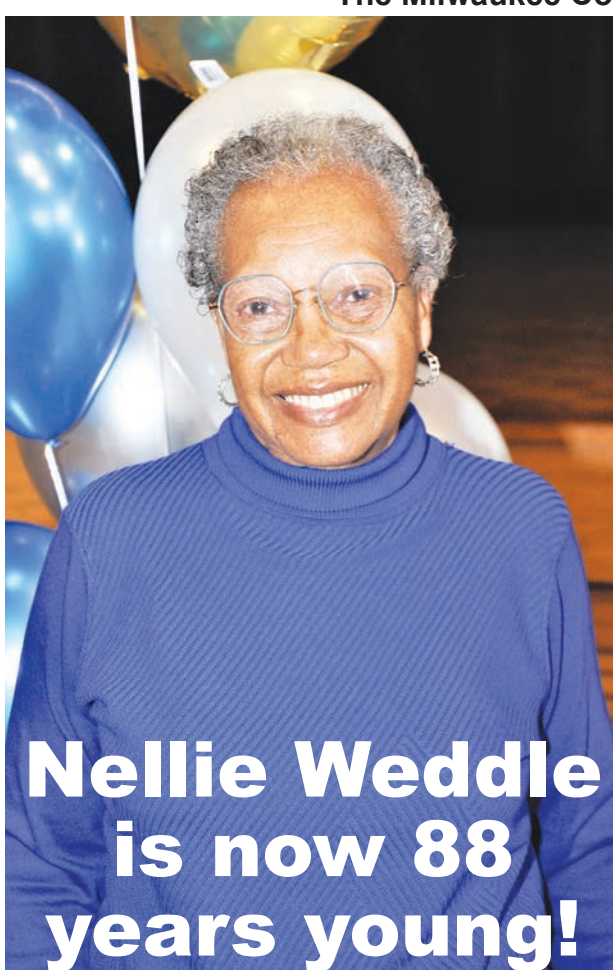
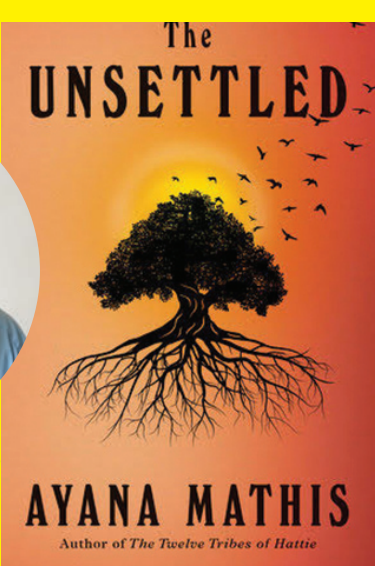
COMING AND PAST HAPPENINGS IN AND OUTSIDE OF YOUR COMMUNITY!

Critically acclaimed author and best seller Ayana Mathis serves as keynote speaker for the Delta Memorial Endowment Fund, Inc.'s LITERARY LUNCHEON

Ayana Mathis, author of the New York Times Best seller *The Twelve Tribes of Hattie*, headlines the Delta Memorial Endowment Fund Inc.'s (DMEF, Inc.) 46th Annual Literary Luncheon on Saturday, April 20, 11 a.m. at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, 333 W. Kilbourn Avenue. Tickets for the luncheon can be purchased online at Eventbrite.com. Since 1978, DMEF has hosted notable authors across four decades, from Octavia Butler and Maya Angelou to Pearl Cleage and Attica Locke. Proceeds from the event fund college scholarships to local graduating high school seniors and Milwaukee-area charities, including arts-based organizations. More than \$500,000 has been awarded to date. Mathis's Milwaukee appearance comes on the heels of her 2023 release of *Unsettled*, which was named a Notable Book of 2023 by the Washington Post and New York Times and an Oprah Daily Best Book of the Year.



Ayana Mathis



Nellie Weddle is now 88 years young!

Noted community leader to bring back organization she founded in 1994 that will again focus on the community's youth!



Maybe its the camera MCJ photographer Yvonne Kemp uses, but it seems Nellie Weddle gets younger and younger with each passing year, especially now that she is 88 years 'young.' She celebrated her birthday recently with family and friends at the Washington Park Senior Center. During the ceremony, Weddle announced she was restarting her organization, Nellie's Outreach Resource Initiative (NORI). Originally created in 1994 as a youth focused entity, NORI will expand its mission, moving into a new era of constructing a program that is geared to helping build strong inter-generational relationships and working to increase peer to peer mentoring avenues for youth advancement within Milwaukee communities. —Photos by Yvonne Kemp

2024 HARLEY-DAVIDSON HOMECOMING FESTIVAL KICKS OFF IN 100 DAYS



The countdown has started. In just 100 days, Milwaukee will host the music and mototainment event of the season when the annual Harley-Davidson Homecoming™ Festival kicks off its four-day run.

A complete schedule of free and ticketed family-friendly events and musical performances planned for July 25-28 at venues across the Milwaukee area is posted and advance Veterans Park tickets are on sale at HDHomecoming.com.

The big weekend revs up at 4:30 p.m. on July 25 with opening ceremonies at Davidson Park, the new outdoor community hub created by the Harley-Davidson Foundation at Harley-Davidson Headquarters on Juneau Avenue in Milwaukee. Complete details on all Harley-Davidson Homecoming™ Festival ticketing options, venues, entertainment, scheduled events, Harley-Davidson factory tours, FAQ and lodging are available at HDHomecoming.com, where visitors can also sign up to receive Homecoming updates.



Participants of the check presentation by Horicon Bank to Columbia Savings & Loan (Left to Right): Pastor Mose Fuller – Columbia Saving & Loan Board Member, Dr. George Koonce Jr. – Horicon Bank Board Member, Attorney Coral D. Pleas – Columbia Savings & Loan Board Member, Steve Moore – Columbia Savings & Loan Board Member, Wesley McKenzie – Columbia Savings & Loan Senior Vice President, Erik Stanton – Horicon Bank Executive Vice President / Chief Risk Officer, Fred Schwertfegen – Horicon Bank President, John Todryk – Horicon Bank Senior Vice President, John Zanghi – Horicon Senior Vice President.—Photos by Yvonne Kemp

Horicon Bank commemorated the legacy of Ardie and her husband Wilbur Halyard during Women's History Month, recognizing their pioneering efforts in empowering African American families with generational wealth through homeownership a century ago by founding Columbia Savings & Loan Association during a recent ceremony, joined by area community and business leaders.



Dr. George Koonce Jr.

In recognition of Columbia Savings & Loan's 100th Anniversary and sharing the dedication to building stronger and financially healthy communities in Milwaukee Horicon Bank's leadership and board presented Columbia Savings & Loan Association with a \$250,000 check to support their commitment to upholding the Halyards' legacy and raising \$10 million to assist 100 families in achieving their dream of homeownership. —Photos by Yvonne Kemp



In recognition of Columbia Savings & Loan's 100th Anniversary and sharing the dedication to building stronger and financially healthy communities in Milwaukee Horicon Bank's leadership and board presented Columbia Savings & Loan Association with a \$250,000 check to support their commitment to upholding the Halyards' leg-



Fred Schwertfegen

HORICON BANK DEPOSITS \$250,000 IN COLUMBIA SAVINGS & LOAN, WISCONSIN'S ONLY BLACK-OWNED BANK!

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THE NATIONAL PULSE



Beyoncé'

Indiana State Responds After Student's Racist Video Saying 'If You're Black, You're Not Country' Amid Beyoncé's Cowboy Carter Release

By Jahaura Michelle—courtesy of Blavity via newsbreak.com

An Indiana State University student is receiving backlash after making racist comments in a widely circulated video about Black people and Beyoncé's influence on country music.

According to People and ABC 33/40, the video was shared on social media and has since been deleted.

The clip surfaced following Beyoncé's release of Cowboy Carter on March 29 and quickly gained traction on TikTok, with numerous social media users stitching their reactions to it.

"I'm sorry, but if you're Black, you're not

country," the woman said in the video. "I don't care. And I meant that in the nicest way. I know you were raised in the country or your grandparents were, I guess — your great granny and grandpas — but they was picking. OK? They wasn't planting.

"Just keep that in mind. They wasn't making money. They was getting sold for money. You ain't country."

She also stated that Black people shouldn't wear jeans and boots to fraternity parties because it really "pisses [her] off," the Daily Dot reported.

The video has made its

Asa Blanton (pictured inset), a student at Indiana State, was identified as the individual who unleashed a racist rant against Beyoncé' and her "Cowboy Carter' country music release.



rounds on social media, with many users calling out the student over her racist remarks.

"This is disgusting racist behavior from one of your students," a user on X, formerly known as Twitter, wrote, tagging ISU. "Ya'll need to address this immediately."

On Monday, students protested with signs denouncing racism on the university's campus. The following day, Indiana State Univer-

sity President Deborah J. Curtis released a statement shared on the school's Facebook page condemning the racist video.

She said she has worked with the vice president of Student Affairs to "identify the student, communicate directly with student leaders, and strategize how to prioritize student well-being and safety," Fox59 reported.

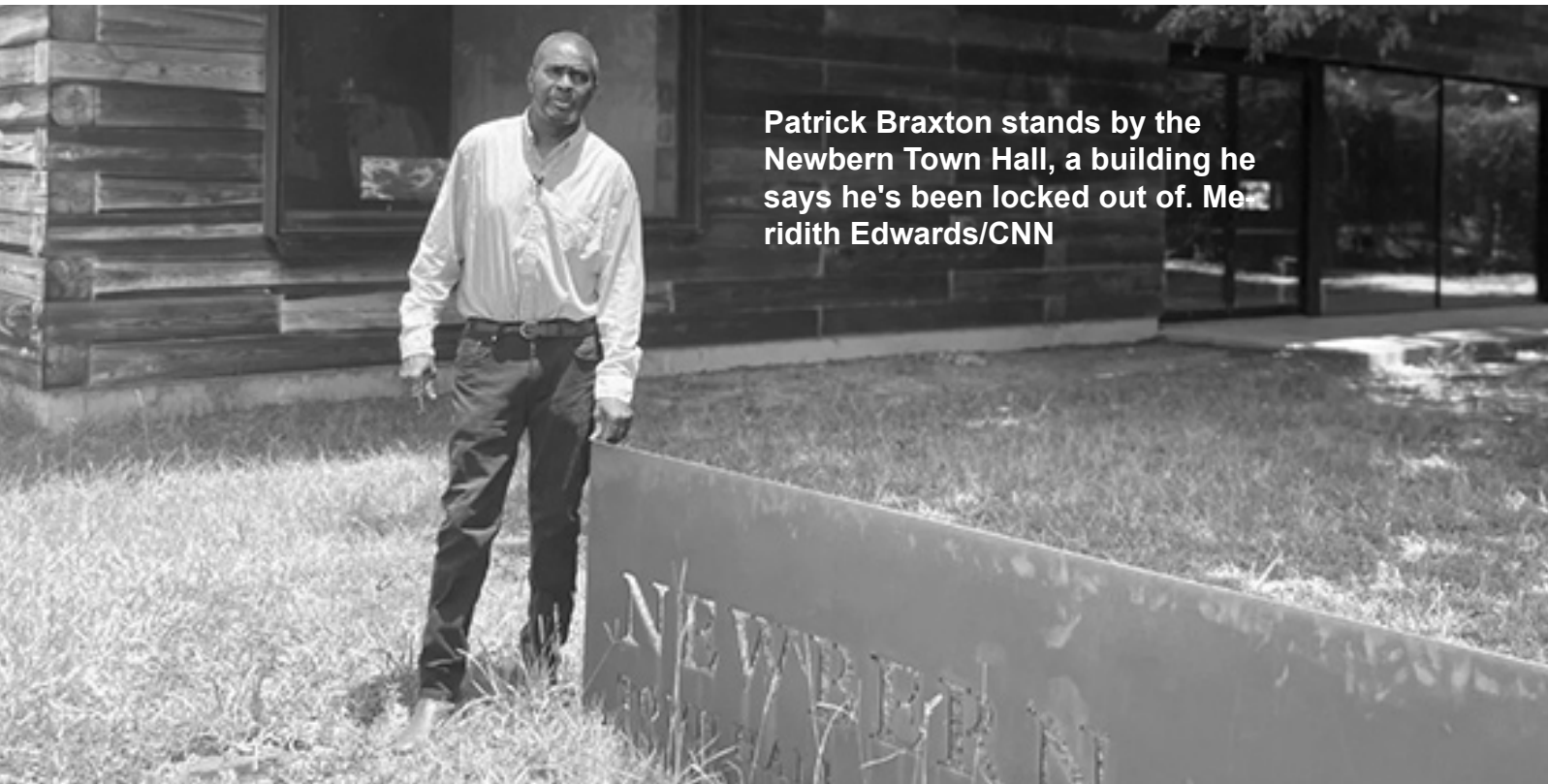
She continued, "Racism, hate speech and discrimination of any kind is deplorable and in direct contradiction of Indiana State's mission, vision, and values.

The student's comments in the video in no way represent the ideals and goals of Indiana State University."

ISU's NAACP chapter and African Student Union have shared statements on Instagram, calling for disciplinary action against the student.

"We believe disciplinary actions should be taken and be an example for future students who consider making a mockery of Indiana State University's moral code regarding diversity and inclusion," the African Student Union wrote in an Instagram post.

As Blavity reported, Beyoncé released Cowboy Carter as the second installment in her three-album trilogy, which began with Renaissance. She released singles "Texas Don't Hold 'Em" and "16 Carriages" ahead of the 27-track album.



Patrick Braxton stands by the Newbern Town Hall, a building he says he's been locked out of. Meredith Edwards/CNN

His (Braxton's) opponents "set in action a plan to thwart a majority Black City Council from taking office and to effectively prevent the first Black Mayor from exercising the duties and power of his new job," according to a lawsuit filed by Braxton and the four residents he named as his council."

from Selma, where civil rights marchers were beaten in 1965 as they crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge, and just 20 minutes west of Marion, where Martin Luther King, Jr. married Coretta Scott and where the shooting death of a church deacon spurred the voting rights movement.

Newbern's residents live mostly in single-story homes on dead-end streets off State Route 61. Cattle and soybeans are farmed on the surrounding land, and catfish are raised in the nearby lakes.

There's no spotlight in the town and your lunch options will depend on whether the historic Newbern Mercantile is open. Auburn University's School of Architecture set up an off-campus studio years ago and its design-build program is evident in an airy library created in a former bank building, a fire station and a com-

Black mayor of tiny Alabama town says he was ousted by his White predecessor

By Meridith Edwards and Rachel Clarke, CNN

Newbern, Alabama CNN — Patrick Braxton accomplished something no Black man in his Alabama town had done in its 166-year history: he became mayor.

He told CNN he ran for office in 2020 to serve the fewer than 300 residents of Newbern, to connect them to help if they didn't have enough food or to spread information on staying healthy in the Covid pandemic.

And when there were no other declared candidates, he won by default.

But within weeks of his win, and before he got to take his oath of office, Braxton says he was dethroned in a secret scheme orchestrated by the former leadership, who he says did not want to hand over power to a Black mayor who was planning to appoint new council members.

His opponents "set in action a plan to thwart a majority Black City Council from taking office and to effectively prevent the first Black Mayor from exercising the duties and power of his new job," according to a lawsuit filed by Braxton and the four residents he named as his council.

The lawsuit alleges the locks on the town hall were changed so Braxton could not get in, adding he was denied access to the post office box used for official mail, and a local bank would not let him see the town accounts.

"Patrick Braxton accomplished something no other black resident of the City of Newbern had ever accomplished since the city's founding in 1854: he was duly elected Mayor of the City," the lawsuit claims.

"However, the minority White residents of the City, long accustomed to exercising total control over city government, refused to accept this outcome."

Braxton's allegations are being disputed by the defendants, including Haywood "Woody" Stokes III, the man who was mayor before Braxton and whom the suit alleges became mayor again after a special election Braxton said he knew nothing about.

Stokes did not respond to requests for comment made by CNN in

email, phone calls and in person. His fellow defendants also did not answer messages. One of the lawyers representing them and Stokes, Rick Howard, wrote in an email: "We do not comment on pending litigation and refer you to our court filings."

In those filings, the defendants say there was no conspiracy and no racial discrimination.

In one motion, lawyers for the defendants wrote: "There is no clearly established law regarding what to do when an Alabama town



Patrick Braxton is sworn in on November 2, 2020, in Newbern, Alabama. Courtesy Leslie Sebastian

does not hold elections for decades. Based on the allegations of the complaint, the Newbern Defendants certainly could have attempted to rectify the situation by doing exactly what they did, i.e. holding another election, installing legitimate council members, and installing a legitimate mayor pursuant to Alabama law."

No stoplights or elections

Newbern lies in western Alabama, deep in the agricultural Black Belt named for the dark richness of the soil. It's about an hour's drive

community town hall. Late last month, cobwebs covered the door of the town hall, built from cypress and steel to give what the architects called a "physical and psychological weight to the civic building."

Occasional passersby demurred when asked if they knew who the

(continued on page 7)



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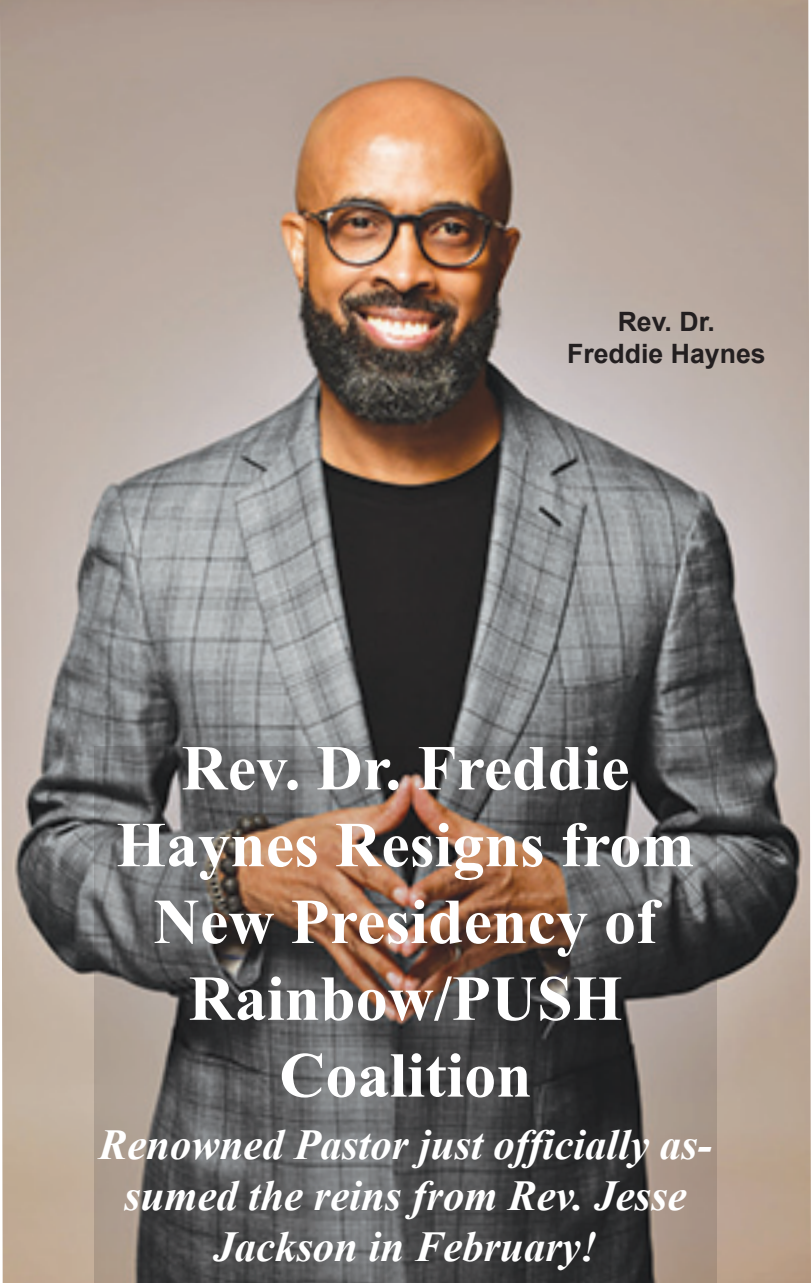
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Rev. Dr. Freddie Haynes

Rev. Dr. Freddie Haynes Resigns from New Presidency of Rainbow/PUSH Coalition

Renowned Pastor just officially assumed the reins from Rev. Jesse Jackson in February!

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - Less than a year after the fanfare announcement that he will succeed the Rev. Jesse Jackson as leader of the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, the Rev. Dr. Frederick D. Haynes III announced his resignation this week amid what insiders described as a painful financial situation.

Few details were available at Trice Edney News Wire deadline, but according to Dr. Haynes' April 16 statement titled, "Public Resignation Statement," he said the following as he resigned from the organization that announced him as Jackson's successor last July and formally installed him Feb. 1.

"After continued prayer and deliberation, I have decided to step down from the position of Chief Executive Officer and President of Rainbow Push Coalition (RPC), effective immediately. I remain committed to honoring the rich history of RPC and the legacy of its esteemed leader, the incomparable Reverend Jesse L. Jackson Sr., and, most significantly, to the calling and pursuit of social justice. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all who have expressed their support since my appointment in July of last year. Rest assured that my work in the fight for liberation and freedom continues. Yours in the struggle, Frederick D. Haynes III"

Neither Rev. Haynes nor Rev. Jackson, who has been ill with Parkinson's disease, could be reached for comment by deadline. Sources close to RPC said the organization has been stricken with insurmountable financial problems.

Dr. Haynes still serves as the Senior Pastor of Friendship-West Baptist Church in Dallas.

On its website, RPC describes itself by saying, "We protect, defend, and gain civil rights by leveling the economic and educational playing fields, and to promote peace and justice around the world."

According to its written history, The Chicago-based organization, founded in 1971, "is the product of a social justice movement that grew out of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's (SCLC) Operation Breadbasket. Founded by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Operation Breadbasket sought to combine theology and social justice and to effect progressive economic, educational, and social policy in America. In 1966, Dr. King appointed Jesse L. Jackson, Sr. to serve as the first director of Operation Breadbasket in Chicago."

According to a news release, Haynes' sold-out installation event on Feb. 1 this year, "featured VIP program participants and attendees from all over the country, including Roland Martin, Rev. Al Sharpton (NAN), Shavonne Arline-Bradley (NCNW), Dr. Michael Sorrell, Dr. Amos Brown, and Dr. Ron Daniels."

Rev. Sharpton who was keynote at the event, said in his speech, "Look at the time we are in: everything that was gained in the '60s is now under threat...They talk about affirmative action, women's rights, diversity, inclusion, voting rights, like somebody woke up and gave us that. Nobody dominated anything to us.

"We fought for everything we got and we need to get back to fighting right now. And that's why I've come to celebrate Freddy, because we need fighters in the pulpit... We need a fighter like Freddy Haynes."

Vice President Kamala Harris, at the Rainbow/PUSH convention where Haynes was announced last July, said, "I am so confident in his leadership and his ability to carry on the greatest traditions of this organization and to meet the challenges of this moment."



Alexis J Roston belts out a song as Nina Simone in the play, 'Nina Simone: Four Women'

Milwaukee Repertory Theater Presents, 'Nina Simone: Four Women' now until May 12, at the Quadracci Powerhouse

The final production of Milwaukee Repertory Theater's 70th Anniversary Season is 'Nina Simone: Four Women,' being staged now until May 12, in the Quadracci Powerhouse.

Written by Christina Ham and directed by Milwaukee native Malkia Stampley, *Nina Simone: Four Women* is a play with music that Broadway World calls "Entertaining, enlightening, and educational... a stirring portrait of a tortured artist yearning to have her voice heard."

The creator of some of our nation's most powerful Civil Rights anthems, *Nina Simone* shook the world with her music.

After the 1963 bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Simone's tribute song "Four Women" transformed her from gifted pianist to trailblazing activist, charting a new

course as an agent of change and

Nina Simone: Four Women is a play with music that shines a light on how she found her true calling and gave voice to a movement through impactful and inspirational songs like "Everything Must Change," "To Be Young, Gifted and Black" and "His Eye is on the Sparrow."

Nina Simone: Four Women will be the last play to be performed on the Quadracci Powerhouse stage before Milwaukee Rep breaks ground on the new Associated Bank Theater Center. To honor the historic moment, playwright Christina Ham will attend opening night to celebrate the bright future of the American theater. Her play was programmed as the 2023/24 Season finale because it speaks to the present moment and honors the past, while broadening the horizons of Milwaukee's richly diverse community.



Milwaukee native Malkia Stampley, who directed *Nina Simone: Four Women*

Nina Simone: Four Women cast features Alexis J Roston (First Lady of Song, Milwaukee Rep) as Nina Simone, Matthew Harris (Dreamgirls, New Theatre) as Sam, Gabrielle Lott-Rogers (Spitfire Grill, American Blues Theater) as Sarah, Brittney Mack (SIX, Original Broadway Cast) as Sweet Thing, and Milwaukee native Toni Martin, who first performed at Milwaukee Rep as a child in Joe Turner's *Come and Gone* in the 1993/94 Season followed by joining the theater as an Emerging Professional Resident in 2012, as Sephronia.

Nina Simone: Four Women is directed and co-music directed by Malkia Stampley (Nun-sense, Milwaukee Rep) with co-music direction and arrangements by Pamela Baskin-Watson, set design by Shaun L. Motley (Fences, American Players Theatre), costume design by Yvonne L. Miranda (Seven Guitars, Milwaukee Rep), lighting design by Jason Lynch (Choir Boy, Steppenwolf Theatre), sound design by Sartje Pickett (Love's Labour's Lost, American Players Theatre), wig design by David Zimmerman, choreography by Marc Wayne, with casting by Jonathan Hetler, Kansas City Casting by Andi Meyer and stage managed by Jordan-Canon Kruijs.

Nina Simone: Four Women is presented by Ellen and Joe Checota with corporate sponsor We Energies Foundation, Executive Producers Susan and Thomas Quadracci, Judy Van Till and Associate Producers Rania and Pat Dempsey. It is a co-production with Kansas City Repertory Theatre.

Nina Simone: Four Women tickets are available for purchase online at www.MilwaukeeRep.com, by calling the Ticket Office at 414-224-9490 or in-person at 108 E. Wells Street in downtown Milwaukee.

For more information visit www.MilwaukeeRep.com.

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