

MILWAUKEE

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GOLDEN YEARS OF FEELING THE PULSE OF BLACK MILWAUKEE!

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FERNE CAULKER-BRONSON



TODD 'SPEECH' THOMAS

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KIA GREEN



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GERALDINE SYKES

EDUCATION



DR. CLAYBORN BENSON



LA TOYA WATSON



DR. EARL WHEATFALL



LENA MARTIN



PAT ROBERSON



CAROLYN TOWNSEND



HELEN MCCRAY

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JULIA HARRIS-ROBINSON



DR. RENEE SETTLE-ROBINSON



DR. RENEE STOKES



ALSO INSIDE

THE 2026 DR. TERENCE N. THOMAS SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

50 FOUNDERS



CAROLYN TOWNSEND

whom their children were associating.

The Cannon front porch was a welcoming center with Daddy C and Ceto and Grandmother Honey always present to view, assess and also guide many a youngster seeking a stronger family association.

It was a grounding place for young students like the Publisher of this newspaper as she had begun to date, who ultimately become the co-Founder of Milwaukee Community Journal.

Carolyn Townsend graduated from North Division High School and began a tenured career as an Executive Secretary.

She worked for many of the Presidents, Vice Presidents and upward-positioned Milwaukee corporate officers.

Her posts took her to many cities and countries around the world. Her

brother, Jack Cannon, was a giant in the Equal Opportunity Division at Milwaukee County under County Executive Tom Ament.

The love of Carolyn's life is her daughter Vickie Lynne. She and her husband Darryl are the proud parents of two children and three grandchildren.

These solid Milwaukee families provided the sounding board for every inquiry about Milwaukee life.

Their lives as young mothers and the vision a "good newspaper" could make by advocating for the changes they knew were needed for there to be equity, justice and opportunity continue to be their hope.

We salute Carolyn Townsend and her family. They are the "salt" of the original readers of Milwaukee Community Journal, Inc.. Your newspaper you can trust!



LENA MARTIN

and was instrumental to its success.

She managed payroll and book-keeping and played a key role in day-to-day operations. Bezelee and Lena were true partners, Lena would close the store once a week to provide Bezelee with a much-needed break from the everyday demands of running the business.

In the late 1960s, Lena and Bezelee also founded a canned goods company called Black Gem Brands, which eventually grew to include more than 50 grocery and household products.

These products were sold throughout several Midwestern states and carried by national and regional chains such as Kroger, Kohl's Food Stores, Century, Cub Foods, Jewel, and A&P.

Lena was also the primary manager of the couple's expansive real estate portfolio, which included both residential and commercial properties throughout the city of Milwaukee.

She accomplished all of this while raising her four sons—Eric, Anthony, Derrick, and Gregory—in their Brown Deer home. She took

great pride in being actively involved in their lives, never missing a school play or sporting event. She even served as a den mother for their Boy Scout troops. Lena ensured that the value of education was instilled in each of her sons, encouraging all of them to attend and graduate from college. She is also the proud grandmother of eight grandchildren.

Lena remained active in the grocery business until 1995, when three of her four sons took over operations and continued their parents' legacy.

Under their leadership, Lena's Food Market expanded to more than six stores by 2008 and employed over 600 people.

Together with her husband, Lena has received dozens of awards and honors at the local, state, and national levels, including the 2005 Minority Retailer of the Year Award from the United States Department of Commerce.

For generations of Black women, Lena has served as a role model for balancing entrepreneurial success with a rich and active family life.



HELEN MCCRAY

brother Pete on the

Later Helen McCray went on to graduate from West Division High School and attended Concordia College. Helen wed and raised her 4 children on the north/northwest side of Milwaukee.

It was Helen's early modeling career as coordinator of Milwaukee's first African American Pageant that led her to connecting with Patricia O'Flynn Pattillo.

Alongside Patricia O'Flynn Pattillo Helen Mc Cray organized Ms. Milwaukee Black Pageant finding sponsors for all the participants.

From there a friendship and working relationship was well established.

Helen's allegiance to uplifting Milwaukee's black community helped the newspaper grow from a small start into a major voice.

Helen demonstrated her allegiance to the early beginnings of the publication by being instrumental in establishing the home of The Milwaukee Community Journal.

Helen utilized her social capital and introduced Patricia O'Flynn Pattillo to the building's owner which led to occupancy of what has been the home of The Milwaukee Community Journal for 50 years.

Helen McCray continued on supporting the publications early beginnings as advertisement sales agent.



PAT ROBERSON

to see for their children. They dreamed of a city that recognized the beauty and talent within the central city communities.

And one that encouraged their young children to grow, prosper and be able to give back to their community.

Education was a key issue for launching their children into economic independence and guiding their destinies, so good schools and programs that supported their children's dreams and aspirations were key points mentioned as the newspaper was designing its mission.

Pat Roberson worked for over 37 years for Milwaukee County in various roles, under changing

elected supervisors and Milwaukee County Executives.

She retired in 2005 as a Judicial Clerk. Always one to honor her responsibilities for her family first, she and her husband, Robert, married for 69 years, had six children.

Robert passed in 2025. Their children are now grandparents and the family consists of their children, 16 grandchildren and 21 great grandchildren.

Mrs. Pat Roberson reads the Milwaukee Community Journal yet today.

She gets her news both through the printed copy and digitally through www.milwaukeecommunityjournal.com.

Celebrating

CONGRATULATIONS ON ACHIEVING THIS MILESTONE!

The Brewers Community Foundation



Judge Clarence R. Parrish was born in Louisburg, North Carolina and raised in Brooklyn, New York. His wife is Mildred Parrish, and they have two daughters, Atty. Sheila Parrish and Sharon Andrews, and four grandchildren.

JUDGE CLARENCE R. PARRISH

Judge Parrish was the first Black lawyer to win a contested judicial race as Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judge in 1981 and he served until his demise in 1992.

He graduated from St. John's University Law School in Queens New York, and the University of Wisconsin Law School where there is a law student scholarship in his name.

Judge Parrish served the Milwaukee community as Mayor of Bronzeville. Several boards he sat on were the Milwaukee Bar Association and the Wisconsin Board of Bar Examiners.

Parrish was a City of Milwaukee

magistrate and a Milwaukee County judicial Court Commissioner.

Judge Parrish graduated in 1992 from Saint Francis Seminary and was a minister at Calvary Baptist Church.

He founded the Milwaukee Chapter of the National Bar Association for Black lawyers, and was president of the NAACP.

Along with several other men they the first Wisconsin chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity know as Kappa Phi.

Judge Parrish and several men founded the first chapter of Sigma Pi Phi (The Boulé) was founded.

Both fraternities have college stu-

excellence inspired generations of family members who pursued advanced degrees and distinguished professional careers in medicine, engineering, education, public health, veterinary medicine, and technology.

Beyond the classroom, Mrs. Trotman dedicated herself to numerous civic, social, and service organizations. In 1990, she became a charter member of the Cream City (Wisconsin) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated.

She was widely known for her leadership, generosity, and tireless fundraising efforts, particularly through the chapter's annual Ebony Fashion Show.

Her service extended to organizations including the Business and Professional Women's Club, the NAACP Milwaukee Branch, Girl Scouts of America, Church Women United, and Top Ladies of Distinction.

Cherrye was recognized as a Living Legend in Milwaukee and was honored at Milwaukee City Hall in February 2017 for her many contributions to the community.

Her commitment to education and student success earned her the distinction of being named Teacher of the Year by Milwaukee Public

Schools in 1972.

A dedicated civic and community leader, Cherrye served on the Board of Directors and the Nominating Committee for the Milwaukee Council of the Girl Scouts of America.

She was also an active member of the NAACP and the Alabama State Alumni Association, where she served as a past president.

Following the assassination of her friend, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., in 1968, Cherrye founded the Martin Luther King, Jr. Club for Milwaukee-area youth.

Through this organization, she promoted unity, community service, academic excellence, and cultural awareness.

The club encouraged young people to learn and celebrate Black history and sponsored an annual Black History program.

Under her leadership, club members actively participated in community events, including the Milwaukee Christmas Parade, Fourth of July Parade, and Juneteenth Celebration Parade, fostering civic pride and community engagement among generations of young people.

A woman of deep faith, Mrs. Trotman was a devoted member of St. Mark A.M.E. Church, where she ac-

tively participated in church ministries and supported the congregation through her service, stewardship, and generosity.

She was also known throughout the community for her exceptional pound cakes, which became cherished gifts for family, friends, and church members across the country.

Mrs. Trotman found joy in gardening, cultivating beautiful roses, geraniums, peonies, and other flowering plants.

She was also an avid traveler who explored destinations across Africa, South America, Europe, and the Caribbean, embracing opportunities to learn about diverse cultures and communities worldwide.

Throughout her life, Mrs. Trotman exemplified the values of education, perseverance, service, and faith.

Her influence continues through the countless students she taught, the organizations she strengthened, the community she enriched, and the generations of family members whose lives reflect her enduring commitment to excellence.

Mrs. Cherrye Janet Ballard Trotman's life remains a testament to the transformative power of education, community service, and unwavering dedication to uplifting others.



In 1952, Ernestine Wilson O'Bee became one of the first African

ERNESTINE O'BEE

American women to be licensed as a funeral director in Wisconsin.

Despite the racism, sexism, and classism she was put through during her education, O'Bee faced these challenges head on with the intent to serve her community.

Her admirable reputation led to the governor appointing her to the Wisconsin Department of Regulation and Licensing, making her the

first African American woman to sit on the State Board of Examiners.

Over the course of nearly 60 years, Milwaukee's famed Mrs. O'Bee served the members of her community with pride.

Mrs. O'Bee was an active fixture at the funeral home, which was later renamed Northwest Funeral Chapel in 1992. The funeral home continues to be active to this day.



Mrs. Cherrye Janet Ballard Trotman was born on July 6, 1930, in Montgomery, Alabama, to David W. Ballard and Lura Cordelia Arrington Ballard.

Raised in a family that valued education, faith, and service, she developed a lifelong commitment to learning and community engagement that would define her legacy.

Mrs. Trotman was a proud graduate of Alabama State College for Negroes, now Alabama State University, where she earned a de-

CHERRYE TROTMAN

gree in Secondary Education. She later completed a master's degree in education.

Although trained as a secondary educator, she devoted her professional career to elementary education in Milwaukee Public Schools. She taught for 29 years at H.L. Palmer Elementary School and 6 additional years at Washington Irving School, where she taught deaf students mathematics and reading with the assistance of an interpreter.

A passionate educator and advocate for youth, Mrs. Trotman consistently challenged her students to pursue excellence.

During her tenure with Milwaukee Public Schools, she established the first Girl Scouts troop at Palmer Elementary School and created the first Milwaukee Public Schools Scout-a-

Rama, a tradition that continues today.

She also founded the Martin Luther King Jr. Club, providing hundreds of students with opportunities to learn about civil rights history and leadership.

Her outstanding contributions to education earned her recognition as Wisconsin Teacher of the Year in 1976.

Mrs. Trotman and her husband, Reginald Trotman, were among Milwaukee's pioneering African American families who helped strengthen the city's growing Black middle class.

Together, they built a strong foundation centered on education, entrepreneurship, civic engagement, and community service.

Their commitment to academic

CELEBRATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MILWAUKEE COMMUNITY JOURNAL



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August 2026

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50 ARTS & CULTURE



FERNE CAULKER-BRONSON

educational curiosity she studied and was greatly influenced by master artists, including Katherine Dunham, Lavinia Williams, Chief Bey and Pearl Primus.

Caulker started her teaching career at the University of WI – Milwaukee in 1971 where she founded the Dance Department's BFA Degree in Choreography and Performance/African dance. She retired from the University as a full Professor Emeritus in 2014. She is the Founder (1969), of Ko-Thi Dance Company, the oldest professional black arts organization in the State of Wisconsin. In 2026 Ko-Thi celebrates 57 years and has reached over 1 million children through its educational outreach program. Ko-Thi has received numerous awards, and has a touring portfolio spanning Japan, Canada, the United States,

New York's Lincoln Center 'Out of Doors' concert series, Brooklyn Academy's 'Dance Africa' series to name a few.

Caulker's academic resume is prestigious. She was the recipient of a Fulbright Scholar Award completing a research sabbatical in Tanzania, East Africa, contributed a chapter in the book, The Dance Experience, entitled "African Dance: Divine Motion, a presenter in the 2009 Imagine

America conference, a recipient of UWM's 2012/13 prestigious Research Grant Initiative (RGI) and presented in the 2014 Dancing the African Diaspora:

Theories of Black Performance at Duke University. In 2020 Caulker was named the Milwaukee Magazine's Betty Award: Creative Genius.



TODD'SPEECH'THOMAS

vulnerability, heritage, and global consciousness to the mainstream. Their music didn't just entertain; it uplifted, questioned, and healed.

Long before the group released its debut album, Speech was already shaping narratives through journalism.

Writing for the Milwaukee Community Journal alongside co-writer Gary Hoover, he explored themes that would later become iconic songs like "Mr. Wendal" and "Fishing for Religion."

Through the newspaper, he witnessed firsthand the power of informing and strengthening the community — addressing both its challenges and its triumphs.

That sense of purpose was nurtured at home. Speech watched his mother, Patricia Patillo, make history as the first woman president of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), leading with vision and conviction.

He also observed his father, Robert Thomas, strategically expand the paper's reach and advertising impact.

From them, he learned that leadership is service — and that media, when guided by integrity, can transform lives.

Today, Speech and Arrested Development continue to tour globally, delivering performances that transcend nostalgia.

Fans quickly discover their shows are more than renditions of classics like "Tennessee" and "People Everyday."

They are high-energy, multi-generational celebrations of hip-hop's roots, resilience, and future — powered by live instrumentation, unity, and an unwavering message of consciousness.

In an era searching for authenticity, Arrested Development remains not just a chapter in hip-hop history, but a living force shaping its spirit.

50 COMMUNICATION



ANDREA WILLIAMS

A familiar face in Milwaukee media for decades, Andrea made the transition from a successful radio career to television, where she brings energy, personality, style, and community connection to viewers each evening.

Known for her signature blend of credibility and fun, Andrea has become a standout voice in Milwaukee for enter-

tainment and lifestyle television through celebrity interviews, community storytelling, and engaging live-event coverage.

Andrea's vibrant presence and passion for people shine through both on-air and in the community.

She is also the host of this years MCJ Golden Anniversary event



KIA GREEN

of a Milwaukee-based journalism program, where she explored both print and broadcast media.

In college, she continued to expand her craft, serving as a reporter, writing consultant and tutor.

Kia began her career as a print journalist, freelancing and interning for Milwaukee- and Minneapolis-based publications before finding her home at the Milwaukee Community Journal.

At MCJ, she started as a copywriter and rose to become the newspaper's first female Managing Editor, pushing the limits of the newsroom and introducing a bold, clean design to the front page.

Throughout her tenure, she championed excellence and pride, shining a light on positive community stories while producing a compelling publication.

In 2015, Kia transitioned into Marketing and Internal Communi-

cations, primarily working in the healthcare technology space.

Currently at R1, Kia specializes in strategic communications, executive messaging, employer brand, and associate storytelling, while leading the global People Leader Communications programming.

A Milwaukee native, Kia holds a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Minnesota—Twin Cities and an MBA from Cardinal Stritch University.

Passionate about uncovering and sharing meaningful stories, she remains active in her church, Mt. Zion Assembly Healing Temple, and community.

She and her husband, Darwin, are the proud parents of three children: Zion-Elon, Zuri, and Zakai.

The experiences and memories gained at the Milwaukee Community Journal remain a cornerstone of her career.



KATHY GAILLARD

cations and public relations. Most recently, she served as interim Executive Director with Ezekiel HOPE.

She is also one of three founders of Mosaic Communications.

Gaillard also has served as former Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett's interim press secretary and worked in the Corporate Communications departments of Wis-

consin Gas Company, Journal Communications, San Diego Gas and Electric, and served as the City of San Diego's Senior Public Information Office.

She is proud of the fact that she was able to return to her alma mater, Marquette University, where she worked as an adjunct lecturer in the Diedrich College of Communications for more than eight years.



GERALDINE SYKES

Development Commission. Gerri taught for a couple years and then went to work for the state of Wisconsin, licensing preschool programs and community based residential facilities.

Gerri became active in the community after the boys were old enough to be in school. She volunteered at the inner City Arts Council, and the YWCA, where she served as board president during the time that the present building on Dr Martin Luther King drive was being constructed.

She was also the first African American female to co-host a television talk show, "Black Scene."

Donald's career took the family to Washington DC to work in the Clinton administration, Gerri worked for

the District of Columbia, directing the office that was responsible for licensing and regulating child care facilities, nursing homes and issuing licenses to health care providers. Her last job was as a customer relations agent for Midwest Express Airlines.

Life wasn't all work, the passion in the Sykes' household was travel, and travel they did! Donald was able to visit all 50 states, Gerri did 44. They visited 5 continents and after Donald's death Gerri did Australia, the 6th and no, Antarctica is not calling!

Gerri is a longtime member of St Mark AME Church. A 52 year member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc, a member of The Links Incorporated and an emeritus member of The Girl Friends Inc.



LINDA JACKSON COCROFT

Publisher Black Women 50+ Health & Lifestyles Magazine the Milwaukee Community Pride Expo.

Beyond creating a format caulked with entertainment, vendors, and educational resources, our goal was to connect diplomats with Wisconsin corporations interested in doing business in African countries.

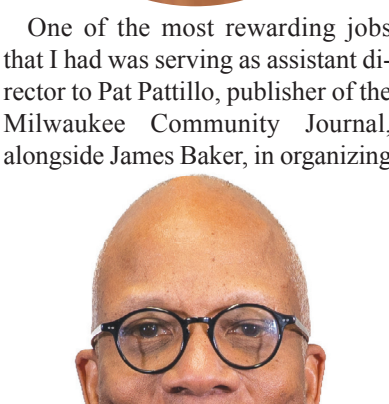
Tom Shopshire, Sr. VP at Miller Brewing Company, appreciated the concept and was a major sponsor.

I can't remember the number of times that we flew to Washington,

D.C. for meetings or to host receptions.

The crowning achievement of our efforts – a mix of 17 ambassadors, deputy chiefs, and others charged with advancing their countries political and economic opportunities participated.

They spent two days touring facilities and meeting executive level corporate reps. The skills acquired, and confidence developed still serve me.



DR. KEN HARRIS

Dr. Ken Harris is an award-winning broadcaster, author, educator, entrepreneur, and retired City of Milwaukee police lieutenant with more than 40 years of leadership experience in public safety, higher education, and community engagement.

As the host of Dr. Ken's Truth podcast and chair of the Department of Justice & Public Policy at Concordia

University Wisconsin, he brings practical insight to topics including leadership, justice, AI, business, financial literacy, and civic responsibility.

Known for his engaging presentation style and thought-provoking perspective, he has built a reputation for being frank, candid, and straight to the point.

50 EDUCATION



DR. CLAYBORN BENSON

begin the next chapter of their lives."

Benson is a photographer, historian and military veteran who has had two remarkable careers in his lifetime.

He spent 39 years as an award-winning broadcast journalist with Milwaukee's WTMJ-TV, covering news and sports and earning a reputation for excellence in storytelling.

While working full time at the station, he enrolled in Milwaukee Area Technical College's photography training program and later attended the U.S. Army's military photography school at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey.

He ultimately earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in film from UWM in 1987.

During his time at UWM, Benson received a grant to produce "Black Communities," a documentary examining Black housing, migration, settlements and trade skills in the United States, Wisconsin and Milwaukee.

The film aired on NBC affiliate WTMJ-TV, on public television stations across the state and became a formative project in shaping his future work.

While producing the documentary,

he recognized that the history and heritage of Black Americans in Wisconsin were widely scattered and inadequately preserved.

In response, he founded the Wisconsin Black Historical Society/Museum in 1987 to collect, preserve and share that history while also serving as a neighborhood anchor and resource.

He has built and maintained an unparalleled collection documenting Black life in Milwaukee that has been used by researchers, students, journalists and community groups, and Benson remains one of the state's most influential voices.

A life-long learner, Benson went back to earn a master's degree in public history from UWM's College of Letters & Science in 2024 at the age of 75.

Benson's many honors include the City of Milwaukee Living Legacy Award, the Milwaukee Press Club Hall of Fame Award, the Emmy Silver Circle Award from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences regional chapter, and the UWM Alumni Lifetime Achievement Award.

Education honorees continued on page 13!

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TAKING THE 'SOUL TRAIN' DOWN MEMORY LANE!

50 years of feeling the Pulse of Black MKE

By Patricia O'Flynn Pattillo

The Soul Train! “People all over the world. It’s time to get down”....the music blasted. Young enough to still love to dance.

And with enough life experiences that you knew it was not all dance and song, but still finding myself...as wife, mother, church member and community thought thinker...not leader.

We had gone through the phenomena called “Roots” written by Alex Haley, the story of a Tennessee family—that started with Kunta Kinte—who shared their oral and now written history of slavery and how they made it through that atrocity for eight consecutive nights on national television. Our Interest as a nation was peaked.

Don Cornelius was coming live from Chicago with his soon to be iconic television dance show, and by 1976 he was on national television. It was the first Black-owned television show, owned produced and supported solely by Blacks.

Afro Sheen, Soft Sheen; Angela Davis with full Afro (using Afro Sheen, of course) was talking about this new activism.

The irony today is that we need to be thinking again of owning and HOLDING ON TO what we build, as did George Johnson—who recently passed at age 99—the creator of Afro Sheen who had the vision and the courage to pursue his dreams.

Davis, a young woman who was making her mark in ‘The Movement’ like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Jesse Jackson and Malcolm X, was articulate, with a paradigm shift for Black America. Suddenly the sound of ‘Soul Train’ took on new meaning!

Don Cornelius, sharp in dress and so successful as he brought Soul and R&B artists to national television.

The ‘Soul Train dancers’ were stepping and almost break dancing and performing new dance steps that everyone was eager to learn.

So ‘SOUL TRAIN’ slowly became a new form of MOVEMENT, VERSITILITY, and POWER. Young entrepreneurs began to spring up in restaurants, gas stations, housing development, insurance; the community savings and loan, business furniture, North Milwaukee State Bank...Our star was rising.

Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) teachers, and young moms were committed to better education and soon Harambee, Urban Day and other new schools, and strong Catholic parochial schools were uniting to prove Black children could not only learn, but excel. Beverly Kern had begun her modeling school and Marie Gaines had Etiquette classes at Milwaukee public schools.

Queen Mother Frances Starms had espoused early education. Head Start, and pre-Kindergarten schools were created, some bearing her name.

In Chicago, Marva Collins Schools were proliferating and local organizations were inviting her to share the secrets of her success.

Saleem and Olivia El-Amin were early childhood leaders of independently owned day care centers. Milwaukee was focused on children.

This ‘SOUL TRAIN’ was moving forward. Visions and dreams were becoming realities that were being implemented.

Milwaukee has been a non-monolithic community; meaning that different elements approached the ‘Soul Train’ of upward mobility in different ways...some through the electoral track, where we saw aggressive thrusts on voting and voter

registration that helped expand the representative maps so that more Blacks had the access to win electoral seats

Others worked toward upward mobility through joining organizations focused on increasing home ownership, like United Realty Group with Beechie Brooks, Claude Baldwin, Robert Mays and Mary Butts.

Others were working on opening up loan and banking opportunities like the local NAACP, whose leader, Felmers Chaney, brought forth lawsuits that battled redlining and other discriminatory practices that revealed Black central city homeowners and business owners having to unjustly pay more in fees and coverage because of their location.

resentation was improving. Sororities, fraternities, social clubs and other social groups responded to the changes, and the Community Journal continued to see all, hear all, represent all and be all. WE called it feeling the ‘PULSE’ of our Black Community.

We continued to keep a ‘pulse’ on what was happening, who were the players and what—if any—benefit their activities would have for Black people in Milwaukee.

How would it impact or alter our movement...our upward mobility our ‘SOUL TRAIN’.

“We are You!”...for indeed we are! What affects you ultimately begins to affect us. We desire to win and keep your trust.

including forever friends, brilliant employees, impassioned consultants, and respected community thought leaders who still give me advice and whose suggestions are valued as we determine the best way to put the steam behind this ‘SOUL TRAIN.’

It must have fuel to keep rolling, producing, and building.

Each of you in your own wonderful way have been a part of this blessing.

Thank you individually and collectively for you touched my life and afforded me the opportunity to touch others.

THANK YOU MILWAUKEE for 50 BLESSED YEARS! WE still are MCJ, on

a ‘SOUL TRAIN’!

—Patricia O’Flynn Pattillo is the Publisher, Founder, CEO MCJ., Healthy Start Magazine, MCJ/PPP and Chair of the Dr. Terence N. Thomas Scholarship, Inc.



That fight was waged at the same time the Milwaukee Urban League—led by Wesley Scott, later Ken Little and finally Ralph Hollmon—played an important role because the once dependable tract into factory work that helped build the Black Milwaukee Middle Class became non-existent, leaving

We can state unequivocally, the Milwaukee Community Journal is a cultural and institutional reality that continues to work aggressively to say without question:” Say It Loud: ‘I’m Black and I’m Proud.’”

From this wonderful city has come many artists, physicians, and intellectual giants



the city with fewer good paying jobs.

The drought in employment opportunities paved the way to making money illegally via drug trafficking, which became an unwanted force on many a corner and—regrettably—in many homes as well.

Our different approaches all collided at City Hall and the state capital in Madison for there was no stratification—arrangement—in pay and bank accounts there. Black was Black. Too often bundled, grouped, and branded.

We responded as the racial division led more and more of us into the suburbs; and our schools became—again—Black and more impoverished as our communities grew economically more destitute, despite the fact that our electoral rep-

who are respected throughout the world.

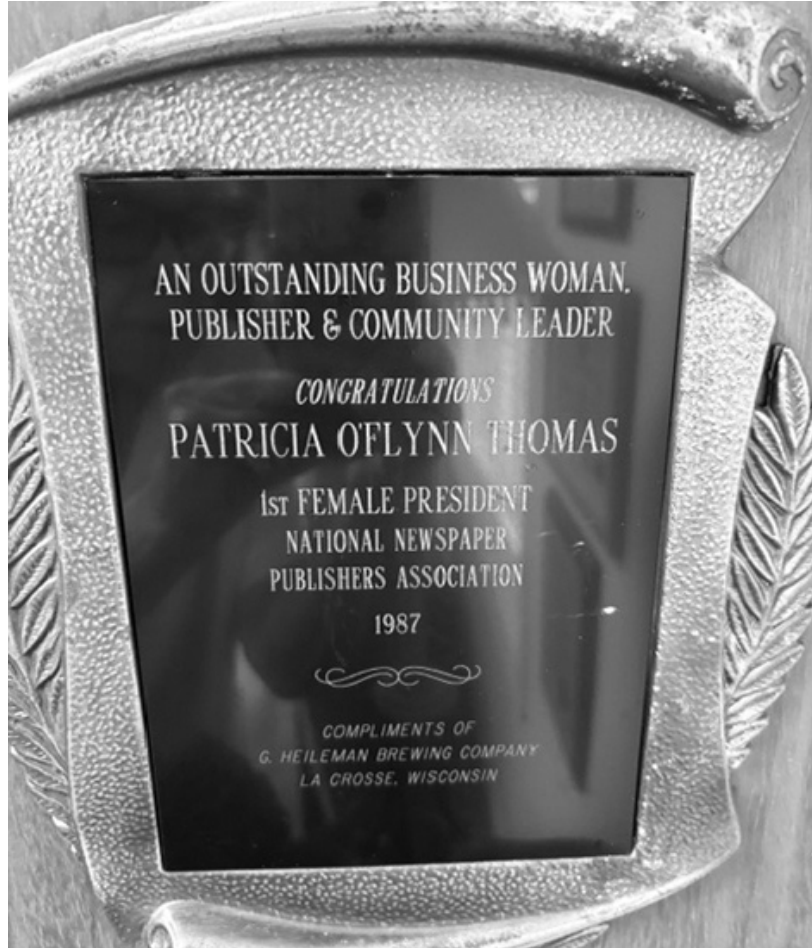
Lawyers, educators, communicators, pastors, organizational giants, elected officials, government servants, our mayor, congresswoman, and gubernatorial candidates and county executive; and television anchors and radio station owners and radio personalities and phenomenal social workers and activists...the Honorees you see in this special anniversary edition of your Milwaukee Community Journal.

It has been my pleasure to grow in Milwaukee and raise my family and see them become positive, thoughtful, committed adults.

Today I am a widow but knew an entrepreneurial giant in Milwaukee’s history and later enjoyed the union one always dreams to know.

Milwaukee gave me all,

“SO ‘SOUL TRAIN’ SLOWLY BECAME A NEW FORM OF MOVEMENT, VERSITILITY, AND POWER. YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS BEGAN TO SPRING UP IN RESTAURANTS, GAS STATIONS, HOUSING DEVELOPMENT, INSURANCE; THE COMMUNITY SAVINGS AND LOAN, BUSINESS FURNITURE, NORTH MILWAUKEE STATE BANK...OUR STAR WAS RISING.”



“MILWAUKEE HAS BEEN A NON-MONOLITHIC COMMUNITY; MEANING THAT DIFFERENT ELEMENTS APPROACHED THE ‘SOUL TRAIN’ OF UPWARD MOBILITY IN DIFFERENT WAYS...SOME THROUGH THE ELECTORAL TRACK...OTHERS WORKED TOWARD UPWARD MOBILITY THROUGH JOINING ORGANIZATIONS FOCUSED ON INCREASING HOME OWNERSHIP...OTHERS WERE WORKING ON OPENING UP LOAN AND BANKING OPPORTUNITIES LIKE THE LOCAL NAACP, WHICH BROUGHT FORTH LAWSUITS REVEALING BLACK HOME AND BUSINESS OWNERS PAYING MORE IN FEES AND COVERAGE BECAUSE OF THEIR LOCATION.”

STAFF: PRESENT AND PAST



**EDITOR
THOMAS
MITCHELL, JR.**

A graduate of Concordia University and Marquette University's 'Second Edition' accelerated journalism program, Mitchell joined the MCJ staff in 1984 as a reporter. In the following years, he rose from reporter, to managing editor, to editor, handling the newspaper's layout and design, copyediting, photo editing, and assignment editor.

He also wrote a column at one time called, 'Just Venting,' which focused on timely issues within the community and the culture.

Mitchell has covered stories for the MCJ of historic import that have impacted Milwaukee's Black community and beyond, from the Parental School Choice education revolution to the murder trial of serial killer Jeffery Dahmer, to the Milwaukee police involved shooting deaths of Dontre Hamilton and Sylville Smith.

A Milwaukee native, Mitchell became the fourth member of the Community Journal staff to be inducted into the Milwaukee Press Club's Media Hall of Fame in 2022. Other MCJ staff who are in the hall of fame are: MCJ Publisher Patricia O'Flynn Patillo, Associate Publisher and former Editor Mikel Holt, and Photographer Harry Kemp.



**ASSIST. TO PUB.
PATRICIA
WILLIAMS**

Patricia Williams is a receptionist and assistant to the MCJ Publisher Patricia O'Flynn Patillo.

A retired pharmaceutical sales representative, she has known the publisher for a long as the newspaper has been in existence, first meeting her at Calvary Baptist Church, which Williams is a member of.



**COLLEEN NEWSOM
SALES AND
MARKETING**

Started as receptionist, moved to accountants payable, before moving to sales. She has been at the MCJ for 37 1/2 years.



**PHOTOGRAPHER
YVONNE KEMP**

Born in Racine, Wisconsin, but raised in Milwaukee. She attended Siefert Elementary School and graduated high school from North Division and continues to be an active alumnus.

After a 30-year career as an accountant, Yvonne Kemp eagerly accepted an offer from her brother, renowned photographer Harry Kemp, to work as his assistant.

Ms. Kemp initially handled scheduling and accounting for her brother, who was posthumously honored in 2013 with a street named after him.

Yvonne caught the photography bug soon after she began working with Harry, who began to pass on his extensive knowledge of photography.

Within months, Yvonne was taking on shooting assignments and learning the intricacies of creative photography.

When Harry died, Yvonne stepped in to fulfill several of his contracts, including a prestigious position as a photographer for the Milwaukee Brewers, the Milwaukee Community Journal Weekly Newspaper and the Milwaukee Times. Nearly 10 years later, Yvonne emerged as one of the city's most prominent photographers, having built an impressive resume and reputation.

Yvonne intends to carry on Harry's legacy by forming the Harry Kemp Foundation including his "Lifetime of Memories" Today, Yvonne is a highly sought-after photographer, expanding her resume from commercial and newspaper photography to include creative works that have earned her national recognition.



**PHOTOGRAPHER
KIM ROBINSON**

Kim A. Robinson is a retired and accomplished law enforcement professional who dedicated over four decades to law enforcement and forensic investigation with MPD, where he was instrumental in the identification of passengers from Midwest Air Express Flight #105, which tragically crashed on September 6, 1985, resulting in the loss of 31 lives. In addition to his extensive career with MPD, Kim is a sought-after freelance photographer and photojournalist, specializing in sports photography for various Wisconsin local and national media organizations.



NICOLE GAMBLE

Nikki Gamble is a lifestyle writer with a passion for local events, community businesses, travel, food, and culture. Known for her upbeat personality and curiosity, she enjoys highlighting the stories that bring people together. When she's not writing, Nikki loves cooking, reading, following politics, and finding reasons to laugh and celebrate life.



**MIKE MULLIS, TNT
SCHOLARSHIP CONSULTANT**

Since 2009, Mike Mullis has served as a consultant for the Dr. Terence N. Thomas Scholarship Fund, helping guide and support generations of scholars through the program. During his 18-year tenure as Student Coordinator, more than 70 students have been part of the scholarship roster, with over 90% receiving support for four or more years. In that time, the Fund has awarded well over a half million dollars in scholarships—an impact Mike is proud to have helped nurture. For him, the most meaningful part of the work has been getting to know the students, welcoming each new class of scholars, and watching lasting friendships form.

The Scholarship Fund has become more than a program; it has become a family—even bringing two scholars together who later married. The greatest challenge, Mike says, is seeing so many deserving students apply each year and knowing that limited funding prevents the Fund from supporting them all.

Mike also finds deep satisfaction in staying connected with former scholars and celebrating their achievements as they graduate, begin their careers, and make their mark in their chosen fields. Each year, he gathers profile information from current students and alumni to help share their stories through the Scholarship Fund website and the Milwaukee Community Journal newspaper.

In addition to his work with the Scholarship Fund, Mike serves as Advertising Coordinator for the Milwaukee Community Journal.



**GREG THOMPSON
RET. MPD SARGENT**

"My name is Greg Thompson, and I am a retired City of Milwaukee police officer. I retired with 30 years of service and the rank of Deputy Inspector of Police. My last seven years on the job I supervised the entire police department on second and third shifts. My job was also to respond to major events like shootings, fires, missing children, hostage situations, etc. Then I filed a report for the Police Chief to read in the morning. In addition, I would visit the police district stations around the city to make sure everything was going okay.

"Upon retirement I got a job as the Head of Security for the Milwaukee Bucks Basketball Team. I worked in that capacity for about eight years or so. I would sit by the bench for games and make sure no fans bothered the players.

My duties included going to practice also, plus checking in players at the airport with their luggage, making sure the hotel was secure on our arrival in other cities, and practicing at the gym in those cities. For several years now I have been authoring articles, mostly related to criminal justice, for the Milwaukee Community Journal. One of my favorite topics has been writing about police who go on to do different things after their retirement. I wrote about Sheriff Denita Ball and Marquette Police Chief Edith Hudson who both worked in the Milwaukee Police Department. Lately I have been writing about the street Takeovers with the teens blocking off intersections and burning rubber with cars in the street along with lighting fireworks and bottle rockets."

FORMER STAFFERS—EDITORIAL/SALES



**KIA GREEN,
FORMER MCJ
MANAGING ED.**

Read her profile under, 'communications' on page 4)



**TERETHA MARTIN,
SERVED IN VARIOUS CAPACITIES WITH THE MCJ**

Teretha Martin dedicated 33 years to the The Milwaukee Community Journal, serving from 1986 until her retirement in 2019.

During her career, she held a variety of positions including Typesetter, Proofreader, Production Manager, Website Content Manager, Classified Page Layout Specialist, Display Ad Makeup Artist, Office Manager, and Assistant to the Publisher.

Throughout her years with the newspaper, Teretha took great pride in helping produce quality publications that served the Milwaukee community.

She enjoyed working alongside her coworkers to meet the daily MCJ's City Edition and MCJ's Wednesday and WEEKEND editions' printing deadlines and found satisfaction in watching each edition come together from concept to finished product.

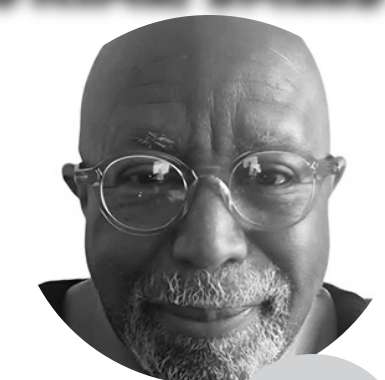
One of the most rewarding aspects of her career was knowing that the newspaper provided positive, meaningful news and information to its readers.

Teretha was especially proud of the dedication and teamwork that went into every issue and looked forward to celebrating the newspaper's anniversary milestones each year.

As a longtime member of the Milwaukee Community Journal family, she values the friendships, memories, and sense of purpose she gained throughout her career.

Now retired and living in Maryland with her youngest daughter, Teretha reflects with gratitude on her 33-year career at The Milwaukee Community Journal.

As a breast cancer survivor, she is especially appreciative of the opportunities, friendships, and experiences that shaped her life and the lives of her three children Merrell, Aletha and Tameka and is honored to have contributed to the newspaper's lasting impact on the community.



**KARL EVANS
SALES AND MARKETING**

Karl Evans was an employee of the Milwaukee Community Journal working under Associate Publisher Jimmie Ewing, Director of Advertising.

In that capacity Karl was an innovative marketing professional who worked tirelessly to introduce MCJ as a viable promotion and advertising vehicle to thousands of clients.

He had a particular passion for reaching out to small business people. With the message, "no one knows what you do, nor how they can benefit from your service if they do not know you exist", small business was driven by Karl Evans.

He left MCJ and found employment and found security in small car management and sales.

The last fifteen years have been reaching his customer, extolling the quality of his cars, and building that business, as he had also done for MCJ.

Thanks Karl.. an MCJ builder.

OTHER MCJ PERSONNEL

**JENEEN JACKSON
JAH THOMAS
ZOE THOMAS**

**YOLANDA THOMAS
MONIQUE JENKINS
BILL TENNESSEN (RET.)**

**RAY LATHAN
(VOLUNTEER BOOKKEEPER)**

CONSULTANTS: 30+ YEARS

**JAMILA BENSON
REWA DURHAM
BEVERLY BENSON-KERN**

LEST WE FORGET...

**ROBERT THOMAS
JIMMY JOHNSON
CAL PATTERSON
HARRY KEMP
CAROL MCDUFFIE
DON DEEDRICK
WALTER JONES**

50 CORPORATE SPONSORS & FRIENDS OF THE FUND



MITCHELL AVANT



ATTY. JOHN DANIELS



CECELIA GORE



ATTY. COREY HOZE



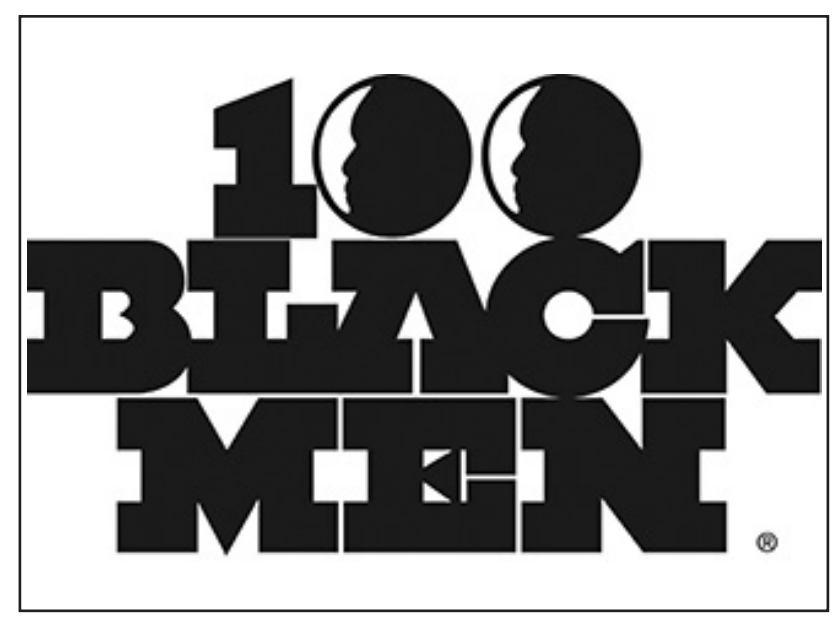
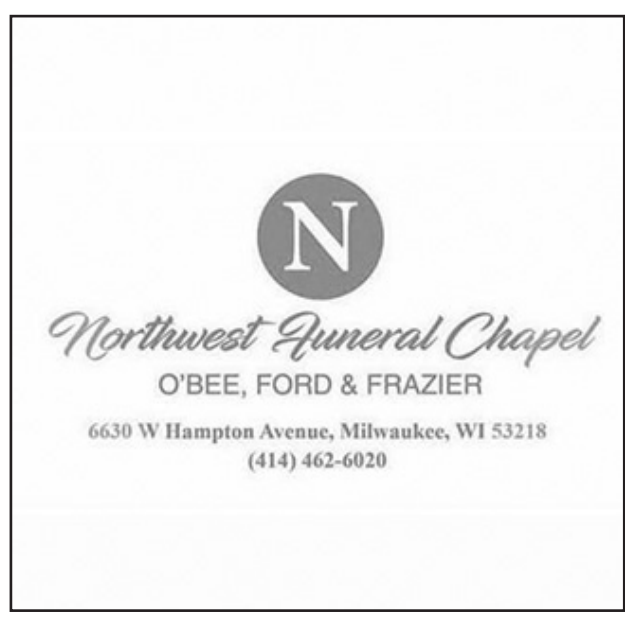
Rewa Durham
NORTHWEST FUNERAL CHAPEL



LARRY WATERS



ATTY. GREG WESLEY



THE STAFF AND MANAGEMENT
OF YOUR MILWAUKEE
COMMUNITY JOURNAL SAY
THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING US
TO FEEL THE PULSE OF YOUR
COMMUNITY FOR

50



YEARS!



DR. TERENCE THOMAS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Supporting academic excellence



ZORA PENAGER DAVIDSON
Yale University
2nd Year Undergraduate
Major: Ethics/Politics/
Economics



JORDYN HENDERSON
Spelman College
2nd Year Undergraduate
Major: Biology/
Biochemistry



IMANI HOLLOWAY
University of Wisconsin
Milwaukee
2nd Year Undergraduate
Major: Psychology



JACE PERRY
Clark Atlanta
2nd Year Undergraduate
Major: Theatre Arts



DANIELLA ESEYLIN
Marquette University
3rd Year Undergraduate
Major: Health Sciences



JADA HUGHES
Morgan State University
3rd Year Undergraduate
Major: Biology/
Psychology Minor



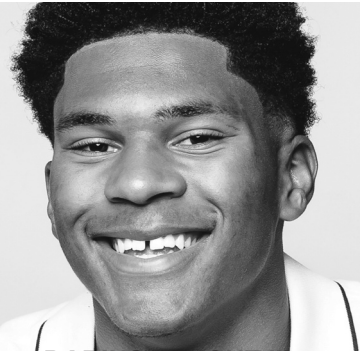
YAMERA HUGHES
Fayetteville State University
3rd Year Undergraduate
Major: Business
Administration



KARRINGTON PARRISH
(Dr. Roland A. Pattillo Scholar)
Spelman College
3rd Year Undergraduate
Major: Health Science



ALEC ROMERO
Marquette University
3rd Year Undergraduate
Major: Criminology,
Law Studies, Social
Justice & Welfare



DARIUS WRIGHT III
Kalamazoo College
3rd Year Undergraduate
Major: Business



FANIHA LEE
University of Wisconsin
Milwaukee
4th Year Undergraduate
Major: Business Management



DREW WILSON
Lafayette College
4th Year Undergraduate
Major: Marketing



**Ernestine O'Bee Graduate
Scholarship Students**
JONAH DIXON (Dr And Mrs.
Thomas Boccia Scholar)
University of North Carolina at
Chapel Hill Masters Healthcare



TAYLOR OWENS
University of Chicago
School of Law
J.D. Law



SHERLEAN ROBERTS
University of Iowa
Political Science Ph.D

The Dr. Terence N. Thomas Scholarship Fund (often called the Dr. TNT Scholarship) is a Milwaukee-based non-profit providing stipends to low-income students and students of color.

Established in 2000, the program honors Dr. Terence N. Thomas, a Milwaukee native and physician who died of an asthma attack in 1991. The scholarship focuses on identifying and supporting top-notch students who excel academically.

Unlike many programs, it provides multi-year support to help students remain in college through graduation. Since its inception, the fund has distributed over \$1 million in stipends.

A Legacy That Was Already Part of My Story

By Tiffinie Cobb

people, when given opportunity and encouragement, can create meaningful change in the lives of others.

That belief has stayed with me throughout my career.

Whether serving in public health, leading strategy and evaluation initiatives, or now overseeing programs that help families achieve homeownership as Vice President of Programs at Acts Housing, I have always been drawn to work that creates opportunities for people and communities to thrive. While the settings have changed, the purpose has remained the same: to leave things better than I found them and to invest in others in ways that create lasting impact.

As I've grown professionally, I've come to appreciate that Terry's legacy was never just about becoming a physician. It was about the kind of person he was and the values he embodied—generosity, excellence, compassion, and a belief that our lives should make a difference in the lives of others. The scholarship ensures those values continue to influence new generations of students, many of whom never had the opportunity to know him personally.

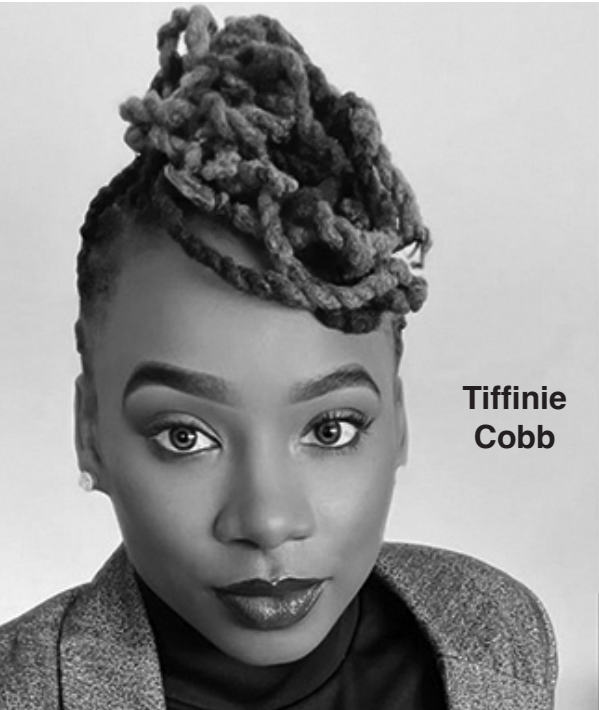
For me, that legacy comes full circle.

Today, my father and I have the privilege of celebrating Terry's life together—he as a lifelong friend, and I as someone whose educational journey was made possible, in part, because of Terry's enduring legacy. Few scholarship recipients have the opportunity to experience that connection, and I carry it with deep gratitude.

When I think about what this scholarship represents, I don't think first about the financial support, although that mattered tremendously. I think about what it says to every recipient: Someone believes in you.

Sometimes, that's all it takes to change the course of a life.

I hope to honor that belief by continuing to invest in others, just as Terry's legacy has invested in me.



Tiffinie Cobb

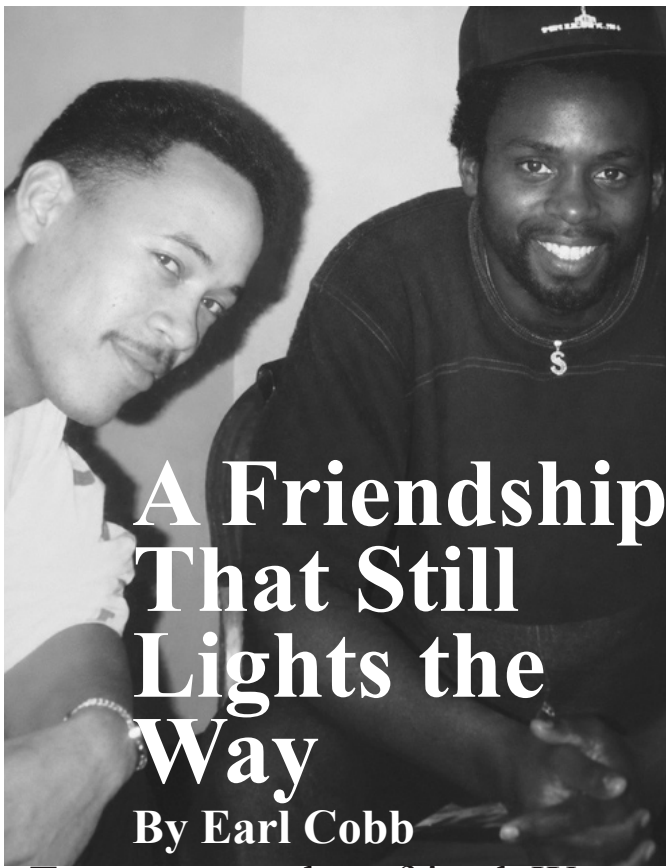
Long before I became a recipient of the Dr. Terence N. Thomas Scholarship, I knew the name Terry.

To my father, he wasn't "Dr. Terence N. Thomas." He was simply Terry—his best friend. Growing up, I heard stories about their friendship. They played basketball together, rode motorcycles, worked in their family businesses during the summers, and shared dreams about the future.

My father often spoke about Terry's intelligence, generosity, and sense of humor. He also spoke about the devastating loss our community experienced when Terry's life was cut short.

Years later, when I learned I had been selected as a recipient of the scholarship established in Terry's honor, it felt deeply personal. I understood that I was receiving more than financial assistance. I was becoming part of a legacy that had already touched my family in a profound way.

At that stage in my life, the scholarship helped remove one of the many barriers students face while pursuing higher education. Like many recipients, I was focused on earning my degree and building a future. Looking back, I now realize the scholarship offered something even greater than financial support. It represented confidence—a belief that young



A Friendship That Still Lights the Way

By Earl Cobb

Terry was my best friend. We did everything together. We called him "Dynamite" because his initials were T.N.T., and the nickname fit his personality.

We played basketball, rode our motorcycles, played cards, cleaned our cars, and worked together at our family businesses during the summers. Some of my best memories are simply of spending time together.

When Terry began his medical journey, I was with him every step of the way. We traveled together to Pittsburgh, Michigan, and Tennessee, sharing the excitement of each new chapter.

I had the honor of him standing beside me as my best man, but more importantly, I was blessed to call him my best friend.

When Terry became ill, I wasn't able to visit him because we could never be together without laughing.

We had the kind of friendship where we always found something to joke about, and once we started laughing, it was hard to stop. His doctors wanted him to avoid anything that could put additional strain on his body, so as difficult as it was, I stayed away.

It was one of the hardest things I've ever had to do because all I wanted was to spend time with my best friend.

When I lost Terry, I lost a part of myself. There isn't a day that goes by that I don't think about him or wonder what could have been. I know Terry would have become an extraordinary doctor because he was already an extraordinary person—kind, compassionate, generous, and the kind of friend everyone hopes to have.

Over the years, Mrs. Pattillo and I have remained in touch, and it has meant so much to see Terry's legacy continue through the Dr. Terence N. Thomas Scholarship. It became especially personal when my daughter, Tiffinie, was selected as one of its recipients.

Watching her benefit from Terry's legacy has been incredibly meaningful. It is a reminder that although Terry is no longer with us, his belief in young people and his commitment to helping others continues to change lives.

I know Terry would be proud to see the lives that have been touched because of his vision, and I am grateful that his legacy lives on through each scholarship recipient.



White Comfort, Black Betrayal: When Our Billionaires Forget Us

By Stacy M. Brown • Black Press USA Senior National Correspondent



The betrayal is not subtle. It is loud in its quiet, glaring in its silence, and brutal in its indifference.

The Black Press—born in chains in 1827 before slavery ended, built in blood, and sustained by courage—is gasping for air while those who could save it look the other way.

These are not outsiders. They are our own. The rich and powerful among us who have traded solidarity for status, truth for comfort, and liberation for proximity to whiteness.

The Black Press is the backbone of our collective memory. It told our stories when no one else would, when white America painted our faces as criminals and our dreams as crimes.

It printed Mamie Till's anguish so the world could see her son's mutilated body. It carried the words of Frederick Douglass and the defiance of Ida B. Wells.

It stood with Martin Luther King Jr., reporting his sermons and his jailhouse letters when white editors called him a menace.

That same Black Press now struggles to survive while the billionaires it helped lift into the light sit in luxury, feeding the illusion that their comfort beside white power is safety.

Magic Johnson lounges on a \$138 million yacht, surrounded by a world of white wealth. The same Magic Johnson who once symbolized Black excellence has turned his back on the institution that chronicled his rise.

Meanwhile, Mark Cuban, a white billionaire with no stake in the struggle, did what Magic would not. He gave six figures to support the Black Press. Black billionaires, meanwhile, haven't given six cents. That is what proximity to whiteness does,

it kills the memory of where you came from.

Dr. Dre helped to write the soundtracks of our lives. His beats gave rhythm to resistance. But his billions went to USC, a white institution that built its prestige while keeping Black students at the margins.

Not a single dollar went to a Historically Black College or University.

Not one dime to the Black Press. His music screamed revolution; his money whispered obedience.

And yet, we acknowledge the truth, they have every right to do what they want with their money. No one questions that.

But when the world is burning, and our people are being pushed back into the fields, we wish they'd remember from whence they came.

MacKenzie Scott, a white woman, has given more to Black America in one week than all of our Black billionaires combined have given in a decade.

She's donated hundreds of millions to HBCUs and Black non-

profits. Meanwhile, those who built their fortunes on the backs of Black culture, labor, and genius have built walls instead of bridges.

Spike Lee, once the messenger of "Do the Right Thing," now sits courtside beside men like Knicks owner James Dolan and Mets owner

manding he restore food stamps for millions of hungry Americans, many of them Black.

Healthcare for our elders has been gutted. WIC and Medicaid are under attack.

Trump's inner circle—Stephen Miller, Russell Vought, Steve Ban-

pain for profit, and then vanished when accountability came calling.

Through it all, the Black Press remains the only institution that tells the truth. It is the keeper of our history, our victories, our wounds. It is not begging—it is bearing witness.

But witness without support cannot survive. And as the Black Press is starved, those who could sustain it—the billionaires who grew from its pages—are silent.

They seem to believe their proximity to whiteness will save them. They seem to believe that if they stay quiet, they will remain safe.

They are wrong. Proximity to whiteness is not safety. It is surrender. It is the price of forgetting.

The truth is that the struggle never ended—it was rebranded. Trump's America is the plantation with Wi-Fi and private jets. The new overseers wear designer suits instead of badges.

They smile while they strip away everything that made our progress possible.

And while they do, our billionaires sip champagne beside them, believing their wealth is protection.

It is not. When the history of this era is written, it will show that while the Black Press fought to preserve the truth, many of the richest among us stood by—quiet, comfortable, and complicit.

They had the means to fight, but chose instead to stay close to power, even as that power worked to destroy us.

Proximity to whiteness didn't save the enslaved, and it will not save the rich.

It will only make them forget who they are—and who they were meant to fight for.



Hip Hop and business icon Dr. Dre/wikimedia commons



Businessman Mark Cuban/wikimedia commons



Legendary director Spike Lee/wikimedia commons

Steve Cohen—both donors and allies of Trump's MAGA machine. Jay-Z, who once spoke truth from the corners of Brooklyn, now partners with the whiteness of SL Green and Caesars to build casinos while Black-owned media struggles to pay reporters.

Isiah Thomas, a Hall of Fame legend and one of the finest businessmen among them, knows firsthand what the Black Press can do.

When his award-winning wine was shut out of a major retail chain, it wasn't a white PR firm or a corporate lawyer who came to his defense, it was the Black Press.

One call, one email, one tweet, and the company called back immediately. They didn't want the smoke from the Black Press. That's the power we still hold, if only our own would stand beside us.

Instead, the billionaires remain silent while the walls close in on our people.

Under Trump's regime, more than 300,000 Black women have already lost their federal jobs—and the number is rising. Trump's government is fighting a judge's order de-

non, and their MAGA faithful—openly promise to erase every gain made by Black Americans.

They are not even hiding their racism anymore. They fired four-star generals because they were Black.

They removed the Librarian of Congress because she was Black. They are dismantling Black leadership from the military to academia.

They say the immigrants they are deporting "stole" the jobs that Black Americans should have—as if the only work we deserve is in the fields.

This is not a political shift. It is an unmasking.

The same white corporations that once filled their websites with slogans of "equity" and "diversity" after George Floyd's murder have quietly pulled back.

Target, Amazon, Meta, McDonald's, Citigroup, Disney, AT&T, Goldman Sachs, and others have walked away from the very promises they made to Black America.

They pledged billions, then simply decided not to give it. They used our grief for marketing, our

"A man who stops advertising to save money is like a man who stops a clock to save time!"

Don't stop your business from profiting and growing! Place your display or classified ad in YOUR MILWAUKEE COMMUNITY JOURNAL, the newspaper that has BLACK MILWAUKEE'S ATTENTION!

**Wisconsin Primary Election:**
Tuesday, August 11, 2026

9 in 10
BLACK STUDENTS IN WISCONSIN AREN'T READING ON GRADE LEVEL.
On August 11, vote for candidates who'll fight for every child's education — no matter where they learn.

KEY DEADLINES

- ✓ **Early voting:** July 28 – Aug 9
- ✓ **Request absentee ballot:** by Aug 6
- ✓ **Register in person:** up to Aug 11
- ✓ **Polls open:** 7am – 8pm, Aug 11

VOTE BY TUESDAY, AUGUST 11.

Find your polling place & sample ballot:
myvote.wi.gov
CITY FORWARD COLLECTIVE

50 EDUCATION

Continued from page 4

LAYTOYA WATSON



LaToya Watson is a two-time award-winning children's author, literacy advocate, community leader, and childcare Director at Catherine Early Childhood Development Center LLC. Dedicated to promoting literacy and a love of learning, she uses her books to inspire children to embrace kindness, leadership, creativity, and self-confidence.

LaToya recently published *G for Gabrielle*, *Harmless Harmony*, and *Gold Star Leader*.



I first met Dr. Wheatfall in 2004 when he was serving as the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs at Milwaukee Area Technical College.

I witnessed first-hand the multidisciplinary knowledge, skills, and abilities that have positioned Dr. Wheatfall to successfully steer the University in a complex and dynamic global environment.

With over 40 years of comprehensive experience in every facet of higher education, including fund development and senior-level administration, Dr. Wheatfall possesses the ability to develop a shared vision and the savvy to work across institutional boundaries and silos to build a flexible and agile university-wide strategy that will elevate the performance

She is also the author of *Colors of Feelings*, which earned her two author awards, as well as *My Adventure in Shape Town*, *Langston Saves the Day*, *Coco Counting Forest Friends*, and *True Blue Que*.

A lifelong love of reading and education was instilled in LaToya by her parents, Floyd Watson and Shirley Watson, who emphasized the importance of literacy, learning, and academic achievement from an early age.

Their encouragement and commitment to education helped shape her passion for working with children and inspired her journey as an author and educator.

Many of LaToya's books are inspired by her family and personal experiences.

Langston Saves the Day was written in honor of her late brother, SSG Langston Thurgood Watson, whose service, courage, and legacy continue to inspire her work.

LaToya wrote several of her books while earning her degree in Early Childhood Education from Concordia University Wisconsin, where she graduated *summa cum laude*.

Through her work as an educator, author, and community advocate, she remains committed to empowering young minds, strengthening literacy in her community, and encouraging children to dream big, work hard, and believe in themselves.

Today, LaToya continues to make a lasting impact through her leadership in early childhood education, her involvement in community literacy initiatives, and her growing collection of children's books that inspire the next generation of readers and leaders.

"Every child deserves to see themselves reflected in a story and discover the power of their own voice."

— LaToya Watson

DR. EARL WHEATFALL

of Lincoln.

To demonstrate, he worked with faculty, staff, and external stakeholders to advance enrollment, retention and student success.

He collaborated with academic Deans to develop and implement articulation and transfer agreements with thirteen 4-year universities across the University of Wisconsin system.

Dr. Wheatfall, led the implementation of a high impact program that identified and provided academic support to high performing students of color interested in transferring to Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

He partnered with academic Deans at Texas College to develop and implement a program that succeeded at transferring and supporting over 100 single mothers who completed a 2-year degree at MATC to Texas College for baccalaureate degree completion.

Further, he led successful retention programming efforts by collaborating with academic and student support services to ensure that students received adequate financial assistance and academic support.

In addition to his academic expertise, he spearheaded efforts to secure the financial future of postsecondary institutions.

For instance, Dr. Wheatfall is the founder of the Lincoln University Milwaukee Alumni chapter. He served as president before being elected Lincoln University Alumni Association's National President.

Moreover, immediately following his service as president, he was selected to become a member of the LU Foundation board.

As association president, he simultaneously served as an ex officio member of the Foundation. Moreover, while president of the LU Alumni president he initiated the "Million Dollar Endowed Scholarship Campaign."

In his three years as president, he reestablished relationships with hundreds of alumni and established a fundraising campaign. This was a first for an alumni association president. —Written by Shenita Ray, Ph.D, Director for Online Operations Georgetown University School of Continuing Studies on behalf of Wheatfall who was a candidate for the Lincoln University of Missouri presidency.

50 GOVERNMENT AND ELECTED OFFICIALS

SHEILA ASHLEY



Sheila Ashley's life and career have been defined by unwavering service, principled leadership, and an enduring commitment to justice. From her humble beginnings in North Philadelphia to her remarkable journey as a public servant in Milwaukee, Ms. Ashley has exemplified resilience, purpose, and a steadfast dedication to uplifting others.

A graduate of Marquette University and a commissioned officer in the United States Army, she has consistently answered the call to serve—both her country and her community—with distinction.

Throughout her distinguished career, Ms. Ashley has held numerous impactful leadership roles that have shaped the city of Milwaukee. She began her service with the City of

Milwaukee's Department of Employee Relations and went on to serve as Director of the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee, where she championed the cause of safe and affordable housing for residents across the city.

She also served as Public Affairs Officer for the Fire and Police Commission, where her leadership contributed to meaningful reforms that expanded opportunities for women and African Americans within Milwaukee's fire and police departments.

As Legislative Fiscal Manager in the City's Intergovernmental Relations Division, she played a pivotal role in securing changes to state law that strengthened shared revenue and provided critical property tax relief for Milwaukee families.

Beyond city government, Ms. Ashley served as Education Coordinator for the Metropolitan Milwaukee Sewerage District, further demonstrating her commitment to public engagement and community development. She later served as Deputy Director of the Milwaukee Field Office at the U.S. Department of Hous-

ing and Urban Development, where she led congressional and public affairs, coordinated emergency preparedness efforts, and advanced initiatives that supported neighborhood revitalization, homeownership, and economic growth.

Her service to our nation is equally distinguished. Over the course of eleven years as a commissioned officer in the United States Army, she held key leadership roles including Personnel Officer, Adjutant in Okinawa, Equal Opportunity Staff Officer, Commander of the Separation and Transfer Point at Fort Sheridan, and Brigade S-1 overseeing personnel operations across seven states in the Midwest.

Across every role, Ms. Ashley's work has been guided by a deep and abiding belief in equity, dignity, and opportunity for all. Her leadership has not only strengthened institutions—it has transformed lives and enriched the fabric of Milwaukee's communities. Her life's journey stands as a powerful testament to what can be achieved through determination, vision, and an unyielding commitment to service.

MAYOR CAVALIER JOHNSON



Mayor Cavalier Johnson has led the City of Milwaukee since December 2021.

He won Mayoral elections in 2022 and 2024s. He is the first African American elected Milwaukee Mayor.

Johnson has focused on data-driven, solutions-oriented governance, prioritizing public safety, fiscal stability, transportation, housing, jobs, and the well-being of Milwaukee residents.

Johnson's commitment to public service began at an early age when he was selected by the YMCA to participate in a pre-college program for low-income Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) students.

That program, Sponsor-A-Scholar, instilled in him a passion to make Milwaukee better for future generations. A proud MPS alumnus, Johnson's childhood was spent in some of the most historically disenfranchised neighborhoods.

Johnson attended six different elementary schools. He has seen the challenges common in urban poverty and brings that lived experience to his work. A graduate of Bay View High School, Johnson earned a bachelor's degree from the UW-Madison and worked for the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board, now Employ Milwaukee.

Before his 2016 election as 2nd District Alderman and 2020 election as Common Council President, he served as a staff assistant in the office of former Mayor Tom Barrett.

Government and Elected Officials continued on page 14

Celebrating

CONGRATULATIONS ON ACHIEVING THIS MILESTONE!

Greater Milwaukee Foundation

ISAAC & MARCIA COGGS



"Isaac and Marcia Coggs planted seeds of faith, service, and justice whose harvest continues to bless generations." Some people make history through a single accomplishment. Isaac Newton Coggs and Marcia Priscilla Young Coggs built a legacy that continues to grow through generations of family, faith, and public service. Partners in life, love, faith, and service, they transformed Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and inspired leaders through their unwavering commitment to justice, compassion, and opportunity.

Born in Muskogee, Oklahoma, Isaac N. Coggs was a decorated World War II veteran who became disabled while serving his country. Following his military service, he attended the University of Wisconsin–Madison, where he earned a double degree in Agriculture and Economics. While attending the University of Wisconsin–Madison, Isaac and his older brother, Attorney Theodore W. Coggs, established the first chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. in Wisconsin, becoming founding members of a brotherhood dedicated to achievement, scholarship, and leadership. Although he originally planned to return to Oklahoma to resume farming, God had another plan. After meeting Marcia Priscilla Young at a Church of God in Christ convention in 1952, he made Milwaukee his home. He devoted his life to advancing civil rights, economic opportunity, and

political representation for African Americans. Elected to the Wisconsin State Assembly in 1952, he became one of Wisconsin's earliest Black legislators and, in 1964, made history as Milwaukee County's first Black County Supervisor. Throughout his distinguished career, Isaac championed fair housing, equal employment, quality education, health-care access, veterans' rights, and economic justice. Long before community food pantries became common, Isaac quietly gave food away from his place of business and from the pantry in his own home. He made sure neighborhood children had warm winter coats, hats, gloves, and other cold-weather clothing. Whether someone needed a meal, a helping hand, or simply encouragement, Isaac gave generously without seeking recognition. He possessed a giving heart and believed that serving others was one of life's highest callings. His wisdom, integrity, and courage earned statewide respect, and Congressman Adam Clayton Powell Jr. recognized him as "Mr. Civil Rights." Born and raised in Kansas City, Kansas, Marcia Priscilla Young Coggs was grounded in faith, education, and service from an early age. Before entering public office, she devoted herself to serving children and families, working with youth at the Milwaukee Children's Home and volunteering tirelessly throughout the community.

Those experiences shaped her lifelong belief that government should protect the most vulnerable and give a voice to those who had none. After her husband's death, Marcia returned to college. Having paused her own education to work, support her husband's public service, and raise their family, she fulfilled a lifelong dream by earning her degree in Urban Education from the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee. In 1976, Marcia became the first Black woman elected to the Wisconsin State Legislature, serving from 1977 to 1993. Her motto was "Love, Unity and Peace." Throughout Wisconsin, she became known as "The Human Needs Legislator" and was affectionately recognized as "The Conscience of Wisconsin." In 1987, she became the first Black person appointed to Wisconsin's Joint Finance Committee, where she helped shape state budget priorities while never losing sight of the needs of children, families, seniors, and underserved

communities. Her guiding philosophy remained: "You cannot legislate the heart, but you can legislate laws." Together, Isaac and Marcia shattered barriers during one of America's most challenging periods of racial discrimination. Long before the phrase power couple became popular, they modeled a marriage built on faith, mutual respect, shared leadership, and an unwavering commitment to lifting others. Their home became a place of fellowship, meetings, mentorship, hospitality, and hope where neighbors, ministers, civil rights leaders, elected officials, and young people found encouragement, wisdom, and a warm meal. They believed that serving people meant caring for their spiritual, emotional, physical, and economic well-being. Their legacy continues through an extraordinary family dynasty spanning Wisconsin and Kansas, representing more than 190 years of combined elected public service. Their commitment to servant leadership was first carried forward by their children: Elizabeth M. Coggs, their daughter, who served as a Wisconsin State Representative and Milwaukee County Supervisor, and Leon D. Young, their son, who has faithfully served the people of Wisconsin for decades as a State Representative. That legacy continued through Spencer Coggs, their grandnephew, who served as a Wisconsin State Representative and State Senator, and today serves as the Milwaukee City Treasurer; Milele A. Coggs, their great-grandniece, who serves as a Milwaukee Common Council Alderwoman; and Priscilla E. Coggs-Jones, their granddaughter, who serves as a Milwaukee County Supervisor. Today, the Isaac N. Coggs Health Center and the Milwaukee County Marcia P. Coggs Health & Human Services Center stand as lasting tributes to two lives devoted to serving others. Through more than 190 years of combined elected public service, the Coggs and Young families have established one of America's longest-serving African American family legacies of public service, inspiring generations to lead with courage, compassion, and an unwavering commitment to justice.

RET. REP. BARBARA TOLES



She worked as an Admissions Counselor, Recruiter, Advisor, Employment Development Specialist, and an Adjunct Faculty member. In January, 2004 Toles was elected to the Wisconsin State Assembly and served as a State Representative for the 17th Assembly District until July, 2012. She was elected to the Social Development Commission Board (SDC) in July, 2020 and served as a Commissioner for District 2 until October, 2024. In retirement she continues to work to improve the quality of life in the community by working on Community Service Projects as a member of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc.

Barbara Toles earned her BA Degree in Social Work at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, and her M.Ed. in Counseling from Marquette University. Toles worked in Student Services on the collegiate level for 26+ years (18 at Milwaukee Area Technical College) in a number of positions.

50 ORGANIZATIONS AND SERVICES ANDRE DOUGLAS



provides leadership support to The Life and Workforce Readiness Programs, Health & Well-Being Programs, and The Ready Center powered by the Milwaukee Admirals. A passionate advocate for education and student success, Andre has dedicated his career to helping young people discover their purpose, overcome barriers, and create opportunities for lifelong achievement. As a first-generation college graduate, he understands many of the challenges students face and is committed to ensuring they have access to the resources, mentorship, and

support needed to thrive. Andre earned a Bachelor of Arts in Speech from the University of Wisconsin–Whitewater and a Master of Science in College Personnel Administration from Concordia University Wisconsin. Prior to joining Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee, he held leadership and student development roles at the University of Wisconsin–Whitewater, Blackhawk Technical College, and Marquette University. Throughout his career, Andre has coached and mentored thousands of students on their journeys to and through college.

His work focuses on college access and success, leadership development, public speaking, and personal and professional growth. Former students often credit his guidance, encouragement, and servant leadership as instrumental to their achievements. Andre lives by the mission: helping others discover and fulfill their purpose. Through leadership, mentorship, and service, he continues to empower the next generation to dream bigger, achieve more, and lead with confidence.

Organizations and Services continued on next page

Celebrating

50

CONGRATULATIONS ON ACHIEVING THIS MILESTONE!

Medical College of Wisconsin



For more than three decades, Saleem and Olivia El-Amin have dedicated their lives to serving children, families, and communities throughout Wisconsin. Together, they have built a legacy of leadership, faith, social service, and community development that has positively impacted hundreds of individuals and families. New Horizon Center, Inc. was co-founded by Saleem El-Amin (Retired) on December 2, 1985. Under his leadership as Chief Executive Officer, the organization grew into one of the area's respected human service

SALEEM & OLIVIA EL-AMIN

agencies. Olivia El-Amin with a Bachelor's Degree in Communication from the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, joined the agency in April 1996 and continues to serve as Director of Corporate Affairs and Assistant Chief Executive Officer.

Throughout their years of service, Saleem and Olivia helped build and manage an organization that supported more than 100 employees and operated seven distinct program entities, including boys' and girls' group homes, female shelter care, crisis stabilization services, mentoring programs, a male assessment center, treatment foster care services, and an early childhood education center.

At its peak, New Horizon Center maintained an annual operating budget exceeding millions and served hundreds of youths and families throughout Southeastern Wisconsin.

As of 2026, the organization continues to operate its (Treatment

Foster Care Program)/Child Placing Agency and Catherine Early Childhood Development Center where Olivia is the Owner.

Collectively, Saleem and Olivia El-Amin have helped hundreds of individuals and families obtain stable housing, meaningful employment, educational opportunities, and pathways to entrepreneurship. Their commitment to service has strengthened communities and improved countless lives.

Of all their accomplishments, Saleem and Olivia are most proud of their enduring marriage of more than 32 years and the loving family they have built together, including their five adult children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. They are also avid domestic and international travelers.

Their lives reflect a shared commitment to faith, family, service, and community empowerment that continues to inspire future generations.



For decades, Lamarr Franklin has dedicated his life to strengthening the neighborhoods he grew up in, always believing that a community thrives when its people are empowered.

His leadership, humility, and unwavering commitment made him a

LAMARR FRANKLIN

pillar on Milwaukee's Northside.

Franklin helped shape some of Milwaukee's most important community institutions. He played a key role in the Martin Luther King Economic Development Corporation, driving revitalization along King Drive.

He served for more than 40 years with the Northcott Neighborhood House, supporting programs that uplifted families and created opportunities for youth.

In 1973, he founded the Milwaukee chapter of the Black Achievers Program, mentoring generations of young people and opening doors that changed lives.

Franklin's legacy is visible not only in the organizations he strengthened, but in the spirit of unity he inspired. From organizing the first Garfield Festival to championing affordable housing, Lamarr believed in building spaces where people could grow, celebrate, and belong.

The city honored that legacy recently with the Lamarr Franklin Lofts, a lasting tribute to his lifelong mission of community empowerment.

His work lives on in the neighborhoods he uplifted, the families he supported, and the countless lives he touched.



Jim Gaillard is the Vice President of Ezekiel Community Development Corporation ("Ezekiel HOPE"), a nonprofit

JIM GAILLARD

organization dedicated to training men and women in the skilled trades to help prepare them for well-paying jobs in industries in dire need of workers.

Program participants receive on-the-job training by rehabbing blighted homes. He is also the owner of WHIRE Electric, which he founded in 2002.

A master electrician by trade, Jim has more than 40 years of experience in the electrical trades.

He developed the SHARP (Skills Help And Reentry Program) Electrical Pre-Apprenticeship Program, which is certified by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development.



Ralph Hollmon is the retired president and CEO of the Milwaukee Urban League, a position he held for 14 years.

Hollmon's public service work spans more than 45 years, and he used his long career leading nonprofit organizations and government agencies to improve the lives of

RALPH HOLLMON

many underrepresented members of our community.

His career includes serving as director of the Milwaukee County Department of Human Services, chief executive officer of the Private Industry Council and executive director of the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District.

His volunteer work includes serving as past board chair of America's Black Holocaust Museum, past board member of the Milwaukee Jewish Museum, and current member of the Stonehenge Capital National Community Board.

He and his wife, Margaret also established the Hollmon Family Charitable Fund so they could help

support educational and quality of life organizations in our community.

Hollmon received his undergraduate degree from Parson's College, his Master's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and an honorary Doctor of Humanities degree from the Medical College of Wisconsin. He also completed the executive education program, 'Strategic Perspectives in Non-Profit Management' at the Harvard School of Business.

Throughout his career and volunteer work, Hollmon has lived his strong commitment to serving the Milwaukee community and providing greater opportunities for those who live here.



Dr Debbie Lassiter is the Executive Director and Co-Founder of The Convergence Resource Center with over 50 yrs of experience working

DR. DEBBIE LASSITER

with traumatized individuals. In 2012 she launched the Human and Sex Trafficking Support Initiative and in 2013 she created The Epidemic and The Game – an annual community awareness event focusing on human trafficking. Dr D is a panelist, presenter and trainer.

She is a Certified Heartmath Coach and Trainer and a Certified Ending The Game Facilitator and Trainer. She launched the HEMAD campaign and to date over 65,000 men visibly take a stand against

human trafficking. Dr. Lassiter has received numerous awards and acknowledgements for her community service. She has provided training for the State of Wisconsin, Milwaukee Public School Counselors, Emergency Medical Staff and Educators in Belize, Heartmath Coaches and Trainers in Mexico, Early Childhood Service Providers, The Wisconsin Association of School Nurses and a host of other organizations and service providers.

She serves on the Domestic Violence

and Sexual Assault Commission (Milwaukee) and The Human Trafficking Council for the State of Wisconsin.

She is the host of TRIUMPH Rising – a weekly radio show that shares information on human trafficking and presents a weekly podcast (CRC – The Conversation) with the Co-Founder and CFO – Carla McKiver) Dr Lassiter has a Doctor-



Figuratively and literally, Karen Dotson, Program Director for the All of Us Research Program at the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW), has reaffirmed her purpose and her passion.

All of Us at MCW, in collaboration with partners throughout the state and country, is laying the groundwork for research that may help eliminate health disparities, particularly in black and brown communities. Historically, black and brown communities have been under-represented in biomedical research and experience the greatest dis-

parity in healthcare access and health outcomes. Dotson and her All of Us team at MCW want to lead the region in program enrollments from communities of color.

Born in Milwaukee, Dotson grew up with both loving parents in Milwaukee's inner city. Family, church, school, community, and volunteerism were shared values in the Dotson household. Sundays were, and continue to be, a time for church services and religious as she is the First Lady of the New Life International Ministries, located at 2440 N. 35th Street, where her husband, Walter is the Senior Pastor.

Medicine and education have played important roles in the Dotson family for generations Dotson notes. Her mother worked as a nurse's aide for many years. Her sister, Rose Dotson, is a medical physician specializing in neurology – one of just a handful of African Americans in the field in Wisconsin.

and trains law enforcement Crisis Response Teams. She is a soloist, praise team leader, author, panelist, presenter and trainer.

Dr. Lassiter delivers the hard truths with humor and humanitarianism making her unique and highly effective.

She serves on several task forces

sin. Her younger sister, Jackie, has written two books and also works in the Atlanta medical community as a tenured professional. Dotson has a master's degree in health services administration from Cardinal Stritch University.

"I'd been working on various medical review panels for local and federal grants in different areas of medical services for many years. I was frustrated by the large number of people of color experiencing health disparities, not participating in health research and impacting the reports. When I saw the opening for Program Director for the All of Us Research Program at the Medical College of Wisconsin, I thought, 'Here is an opportunity to be at the front end of education, of guiding people from the community into the future of medicine – for themselves, their

(continued on page 16)

Thank You Mrs. Ernestine O'Bee



for helping make dreams come true!

The Northwest Funeral Chapel



CONGRATULATIONS ON ACHIEVING THIS MILESTONE! From the Kenners Family

KAREN DOTSON-OWENS

(continued from page 12)

heirs, and future generations.” All of Us is the future today!

“The information collected goes into a secure health research database managed by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Researchers may use it to conduct thousands of studies.

What they learn might help target medicine to individuals, make it more precise, what we call ‘precision medicine.’ It’s really cutting-edge,” said Dotson.

Dotson believes in the words of

Maya

Angelou: “When we know better, we do better.”

“Many patients come to their primary care doctors with high blood pressure. The doctor might start by prescribing a beta blocker. If that doesn’t get the desired result, the doctor might change it to something else, or add another medication on top of it.

For a while, it’s trial and error until something works. Thankfully, 99% of patients eventually get something that achieves the desired results. However,

JULIA HARRIS-ROBINSON

high-quality care and addressing the social factors that impact health and wellbeing.

Julia has worked in the Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) sector since 1995 and brings decades of leadership and financial management experience to her role. She holds an MBA and is a Certified Public Accountant (CPA), with a strong background in healthcare finance and operations, including prior experience serving as a Chief Financial Officer.

Under her leadership, Outreach Community Health Centers has experienced significant growth and innovation, including expanded behavioral health services, strategic community partnerships, medical respite services

this is costly in time and money for both the patient and the healthcare system. Medicine that considers a patient’s unique DNA – that is, precision medicine – would reveal exactly what medication would work best for them. No more trial and error. That’s the excitement in All of Us,” Dotson said.

Dotson is a role model, known for her availability, good sense, and honest sensitivity.

She applies her skills and knowledge freely and is committed to making a difference in the community. To learn more about All of Us or to join, visit www.allofus.wisc.edu.

the Rotary Foundation of Rotary International, and has been a member of the Mequon-Thiensville Sunrise Rotary Club for 18 years. She ran for Wisconsin State Assembly in 2004 achieving 45% of the popular Vote. She ran again in 2008 achieving 42% of the popular



Dr. Annette Stokes is a board-certified Family Medicine physician, entrepreneur, community advocate, and faith leader based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She is the Founder, Owner, and Chief Executive Officer of Innovative Health & MedSpa, a comprehensive medical practice, weight loss, and wellness center located in Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin.

In addition to her clinical and busi-

ness leadership roles, Dr. Stokes serves as the Wisconsin Northwest Jurisdictional Commissioner of Health & Wellness for the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) under the leadership of Bishop C. H. McClelland, Jurisdictional Prelate and member of the General Board of the Church of God in Christ, Inc.

Dr. Stokes earned her undergraduate degree from the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee and her Doctor of Medicine degree from Creighton University School of Medicine in Omaha, Nebraska. With more than three decades of experience in medicine, she has dedicated her career to providing compassionate, patient centered care while promoting preventive health and wellness throughout the communities

no podiatrists available in their country. She provided Podiatric care and training to reduce the rate of amputations in that nation.

Her favorite quote: “Obstacles are what you see when you take your eyes off the goal.”

DR. ANNETTE STOKES

she serves.

Throughout her distinguished career, Dr. Stokes has maintained active membership in numerous professional medical organizations and is a member of the International Society of Female Professionals. From 2016 to 2018, she served as President of the Cream City Medical Society, one of the nation’s oldest organizations of minority healthcare professionals, where she championed initiatives focused on health equity and community engagement.

Dr. Stokes currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Black Child Development Institute of Wisconsin (BCDI-WI), where she advocates for literacy, educational equity, and the overall well-being of children and families.



Julia Harris Robinson is the President and CEO of Outreach Community Health Centers in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where she leads efforts to expand equitable, community-based healthcare for underserved populations.

A dedicated healthcare executive and advocate, Julia has built her career around improving access to affordable,



(Editor’s note: This profile has been edited due to limited space.)

An obstetrician-gynecologist, Dr. James moved to Milwaukee in 1985 and worked at Mt. Sinai Hospital where she became the first Black board-certified maternal-fetal medicine specialist

DR. JANINE JAMES

in Wisconsin.

Born and raised in Chicago, Dr. James’ passion for medicine was nurtured at Wesleyan University in Bloomington, Illinois. It was there that she pursued a degree in obstetrics and gynecology, applying for a residency at Chicago’s Mt. Sinai Hospital.

She continued her ob/gyn residency in New York at St. Mary’s Hospital in Brooklyn and St. John’s Hospital in Queens.

In the 1980s, Dr. James would go on to join the University of Wisconsin medical school’s Milwaukee clinical campus at Mt. Sinai Hospital (now Advocate Aurora Sinai Medical Center) as an assistant professor.

From 1985 to 1992, Dr. James was the director of obstetrics, midwifery, and sexual assault treatment at Milwaukee’s Mt. Sinai Hospital.

For a number of years she practiced ob/gyn medicine at her on private medical practice in Mequon. She would later accept the chief medical officer position at Milwaukee Health Services, Inc.

Dr. James has practiced at a number of hospitals around the country. She recently started writing a monthly column for the Milwaukee Community Journal titled, ‘The Joyful Doctor,’ which reflects on her commitment to a joyful outlook and well being as a physician.



Reverend Greg grew up in Milwaukee’s central city, where he at-

REV. DR. GREG LEWIS

tended several schools, including North Division High School and Marquette University.

He also played basketball at Wiconna State before transitioning to a career in community service during high school. Working alongside civil rights activist Lloyd Barbee, he contributed to the desegregation efforts in Milwaukee. After twenty years in financial planning, Greg founded Souls to the Polls in 2010 to mo-

bilize voters, particularly in the Black community.

His work with clergy continues to strengthen voter engagement and community activism. Currently, he serves as an assistant pastor at St. Gabriel Church and leads initiatives aimed at increasing Black homeownership.

With over a decade leading Souls to the Polls, Greg remains dedicated to social justice in Milwaukee.



Dr. Delicia Randle-Izard exemplifies the spirit of excellence, service, and transformative leadership that defines this Black Excellence Award recognition.

As a physician, educator, mentor, and advocate, she has dedicated her life to advancing health equity and expanding opportunities for future generations of underrepresented students pursuing careers in medicine.

Originally from Missouri and a Wis-

DR. DELICIA RANDLE-IZARD

consin resident for more than 30 years, Dr. Randle-Izard is a proud alumna of the Medical College of Wisconsin and an inaugural resident physician of the Aurora St. Luke’s Central City Residency Program, a Family Medicine residency program grounded in the care of underserved communities.

After stepping away from clinical practice early in her career to focus on her family, she seamlessly combined her passion for medicine with an unwavering commitment to education and community empowerment.

She also served as a strong advocate and school board member for educational equity within the Nicolet School District and later developed programming at the Milwaukee Academy of Science to introduce high school students to healthcare professions.

These experiences deepened her

conviction that brilliance and potential exist in every community when students are given access, encouragement, and support.

Driven by this vision, in 2020, Dr. Randle-Izard became the co-founder and Director of Physician Pathways for Pipeline to Practice (P2P-ADOS), a groundbreaking initiative dedicated to increasing the representation of American Descendants of Slavery (ADOS) in medicine.

Through her leadership, she has helped build a statewide collaborative network connecting healthcare institutions, colleges, medical schools, community organizations, the Milwaukee Area Health Education Center, and Federally Qualified Health Centers to create sustainable pathways for future physicians.



Sfg. (Suffragan) Bishop Monica Parchia Price is a worshipper, preacher, teacher, pastor, educator, journalist, and community leader committed to God and His people. As a “Levite,” worship is not simply something she does—it is a way of life.

She has served in various Kingdom capacities: worship leader, Sunday School teacher, youth leader, choir director, and minister of music. She studied Journalism and Public Relations at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee and Urban Ministries at the Milwaukee Theological Institute.

Her journalism career began at The

BISHOP MONICA PARCHIA PRICE

Milwaukee Community Journal, where she gained formative opportunities that would shape her life. She worked with Dr. William “Bill” Rogers, producing and hosting the community affairs television program “Pushing for Excellence.”

She made history as the youngest African American female to have her own telecast. She interviewed many celebrities including Oprah Winfrey, Les Brown, Cicely Tyson, and Milwaukee civil-rights pioneer and author James Cameron.

She later became the regional manager (4 clinics) for Milwaukee Health Service Systems, owned by the late Nellie and George Kendrick.

Her life shifted after accepting the call to ministry. Monica began preaching, teaching, and ministering throughout the United States and abroad. Her travels have taken her to the Caribbean, Europe, Africa, Israel, and Australia.

In 2000, she was recruited by a church & legal management firm in

Brooklyn, New York to manage that office. After several years in the New York and New Jersey area, God directed her to return to Milwaukee, where she assisted her father, the late Bishop Earl Parchia Sr., in ministry.

Following his passing, she assisted her mother, Dr. Cora Parchia, in co-pastoring Mt. Zion Assembly of the Apostolic Faith Church until her demise in 2016. She now continues the spiritual legacy established by her parents, who founded Mt. Zion Assembly 75 years ago.

Bishop Price as served on several community Boards. But dear to heart are the boards of Prevent Blindness of Wisconsin, and Aeon Bible College (Indianapolis) — The educational arm of the organization she is ordained through, and the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World. She has masters and doctorate degrees in Chaplaincy from the International Police and Fire Chaplain Association Bible College and Seminary.



Dr. Rene Settle-Robinson is a gifted, double board certified podiatrist, who is highly skilled in podiatric surgery. She is the first Black female to be residency trained in foot surgery in the state of Illinois, and among the first five black females in the United States to receive such training. She is a graduate of Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, California with a Bachelor of Science in Biology and received her Doctorate in Podiatric Medicine from the California College of Podia-

DR. RENE SETTLE-ROBINSON

tric Medicine in San Francisco. It was her Registered Nurse license, that she received when she was 20 years old, that afforded the financing for her academic endeavors.

Dr. Settle-Robinson practiced in Chicago, prior to teaching at the Scholl College of Podiatric Medicine for four years. She moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 1994 and made Milwaukee her home.

She became active in her community and has received a number of awards and recognition of her service and achievements. She served as President of Cream City Medical Society for seven years. She served as Chief of Podiatric Surgery at Aurora Sinai Medical Center in Milwaukee Wisconsin. She served as Secretary of the Podiatry Licensing Board of the State of Wisconsin Department of Regulation and Licensing and was the first Black Po-

diatrist to serve in that capacity. Her signature appeared on all of the Wisconsin Podiatry licenses for 12 years.

Dr. Settle-Robinson served as Secretary of Region IV of the National Medical Association for four years and currently serves as Vice President of Region IV. She completed 6 years as Region IV Trustee on the Board of Trustees of the National Medical Association.

Dr. Settle-Robinson is currently working full-time in a federally qualified healthcare center, Outreach Community Healthcare Center, on Milwaukee’s Northside. She is an active member in her sorority, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated, in Kappa Beta Zeta Chapter in Milwaukee. She is a life member of the NAACP and currently serves as Chair of the NAACP Wisconsin State Health Committee. She is a Paul Harris recipient in



The Reverend Dr. John Richard Walton, Jr., is a native of Cleveland Ohio. Licensed to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ in August of 1992, he was ordained in June of 1994 in Cleveland.

He was Assistant to the Pastor at Israel Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., Senior Pastor of the St. Mark Church of Boston, and since March of 2002, has served as Senior Pastor of the Calvary Baptist Church of Milwaukee. In his 25th year there, he is the second longest serving pastor in Calvary’s 130

REV. DR. JOHN WALTON, JR.

year history. His leadership is informed and inspired by the Great Commission of Jesus in the Gospels, the Pastoral Epistles, and his growing up in and serving in the Black Church, with a primary focus on discipleship in the local church. He is known as a pastor’s pastor. In addition, Pastor Walton is a Certified Senior Spiritual Director with Soul Shepherding, a national organization based in Irvine, California.

In this role, he helps new and longtime pastors to maximize their mental, spiritual and physical health. Lastly, Reverend Walton is an avid history buff as well as a health and fitness enthusiast.

Pastor Walton received his B.A. from Cleveland State University, Master of Divinity from Howard University, and Doctor of Ministry in Leadership Through Preaching from the Northern Baptist Theological Semi-

nary in Chicago, IL, with additional coursework at Boston University.

Pastor Walton has been an active part of every community where God has planted him throughout his 34 year ministry career. In his tenure here in the city of Milwaukee, he has worked with United Way Teen Pregnancy Prevention, the Blanket of Love Initiative with Ascension Wisconsin and MICAH. Also, he is a past member and Moderator of the Commission on the Ministry for the American Baptist Churches of Wisconsin and has served on the Board of Directors of the Milwaukee Christian Center. He is the Immediate Past Chair of the Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee and served on its Executive Committee for 14 years. Dr. Walton has been married to the former Lorrie Grace Craig of Maryland for 30 years. They are the parents of four adult children.



CONGRATULATIONS ON ACHIEVING THIS MILESTONE!

Charles & Cheryl Harvey