

THE Anchor NEWS

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VOLUME 23, NUMBER 7

DR. SHERYL VICTORIAN MAKES AN IMPACT

BY LINDA MASON CRAWFORD

When Dr. Sheryl D. Victorian was sworn in as Waco's first Black female chief of police, the appointment marked a historic milestone. More importantly, her leadership has been defined by measurable community engagement and intentional investment in youth, education, and public service.

Since assuming the role, Dr. Victorian has expanded and supported initiatives that meet immediate needs while strengthening relationships between law enforcement and the community. One of the most visible efforts has been the Waco Police Department's annual Back-to-School Bash, which provides hundreds of students with backpacks and school supplies ahead of each school year. The event brings together officers, families, local businesses, and nonprof-



DR. SHERYL VICTORIAN

it partners, allowing children and parents to interact with law enforcement in a positive, supportive setting.

Dr. Victorian has also supported family-centered events such as Trunk or Treat, intentionally transforming police spaces into welcoming envi-

ronments where children can safely engage with officers outside of emergency situations. These events are designed to build trust early by creating positive, non-crisis interactions between youth and public safety professionals.

Beyond community events, Dr. Victorian has emphasized access to education and career pathways. Through the Waco Police Department's Community Opportunity Event (COE), young adults have been connected to training, workforce resources, and educational support. In partnership with Southern Careers Institute, the department has facilitated scholarship awards totaling tens of thousands of dollars, including individual scholarships of up to \$4,500, for students pursuing workforce and public service ca-

SEE VICTORIAN, PG. 11

KAREN COLEMAN: EMPOWERING THROUGH SERVICE

Former Councilwoman Karen Coleman will be recognized at THE Waco Club of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Club's annual Founder's Day/Women's History Celebration on March 7 at 1:00 p.m. Held at Park Lake Drive Baptist Church, the program will feature the Club's national President, Dr. Terri O'Neal Ford, as the Keynote speaker.

Coleman's life and career reflect a steadfast commitment to service, leadership, and community empowerment—values that have guided her professional journey for decades and earned her recognition as an



KAREN COLEMAN

honoree on March 7.

A Waco native and graduate of Jefferson Moore High School's Class of 1982, Coleman entered the workforce immediately after graduation, driven by a strong calling to serve others and help shape brighter futures.

That calling led her to the banking industry in 1989, where she built a career spanning more than 37 years. Today, she serves as Assistant Vice President of New Accounts at TFNB – Your Bank for Life, Elm location, bringing a

SEE COLEMAN, PG. 6

NATIONAL PRESIDENT TO SERVE AS KEYNOTE IN WACO

BY LINDA CRAWFORD

WACO — The Waco Club of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc. will mark Founders' Day and Women's History Month with a special celebration featuring the Association's re-elected National President, Dr. Terri O'Neal Ford, who will serve as the keynote speaker for the event.

Founded in 1935 by seven determined Black women during the Great Depression, NANBPWC, Inc. has spent nearly nine decades advancing opportunity, leadership, and economic empowerment for Black women across the nation. This year's celebration honors that legacy while also recognizing the modern leadership shaping the organization's future.

Dr. Ford's visit to Waco offers members and the community an opportunity to reflect on both history and progress. As National President, she has led with a steady hand, a clear vision, and a faith-centered commitment to service. Many describe her leadership as grounded, accessible, and intentional, rooted in the belief that purpose-driven organizations must continuously evolve while remaining anchored to their founding values.

Under Dr. Ford's administration, the Association has expanded its national footprint and strengthened engagement in meaningful ways. One of her signature initiatives, FemmeForce,



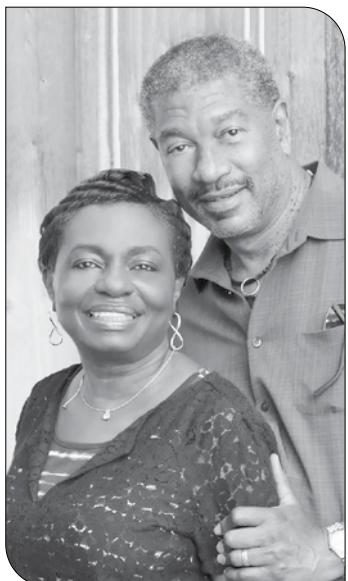
DR. TERRI O'NEAL FORD

was launched to support Black women entrepreneurs in navigating certification processes and positioning their businesses for contracting opportunities. The initiative reflects her long-standing emphasis on economic development as a pathway to generational stability and growth.

Dr. Ford has also prioritized platforms that elevate member voices and encourage dialogue. The Yellow Couch Podcast, introduced during her tenure, highlights professional journeys and economic impact stories from across the organization. In addition, monthly "Let's Talk" town halls were created to foster transparency, allowing members nationwide to engage directly with leadership, ask questions, and share concerns in real time.

Recognizing the importance of continuous learning, Dr. Ford led the establishment of a LinkedIn Learning partnership, providing members access

SEE FORD, PG. 11



J.L. & LINDA CRAWFORD

J.L. and Linda Crawford are co-owners of *The Anchor News*. J.L. Crawford serves as Director of Operations and is a Bible teacher and columnist writing on faith, family, and men's issues. Linda Crawford serves as Publisher and Editor, is a motivational speaker, and is the owner of Enjoy the Journey Life Coaching Services.



LINDA CRAWFORD
BY LINDA CRAWFORD

QUESTION: Linda, I need help. I love my husband, but

I feel like I am carrying everything. A few months after we got married, he stopped working regularly. Now it has been three years. We have a child and another baby on the way. I have a degree, and he does too. He was teaching, but he missed so many days that his contract was not renewed. He says he is looking for work, but nothing is changing. I do not understand it because there is a teacher shortage. I am exhausted, worried, and starting to feel resentful. What should I do? Hurt and Confused

ANSWER: Dear Hurt and Confused, I hear you. You are

carrying a lot, and it is understandable that you feel tired and worried. You can love your husband and still need more stability and partnership than you have right now.

Choose a calm moment and talk from your heart. Try, "I love you, and I need us to have a steady plan for income for our family." Then ask gently, "What has been getting in your way?" Sometimes what looks like a lack of effort is discouragement, stress, or feeling stuck.

Next, ask for a clear, simple plan you both can track. That could mean a daily job search

routine, specific applications each week, and being willing to take temporary or part time work while he looks for a better fit. Consistency matters more than the perfect job right now.

If this keeps repeating, consider counseling, not as punishment, but as support and structure for both of you. And in the meantime, protect your peace with a tighter budget and clear boundaries around what you can and cannot carry alone.

You are not asking for too much. You are asking for teamwork.

—Coach Crawford

FROM THE EDITOR...

HONORING TODAY'S BLACK HISTORY MAKERS

ROOTS: Today's History Makers is our Black History Month issue, a tribute to the living legacy being built right now in our homes, schools, businesses, churches, and neighborhoods. This month, we honor the men and women whose daily work is

shaping tomorrow's history through leadership, service, and excellence. Their stories remind us that Black history is not only what we remember; it is what we are creating. As you read, may you feel proud of our roots and inspired by the history makers among us.

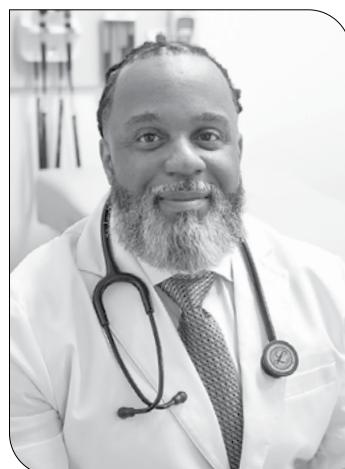
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FROM IRON CHAINS TO GILDED CAGES: THE 400-YEAR STATE OF EMERGENCY

BY R. L. DUCKETT

We are standing in the center of a 400-year-old "State of Emergency." Today, we aren't just discussing policy; we are discussing the life cycle of a system that rebranded human trafficking as "labor" and genocide as "progress." As we navigate this era, we often ask why we are still fighting for Civil Rights. But the real question is this: Why are we begging the State for Civil Rights when our Human Rights were ours the moment we took our first breath?

Civil Rights are a contract with the government; they can be signed in 1964 and shredded in 2025. Human Rights,



R. L. DUCKETT

however, are a contract with the Creator. From Indigenous

lands cleared by a genocide that never ended to the descendants of those stolen from their homelands, the timeline is clear. We moved from the iron chains of the 1800s to the economic chains of Reaganomics, and now to the digital and legal chains of Project 2025. This "Big Beautiful Bill" rhetoric is not progress. It is the final step in making the State the master and the human a commodity.

The architecture of this emergency is built on tactical pivots. The 13th Amendment did not end human trafficking; it relocated it into the prison

SEE **DUCKETT**, PG. 15



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The Anchor News, dedicated to serving the community and surrounding areas, focuses on positive news and accomplishments of minorities.

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Anchored on the principles of scripture, *Anchor News* will at no time publish information that is potentially libelous material or intentionally malicious, derogatory or irrelevant.

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als reflect the opinions of the editor.

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The comments and opinions of our readers are welcomed. Letters and articles should be e-mailed. Letters should be no longer than 200 words and must include a name and phone number. Article submissions should be no longer than 450 words and should include an original head shot (in jpeg

format) along with your name, address and phone number. We reserve the right to edit for grammar, space, potentially libelous material and copyright infringement. We also reserve the right to refuse derogatory, irrelevant and malicious submissions.

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DERRICK ROSS: FAITH, SERVICE, AND A HEART FOR HELPING FAMILIES BUILD LEGACY

New York native Derrick Ross is quickly becoming a familiar and trusted name to families across Waco and Central Texas—both in the community and in the real estate market. A real estate professional with Keller Williams Advantage, Ross is known for a client-first approach rooted in integrity, excellence, and a genuine desire to help others move forward with confidence.

Ross's commitment to service extends well beyond open houses and closing tables. In his professional life, he serves as a Hospitality General Manager, bringing strong leadership, careful attention to detail, and a deep respect for people into every environment he leads. Those same qual-

ties show up in his real estate work—where organization, responsiveness, and clear communication can make the difference between a stressful transaction and a smooth, supported experience.

In addition to his career responsibilities, Ross is also the Director of Music Ministries at Pleasant Olive Missionary Baptist Church, where he serves with a servant's heart and a steady devotion to faith. His leadership in ministry reflects a core belief that purpose and professionalism can—and should—work hand in hand. Whether he is guiding a team, uplifting a congregation through music, or helping a family navigate a major life decision, Ross's guiding principles remain the same:



DERRICK ROSS

lead with compassion, operate with excellence, and put people first.

For Ross, real estate is nev-

er just about property. It is about stewardship. It is about building legacy. And it is about helping individuals and families step into their next chapter with clarity and confidence. He understands that buying or selling a home is often tied to larger life moments—marriage, a growing family, relocation, a fresh start, downsizing, or the dream of homeownership after years of planning. Because of this, he works to create an experience that is not only effective, but also personal and respectful of each client's goals and timeline.

Clients often look for someone who will simply "get the job done." Ross aims to do more than that. His approach is shaped by faith-driven val-

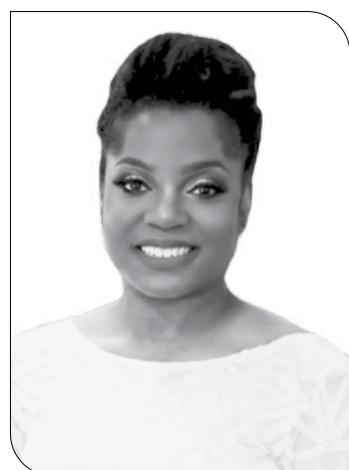
ues, strong relational skills, and a belief that how you serve matters just as much as what you deliver. He strives to provide guidance that is honest, steady, and informed—so that clients feel supported, not pressured.

From New York roots to Central Texas relationships, Derrick Ross represents a new generation of professionals who are building trust the right way: through consistent service, principled leadership, and a sincere commitment to helping others thrive. In every role he holds—real estate professional, hospitality leader, and ministry servant—Ross continues to reflect the same mission: to serve with integrity and help people move forward, one meaningful step at a time.

NICOLE IVORY: HELPING CENTRAL TEXANS BUILD BLACK WEALTH IN THE DIGITAL AGE

As Central Texas honors Black History Month, one visionary leader is reshaping how Black communities engage with wealth, technology, and the future economy. Nicole Ivory, CEO and Founder of EMPIRENEURS DeFi LLC, has emerged as a history maker across the Central Texas corridor and surrounding communities by championing financial literacy and access to decentralized finance (DeFi).

Nicole Ivory is widely recognized for her bold leadership at the intersection of technology, education, and economic justice. Through EMPIRENEURS DeFi LLC, she has built a platform dedicated to equipping Black professionals, EMPIRENEURS, and families with the knowledge and tools needed to participate in the digital financial system. This is an



NICOLE IVORY

area where Black communities have historically been excluded.

Operating across Central Texas, EMPIRENEURS DeFi LLC delivers cohort-based education, workshops, and com-

munity conversations focused on cryptocurrency, blockchain, AI, and digital assets. These programs are designed to remove fear and confusion around emerging technologies and replace them with confidence, strategy, and opportunity.

At the heart of Ivory's work is her 12 Week Wealth in DeFi Cohort which transforms learners into informed participants in the global digital economy. Participants gain hands-on experience with real-world applications from understanding wallets and tokenization to building long-term wealth strategies that prioritize ownership and sovereignty.

"What we are witnessing is a monetary reset," Ivory explains. "If our communities are not educated and positioned early, we risk being left behind once again." Her approach intentionally centers Black economic empowerment, emphasizing generational wealth, ethical innovation, and community stewardship.

The impact of EMPIRENEURS DeFi LLC is already being felt across Central Texas. Graduates have gone on to start businesses, invest confidently, and contribute to collaborative digital projects that create sustainable income and community value. Ivory's leadership has earned recogni-

tion from educators, EMPIRENEURS, and civic leaders who see her work as essential to the region's economic future.

This Black History Month, Nicole Ivory stands as a mod-

ern architect of progress, continuing the legacy of Black innovation by ensuring Central Texas communities are prepared. Not just to survive but to lead in the digital age.

"This is worship:
to serve mankind
and to minister to
the needs of the
people. Service
is prayer."

~ 'Abdu'l-Bahá



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ROOTED IN CONNECTION AND PURPOSE: SAMANTHA SMITH

Samantha Smith's leadership is grounded in something both powerful and rare: the ability to create genuine connection. In a world where many seek platforms, Smith has chosen people—listening closely, leading intentionally, and building spaces where women feel affirmed, empowered, and encouraged to live boldly in their truth.

A community-driven leader, Smith is widely known for her warmth and authenticity. Her presence invites openness, and her leadership style reflects care, purpose, and sincerity. She does not lead from a distance, but from within the circle—cultivating environments where women feel seen, supported, and valued. Those who encounter her work often describe feeling both chal-

lenged and comforted, inspired to grow while knowing they are not alone in the journey.

At the heart of her vision is *She Speaks Boldly*, a women's empowerment initiative scheduled to officially launch in 2026. What began as a personal calling has evolved into a movement centered on belonging, self-discovery, and meaningful dialogue. Through intentional gatherings and thoughtfully designed experiences, *She Speaks Boldly* encourages women to reflect, heal, and step confidently into who they are becoming.

Smith's work is rooted in the belief that connection is transformative. She understands that when women are given space to share their stories honestly—with-



SAMANTHA SMITH

out judgment or pressure—growth naturally follows. Her gatherings emphasize authenticity over perfection and dialogue over performance, allowing participants to en-

gage fully and freely. In these spaces, women are reminded of their strength, their voice, and their value.

Beyond programs and events, Smith's impact is deeply relational. She is known for leading with humility, encouraging collaboration, and fostering trust across diverse backgrounds and experiences. Her commitment to strengthening community relationships reflects a long-term vision—one focused not only on individual empowerment, but on collective growth.

As *She Speaks Boldly* continues to take shape, Smith remains focused on sustainability and purpose. She welcomes collaboration and partnership, believing that the most meaningful work is built together. Her leadership

reflects patience, discernment, and a deep respect for the journeys of others.

In recognition of her dedication to uplifting women and strengthening community bonds, Samantha Smith will be honored at the Founders' Day/Women's History Celebration hosted by the Waco Club of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs. The honor celebrates not only her emerging work, but the steady and intentional leadership she brings to every space she enters.

Rooted in connection and purpose, Samantha Smith is building more than a program—she is cultivating a movement where women are encouraged to speak boldly, live authentically, and walk confidently in their calling.

LOGAN'S MISSION-DRIVEN IMPACT

LaTanya Logan is a respected leader, advocate, and nonprofit executive whose work is rooted in advancing access to care, strengthening community resilience, and developing effective leadership. She currently serves as a Program Analyst in the National Preparedness Division for FEMA Region VI, where she oversees preparedness grant programs supporting state and local emergency management agencies across Oklahoma and New Mexico. In this role, Logan focuses on building sustainable systems, strengthening program effectiveness, and improving outcomes for vulnerable populations.

A cancer survivor and passionate healthcare advocate, Logan brings both professional expertise and lived experience to critical conversations surrounding ac-



LATANYA LOGAN

cess to care, health equity, and patient empowerment. Her personal journey has deepened her commitment to ensuring that individuals, caregivers, and communities are equipped with the resources, information, and support needed to navigate complex systems with confidence and dignity.

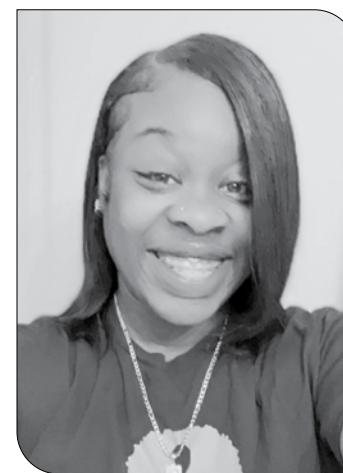
Logan also serves as West Texas State Director for Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated, providing leadership and strategic guidance to more than 1,200 members across 26 chapters. Her responsibilities include advancing initiatives

EMILIE SAINT PIERRE: ROOTED IN RESILIENCE

Emilie Saint Pierre works full time and goes to school full time. As a devoted mother of two sons, Victor, 15, and Davon, 12, she has built a life defined by perseverance, growth, and unwavering determination.

Raised between Miami and Fort Pierce, Florida, Emilie faced adult responsibilities early, becoming a mother at just 15. Instead of allowing that moment to limit her future, she used it as motivation. She stayed focused on finishing school, graduating from high school and continuing her education with purpose. In 2019, she completed a medical assistant program, an important milestone that strengthened her commitment to building stability and opportunity for her family.

In 2021, at age 26, Emilie made a bold decision to re-



EMILIE SAINT PIERRE

locate to Texas in search of a better path for herself and her children. The move represented more than a change of scenery. It was a fresh start rooted in courage, vision, and

determination. Today, she is a valued member of the Hillcrest Chiropractic team, where she is known for her strong work ethic, professionalism, and commitment to learning.

Emilie's drive does not stop when the workday ends. She balances motherhood, career, and education with remarkable discipline and focus. This May, she is set to graduate in cosmetology, marking yet another chapter in her ongoing pursuit of excellence and personal growth.

Her story is one of resilience and forward motion, a young mother who refused to be defined by obstacles and instead chose to build a future of promise. In recognition of her accomplishments and inspiring journey, Emilie Saint Pierre will be honored at the NANB-PW program on May 7.

related to membership growth, leadership development, sisterhood, and community engagement throughout the region. Additionally, she serves as the International Liaison to the American Cancer Society and Making Strides Programming, helping to advance national advocacy, education, and awareness efforts.

She is the founder of *The Mission Is... Foundation*, a non-profit organization dedicated to removing barriers that limit opportunity by delivering education, advocacy, and essential resources to underserved communities.

Logan holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Jackson State University, a

Master of Science in Criminal Justice from Texas State University, and a Master of Science in Organizational Leadership and Ethics from St. Edward's University. She resides in the Dallas-Fort Worth area and continues to live life "as an exclamation mark," inspiring others to lead boldly, serve intentionally, and advocate fearlessly.

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MARILYN & DWAYNE BANKS: BUILDING COMMUNITY

When Marilyn and Dwayne Banks opened Marilyn's Gift Gallery & Sound World Music in November 1989, they were doing more than launching a business. They were planting a lasting symbol of pride, culture, and inspiration in the heart of East Waco. Located at 818 Elm Avenue, the shop quickly became a place where customers could find meaningful merchandise and feel connected to the community it represents.

From the beginning, both Marilyn and Dwayne shared the dream of entrepreneurship. With deep ties to the community, Dwayne brought a strong knowledge of music across every genre, making Sound World Music a natural fit. Marilyn, known for her love of fashion, had a clear vision for a gift gallery that celebrated style and self expression. She wanted hats, fashions, and plenty of "bling," but with purpose behind every item.

That purpose shaped the identity of the store. Marilyn and Dwayne were intentional about what they carried, choosing merchandise that was inspirational, uplifting, and positive. Black art, books, African attire, and cultural artifacts were not optional additions.



MARILYN BANKS

They were essential. Their goal was for the Gift Gallery to reflect the community and to ensure that every customer who walked through the doors felt a sense of pride.

Over the years, customers have shared how the store's presence has motivated them. Many are grateful not only for what they can purchase, but for what the business represents: proof that success is possible. The Bankses openly acknowledge that they, too, were inspired by other business owners, and their hope has been to pass that encour-

agement forward to the next generation of dreamers.

For those who desire to start a business but feel hesitant, Marilyn and Dwayne offer simple, faith grounded advice. Put God first in every decision, pray

about the steps ahead, and allow God to lead. Their favorite scripture reflects that steady confidence: Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me."

More than three decades

after opening, Marilyn's Gift Gallery & Sound World Music stands as a reminder that when vision meets faith and community commitment, a small business can become a lasting legacy.

THE DUNNERS: LOCAL COUPLE ROOTED IN SERVICE



JEFF & BESS DUNNER

Vietnam era, but upon returning, he completed his degree

and went on to devote more than four decades to Texas public schools. As a science and mathematics educator and a highly respected junior high basketball coach, Dunner influenced generations of students both in the classroom and beyond. His life of service also includes long-standing military and civic involvement.

Dr. Bess Carpenter Dunner, a two-time graduate of Paul Quinn College, built a distinguished career centered on advocacy, leadership, and care. Her professional work spanned education, healthcare, and nonprofit leader-

SEE **DUNNERS**, PG. 12

HILLCREST CHIROPRACTIC

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Glasser Institute for Choice Theory

BY APOSTLE FANN MINNITT

Key Scripture: Colossians 2:6-7 (WEB): "As therefore you received Christ Jesus the Lord, walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, even as you were taught, abounding in it in thanksgiving."

Paul's perspective is that those who follow Christ by faith ought to "walk"—to live and think—by faith.

What Is Faith? — Hebrews 11:1

1. Now faith is the assurance (substance) of things hoped for, the proof (evidence) of things not seen.

Why Faith? — Hebrews 11:6 : "Without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing to him, for he who comes to God must believe that he exists, and that he is a rewarder of those who seek him."

2. What Does It Mean To Be Rooted?

Read and study Jeremiah 17:7-8: "Believers must actively abide in Christ to experience spiritual growth, bear fruit, and be effective in their Christian walk. Abiding means actively engaging with Christ's teachings and living in obedience to his commands."


APOSTLE FANN MINNITT

3. Why Must You Be Rooted in Christ?

Jesus is the vine, and we are the branches. We cannot bring forth fruit without the mightiness of God (John 15:4-5).

You are promised everlasting life.

4. Signs You're Rooted in Christ

- You bear consistent fruit.
- You read and study the Word daily.
- You stand firm on the Word of God during major trials.

- You are not easily pulled up by offense or cultural pressure.
- You WALK, LIVE, and THINK by faith!

5. How to Stay Rooted

- Read and study your Bible daily.

- Pay attention to the biblical prophets.

- Pray daily for yourself and others.

- Read and apply Proverbs 3:5-6.

- Get rid of distractions.

- Find an authentic Christian community.

- WALK, LIVE, and THINK by faith!

6. How Deep Are Your Roots in Christ?

If you are easily persuaded by every new religion, doctrine, or cultural trend, your roots may be easily uprooted.

Where are your roots right now? Determine this day who you are going to follow. You cannot have deep roots in Christ and deep roots in the devil. God wants all of you, for your eternal life. The devil wants to destroy you so that you do not have eternal life with God. WALK, LIVE, and THINK by faith in God.

the tools needed to make informed financial decisions.

Her passion for service extends far beyond her professional career. Coleman has been actively involved in civic leadership since her election to the Bellmead City Council in May 2021, representing Precinct 1. In

May 2025, she made history as only the second Black woman to serve as Mayor Pro Tem in the City of Bellmead, a milestone that underscores both her leadership and the trust placed in her by the community.

She recently resigned from this position, realizing she had fulfilled her calling on the council. Throughout her tenure, Coleman has served on several key boards and committees, including the Bellmead Chamber of Commerce Beautification Committee and the Bellmead Development Corporation Board. Her dedication to community improvement has been recognized over the years, including being named Woman of the Year by the City of Bellmead in 1999 and receiving the Women of Excellence honor in the Waco area in 2021.

Equally important to Coleman is her role as a wife, mother, and grandmother. She and her husband, Ronnie Coleman, have been married since 1989 and are the proud parents of one son, TaMarcus Coleman. Known affectionately as "Nana," she cherishes her role as grandmother to four grandchildren, a role she considers among her greatest joys.

Her recognition at the March 7 celebration honors not only her accomplishments, but also her enduring commitment to empowering others—financially, civically, and personally.

COLEMAN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

wealth of knowledge, diligence, and integrity to her role. As a financial educator, Coleman has consistently worked to empower individuals and families with


Linda Crawford

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ROOTED IN SERVICE, SCHOLARSHIP, AND SISTERHOOD: HONORING LOIS McDOWELL

Lois Jacqueline Cotton McDowell is a proud daughter of Waco whose life reflects a deep commitment to education, family, faith, and community service. A native of the city, she attended the public schools of Waco ISD and was part of the final graduating class of A. J. Moore High School, a milestone that marked both the end of an era and the beginning of her lifelong journey of leadership.

McDowell continued her education at the historic HBCU Paul Quinn College, where she earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education with a minor in English. Her passion for learning led her to Prairie View A&M University, where she obtained a master's degree in elementary education, a principalship certification, and a master's degree in reading.

Throughout her life, McDowell has remained deeply connected to organizations that uplift and empower communities. She is a Life Member and Golden Member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., celebrating 50 years of service. She is also a Life Member of The National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, Inc. with 25 years of dedication, serves as Services to Youth Chair for the Waco Central Texas Chapter of The Links, Incorporated, and holds the role of financial secretary for the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's



LOIS JACQUELINE COTTON McDOWELL

Clubs, Inc..

Her professional journey spans both education and entrepreneurship. After 30 years as an elementary school teacher, she retired in 2012 and began a second career as an adjunct instructor in reading and writing at McLennan Community College. Alongside her late husband, Lester McDowell, she co-founded McDowell Funeral Home, L.L.C. in 1982. Today, the family legacy continues through their daughters, Madelyn McDowell Butler and Andrea J. McDowell, who serve as funeral directors and leaders of the business, which operates in Waco and surrounding areas as well as out-of-state

locations.

A devoted grandmother, McDowell proudly celebrates her five grandsons—Cedarian, Sterling, Sullivan, Brenton, and Ayden—whom she affectionately calls her “future CEOs.” She is also a faith-

ful member of Toliver Chapel Missionary Baptist Church.

In recognition of her lifelong contributions, McDowell will be honored at the Founders' Day/Women's History Month Celebration on Saturday, March 7, at

1:00 p.m. at Park Lake Drive Baptist Church. The event is hosted by THE Waco Club of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc. Tickets are \$50 and may be purchased from any club member.

KELVIN MANNING MAKES HISTORY AT NASA

With deep Willow Grove roots and a career that continues to make history, Kelvin Manning stands as one of the most influential leaders at NASA's John F. Kennedy Space Center. His journey from a small community connection to the forefront of America's space program reflects decades of dedication, technical excellence, and steady leadership.

Manning has served as deputy director of NASA's Kennedy Space Center since July 2021, helping guide one of the world's most important launch facilities during a time of rapid change. In this role, he shares responsibility for overseeing thousands of civil service and contractor employees, shaping center policy, and ensuring the successful execution of NASA missions and agency programs.

In 2025, Manning was selected to serve as acting director of



KELVIN MANNING

the Kennedy Space Center from January through July, a role that reflected the confidence NASA leadership has placed in him. Before becoming deputy director, he spent more than a decade as associate director, focusing on aligning the workforce, facilities, and operations with NASA's evolving mission goals.

Manning began his NASA career in 1992 and held several key roles within the Space Shuttle Pro-

gram. He served as flow director for shuttle Atlantis, vehicle manager for shuttle Columbia, chief engineer for shuttle upgrades, and NASA test director. Later, he became the first division chief for NASA's Orion spacecraft and served on three astronaut candidate selection boards.

His many honors include the Presidential Meritorious Rank Award, NASA Exceptional Achievement and Service Medals, the Silver Snoopy Award, and recognition as National Black Engineer of the Year for Outstanding Technical Achievement in Government.

A U.S. Air Force veteran, Manning holds degrees from the Air Force Academy and the University of Central Florida, and completed executive studies at Harvard. His story reflects a life of service, excellence, and historic achievement.

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“I absolutely love this book! I could not put it down and read it in two days. There is so much good stuff in this book that I am reading it again. It is inspiring, encouraging and will bless you.”

5.0 OUT OF 5 STARS FIVE STARS | AMAZON CUSTOMER

(Reviewed in the United States on May 21, 2018)

“This is an amazing book. It is entertaining, compelling and convicting. A definite must-read for everyone!”

5.0 OUT OF 5 STARS | EASY READ AND APPLICABLE TO MY LIFE

(Reviewed in the United States on March 27, 2019)

“After God, Destiny, and a Glass of Wine, I felt like I could take the author's response to certain circumstances and apply to my own life. Each chapter is a life learning lesson of praising God through hard times, and walking into God's plan for my life. It may appear as an easy read, because I read it in one day my first time reading it. Then I had the opportunity to re-read and breakdown each chapter week by week.”

Rey

5.0 OUT OF 5 STARS | EXCELLENT BOOK

(Reviewed in the United States on June 13, 2020)

“This is an amazing book. I found it helpful in navigating my fear of not reaching my full potential. It helped me understand how I can have a positive God-ordained destiny. Excellent work!”

Dr. Mia Moody-Ramirez



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WHAT HOMEOWNERS SHOULD KNOW NOW

BY MARGARET IVORY

Many homeowners—especially retirees living on fixed incomes—don't realize how quickly their homes and estates can be put at risk. Rising costs and changing laws mean families can lose property sooner than expected if they are not prepared.

Here are four major financial threats every homeowner should understand.

1) Property Tax Foreclosure
(In Texas, a home can be lost after one year of unpaid

taxes)

In Texas, unpaid property taxes can lead to foreclosure—even if your home is fully paid off. In some cases, foreclosure action can begin after just one year of unpaid taxes.

This often happens when homeowners face rising tax bills, medical expenses, or unexpected financial hardship. Many families are shocked to learn they can lose a home they've owned for decades simply because property taxes fell behind.

2) Estate Tax Changes Coming in 2026

(Exemption expected to drop significantly)

Current federal law allows families to pass large estates to heirs without estate taxes. However, beginning January 1, 2026, that exemption is scheduled to drop by about half.

As a result, more estates—including homes, land, and investments—may become subject to estate taxes. Families who never expected to face estate tax issues may need planning to protect assets for

their heirs.

3) Medicaid Estate Recovery

(The government may claim assets after death)

When Medicaid helps pay for long-term care, the state may later seek repayment through estate recovery after the person passes away.

Often, the largest asset remaining is the home. Families expecting to inherit property may discover the home must be sold to repay Medicaid expenses unless planning was done in advance.

4) Reverse Mortgage Default

(Failure to pay taxes or insurance can trigger foreclosure)

Reverse mortgages allow homeowners 62 and older to use home equity without monthly loan payments. However, borrowers must still pay property taxes, insurance, and maintain the home.

If these obligations are not met, the loan can default and



MARGARET IVORY

foreclosure can occur—even without traditional mortgage payments due.

For many families, the home is their largest asset. Understanding these risks early allows families to plan ahead and protect property so it stays with loved ones instead of being lost unexpectedly.

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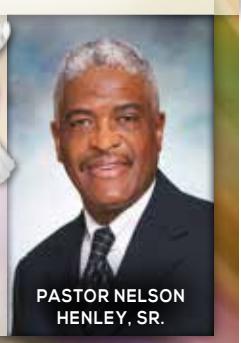
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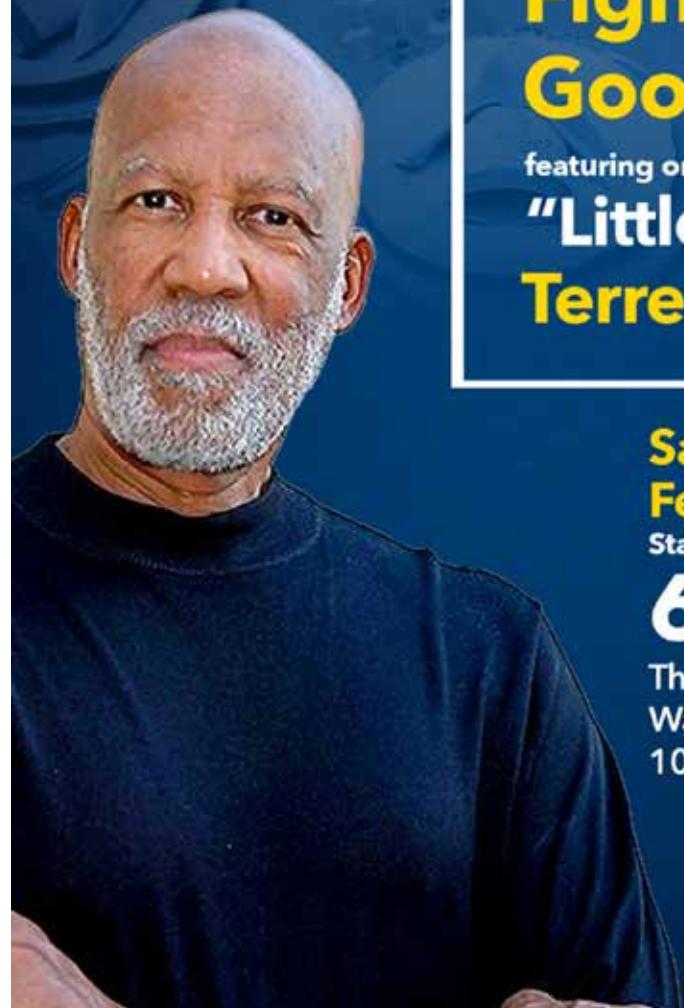
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featuring one of the **"Little Rock Nine"**

Terrence Roberts

Saturday, February 28, 2026

Starting at **6:30PM**

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Waco Convention Center
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Table of (10) **\$1,000**

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LEADING THE CHANGE: WOMEN SHAPING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Founders' Day/Women's History Celebration

—KEYNOTE SPEAKER—
DR. TERRI O'NEAL FORD

—HONOREE—
CHIEF SHERYL VICTORIAN

—HONOREE—
MRS. KAREN COLEMAN

—HONOREE—
MRS. LOIS McDOWELL

—HONOREE—
MS. SAMANTHA SMITH

—HONOREE—
MS. EMILIE SAINT PIERRE

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Park Lake Drive Baptist Church Fellowship Hall | 3701 N. 27th Street | Waco, TX 76708
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NAACP PRESENTS DEI EDUCATIONAL EMPOWERMENT RALLY



BEVERLY HENRY WHEELER

The Waco NAACP presented the DEI—"Definitely Earned It" Educational Empowerment Rally at the Bledsoe-Miller STEAM Center on Saturday, January 31. The free all-day event targeted local high school students and their parents. Headlined by Beverly Henry Wheeler, past president of the National As-

sociation for College Admission Counseling, the rally also featured a panel of admission experts.

District 1 Councilwoman Andrea Barefield greeted participants via video, telling them that the STEAM Center

SEE **RALLY**, PG. 13

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FAITH-BASED LEARNING AT LITTLE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

As communities across the nation reflect on the 2026 Black History Theme, "A Century of Black History," the legacy of Black leadership is evident not only in history books, but in everyday institutions that shape lives. For Teresa Echols, that legacy lives through Little Christian Academy, Inc., a faith-based early childhood education center that has faithfully served families for 36 years.

Founded in 1989, Little Christian Academy was born from Echols' desire to provide children with a safe, nurturing environment where they could grow academically, spiritually, and socially. Her vision extended beyond basic childcare. She believed early childhood should be a season of intentional development—where young minds are shaped, confidence is built, and character begins to form. That belief continues to guide the academy's mission today.



TERESA ECHOLS

Known for its welcoming and supportive atmosphere, Little Christian Academy focuses on developmentally appropriate instruction that builds early literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional skills. Grounded in faith, the academy also teaches values such as kindness, respect, responsibility, and purpose. For many families, it has become a trusted partner, provid-

ing stability and peace of mind during their children's most formative years.

Echols' journey has not been without challenges. Like many African American business owners, she faced limited access to funding, complex regulations, and the ongoing need to prove credibility. Yet,

anchored by faith, resilience, and community support, she persisted.

Today, the impact of Little Christian Academy reaches far beyond the classroom. It is seen in confident children, grateful parents, and strengthened families. Through consistency, faith, and service, Teresa Echols continues to build a legacy

that nurtures the future—one child at a time. Echols will be honored at the February 21 Black History celebration hosted by THE Waco Business and Professional Women's Club.

She will be recognized at the NANBPW Waco Club's Black History Celebration on February 21.

FORD

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

to professional development tools designed to enhance skills, leadership capacity, and career advancement. Her administration also reimagined the Association's 85th National Convention, blending innovation with tradition and showcasing a forward-looking vision while honoring the organization's historic milestones.

Dr. Ford's leadership has extended beyond programming to visibility and relationship-building. In 2023

and 2024, she oversaw open house events at the Association's national headquarters, reconnecting NANBPWC, Inc. with the Washington, D.C. business and professional community and reintroducing the organization to key stakeholders.

Professionally, Dr. Ford serves as Assistant to the President at Tarrant County College's Northeast Campus and holds a Ph.D. in Family Studies from Texas Woman's University. She is widely respected as a scholar, mentor, and servant leader whose work reflects a deep commit-

ment to education, accountability, and community uplift.

The Founders' Day and Women's History Month Celebration will be held at Park Lake Drive Baptist Church Fellowship Hall, 3702 N. 27th Street, Waco, Texas 76708. Tickets are \$50 and may be purchased from any NANBPWC Waco Club member.

As Waco honors the women who built the Association and those leading it forward, Dr. Ford's keynote presence serves as a reminder that legacy, when guided by faith and purpose, continues to create opportunity and impact.

VICTORIAN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

reers. These efforts reflect a practical approach to community engagement that focuses on long-term opportunity rather than short-term visibility.

Education and mentorship are central to Dr. Victorian's leadership. She holds a doctorate in administration of justice and regularly engages with students and civic groups to discuss leadership, accountability, and service. Her commitment to representation is also reflected in her work as an author of a children's book, created to encourage young readers, particularly girls, to envision themselves in leadership and public service roles.

One of Dr. Victorian's most

enduring contributions is rooted in family legacy. Along with her siblings, she established a scholarship through the Waco Branch of the NAACP in honor of their parents. The Mr. and Mrs. Robert Jefferson, Jr. Public Safety Scholarship awards \$1,500 to students pursuing careers in public safety or

criminal justice. Administered through the NAACP, the scholarship reflects a shared commitment to education, service, and community advancement, while honoring the values instilled by her parents.

SEE **VICTORIAN**, PG. 13

JOY AND PEACE ON PURPOSE

BY LINDA CRAWFORD

Joy and peace are not only feelings. They are practices. Life will always bring demands, deadlines, and unexpected problems, but you can still choose a calmer way to live in the middle of it.

Start small. Each morning, ask yourself, "What do I need today to feel steady?" Then choose one simple thing you can control. It might be leaving five minutes earlier, drinking more water, turning off the news, or saying no to one extra obligation. Peace grows when your life matches your values, not just everyone else's expectations.

Joy also needs room. Make space for one meaningful moment each day. A short walk, a favorite song, a phone call with someone who makes you laugh, a quiet prayer, or writing down three good things from the day. These are not "little" things. They are life giving habits that remind



LINDA CRAWFORD

your heart it is safe to exhale.

This week, try this. Protect your mornings, simplify one area, and choose one joyful moment on purpose. You cannot control everything, but you can create a life that feels lighter, one choice at a time.

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WANDA B.
GUNTER

Author, Artist &
Contributing writer
for The Anchor News

WHAT SHALL WE DO

BY PASTOR MATTHEW REED

Order no longer exists in the world today; nothing is sure. The church in Acts 2:37 asked the question, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" The answer Peter gave was to repent and be baptized. That same answer is the hope of mankind today.

Acts 2:38: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Thank God it is by promise given after repentance. Acts 2:39: "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God



PASTOR MATTHEW REED

shall call."

If you want assurance of salvation, this is the only option. We are living in a peril-

ous world where man thinks right is wrong and wrong is right. We've come to that place where they will no longer endure sound doctrine. 2 Timothy 4:3: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears."

Let me be the bearer of good news: there is hope in the salvation of God. This salvation I speak of is found in the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are at a place and time where we can see the truth of God: "the wages of sin is death." The only question to be resolved is, what are we going to do about it? A lion is in the street—choose wisely.

PREPARING YOUR HOUSE FOR THE MARKET

BY LINDA MCDONALD

Putting your home on the market is more than just planting a sign in the yard. A little preparation can make a big difference in attracting buyers and getting the best price for your property.

Start with curb appeal. First impressions matter, and a freshly mowed lawn, trimmed shrubs, and a clean entryway set the right tone. A new welcome mat and a few potted plants by the front door go a long way.

Inside the house, decluttering is key. Pack away personal items such as family photos and knickknacks. Buyers want to imagine themselves living in the space, and a clean, neutral look helps them do that. Consider giving walls a fresh coat of paint in light, neutral colors.

Do a deep clean from top to bottom. Shine the windows, scrub floors, and make sure every room smells fresh. Minor repairs also make a big impact, whether it is fixing a



LINDA MCDONALD
REALTOR, CRS, GRI, PMN, SRS

leaky faucet or replacing a burned-out lightbulb. Small details tell buyers that the home has been well cared for.

Finally, stage the home to highlight its best features. Arrange furniture to make rooms feel open and inviting. Let in as much natural light as possi-

A MONTHLY WORD OF WISDOM AND ENCOURAGEMENT FOR MEN...

TO MY BROTHERS LOVE HER LIKE YOU MEAN IT

BY J.L. CRAWFORD

Brothers, I am writing as a husband who has been at this thing a long time. Marriage will teach you who you are, especially when life gets heavy and nobody is clapping for you. The world tells a man to be tough, silent, and in control. But a strong man knows how to be steady and gentle at the same time.

Scripture gives us the blueprint. Husbands, love your wives (Ephesians 5:25). That love is not just anniversaries and special moments. It is a daily decision to protect her peace. Pay attention to how you talk to her. Your tone can either build a home or bruise it. Before you raise your voice, ask yourself, "would I speak this way to someone I am trying to keep?"

Learn to listen without trying to win. Sometimes she does not need a solution. She needs your presence. Put the phone down. Look her in the eyes. Ask her how she is really doing. Pray with her, even if it feels awkward at first. A home can have money and still be poor if it has no peace.

Handle your responsibilities. A man who avoids bills, parenting, and hard con-



J.L. CRAWFORD

versations will end up paying with something bigger, trust. Trust, once cracked, takes time and humility to repair. Be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath (James 1:19). That verse will save you more arguments than you can count.

Finally, brothers, be the same man at home that you are in public. Your wife and children should get your best, not your leftovers. Love her out loud, respect her in front of others, and correct problems in private. If you do that, you will not just have a marriage. You will have a legacy.

DUNNERS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

ship, where she led programs supporting individuals with disabilities, at-risk youth, and families across Texas. She later served as President of the Paul Quinn College National Alumni Association and currently serves as a Trustee of Paul Quinn College, continuing her lifelong dedication to the institution.

Married for 50 years, Jeff and Dr. Bess Dunner exemplify partnership and purpose. Their sustained leadership, mentorship, and philanthropy have strengthened Paul Quinn College and expanded opportunities for future generations. Honored as pillars of the Quinnite Nation, their story reminds us that true legacy is built not only through personal achievement, but through unwavering investment in others.

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LISTEN TO YOUR WISDOM-HEART

BY MONA DUNKIN

In our perceived world versus the real world, we humans often get things mixed up.

We perceive that we use our brains to think. We perceive that our emotions cannot be regulated and controlled. We may not even realize that it is with our will that we make decisions. "Yes, I will do this."

"No, I will not do that."

"As a man thinks in his heart so is he."

Or so we become!?

Brain thoughts 'spin' our reaction to experiences in such a way as to override our wisdom-heart. Let's consider thinking - and loving - with our wisdom-heart.

Locate your GPS. Dreaming and wishing and hoping are pleasant enough activities but they do not impact reality. Allow your GPS system (God-Positioning-Spirit) to steer the success purpose mechanism of your wisdom-heart toward choices that turn thoughts into things.

Let It Be. Observe what is going on inside you. Say, "yes" to the experience. Say, "yes" to the anxiety, the fear, the tension, the anger or whatever.



MONA DUNKIN

You may protest: "Oh, No. I cannot say 'Yes' to those things."

Saying "yes" gives space for feelings to unfold so you can get in touch with and heed your wisdom-heart. By saying "yes" to seemingly negative situations you give yourself permission to relate to life differently.

Failure is Not Fatal. Neither is a slump. Do not allow setbacks or discouragement to paralyze you. Rest, re-think, re-group and get back in the driver's seat. Allow the obstacle to slow you down just long enough to reawaken you

to how deeply this dream is a roadmap to your destiny.

Look and Learn. Pay attention to mistakes or lethargy and allow those missteps to work for you. Growing research shows that we can rewire our brain to approach old habits of thought or action with new challenges.

Be Good To You. The key is to turn paralyzing fear into activating energy. But how? Try a little self-compassion. Psychologists tell us that compassion is the most healing emotion there is. Love yourself enough to believe in you. Believe that you can deserve better. Believe that you can plan, do and succeed.

Talk to the Heart. Your heart is always listening. Beating you up has never accomplished anything positive. Instead, say things like, "Do not be so hard on yourself" or "It's okay. Everyone has a down day" or "If your dream was impossible you would not have thought it up in the first place!" Nurture your growth by treating yourself gently.

Don't Cope - Overcome. It really is all about you. Outside validation does not matter as much as your own self-evalu-

ation. We generate the results we believe we deserve. Go for it.

Invite Mona to speak to your group, you will be entertained

with her humor, challenged by her gift of uncommon insights ad motivated by her thought-provoking poems. 254-749-6594 Leave a message.

NATIONAL THEME: A CENTURY OF BLACK HISTORY

The Waco Club of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women will honor businesses of longevity and community impact

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VICTORIAN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

Dr. Victorian also serves in leadership roles with state and national law enforcement organizations, including the National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives and the Texas Police Chiefs Association, where she advo-

cates for leadership development and expanded opportunities for women in policing.

Through school supply distributions, youth events, scholarships, and education-focused partnerships, Dr. Sheryl Victorian's impact in Waco has been marked by action. Her leadership demonstrates that public safety is strengthened not only through

enforcement, but through consistent community investment and opportunity.

On March 7, Chief Victorian will be an honoree at THE Waco National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Founder's Day/Women's History Month Celebration. Tickets are \$50. Please see any member of the organization.

RALLY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

is intentionally rooted in Black history, culture, and resilience. Barefield told students that Black excellence is not accidental; it is definitely earned. Director of Library and Cultural Enrichment, Roberto Zapata welcomed the more than 100 participants and volunteers to the STEAM Center.

Henry Wheeler reminded students that excellence is part of their DNA, because they come from a long line of courageous people who embraced their excellence. She told them that courage meant attempting scary tasks. Henry Wheeler and her panelists provided workshops on navigating college admission to students and separate ses-

sions for parents on how to help their aspiring collegiates. Students received packets with applications for local scholarships.

Transformation Waco, the nonprofit that oversees programming at the STEAM Center, provided technical and staffing support. Dr. Robin McDurham and Lindsey Helton, Transformation Waco CEO and Project Director, respectively, were onsite encouraging participants to the tour the facility. The NAACP was also supported by a host of volunteers from groups such as the National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa and the Baylor NAACP.

"We hosted this rally to remind participants and the community that diversity, equity, and inclusion are the grandchildren of affirmative action

which was a response to a decades-long denial of African American talent from all walks of life and to support Black excellence among our young people," declared Dr. Peaches Henry, NAACP president. "Our aim today was to rebrand DEI for students to remind them of what our parents have always taught us—African Americans have to be twice as good to get half as much as our White counterparts—so yes, African Americans DEFINITELY EARNED IT!"

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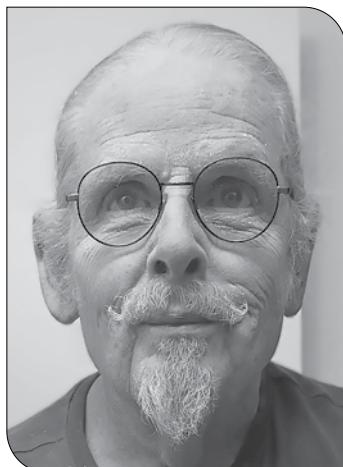
THE BOOK OF CERTITUDE

BY MICHAEL JONES

Everyone with a religious upbringing knows about The Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Indeed, the Rule is integral to literally all the great world religions. For me, that's always been an indication that they are more alike than not, and one which led me to the Bahá'í Faith.

In the early 1860's, our Faith's founder, Bahá'u'lláh, wrote The Book of Certitude, which maintains that the great religions are in fact a series of progressive revelations from the same God; part of one continual process of spiritual guidance designed by Him to lead humanity toward peace and unity. Dictated over the course of two days, this remarkable work lays a unique foundation for the establishment of unity between all religions, especially Judaism, Christianity and Islam, which all trace their heritage back to Abraham. But the founders of other great faiths, Buddha, Zoroaster, and Krishna, are also considered divine messengers.

In The Book of Certitude, Bahá'u'lláh created a new vision of these founders of



MICHAEL JONES

the world's largest religions, whose followers often see them as competing prophets. Wars have been fought for centuries in attempts to prove the superiority of one Faith over another. But Bahá'u'lláh did not see God's messengers or their religions as competitors—he saw them as divine educators in the same school of religion. He explained that the same God sent them to different peoples at different times to help them progress spiritually and materially.

In Bahá'í belief, each consecutive messenger prophesied the messenger to follow.

As Jesus himself said, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." — John 10:16

This central Bahá'í teaching links all the founders of the world's great Faiths in one chain of being, one single system of belief. Bahá'u'lláh taught that the prophets of God bring the same ethical teachings in every age. Their specific prescriptions for living, the social laws of their Faiths, vary from age to age, however—because the needs of each time are different. In The Book of Certitude, Bahá'u'lláh wrote that God sends all of these successive prophets "...down from the heaven of the Will of God, and as they all arise to proclaim His irresistible Faith, they therefore are regarded as one soul and the same person. For they all drink from the one Cup of the love of God, and all partake of the fruit of the same Tree of Oneness."

To learn more, please visit our local Bahá'í website at wacobahais.org or the global information site at baha.org/beliefs.

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LIVING WELL MONTHLY: LOVE YOUR HEART

BY DR. SHAMONICA TRUNELL

February is often associated with love, but it is also an important reminder to care for one of the hardest-working organs in your body: your heart. Heart disease remains a leading cause of illness, yet many risk factors can be reduced through everyday life-style choices.

Heart health is not built in a single doctor's visit. It is shaped daily by how you eat, move, rest, and manage stress. This month, show your heart some love by making small, consistent choices that support long-term cardiovascular health.

TIPS FOR A HEALTHIER HEART

- Move More, Sit Less: Regular physical activity strengthens the heart, improves circulation, and lowers blood pressure. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate movement each week, such as brisk walking, cycling, or dancing.

DUCKETT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

system through the "punishment for a crime" clause. The 1964 Civil Rights Act served as a necessary shield, but it was a limited ceasefire—one that focused on citizenship while leaving fundamental Human Rights violations untouched.

We are now entering the most dangerous phase of the transition. Project 2025 uses Schedule F to purge tens of thousands of civil servants, ensuring total loyalty to the Executive while dismantling Disparate Impact protections so systemic harm becomes legally invisible. This is the silence of the regenocide—defunding Native healthcare, expanding the domestic military footprint, and suppressing dissent as economic instability deepens.

Our ancestors left us a blueprint for resistance. Marcus Garvey taught economic sovereignty. Malcolm X warned us to stop asking a vulture for permission to be human. W.E.B. Du Bois challenged us to reject double consciousness and choose the path of the Sovereign Human.

We must stop confusing Civil Rights with Human Rights. The shield is being dropped, and the sword is being raised. The "Big Beautiful Bill" is a gilded cage. It is time we stopped admiring the bars.

Short activity breaks throughout the day also make a difference.

- Eat with Your Heart in Mind: Choose whole foods including fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, whole grains, and healthy fats. Limit processed foods high in sodium, sugar, and unhealthy fats, which can raise blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

- Know Your Numbers: Blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar levels offer important insight into heart health. Many people feel fine even when these numbers are



DR. SHAMONICA TRUNELL

elevated, making regular monitoring essential.

- Manage Stress Effectively: Ongoing stress can increase blood pressure and strain the heart. Relaxation practices such as deep breathing, prayer, meditation, or spending time outdoors can help protect both mental and physical health.

- Prioritize Quality Sleep: Poor sleep is linked to a higher risk of heart disease. Aim for seven to nine hours of restful sleep each night and maintain a consistent bedtime routine.

- Your Takeaway: Heart

health is an act of daily self-care. The choices you make each day add up over time. This February, commit to habits that help your heart stay strong for years to come.

MONTHLY SELF-CARE CHALLENGE: HEART WALK CHALLENGE

Schedule at least three 20-minute walks each week. Invite a friend or family member to join you.

Screening Reminder: Have your blood pressure and cholesterol checked, especially if heart disease runs in your family.

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Friday Night Prayer – 6 to 7 p.m.
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