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Prominent Maryland Library Leader Michael Gannon Announces Retirement

By ANDREA CASTILLO
PGCMLS

Largo, Md. (Dec. 13, 2023)—After 15 years of service to the Prince George's County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS), Chief Operating Officer for Support Services Michael B. Gannon will retire from his position at the end of the year. In his time with PGCMLS, he has overseen facilities, safety and security, in-

formation technology, procurement, collection strategy, and business intelligence. Most notably, he has supervised 10 major renovations of existing branches and the construction of five new branch facilities: South Bowie, Laurel, Hyattsville, Bladensburg, and Baden.

Throughout his time in the system, Gan-

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PHOTO COURTESY PGCMLS

Application Launches for Prince George's County Guaranteed Income Pilot Program

Program provides \$4 million over two years to up to 175 recipients

By LINDSAY WATTS
Prince George's County Council Media

Applications are now open for Prince George's County's first-ever Guaranteed Basic Income Program, which will provide monthly cash payments to people in need with no strings attached or repayment requirements.

District 7 Council Member Krystal Oriadha proposed legislation (CR-018-2023) that was co-sponsored by the entire Council to create this program in conjunction with The Greater Washington Community Foundation, Meyer Foundation and County Executive's Office.

The program will provide monthly payments of \$800 to 50 people ages 18–24 who have aged out of foster care, and 125 seniors (age 60+) for a 24-month period to support their basic needs, decrease debt and increase financial stability.

"I've championed the guaranteed basic income program for years because I know it provides an opportunity to tackle poverty and create better quality of life for our residents," said Council Member Krystal Oriadha. "My hope is with more jurisdictions moving to implement programs like this, we will see an investment at the state and federal level that will allow these pilots to become permanent."

Applications are open until Jan. 1, 2024. Those who are 18–24 years old can apply at bit.ly/casagbi. Seniors 60 years old and up can apply at bit.ly/ucapgbi.

State's Attorney Braveboy and State's Attorney Bates Unveil Joint Legislative Package for 2024 Session

By DENISE DOUGLAS
Office of the State's Attorney, Prince George's County

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (Dec. 14, 2023)—[On Dec. 14] Prince George's County State's Attorney Aisha Braveboy and Baltimore City State's Attorney Ivan J. Bates announced their support of several upcoming bills in the 2024 legislative session, including efforts to tackle juvenile crime in their respective jurisdictions.

"Together, I truly believe that we will make a difference in our respective jurisdictions and in the state," said State's Attorney Braveboy. "The fact is that we have similar jurisdictions in terms of demographics, and we are facing many of the same challenges, such as crime. As a result, we have decided to unite on our top legislative priorities, such as expanding the gang statute, changing the limitations of the child interrogation and juvenile probation laws, and creating a felony domestic abuser database. Changing the laws attached to these issues will give us the tools we need to more effectively prosecute cases and make our communities safer. While we are committed to holding offenders accountable, we also believe that our justice system must be balanced, compassionate, and restorative. That is why we are fighting for a bill that provides prosecutors with the ability to request reconsideration of a sentence beyond the current 5-year cap. And lastly, we will ask the legislature to make it easier for families to access funds to bury their loved ones who are victims of homicide in a timely manner, removing a major stressor during that critical time."

"I am excited to partner with my talented colleague, State's Attorney Aisha Braveboy, to announce our collaborative support of several bills in Annapolis this legislative session that will target the increase in juvenile offenses that we have both seen in the jurisdictions we represent," said State's Attorney Bates. "Curbing the rise of juvenile crime across Baltimore and this state is a top priority for my office and is in the legislative package that State's Attorney Braveboy and I will advocate for in Annapolis next year. The proposed changes are about equity in our juvenile justice system and are reasonable and effective measures to improve public safety, especially concerning our youthful offenders. While we are pushing for stronger accountability for young people, we are also advocating for restorative measures for incarcerated individuals and changes to reduce the impact on families already dealing with grief from a traumatic event. This is a holistic effort to address communities in need in our respective districts."

State's Attorneys Braveboy and Bates will be mutually supporting the following legislation in Annapolis this year:

Juvenile Dispositions—Increasing the probationary period of a misdemeanor involving a juvenile illegally wearing, carrying, and/or transporting a firearm OR knowing and willfully taking a motor vehicle without the owner's lawful custody, control, or consent from

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PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY MARYLAND GOVERNOR'S PRESS OFFICE

Governor Moore participated in a ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Building Trades Career Center in Lanham.

Governor Moore Convenes Final 2023 Statewide Cabinet Meeting Road Tour in Prince George's County

By PRESS OFFICER
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Dec. 9, 2023)—[On Friday, Dec. 8], Governor Wes Moore held his final statewide Cabinet Meeting Road Tour of 2023 in Prince George's County. The administration's cabinet convened to discuss the Moore-Miller Administration's priorities for 2024. Governor Moore also

participated in a ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Building Trades Career Center in Lanham, followed by a tour of the center.

"Partnership isn't a talking point for us—it's a governing philosophy. Yesterday's cabinet visit to Prince George's County underscores why that philosophy is so important," said Gov. Moore. "Together, we are reaching out across the local, county, state,

and federal levels to create new jobs, grow a more competitive economy, and build stronger pathways to prosperity for all. I'm grateful for the leadership of our cabinet and our partners in Prince George's, who continue to help us deliver for Marylanders."

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In Wake of Shootings, HBCU Advocates Urge More Security Resources

By MINNIE STEPHENSON
Capital News Service

WASHINGTON (Dec. 8, 2023)—After the back-to-back shootings in October at Morgan State University and Bowie State University, advocates for historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) say that underfunding is leading to lack of proper safety and security resources on their campuses.

Their concerns have drawn support from Capitol Hill.

Rep. Alma Adams, D-North Carolina, and the founder of the Congressional HBCU Caucus, sent letters to President Joe Biden, Education Secretary Dr. Miguel Cardona and Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, saying there needs to be a "concerted effort to provide funding to

HBCUs for them to protect their student body and faculty from violence."

She added that safety and security on HBCU campuses must be a "top priority" and requested that her office meet regularly with the Biden administration to discuss funding and safety concerns.

On Oct. 3, five people were injured after a shooting on Morgan State's campus during homecoming festivities. Just four days later, two people were injured after a shooting on Bowie State's campus, also during homecoming.

Ryan Coleman, president of the Randallstown NAACP, was on Bowie State's campus visiting family when the shooting happened. The police presence on campus that night was not sufficient, he said.

"You saw some police...but it became really obvious that they weren't walking

around the campus...they weren't patrolling like that," he said. "There were multiple events on the campus with multiple people. And there just wasn't any police presence at those individual events."

Coleman described the scene during the shooting as "chaos." While sheltering in a dorm with his family, he said he saw people running and trying to get off campus, and that the police didn't start evacuating campus until about an hour later.

"The Bowie State University Police were over their heads, it was obvious they did not have the police resources to handle this," Coleman said. "If there was an active shooter who actually wanted to do harm to students, I have no faith that that person

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COMMUNITY

Free Holiday LYFT Rides Offered Throughout Greater Washington to Prevent Drunk Driving

Over a third of U.S. traffic deaths during Christmas and New Year's involve drunk drivers

By PRESS OFFICER

Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP)

TYSONS, Va. (Dec. 12, 2023)—Preparing to combat that time of year when, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, over a third (36%, Christmas; 40% New Year's Day) of U.S. traffic deaths involve drunk drivers,* a local nonprofit organization announced today that free safe rides will be offered to would-be drunk drivers throughout the Washington-area this holiday season.

Offered by the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP), the 2023 Holiday SoberRide® program will be in operation nightly from 10 p.m. until 4 a.m. from Friday, December 15, 2023 until Monday, January 1, 2024 as a way to keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during this traditionally high-risk holiday period.

Each evening during this six-hour period, area residents ages 21 and older celebrating with alcohol may download the Lyft app to their phones then enter the SoberRide® code in the app's 'Payment' tab (under the 'Add Lyft Pass' option) to receive their no-cost (up to \$15) safe transportation home. WRAP's separate 2023 Holiday SoberRide® promo codes will be posted at 9 p.m. on December 15, 22 and 31 on www.SoberRide.com.

"Over a third of all U.S. traffic fatalities during Christmas and New Year's in 2021 involved drunk drivers according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration," said Kurt Erickson, WRAP's President.

Last New Year's alone, over 900 (907) persons in the Washington-metropolitan area used the free safe ride service rather than possibly driving home impaired. The charity also offers its SoberRide® program on St. Patrick's Day, Cinco de Mayo, Independence Day and Halloween.

"Lyft is dedicated to providing access to reliable and responsible rides, and we're proud to partner with programs like WRAP to offer Lyft as an alternative to impaired driving," said Kamillah Wood, Director of Public Policy for Community Safety at Lyft. "Through our Roadway Safety Program and our partnerships with the public, we hope to empower our community with the tools to protect themselves and those around them this holiday season.

SoberRide® is offered throughout Lyft's Washington D.C. coverage area which includes all or parts of: the District of Columbia; the Maryland counties of Montgomery and Prince George's and towns therein plus the cities of Bowie, College Park, District Heights, Gaithersburg, Glenarden, Greenbelt, Hyattsville, Laurel, Mount Rainier, New Carrollton, Rockville, Seat Pleasant and Takoma Park; and the Northern Virginia counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William and towns therein plus the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas and Manassas Park.

Sponsors of WRAP's 2023 Holiday SoberRide® campaign include 395 Express Lanes, Amazon, Anheuser-Busch, Beer Institute, Brown-Forman, Constellation Brands, Diageo, District of Columbia Association of Beverage Alcohol Wholesalers, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibility, Giant Food, Glory Days Grill, Lyft, Molson Coors Beverage Company, New Belgium Brewing, Restaurant Association Metropolitan Washington and the Washington Area New Automobile Dealers Association. WRAP's 2023 Public Partner SoberRide® Sponsors include the District of Columbia Office of the Deputy Mayor for Operations and Infrastructure's Highway Safety Office, Maryland Highway Safety Office/Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration and Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles.

Since 1991, WRAP's SoberRide® program has provided 88,126 free safe rides home to would-be drunk drivers in the Greater Washington area.

Founded in 1982, the nonprofit [501(c)(3)] Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) is an award-winning public-private partnership working to prevent drunk driving and underage drinking in the Washington-metropolitan area. Through public education, innovative health education programs and advocacy, WRAP is credited with helping to keep the annual percentage of metro-Washington traffic deaths involving alcohol-impaired driving historically lower than the national average. WRAP, however, may best be known to area residents via the organization's popular free safe ride service to prevent drunk driving, SoberRide®.

More information about WRAP's SoberRide® initiative can be found at www.SoberRide.com.

* National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2021, 36% of all U.S. traffic fatalities on Christmas and 40% on New Year's day.

The Sky Bridge at Town Center Holds Ribbon Cutting Ceremony With Special Guests and Dignitaries

By PRESS OFFICER

Watermark Retirement Communities

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (Dec. 11, 2023)—In October, The Sky Bridge at Town Center, a Watermark Retirement community, held a VIP grand opening celebration and ribbon cutting ceremony to officially welcome the upscale senior living locale to Prince George's County.

The Sky Bridge at Town Center boasts innovative, upscale residences in an active adult community at The Arch and independent living, assisted living, and memory care at The Parc. Residents have full access to a grand suite of amenities and services.

The event on Oct. 18 was hosted at the community and attended by local dignitaries, officials, and special guests from across Prince George's County, the state of Maryland, and Washington, D.C.

Attendees got to see the community's amenities up close, from their five restaurants, including one designed to accommodate the needs of residents experiencing declines in cognitive and motor function. Whether residents are in the mood for movie screenings, honing their artistic skills in the arts and crafts studio, or a focus on health and wellness in the fitness center and spa, The Sky Bridge at Town Center offers opportunities for all.

The night's festivities included speeches from Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks and a performance of "HOME," a song from the 1975 Broadway musical *The Wiz*, by Maryland State delegate Jamila Woods.

"It was amazing to feel the warmth and support of the broader community behind us," said Executive Director Joy Hart. "We know that The Sky Bridge at Town Center provides amazing, unique amenities for area seniors, but to be surrounded by so many dignitaries who see the same value was very special."



PHOTO COURTESY WATERMARK RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES
Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks giving a speech at the event.



PHOTO COURTESY WATERMARK RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES
Maryland State delegate (District 26) Jamila Woods as she performed "HOME."

Touch4Life Collaborates With National Organizations Including the CDC and Johns Hopkins University to Raise Breast Health Equity Awareness

Touch4Life collaborates with six organizations to continue providing life-changing resources to educate BIPOC women and men regarding preventing, recovering from and living with breast cancer

By PRESS OFFICER

Touch4Life

WASHINGTON (Dec. 11, 2023)—Touch4Life is a breast health equity organization on a mission to eliminate disparities in breast cancer outcomes. The nonprofit is collaborating with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Johns Hopkins University, BlackDoctor.org, the American Cancer Society, FORCE, and the MBC Alliance to bring life-saving biomarker and genetic testing, screening, and education directly to BIPOC communities across the country.

The CDC, in partnership with Johns Hopkins University, has renewed its "Multiple Approaches to Support Young Breast Cancer Survivors and Metastatic Breast Cancer Patients" grant for Touch4Life. The grant is specifically awarded to organizations across the United States that are dedicated to fulfilling an endeavor to support young breast cancer survivors.

With this renewal, Touch4Life is able

to continue developing its B-FRESH™ program. B-FRESH (Food Restores, Energizes, and Sustains Health) is an innovative way for BIPOC people with metastatic breast cancer, their families, and caregivers to stay healthy throughout their breast cancer journey by providing access to locally-grown fresh produce and herbs, nutrition education, culturally relevant recipes and fitness education.

"I am honored for the opportunity to continue this collaboration with the CDC and Johns Hopkins," said Touch4Life's Founder and President, Laura Crandon. "I firmly believe that nutritional health is just as critical as one's physical health and this funding allows us to continue on with that purpose through our B-FRESH programs."

Touch4Life has also connected with four other partners working to promote equitable health outcomes, including:

BlackDoctor.org, a host of Touch4Life's Soul-filling Our Sisters (SOS)™ virtual events and the official media partner of its 7-part series with Black Genes Matter™. Through monthly

SOS Saturday events, now hosted on BlackDoctor.org's YouTube channel and Facebook page, Touch4Life offers a platform for Black women to connect, share experiences, and explore ways to enhance their lives through education, self-care, and personal growth. The 7-part Black Genes Matter™ series, which launched in September covers a wide range of topics, including family health history, genomics 101 and how to discuss genetic testing with your doctor.

The American Cancer Society National Breast Cancer Roundtable (ACS NBCRT) welcomed Touch4Life into its cohort of national thought leaders, organizations, and industry partners. The roundtable, founded in 2022, aims to accelerate progress across the breast cancer continuum through strategic partnerships to eliminate disparities and reduce mortality. As a member, Touch4Life has access to engagement opportunities and resources.

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Maryland Humanities Executive Director Selected for Truth and Reconciliation Commission

By SARAH WEISSMAN

Maryland Humanities

BALTIMORE (Dec. 8, 2023)—The Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission (MLTRC) recently appointed Lindsey Baker, Executive Director at Maryland Humanities, to the position of Commissioner. MLTRC is the country's "first Commission dedicated to investigating racial terror lynchings in the United States," according to a MLTRC press release. The independent Commission invites the Marylanders to share what they believe reconciliation looks like.

Created in 2019 through House Bill 307, MLTRC conducts research and holds "public meetings and regional hearings where a lynching of an African American by a white mob has been documented," according to

its website. Baker joins seventeen other commissioners.

Baker has worked for fifteen years as an action-oriented, nonprofit leader whose work has always been firmly grounded in community engagement, racial equity, transparency, and inclusivity. Prior to becoming the Executive Director of Maryland Humanities, Baker served as the Executive Director of Patapsco Heritage Greenway and spent nearly a decade as the Executive Director of the Laurel Historical Society. Baker has served on the Maryland 250 Commission and currently serves on the Federation for State Humanities Councils' Racial Equity Committee.

"I am honored to join the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission," says Baker. "Its critical work will create a more equitable Mary-

land and reflect a necessarily honest portrayal of our state's history."

MLTRC receives support from Maryland State Archives and the Maryland Office of the Attorney General.

Maryland Humanities is a statewide nonprofit organization that creates and supports educational experiences in the humanities that inspire all Marylanders to embrace lifelong learning, exchange ideas openly, and enrich their communities. For more information, visit www.mdhumanities.org. Maryland Humanities is generously supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities; the State of Maryland; the Citizens of Baltimore County; private foundations; corporations; small businesses; and individual donors. Connect with

Maryland Humanities on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram.

Leadership Maryland is a nonprofit organization offering professional and youth development programs dedicated to building a better Maryland by harnessing the strength of its current and future leaders. Established in 1992, Leadership Maryland's professional development program selects as many as 52 diverse and accomplished executives from Maryland's public and private sectors each year to come together as a class for an eight-month learning program focused on the state's most vital social, economic and environmental issues. In 2017, Leadership Maryland merged with Maryland Leadership Workshops (MLW), the state's premier leadership de-



PHOTO COURTESY MARYLAND HUMANITIES

Lindsey Baker, Executive Director at Maryland Humanities

velopment program for middle and high school students. For more than 65 years, MLW has provided peer-led summer residential and community outreach programs that empower participants—known as delegates—to take ownership of their personal development as they grow in self-awareness, set measurable goals, and collaborate with peers in di-

verse groups. Together, Leadership Maryland and MLW have established thousands of Marylanders on their lifelong leadership path, equipped with the knowledge, skills, and connections needed to influence positive change in all aspects of their lives and within our state. Visit leadershipmd.org or mlw.org.

COMMUNITY

PGCEDC Launches New Season of Takeout Tuesday Program Highlighting County-Based Restaurateurs and Healthy Eating

New 8-episode season focusing on the county culinary scene returns to PGCEDC YouTube Channel

By PRESS OFFICER
PGCEDC

LARGO, Md. (Dec. 13, 2023)—Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation (PGCEDC) announces the launch of the newest season of Takeout Tuesday, which will launch on Tuesday, January 2, 2023. Now entering its fourth production season, the program explores the authentic tastes and delicacies of Prince George's County, from North County down to South County.

The season also debuts new host Nicole Hall, PGCEDC Business Development Manager, Retail/Restaurants, who is instrumental in managing the services and business resources available in Prince George's County to support and grow their companies.

"Season four of Takeout Tuesday will feature diverse culinary destinations around the county," said Takeout Tuesday host Nicole Hall. "The series will showcase the delicious delicacies and dishes curated by our talented restaurant community. These small businesses are staples in our neighborhoods, and we are so excited to tell their story to the masses. The series aims to drive consumer traffic to our local, independent restaurants

to ensure their longevity and stability in the county. In addition, the show will highlight the Buy Prince George's campaign, which is not just a slogan but a call to action to support our small businesses who support the community they serve."

The program will air bi-weekly on Tuesdays on the PGCEDC YouTube channel, with restaurants in Prince George's County.

The first episode will feature Krab King, an upscale seafood eatery changing the culinary landscape of Upper Marlboro, MD. Additional Takeout Tuesday episodes include vegetarian restaurants and international cuisine in Prince George's County, and many more.

View previous seasons here: <https://youtube.com/@pgcedc>

Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation's signature program is Take Out Tuesday. #BuyPrinceGeorges PGCEDC's mission is to cultivate and promote a strong local economy that supports the growth and prosperity of entrepreneurs and businesses, dedicated to strengthening communities through business development and job creation. Visit www.pgcedc.com. Join the conversation: #TakeoutTuesday

Nearly 75 Percent of PGCPSS Schools Achieve Top Three Ratings on Maryland Report Card

10 percent of PGCPSS schools gained at least one star compared to 8 percent statewide. PGCPSS also had fewer schools with a decreased rating compared to the state.

By PRESS OFFICER
PGCPSS

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (Dec. 14, 2023)—The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) report cards and star ratings for the 2022-2023 school year show 72.4 percent of Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPSS) received the three highest ratings, an increase from last year.

Additionally, nearly 75% of PGCPSS schools saw gains in academic achievement, including bright spots in elementary and middle school math.

School star ratings, available at Maryland School Report Card, are based on multiple academic and non-academic measures and are designed to help families and students understand school performance and progress. For school leaders, the report card and ratings help make decisions about where to invest instructional time and resources.

Superintendent Millard House II noted that given the impact of this year's change in chronic absenteeism scoring which resulted in a loss of points, significant academic gains are evident for schools to have maintained and added stars.

"Every student deserves a five-star school, and this year's state report cards confirm what we already knew—that our students are moving in the right direction," House said. "2022-23 MCAP scores showed PGCPSS students growing in both English Language Arts and mathematics, with many just on the cusp of proficiency. The report card tells a similar story."

House said that the district will take a close look at the data and use it as a tool to accelerate learning and continue to close achievement gaps.

Maryland School Report Card ratings for presently enrolled schools in PGCPSS for each category is as follows:

- Five-star—three schools (two el-

- elementary and one high)
- Four-star—27 schools (15 elementary and 12 combination)
- Three-star—107 schools (85 elementary, eight middle, six high, and 8 combination)
- Two-star—50 schools (17 elementary, 14 middle, 17 high, and two combination)
- One-star—two schools (two middle)

Combination schools include those with an elementary, middle and/or high school configuration.

Other PGCPSS Highlights:

- 74% of PGCPSS schools showed gains in Academic Achievement.
 - 67% of schools showed gains in Academic Progress.
 - 50% showed gains in Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency
 - Of schools that lost a star, 50% actually gained points in the Academic Achievement indicator.
- The 2022-23 Maryland School Report Card is available at MDReportcard.org

Retirement from A1

non has become known for his humor and candor, as well as his attention to detail for building design and appearance, leading to awards and accolades for libraries in the system, including the 2018 Library Building Award given by the American Library Association (ALA) and the American Institute for Architects (AIA) for the Laurel Branch Library, and more recently, an AIA Baltimore Chapter Award for the New Carrollton Branch Library. His "Hard Hat Librarian" video series, in which he provides humorous yet informative updates on the system's construction projects, won an ALA 2023 Core PR Xchange Award for PGCMLS.

During a Nov. 30 retirement celebration that included accolades from colleagues across the system, county, and state, Gannon joked, "When I leave, and [the staff] talk about me—which they will—at least they can say Michael gave us beautiful restrooms."

More than 100 guests attended the event, which also included a proclamation from County Executive Angela Alsobrooks' office, a County Council certificate of recognition from District 5 Councilwoman Jolene Ivey, and remarks from PGCMLS Board of Library Trustees member Toni A. Smith

on behalf of the board, among other speakers.

In all, Gannon's library career spans more than 40 years, getting his start as a library page in Anne Arundel County. Accepting that position would put him on a path that would change his life: meeting his wife, Joanie, and changing his career trajectory away from the counseling psychology master's degree he earned at Loyola University Maryland and toward another master's in library science at the University of Maryland instead. He moved up the ladder as a library associate, librarian, branch manager, and head of administrative and borrower services in the system where he got his start, before moving on to Prince George's County, where he worked as COO for support services during his tenure, and serving as the acting co-CEO on two separate occasions.

Among the most notable projects during his time at PGCMLS are the construction of the South Bowie Branch Library in 2012, the first major building project Gannon oversaw and the first branch to include a fireplace and a drive-up window, and the Laurel Branch Library, which includes dinosaur bones buried under walkable glass inside the floor of the children's area. While he noticed some adults were nervous to walk on it, Gannon said he was pleased to see children excitedly jumping on the glass on the branch's opening

day in 2016.

Gannon was always very involved in the design process of each library project, and his vision for each one made the final result better, said Antonio Rebelo, architect with Grimm + Parker, a firm that has worked on several construction projects for PGCMLS.

"His pursuit of excellence has actually elevated the way we design libraries in our region and beyond, both for us, as well [as] for other library systems," Rebelo said. Gannon has also made a name for himself in the library world in the readers' advisory realm, earning him the Public Library Association's (PLA) 2003 Allie Beth Martin Award, and even wrote a book in 2004 to guide more readers, "Blood, Bedlam, Bullets, and Badguys: A Reader's Guide to Adventure/Suspense Fiction." Gannon, a fan of mystery, science fiction, fantasy, suspense, and horror stories, said readers' advisory gave him an opportunity to connect with and interact with readers—whether or not they liked his recommendations.

One of the biggest differences Gannon notes between his earliest days in libraries and today is the availability of computers and internet access, which majorly impact the services staff are able to provide to customers, from being able to answer reference questions more quickly, to having more

time to plan storytimes and other programs, and helping people looking for jobs or applying for public benefits.

"We can have more impact on people's lives now than we did then," he said.

Gannon wraps his final year at PGCMLS with Honorary Membership from the Maryland Library Association (MLA) for his contributions to the organization and throughout his career, including for his involvement in the state's Library Associate Training Institute (LATI), readers' advisory training, serving as the organization's president and vice president, and other leadership roles, as well as entertaining crowds as Pub Quizmaster at MLA's annual conference year after year. He also received MLA's Outstanding Member Award in 2004.

"We so much appreciate everything that Michael has brought to Maryland libraries and how he has made all of our jobs easier, more interesting, and fun, so thank you, Michael," said Maryland State Librarian Irene Padilla.

While there was never a dull moment working with Gannon, he always treated the employees in his department fairly and with respect, said Colin Khem, business analytics manager for the system.

"To us, Michael was a good boss and a good man, and we will miss him in our office," Khem said. "It will not be the same without him."

Security from A1

would've been stopped at all."

After the shooting, Bowie State President Aminta Breaux said the school would revisit the idea of adding metal detectors to campus, but emphasized that "no one person has the solution to all the challenges the university faces."

Bowie State University did not respond to a request for comment about the police presence during the shooting there.

At Morgan State, President David K. Wilson announced his plan to extend a fence barrier around campus, saying it will help limit "unfettered pedestrian access."

The school also said it plans to hire more police officers, implement more security cameras around campus and add metal detectors at entrances. The measures will cost millions of dollars and the school said it hopes to receive additional state and federal funding.

After watching the shooting unfold at Morgan State, Coleman wrote a letter to the president of Howard University, where his daughter is enrolled, urging the school to take action during its homecoming celebration in October, including increasing police presence and adding metal detectors at entrances to events, among other precautions.

At its homecoming celebration, Howard officials said that safety was their "main priority" ahead of the events, and the school had its campus police and Metro police patrolling campus.

On Monday, college officials across Maryland gathered behind closed doors to discuss campus safety in the wake of the Morgan State shooting. They discussed prevention technology on campus, and the importance of doing checks on existing security measures, like security cameras, according to WBAL in Baltimore.

Campus officials also emphasized the importance of community policing, and that schools should partner with surrounding police departments.

Coleman said that when he has visited the University of Maryland or other non-HBCUs in Maryland, those institutions seem to have the resources they need, whether it's funding, programming or security on campus.

Maryland HBCU Advocates spokeswoman Sharon Blake echoed Coleman, saying that underfunding at the institutions is widespread, whether it is in programming, scholarships or security.

"When you don't have enough money, you cut corners wherever you can. And that, of course, does include public safety, and that's unfortunate," Blake said.

In Congress, Adams has passed many bills that supporting HBCUs. Last year, in the wake of bomb threats against HBCU campuses across the country, Adams passed a resolution that condemned violence at HBCUs and reaffirmed Congress's support for these schools.

In 2019, Adams also passed legislation that established two fiscal years' worth of mandatory funding for minority-serving institutions.

Earlier this year, the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) proposed legislation that would direct \$100 million each year from FEMA's non-profit grants security program to go towards safety initiatives on HBCU campuses. Adams' office said she is "strongly in favor" of this proposal.

In terms of federal funding, the Biden-Harris administration has invested over \$7 million in the nation's HBCUs, and has directed money in the 2022 and 2023 spending packages, specifically supporting scholarships and grants, as well as institutional development.

While the administration has not specifically increased funding for campus safety in reference to shootings, the Department of Education did secure over \$2 million in grants to help schools recover after violent events, such as bomb threats.

Additionally, in September, the Biden administration sent letters to the governors of 16 states, including Maryland, asking them to direct more money for their land-grant HBCUs.

In the letters, Cardona and Agriculture Secretary Thomas Vilsack said they found that the states' land-grant HBCUs received a collective \$13 billion less than they should have in the last few decades, according to an analysis by the National Center for Education Statistics.

Maryland's land-grant HBCU is the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, which the analysis found to have a \$321 million funding gap in state appropriations in the last 30 years, compared to the predominantly white land-grant universities in the state, including the University of Maryland College Park.

"The longstanding and ongoing underinvestment in University of Maryland Eastern Shore disadvantages the students, faculty, and community that the institution serves," the two secretaries wrote. "It is our hope that we can work together to make this institution whole after decades of being underfunded."

The letter also acknowledges that the state government has been making steps toward addressing the funding gap in recent years.

In 2021, then-Gov. Larry Hogan approved legislation giving \$577 million to Maryland HBCUs over a decade, which Moore has said he will uphold, according to his office.

The Prince George's Post

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BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

I'm 65 and Working; Can I Collect Ex-spouse Benefits?

By RUSSELL GLOOR,
National Social Security Advisor at the AMAC Foundation,
the non-profit arm of the Association of Mature American Citizens

Dear Rusty: I turned 65 earlier this year, and I still work full time. I was divorced four years ago after 38 years of marriage, but my ex-husband has been collecting Social Security for at least 10 years now. Can I start collecting Social Security and still work full time? And can I collect my ex-husband's amount if it is more than mine (and what is the best way to achieve this)? When I went to my local SSA office, they said they had no way of knowing that. **Signed: Working Divorcee**

Dear Working Divorcee: Although you are eligible to claim Social Security at age 65, because you are working full time you may wish to wait a bit longer to do so. That's because Social Security has an "earnings test" which applies to anyone who collects benefits before full retirement age, and you have not yet reached yours.

The earnings test imposes a limit on how much you can earn before SS takes away some of your benefits. If you exceed the annual earnings limit (\$22,320 for 2024), Social Security will want back \$1 in benefits for every \$2 you are over the limit and you will need to repay that, usually by having future benefits withheld. If you significantly exceed the limit, you may even be temporarily ineligible to receive SS benefits until you either earn less or reach your full retirement age (FRA) of 66 years and 8 months. So, if your earnings from working will significantly exceed the annual earnings limit (which changes yearly), it's likely that your wisest move would be to wait longer to claim your Social Security. As a bonus for doing so, your monthly payment will have grown and will be higher when you claim later. The earnings test no longer applies after you reach FRA.

Regarding benefits from your ex-husband, you cannot collect his instead of yours. What you may be able to do, when you claim your own benefit, is to get an additional amount which brings your monthly payment up to 50% of his. In order for that to happen, you would need to satisfy the following criteria:

- You are not currently married.
- The personal benefit you are entitled to at your FRA must be less than 50% of your ex-husband's FRA entitlement.

If the above are true, when you claim your own SS retirement benefit you will also get a "spousal boost" to bring your payment up to what you're entitled to as an ex-spouse. The amount of the spousal boost, if you claim Social Security at your FRA, will be the difference between half of his FRA entitlement and your FRA entitlement. If you claim your benefit before your FRA, not only will your own benefit be reduced for claiming early, but the amount of your spousal boost will also be reduced (benefits claimed before FRA are always reduced).

Whenever you decide to claim Social Security, you will be automatically deemed to be filing for benefits from your ex-husband as well (you shouldn't need to apply separately). You've already satisfied the basic criteria of at least 10 years married to get benefits from an ex-spouse and, if you satisfy the above criteria as well, you will be entitled to a spousal boost when you claim. But your current earnings from working full time will likely affect your eligibility to collect Social Security benefits at this time, so waiting until your full retirement age to claim may be your best choice.

If you will only slightly exceed the annual earnings limit you can consider claiming earlier, as long as you are comfortable with receiving a permanently reduced amount, and the prospect of not getting benefits for a number of months if you exceed the earnings limit (the number of months you will go without benefits depends on how much you exceed the limit by).

The 2.4 million member Association of Mature American Citizens [AMAC] www.amac.us is a vibrant, vital senior advocacy organization that takes its marching orders from its members. AMAC Action is a non-profit, non-partisan organization representing the membership in our nation's capital and in local Congressional Districts throughout the country. And the AMAC Foundation (www.AmacFoundation.org) is the Association's non-profit organization, dedicated to supporting and educating America's Seniors. Together, we act and speak on the Association members' behalf, protecting their interests and offering a practical insight on how to best solve the problems they face today. Live long and make a difference by joining us today at www.amac.us/join-amac.

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PHOTO COURTESY PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

(L to R)—Shameeka Price, Vice Chair of the Community Service Committee at the Prince George's County Association of REALTORS®, Gene Sementilli, President of the Prince George's County Association of REALTORS®, Leslie Collier, Chair of the Community Service Committee at the Prince George's County Association of REALTORS®, Dwayne Mingo, Director of Legislative Affairs at the Prince George's County Association of REALTORS®.

REALTORS® Support Local Food Drive

By ANIYAH WASHINGTON
Prince George's County Association of REALTORS®

LANDOVER, Md. (Dec. 8, 2023)—On December 7, 2023, The Prince George's County Association of REALTORS®, the county's leading advocate for real estate and private property rights serving almost 4000 real estate professionals, hosted their annual holiday charity event at The Grove at Oak Creek. This year's gathering successfully raised over \$3,000 in support of the Prince George's County Public Safety Assistance Program (PSAP) annual holiday food drive.

The proceeds from this event will be utilized to purchase and assemble complete holiday food baskets, ensuring timely delivery to distressed Prince Georgians just in time for the holiday season. The

Association of REALTORS®, along with the Prince George's County Public Safety Assistance Program (PSAP) and other dedicated sponsors, annually identify and address the pressing needs within the community through this compassionate initiative. Anticipated are over 2,500 meal baskets set to be delivered, spreading holiday cheer and support throughout the community. REALTORS® recognize that there are always those who are less fortunate than others.

"Food insecurity anywhere is a problem. We are proud to be a partner with PSAP so that we may help to make a difference, especially during the holiday season," said Leslie Collier, PGCAR's Community Service Committee Chair.

President Gene Sementilli shared, "Amidst the joy and laughter at this event, members of PGCAR generously con-

tributed to a noble cause, making a meaningful difference in their communities and supporting those in need."

REALTORS® are proud participants in efforts that support the communities in which we live, work, and serve.

The Prince George's County Association of REALTORS® is the voice for real estate in Prince George's County, Maryland, representing more than 3,500 real estate professionals in the national capital area. PGCAR is an affiliate of the Maryland and National Association of REALTORS®. We are proud to serve our members and our community and work to ensure professionalism in the industry. Our volunteers and staff work to offer services to real estate professionals and to provide avenues for our members to become more successful. We proudly work to promote and protect home ownership and private property rights.

Rosa Guixens Joins National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund as New Executive Director of Memorial

Guixens to focus on Memorial Fund's Research Department and lead efforts for Candlelight Vigil and National Police Week-related events

By PRESS OFFICER
NLEOMF

WASHINGTON (Dec. 12, 2023)—The National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF) today announced the hiring of Rosa Guixens as the organization's new Executive Director of the National Law Enforcement Memorial. Ms. Guixens, a resident of Silver Spring, MD, brings a wealth of law enforcement experience to the role, previously serving as the Chief of Police of the Riverdale Park (MD) Police Department.

A decorated member of law enforcement, Guixens accumulated nearly three decades of experience in the profession before being named to the role at the non-profit organization. She began her career in 1994 with the Prince George's County Police Department first as a patrol officer and K9 officer before rising through the ranks. Between 2015 and 2019, she served as Captain - Assistant Commander and then Major - Commander, managing the daily tasks of overall police services for the District I, Hyattsville Station; a community of more than 200,000 citizens. She was most recently the Assistant Chief of Police for the Riverdale Park Police Department in 2019 before being promoted to Chief of Police in November 2021.

"After an extensive nationwide search for the next leader of the National Law Enforcement Memorial, Rosa is an outstanding choice to lead the program and push our organization and the Memorial

forward," said Bill Alexander, CEO of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund. "With her proven track record in effective policing and dedication to community engagement, Rosa is exceptionally qualified to lead our organization in honoring and remembering those who have made the ultimate sacrifice."

As the head of the Memorial, Guixens will focus on leveraging her extensive law enforcement background and managerial expertise to lead the organization in its mission to honor and remember the fallen, filling the role vacated by Bill Alexander, now NLEOMF's CEO. She will be tasked with leading the distribution of the organization's Mid-Year and End of Year Officer Fatality Reports, overseeing the maintenance of the pristine Memorial located on campus, fostering relationships in the District with regards to policing and law enforcement and leading efforts for most of the National Police Week-related events, including the annual Candlelight Vigil that takes place at the National Mall in DC.

Her extensive background in law enforcement leadership equips her with a unique perspective on the challenges faced by officers and their families.

"Working in this profession gives me immense pride, and I plan to take that same level of care and determination into this role to ensure the work of my predecessors continues with honor and respect to the fallen who made the ultimate sacrifice for the safety of others," said Rosa

Guixens, Executive Director, National Law Enforcement Memorial. "I look forward to working collaboratively with the dedicated team at the Memorial Fund to ensure that the sacrifices of our law enforcement officers are properly recognized and celebrated."

For information on the National Law Enforcement Memorial and Museum please visit nleomf.org/memorial/ or nleomf.org/museum/.

Established in 1984, the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund is a nonprofit organization dedicated to honoring the fallen, telling the story of American law enforcement, and making it safer for those who serve. The first pillar of this mission, the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, D.C., honors the names of all of the 23,785 officers who have died in the line of duty to date throughout U.S. history. Additionally, NLEOMF maintains and publishes comprehensive details on the circumstances surrounding official line-of-duty deaths. The Officer Safety and Wellness pillar uses that data, coupled with best-practice program models, to produce programming directed at solutions to improve survivability and enhance wellness. NLEOMF's third pillar, the National Law Enforcement Museum (LawEnforcement-Museum.org) is committed to preserving the history of American law enforcement and sharing the experiences of service and sacrifice for generations to come.

Tour from A1

Governor Moore joined state leaders at the Prince George's County Building Trades Career Center for a ribbon cutting ceremony and tour of the newly completed facility. The Building Trades Career Center is a partnership between the Prince George's County Workforce Development Board, Employ Prince George's, Inc., and the International

Union of Painters and Allied Trades District Council 51. The Building Trades Career Center's goal is to develop a pipeline of students, young adults, and adults for livable wage careers with union employers in the Building Trades and Construction industry.

The Prince George's County's Building Trades Career Center is the first affiliated American Job Center to open within a Building Trades Union in the

United States. Employ Prince George's, Inc. and the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades District Council 51 hope to serve 5,000 to 10,000 residents through the center. Each of the services and programs offered will be free for eligible Prince George's County residents, including pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, and occupational skills training.

The governor was joined by leaders

including U.S. Congressman Glenn Ivey, Secretary of State Susan Lee, Maryland Department of Labor Secretary Portia Wu, Maryland Department of Commerce Secretary Kevin Anderson, Maryland Department of General Services Secretary Atif Chaudhry, Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks, and President and Chief Executive Officer of Employ Prince George's, Inc. Walter Simmons.

Following the ribbon cutting ceremony, Governor Moore had the opportunity to tour The Building Trades Career Center.

As the final stop on the road tour, Governor Moore and the administration's cabinet convened for their monthly meeting. The governor discussed accomplishments of 2023, Maryland's fiscal health, and upcoming priorities for 2024.

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Equity from A3

The FORCE (Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered) Partnership Program works with Touch4Life to advocate for awareness, access to care, better treatment, and prevention options for all those who are impacted by hereditary cancer risks and diagnoses.

The MBC Alliance (Metastatic Breast Cancer Alliance) is a collective of cancer nonprofits, pharmaceutical and biotech industry members and individual patient advocates. Touch4Life has a shared goal with MBC Alliance to enhance its impact in eliminating metastatic breast cancer and the disparities in breast cancer outcomes.

"Together, we can support Touch4Life in achieving its mission by creating a space where Black women can thrive, support one another, and find the strength to prioritize their wellbeing," said Jade Curtis, Executive Editor of BlackDoctor.org. "We are proud to partner with Touch4Life in our commitment to promoting health and wellness in the Black community. The SOS Saturday events align perfectly with our mission, and we look forward to fostering a sense of community and empowerment for Black women."

Touch4Life is honored to connect with these like-minded organizations to advance its mission of encouraging equitable health outcomes. These strategic partnerships reflect Touch4Life's shared values and goals in its dedication to promoting the health and well-being of BIPOC breast cancer patients.

For more information on Touch4Life partners, visit www.touch4life.org/partners.

Touch4Life is the only nonprofit organization dedicated to breast biomarker and genetic testing health equity and was founded by breast cancer survivor and former health care executive Laura Crandon. Touch4Life's mission is to increase the breast health IQ of BIPOC and underserved communities and eliminate disparities in breast cancer outcomes. For more information, visit www.touch4life.org.

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